
Subscribers' Attitude towards Direct Mail Infiltration from Unknown Sources

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Abstract

Purpose – The study was carried out to describe individuals' outlook by unearthing inherent dispositions assumed as a result of indiscriminate influx of unwanted mails directly into subscribers' mobile devices from unscrupulous service providers, which eventually results into certain attitudes that may be either positive or negative. The study was directed towards determining subscribers' general reaction towards direct mail infiltration from unknown sources and their resulting attitude; and also ascertaining whether they view these mails as an invasion of their privacy.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper adopted the descriptive research design, and used the survey method to gain an understanding into individuals' outlook towards unsolicited text messages. 114 copies of the structured questionnaire were distributed to individuals who own a mobile phone within the Enugu metropolis, Nigeria. Respondents were purposively selected as only mobile phone owners who are educated were deemed eligible for the study. A total of 82 usable copies of the questionnaire were analysed using frequencies, percentages and the one-sample t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses.

Findings – The results show that subscribers have a distaste for unsolicited text messages and therefore react unfavourably, as most of them would either delete the messages the moment they are identified as unwanted, or delete them immediately after reading them. This inadvertently brings about the formation of a negative attitude towards unsolicited direct mails generally. It further reveals that the influx of unsolicited text messages during odd hours is a breach of ethical standards as regards to privacy. Consequently, individuals prefer that their consent be sought first by service providers before bombarding them with those mails.

Practical implications – This paper addresses an important issue affecting individuals in this information age. As the spread of information becomes more rapid, certain areas of concern arise. This paper addresses those areas especially with respect to privacy matters as a way of emphasizing the significance of ethics in what is supposed to be an ordered system.

Originality/Value – The novelty of this paper is evident in its demonstration of individuals' innate feelings and its exposition of inherent attitude patterns in a setting where ethics is undermined. It utilizes the opinions gathered to elucidate the need for more cultured patterns of self-expression and communicating to others.

Keywords – Attitude, Unsolicited mails, Subscribers, Service providers, Disposition, Invasion, Privacy

Paper type - Empirical

1. Introduction

The widespread use of mobile phones in this information era as a common means of communication and the rapid increase in number of subscribers to this service have prompted marketers to adopt this medium in the execution of marketing activities. This has further led them to embrace mobile marketing (specifically through direct mails), and has provided them with a new and innovative means in marketing communications, as opposed to other traditional means (Yousif, 2012). Several years ago, specifically the 18th century, the economy was characterised by mass production and distribution of standardised products with the mass media passing across standardized messages to the entire market (Godin, 1999), irrespective of inherent differences existing among different market segments. However, developments in the 21st century brought about a more informed society with enlightened group of customers that require a more personalized and customized approach in serving them. Thus, it became difficult to serve these customers with mass advertising campaigns, and resulted into the need to develop targeted marketing communications strategies in order to properly serve customers in a bid to build and maintain long term customer relationship.

Direct mails as a means of marketing communications incorporate a wide variety of media such as e-mails, text messages, chats, e.t.c. in getting across to individuals. While other media must be operated in an online mode, text messages are usually operated offline. This means that messages sent through e-mail and other chat platforms would usually require an individual purposely checking their e-mail accounts before they can read the content of a mail, or are aware of the presence of an unwanted message (Pescher et.al, 2014); especially when the phone in use is not a smart phone. In contrast, since text messages are operated in an offline mode, these messages once sent, always get to individuals even in their private moments. That is why a mobile phone text message appears to be more distracting than an e-mail because it alerts the individual immediately irrespective of whether it is a smart phone or not. And, where there is a constant infiltration of unwanted messages, individuals tend to react in various ways.

Normally, an individual who subscribes to a telephone network does so for communication purposes but never with the intention of being bombarded uncontrollably with mails from unknown sources. Subscribers might even prefer to register their lines without divulging their personal details and phone numbers where possible, in order to avoid infiltration of unwanted mails. But, this appears very unrealistic in practice. So, at the point of registration, subscribers are required to reveal their personal details, and are usually left to contend with whatever results from the use of these details by their service providers giving rise to ethical issues. Because of the overwhelming nature of the infiltration of unwanted text messages, this study focuses specifically on the attitudes of individuals to unsolicited mails that come in as text messages by telecommunication service providers.

Usually, when promotional messages are initiated by a firm, they are sent to a group of selected or unselected individuals with the intent that they would value the message they have received and respond positively, and where necessary, actively forward the information to other consumers within their social networks (Pescher et.al, 2014). Yet, individuals react differently to these messages. In actual fact, promotional messages provide an array of information to individuals but, when they are sent too repeatedly especially when it is of no relevance to the phone subscriber, it could be distracting, overwhelming and even confusing to the recipients resulting into some negative reactions. Where these messages are unsolicited, yet come in their multiples (as spams), some forms of arrogance could be stirred up within the recipient (Dickinger, 2005; Stewart, 2002).

This subject on unwanted and irritating text messages is an evolving phenomenon as the concept on mobile marketing itself is relatively new. The literature relating to mobile marketing, direct mails and other terms directly associated with the concept has devoted more attention on examining subscribers' reactions to messages where they had previously agreed and subscribed to some platforms (See Pescher at.al, 2014). Limited attention has been given to investigating into mobile phone subscribers' attitude towards unsolicited messages which they receive from service providers, especially as it relates to invasion of privacy. This is a clear indication that studies on this subject are relatively very few in Nigeria; as such, the attitudes of subscribers towards irritating and unsolicited text messages have remained largely unexplored. This forms the rationale for this study. As most of the researches conducted on this subject have been conducted in other countries and continents, they definitely do not translate well into the Nigerian context. This study is an effort towards bridging that gap. Therefore, this study seeks to examine subscribers' attitude towards the infiltration of unwanted direct mails in Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

Communication occupies a very central role in building business and customer relationships. The rapid changes brought about by technological advancement have greatly influenced the way service providers relate with their clients. The 21st century has witnessed an increasing trend in the use of ICT to reach individuals, reflecting a sharp contrast between the past and the present in the use of technological and personalized devices. Past decades featured the prevalent use of fliers, memos, notices and other traditional modes of information dissemination. However, with the rising trend and popularity of mobile devices, the spread of information has become easier, faster and more effective.

The business environment is replete with much rivalry and competition that firms keep devising means to reach customers faster than their competitors. As a great complement to promotions done through the traditional media such as radio, television, billboards, e.t.c. firms now use mobile devices to effectively target individuals. Firms and service providers have discovered that very vital to their success in operations is the need to be in constant personal touch with customers, and also updating them about the latest developments in their product offerings. One of the strategic ways in which technology has impacted the business world is the use of mobile devices and personal digital assistants in ensuring sustainable relationships. Thus, direct mails have been a major medium of reaching customers in these contemporary times. As such, the relevance of mobile devices such as the cell phones in today's business world cannot be relegated to the background.

Despite the availability of other mobile devices used for communication, mobile phones serve as the most widely used medium because it is much more affordable by individuals and people go with it everywhere. Because of the relevance of mobile phones to everyday operations and sustained communications, firms demand individuals' phone numbers for virtually every purpose. Unfortunately, aside the direct reasons for which these phone numbers were originally provided, individuals have been at the mercy of service providers who divulge their numbers to other sources, who thereafter send diverse kinds of messages to subscribers unidentified. Sometimes, the content of the message could even flout individuals' personal values and principles. In some cases, these messages are sent repeatedly without any effort to finding out if these messages are of any relevance to subscribers.

In some situations, the infiltration of these unwanted text messages pose a great distraction and even result into a conflict of interest. For example, a text message on secular entertainments coming in during religious meetings (e.g. Sunday services). How the senders of these messages get subscribers' details is a source of concern to individuals. The selfishness of the senders is evident in the fact that these text messages are sent repeatedly and uncontrollably over time in a way to subtly persuade individuals to consider their ideas, even where they are irrelevant and of no interest to them. On several occasions, efforts to stop these messages from filtering in even prove frustrating. Unfortunately, subscribers sometimes are charged highly even where they mistakenly agree to an offer for which the terms and conditions are not expressly stated.

It is imperative therefore to find out how subscribers react to repeated unsolicited messages and how these shapes their attitudes towards service providers. Besides, would it not be said to be an invasion of privacy that a person's details could be disclosed to unknown sources without the official permission of the owner? This disturbing yet common trend of unscrupulous infiltration of direct mails without subscribers' consent has necessitated this study. Therefore, this study is directed towards examining subscribers' attitude towards the infiltration of direct mails into their mobile phones from unknown sources, and the concerns it raises about invasion of privacy.

3. Research Objectives

- This study is being carried out in order to:
- Discover how subscribers' react to unsolicited direct mail infiltration from unknown sources
- Determine subscribers' disposition towards direct mail infiltration from unknown sources
- Ascertain whether subscribers perceive direct mail infiltration from unknown sources as an invasion of their privacy

4. Research Hypotheses

H₁:Subscribers do not react negatively to unsolicited direct mails from unknown sources

H₂:Subscribers do not have an unfavourable disposition towards direct mail infiltration from unknown sources

H₃:Subscribers do not perceive direct mail infiltration from unknown sources as an invasion of their privacy

5. Research Questions

- How do subscribers react to unsolicited direct mails from unknown sources?

- What are subscribers' dispositions towards direct mail infiltration from unknown sources?
- In what ways do subscribers perceive direct mail infiltration from unknown sources as an invasion of their privacy?

6. Literature Review

6.1 Review of Key Concepts

6.1.1 Direct Mails

Direct mails as a form of marketing communication is the use of a wireless medium to provide consumers with time and location-sensitive, personalized information that promotes products, services and ideas by a well-identified promoter (Scharl et.al, 2005). The existence of several modes of direct communication notwithstanding, the use of mobile phones appears more predominant. Smart phones today contain innovations such as camera, video, internet connectivity, social sites, e.t.c. such that an average user utilizes the device for multi-purposes. As a matter of fact, technological advancements have provided new media for reaching consumers with greater frequency and impact, such as the Short Messaging Service (SMS) which is sent through mobile devices, especially cell phones ((Zabadi et.al, 2012). As such, firms use mobile phones as an advertising medium because it enables them to provide very targeted and timely messages to customers.

In recent times, the mode of communicating promotional messages to individuals is shifting from the general traditional advertising media to specific devices through direct mails. Porter and Golan (2006) observed that the effectiveness of traditional marketing tools (television, radio, e.t.c.) are somehow diminishing because consumers often perceive advertising as either irrelevant or overwhelming due to its volume in quantity. The high penetration of mobile cell phones enhances consumers' ability to quickly and easily exchange information and products and services electronically; and also enable them receive mobile advertisements at anytime and at anywhere (Drossos et.al, 2007).

Existing literature on marketing communications contain several terms such as 'Mobile marketing' (Cengiz and Tetik, 2010; Dickinger et.l, 2004; Scharl et.al, 2005); Viral marketing campaigns (Pescher et.al, 2014); Electronic marketing (Ndyali, 2014); SMS advertising e.t.c. which are used to refer to or incorporate direct mails as a medium of communicating a firm's promotional messages to individuals. *So, in this study, where any of the terms is used, it would be taken to refer to direct mails through mobile phones.* Firms adopt mobile marketing especially through the use of mobile phones when the majority of their target market constitutes the younger customers because this group of people prefers watching programs or surfing the internet at their own convenience as opposed to being stationed at particular places. Also, because they belong to social networks, they prefer using mobile phones to share information and they do not have much interest in reading hard copies of newspapers (Michael and Salter, 2006). This does not in any way exclude older customers from being communicated through text messages. Therefore, it became obvious that service firms became mostly successful in their marketing communications when they adopted the direct marketing approach which involves a database – driven interactive process of direct communication with targeted customers or prospects using any medium (including mobile phones) to obtain a measurable response or transaction (Spiller and Baier, 2010).

6.2 Significance of Direct Mails in Marketing Communications

Several benefits accrue to the use of direct mails, especially via the SMS, which accounts for its increasing usage rate. The literature on mobile marketing has shown that the use of mobile phones for advertising campaigns attracts low cost combined with a high response rate (Barnes & Scornavacca, 2004; Kavassilis, 2003); and that it serves as the best medium for targeting young customers with active lifestyles (Tsang et.al, 2004). Kumar (2013) captured the scenario of the benefits accruing to use of mobile phones thus:

“Due to wireless communication system, mobile phone users are able to access their e-mails, search, and order and buy products and services from everywhere without computers. Besides the internet and personal computers, the mobile phone is key to marketers because it is extremely popular and offers people the opportunity of mobility. Through the introduction of data services, Short Messaging Services (SMS), Multimedia Message Service (MMS), mobile internet, 3G services and so on. The mobile phone is rapidly becoming a viable commercial marketing channel.”

6.3 Privacy Concerns in the Use of Direct Mails

Firms need to be in constant touch with their customers so, the use of mobile devices remains indispensable because it is more than a valuable medium for retaining and maintaining customer relationship and profitability (Khurana

and Chaudhary, 2010); and also enables a firm’s customers to be able to access a firm’s service from a mobile phone (Balasubramanian et.al, 2002). In actual fact, the use of mobile phones in communicating with individuals especially through the SMS medium is not the problem, but rather, the manner in which subscribers’ details are divulged to other parties who use them unscrupulously without their permission. For consumers’ right not to be breached, it is important that service providers obtain subscribers’ permission (mobile permission) before using their details for promotional purposes (Sinisalo et.al, 2007). This permission should be sought constantly and firms should not take a subscribers’ permission at any one time for a particular service to mean that it applies to every situation. This is important because not every permission obtained from subscribers covers all services; rather, the validity of the permission depends on the service being provided (Sinisalo et.al, 2005). This seems to be rather strange within the Nigerian community, as one wonders if service providers actually seek subscribers’ permission before being sent some certain messages, some of which actually contradicts a person’s own beliefs and values. An investigative look into an average mobile phone user’s text messages would show an array of texts from so many unknown sources that code their identities as 4100, 5021, 5900, 55326, Isaiah65V8 e.t.c. A devout Muslim for example would not want to entertain any such messages from Isaiah65V8! Yet, such many cases abound where individuals’ characteristics and values are ignored simply on the grounds of mobile advertising. Unfortunately, this practice is highly predominant in Nigeria (Dickinger et.al, 2004).

6.4 Attitudes towards unwanted text messages

Boone and Kurtz (2004) have defined attitudes as a person’s enduring favourable or unfavourable evaluations, emotions or action tendencies toward a given object. Even though mobile phone advertising offers lots of benefits as a means of communication between firms and customers, service providers still need to be wary because relationship between them and their customers can be further damaged as a result of constant irritating and unwanted messages being sent to subscribers (Jelassi & Enders, 2006). The practice of sending unsolicited text messages is also referred to as the push strategy (Scharl et.al, 2005), where messages are forcefully sent to subscribers’ mobile phones indiscriminately. The literature on Permission Marketing have somewhat addressed the issue on privacy and intrusion especially as it relates to the use of SMS. When text messages are sent to individuals soliciting return actions from them without initially seeking their consent, customers are likely to refuse to accept them (Tizende et.al, 2002). This becomes more irritating especially because it is not in any way easy for a person to change cell phone numbers like e-mail addresses in a bid to avoid further infiltration of unwanted messages (Sinisalo et.al, 2007).

6.5 Theoretical Framework

6.5.1 Attitude towards the Ad Model

Attitudes toward the Ad may be viewed as the thoughts and emotions that evolve from individuals as a result of being exposed to an advertisement (Kirmani and Campbell, 2009). While this theory have been significantly applied to advertising in general especially using the traditional media, its application to mobile advertising specifically through SMS is very apparent. This theory on “Attitudes towards the Ad” has gained significant attention since the 1980s. Right from that time, authors have identified different forms of emotions (annoying, boring, interesting e.t.c.) that could result into some forms of attitudes (Lutz et.al, 1983; Mackenzie, 1986). Current research has shown that these emotions could lead to either favourable or unfavourable reactions/attitudes depending on the level of informativeness, entertainment, irritation, credibility of source of the message, e.t.c. (Tsang et.al, 2004; Jong and Lee, 2007; Bauer, 2005). This creates a framework for this study which is illustrated below:

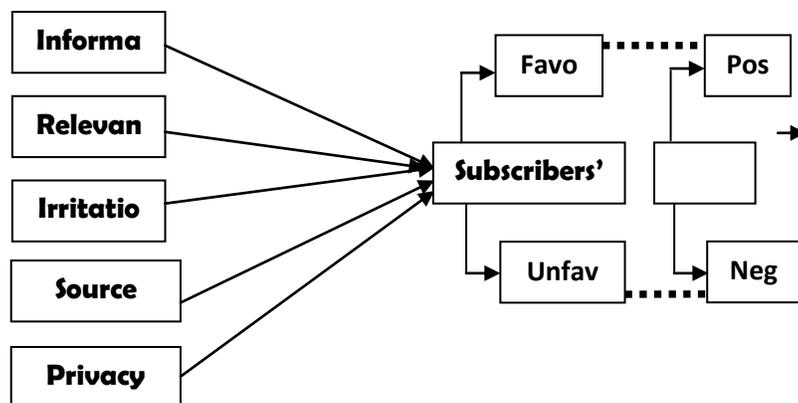


Figure 1 Relationship between Unsolicited Direct Mails and Subscribers’ Attitude

6.6 Researcher's Theoretical Framework

6.6.1 Empirical Reviews

Pescher et.al (2014) undertook a research and focused on consumer decision making process within a mobile environment. They developed a three stage model that analyzes how customers react to text messages forwarded to their phones by service providers. The first stage was concerned with the consumer reading the text message from the mobile phone. The level of relevance contained in the text determines whether they would enter into the next stage of interest, and so on. Specifically, they categorized the consumer decision-making stages as: unawareness stage, reading stage, interest stage and decision to refer stage. A key finding in that study is that the purposive value that customers place on mobile text messages determines whether they would move on from the stage of reading the text to developing an interest in the message content, thereby, necessitating favourable reactions.

A consumer survey dealing with customers' attitude towards SMS advertising was carried out in Jordan by Zabadi et.al (2012). The results of the study showed that customers' perceptions of text messages were based on the entertainment value, informativeness and credibility; and that these formed their overall attitude towards these messages. The study also indicated that the value of the message content has the largest impact on the attitude of customers.

Another study on SMS advertising was carried out in India by Kumar (2013). The results of the research indicate that a person's attitude towards SMS advertising message is determined by their preferences, irritability in the message structure, time of sending such message, prior permission, e.t.c. The research stressed that subscribers are usually favourably disposed towards mobile advertisements if their preferences are taken into consideration before sending the messages. The study also revealed that subscribers detest spams (unwanted and irritating messages); meaning that permission based advertising may become a major consideration by firms when sending promotional messages using mobile phones.

Recently, Samuel and Olatokun (2014) did a survey in Nigeria where they examined subscribers' perception of telecommunication service providers in Nigeria. Although, the study was more directed towards how subscribers perceive telecommunication service providers in terms of their ability to provide adequate information and render services to subscribers based on the code of practice of the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC). This study was done in Ibadan (Western Nigeria) and was made up of 626 subscribers of the MTN, GLO, Airtel and Etisalat networks. The result of the study indicated that MTN and GLO subscribers had more negative perceptions about their service providers than were Etisalat and Airtel subscribers. The study however, did not cover subscribers' perception of these telecommunication service providers in terms of their tendency towards constantly sending unsolicited messages to their phones which could be sometimes irritable.

6.7 Summary and Gap Literature

The literature has shown that most studies conducted in relation to individuals' attitude towards various forms of advertisements, promotions and the likes have focused majorly on factors influencing individuals' acceptance of those messages (Imran, 2011; Saadeghvaziri & Hosseini, 2010; Andersson, Fredrikssen & Berndt, 2014; Tri Dinh Le & Bao-Tran Ho Nguyen, 2014); attitudes towards mobile ads and behavioural intention (Sharp & Bevan-Dye, 2014); Consumers' perception about service providers (Samuel & Olatokun, 2014) e.t.c. Very few studies exist that have addressed this issue from the perspective of individual's privacy concerns. To address this gap, this study has directed significant attention towards how subscribers' privacy concerns and the effect it has on their attitude towards unsolicited mails.

7. Methodology

The research design used in this study was purely descriptive and the survey method was adopted. The study area is Enugu state, Nigeria. The population for this study ideally consists of all owners of a cell phone within Enugu metropolis who have subscribed to any of the mobile networks in Nigeria, and have also received unsolicited text messages at any point in time. Since it is not possible to estimate the number of all cell phone owners within the state, the formula for an infinite population by Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2015) was used to determine the sample size. The formula is stated thus:

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 * pq}{d^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size for infinite population

- p = proportion of success
- q = proportion of failure
- d = margin of error

Therefore, with a confidence level of 95% (1.96), a p-value of 0.9, a q-value of 0.1 at 5% (0.05) margin of error, the sample size is estimated as 114. However, since not all mobile phone owners and/or subscribers are educated enough to read, only those who are able to read were eligible and purposively selected and used in this study.

A set of structured closed ended questionnaires was designed consisting of two sections, A and B. While section A contained items which were mainly concerned with the study’s main objectives, section B merely contained items for collecting personal and demographic data. The research instrument was made up of questions that revolved around individuals’ attitudes to unsolicited mails along different dimensions. Questions suggesting how this trend could be curtailed were also included.

Measuring attitudes could be problematic at times due to the subjective nature of the construct, and the fact that it has to do with a person’s innate character. However, subscribers’ attitude (being the dependent variable) in this study was measured by using items that describe possible dispositions which could result from unsolicited mails. Terms like ‘dislike’ were used to describe displeasure which could consequently lead to unfavourable disposition, and consequently a negative attitude. Included in the questionnaire are scaled items that were intended to be used in measuring the dependent variable (attitude). Respondents were asked to express their opinions by ranking their thoughts according to the extent to which they felt some described scenarios applied to them. This ranged from ‘To a high extent’ to ‘Not at all’, and ‘Always true’ to ‘Not at all’. In order to establish reliability of the research instrument, a pilot study was conducted by administering copies of the questionnaire to 40 respondents. The Cronbach’s alpha statistic was used for reliability testing. The test result showed a value of 72.4% which indicates a high and acceptability level of reliability. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 16.0) was used in analysing data.

8. Results and Discussion

Out of 114 copies of the questionnaire administered to respondents, 93 (81.6%) copies were returned. However, 11 copies of the questionnaire were not used due to some inconsistencies in response or incomplete data. Consequently, only 82 copies of the questionnaire were used in analyzing data.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The table below shows the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 1: Data on Respondents’ Demographics

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	Under 18 years	16	19.5
	18-25 years	49	59.8
	26-35 years	14	17.1
	36-50 years	2	2.4
	Over 50 years	1	1.2
	Total	82	100.0
Gender	Male	65	67.1
	Female	24	29.3
	Missing	3	3.7
	Total	82	100.0
Marital status	Single	78	95.1
	Married	4	4.9
	Total	82	100.0
Highest Educational Qualification	Primary school	2	2.4
	Secondary school	22	26.8
	Diploma/NCE	20	24.4
	University/Polytechnic graduate	29	35.4
	Postgraduate	5	6.1
	Missing	4	4.9
	Total	82	100.0

The survey shows that most of the respondents studied were between 18 to 25 years of age (59.8%) followed by those under 18 years of age (19.1%), and then those in the 26 to 35 years of age category (17.5) while those least represented are above 50 years of age (1.2%). The result also showed that most of the respondents are males (67%.1), and that 95,1% of those studied are still single. Most of the respondents are graduates from higher institutions (35.4%) followed by secondary school leavers (26.8%). The category of respondents with the least level of education is the first school leavers (2.4). Of course, most people who can read proficiently must have been through at least secondary school.

8.1 Test of Hypotheses

The focus of this study is to describe subscribers’ attitude towards unsolicited mails, as such, the t-test statistic was used to estimate the value of the mean responses for each category of items.

The first objective of this study is to **find out how subscribers’ react to unsolicited direct mail infiltration.**

In achieving this objective, question item indicating individuals’ mannerisms were used, ‘read and save them’ which portrays a strong positive reaction towards unsolicited mails; ‘read and delete them’ which indicates at least an interest in wanting to screen the content of the mail before deciding how to react; and ‘delete them immediately without reading them’ which depicts a very strong negative reaction towards them.

The results (*see appendix*) reveal that only 6.2% of respondents would save unsolicited mails after reading them; 54.3% would read the content and thereafter delete them; while 39.5% would delete them immediately without reading them.

The t test result as is seen below has a mean value of 2.3, however the test value is 3.

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
RCQ4	81	2.3333	1.18322	.13147

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
RCQ4	-5.071	80	.000	-.66667	-.9283	-.4050

Since the t value (-5.071) resulted into a significant (p) value (0.00) less than our alpha of 0.05 i.e. $p < .05$, we reject the null hypothesis, thereby supporting the alternate hypothesis which indicates that subscribers react unfavourably towards unsolicited direct mails.

The second objective of this study is to **determine subscribers’ disposition towards direct mail infiltration from unknown sources.**

In order to capture individuals’ view as regards how they feel towards direct mail infiltration from unknown sources, question items about direct mails were constructed in terms of their ability to disturb, distract, contradict values etc. This invariably determines whether individuals’ disposition would either be favourable or unfavourable. Items were weighted on a 5-point likert scale with values, ‘always true’ (5), ‘sometimes true’ (4), ‘not sure’(3), ‘almost never true’ (2), and ‘not at all’ (1).

The results (*see appendix*) show that 63.4% of respondents always feel disturbed when they receive unsolicited messages during odd hours; 54.9% of respondents always feel distracted when unsolicited messages come in at a

time when they are doing something important; a cumulative 58.5% of respondents somehow feel that the content of some unsolicited messages contradict their personal values; 56.1% always consider unsolicited messages requesting for their personal details as being too forward; 48.8% consider repetitive unsolicited mails as being invasive; 86.6% of respondents that telecommunication service providers should always seek their consent before divulging their phone numbers to other sources; and 77.5% of respondents are of the opinion that if they have a chance to block their lines from receiving unsolicited mails into their mobile devices, they would gladly do that.

The t-test analysis is as shown below. The test value serving as a basis for determining whether disposition is favourable or not is 3. The result however shows a mean value of 2.1 which is below the base value thereby indicating an unfavourable disposition of subscribers towards direct mail infiltration from unknown sources.

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Disposition	82	2.1463	1.03186	.11395

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Disposition	-7.492	81	.000	-.85366	-1.0804	-.6269

Since the t value (-7.492) resulted into a significant (p) value (0.000) less than our alpha of 0.05 i.e. $p < .05$, we reject the null hypothesis, thereby supporting the alternate hypothesis which indicates that subscribers have a negative disposition towards direct mail infiltration from unknown sources.

The third objective of this study is to **find out whether subscribers perceive direct mail infiltration from unknown sources as an invasion of their privacy.**

The analysis below shows five related question items as they specifically relate to privacy concerns. With the mean base value at 3, the mean value for the items all show a mean value above 3, indicating that subscribers greatly affirm that unsolicited direct mails are an invasion of their privacy.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Feel disturbed when msgs enter at odd hours	16.535	81	.000	1.52439	1.3410	1.7078
Feel distracted when msgs enter during an impmt task	6.214	81	.000	1.00000	.6798	1.3202
Msgs asking for my personal details are too forward	4.072	81	.000	.74390	.3805	1.1073
Repetitive msgs are invasive	5.071	81	.000	.82927	.5039	1.1546
Consent should be sought before giving out my phone number	12.221	81	.000	1.57317	1.3170	1.8293

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Feel disturbed when msgs enter at odd hours	82	4.5244	.83482	.09219
Feel distracted when msgs enter during an imp't task	82	4.0000	1.45721	.16092
Msgs asking for my personal details are too forward	82	3.7439	1.65411	.18267
Repetitive msgs are invasive	82	3.8293	1.48078	.16352
Consent should be sought before giving out my phone number	82	4.5732	1.16567	.12873

The t values of all the items resulted into a (p) value of 0.00, less than our alpha of 0.05 i.e. $p < .05$. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis, thereby supporting the alternate hypothesis which states that subscribers perceive direct mail infiltration from unknown sources as an invasion of their privacy.

9. Conclusion and its Implications to Marketing

The manner of service providers of barraging individuals’ mobile phones with all sorts of messages have raised up serious concerns in this information era. This study is a critical attempt at unearthing individuals’ opinions about this menace in a bid to discover some of the reactions that this can cause and its concomitant effect on attitude.

On the average, an individual’s reaction to unsolicited mails could range from being outrightly angry to simply being irritated or just acting indifferently. Results from this study show that most people receive these unsolicited messages several times in a single day. This is indeed alarming! This accounts for why individuals feel irritated (Tsang et.al, 2004) and generally have an unfavourable disposition or mindset towards the influx of unsolicited mails from sources they do not know. The situation is even worsened when these unknown service providers obtain subscribers’ personal details from other means without their permission and uses it to reach them. However, the reverse would be the case if only the consent of these individuals could be sought to know if they would be interested in receiving certain messages from them (Godin, 1999).

This situation of uncontrollable influx of unsolicited mails would naturally condition individuals towards reacting in certain ways. This reaction would normally be an offshoot of the mindset that they may have developed by experienced. Results from this study show that most individuals have mistakenly accepted an offer for services proposed to them by unknown service providers by unknowingly pressing the ‘ok’ button, before they become aware; resulting into a corresponding credit cut. This invariably engenders a negative attitude towards these mails as is affirmed by other empirical studies because it is considered as irritating except where permission is sought beforehand (DeReyck & DeGraeve, 2003; Michael & Salter, 2006).

Some individuals’ consideration of their mobile phones as personal and private sparks up invasion of privacy concerns (Grant & O’Donohoe, 2007; Shannon, 2001) whenever this private property of theirs becomes an object of mass information without formal consent. This study reveals that most individuals would want their consent to be sought before their personal phone numbers are given out to sources they do not know, and that unknown service providers should enquire from them first if they would be interested in receiving messages from them. Another dimension of privacy concerns is the fact that messages sometimes are sent to mobile phones at very odd hours when individuals want to have their privacy or do not want to be distracted at all by such.

This calls for redress as it is against marketing principles to aggrieve a customer. Telecommunications subscribers are customers and ought to be treated with such respect that they deserve. Service providers should realize the fact that individuals have the right to accept or decline their offer. Therefore, every tactic designed to force customers into accepting their offerings by manipulating them is unethical. Unknown service providers should first seek the consent of potential customers before reaching out to them in such assiduous manner. By so doing, the principle of consumer sovereignty prevails.

9. Suggestion for Further Studies

This study focused on unveiling inherent attitudes of individuals towards uncontrollable influx of text messages into mobile phones. The study was able to identify how individuals feel towards these messages and how they react towards them. Issues revolving around invasion of privacy were also discussed. However, very little attention was paid to Permission-based marketing as it is outside the scope of this study, though related. Further research can be done in this area in order to reveal how this concept can be practically applied in a bid to handle privacy issues in this regard.

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Appendix

Describing attitude towards those msgs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Dislike unsolicited text msgs	19	47.5	47.5	47.5
Okay with receiving unsolicited text msgs	1	2.5	2.5	50.0
Prefer that a message source seeks permission first	20	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Usual manner to msgs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Read and save them	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
Read and delete them	21	52.5	52.5	62.5
Delete them immediately without reading them	15	37.5	37.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Feel disturbed when msgs enter at odd hours

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not at all	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
Sometimes true	17	42.5	42.5	47.5
Always true	21	52.5	52.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Feel distracted when msgs enter during an impt task

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all	11	27.5	27.5	27.5
	Almost never true	2	5.0	5.0	32.5
	Not sure	1	2.5	2.5	35.0
	Sometimes true	10	25.0	25.0	60.0
	Always true	16	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.724	34

Content of some msgs contradict my personal values

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Almost never true	2	5.0	5.0	45.0
	Not sure	2	5.0	5.0	50.0
	Sometimes true	14	35.0	35.0	85.0
	Always true	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Msgs asking for my personal details are too forward

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Almost never true	3	7.5	7.5	45.0
	Not sure	2	5.0	5.0	50.0
	Sometimes true	3	7.5	7.5	57.5
	Always true	17	42.5	42.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Repetitive msgs are invasive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Almost never true	1	2.5	2.5	32.5
	Not sure	5	12.5	12.5	45.0
	Sometimes true	5	12.5	12.5	57.5
	Always true	17	42.5	42.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Consent should be sought before giving out my phone number

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Not sure	2	5.0	5.0	20.0
	Always true	32	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Block line from receiving those msgs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Yes	28	70.0	70.0	72.5
	No	11	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

QUESTIONNAIRE

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Department of Marketing,
Faculty of Business Administration,
University of Nigeria,
Enugu Campus,
November 4th, 2016.

Dear Respondent,

I am a Postgraduate student of the above named institution and department undertaking a research on **“Subscribers’ Attitude towards Direct Mail Infiltration by Service Providers in Nigeria”**. It is my pleasure to seek your opinion on this subject. I hereby request your assistance in completing the questionnaire attached. This research is purely for academic purposes, and I assure you that all responses and other information provided would be treated in strict confidence.

Thanking you in anticipation for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Okonkwo Deborah Chinwendu

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A (Unsolicited texts messages are messages that enter your phone from a source you do not know.)

1. Have you been receiving unsolicited text messages on your mobile phone? Yes No
2. How often do you receive these messages? Several times a day About once or twice in a day
Few times every week Few times in a month Don't know
3. Do these unknown sources seek your permission before sending you those messages? Yes No
 Sometimes

4. What is your usual manner towards those messages? I read and save them [] I read and delete them [] I delete them immediately without reading them []
5. How do these unsolicited messages make you feel? Angry [] Irritated [] Indifferent [] Happy [] Delighted []
6. The following items describe how you may view unsolicited messages that you receive on your mobile phone. To what extent:

	To a high extent	To some extent	Not sure	To a low extent	Not at all
Do those messages get you distracted?					
Can the content of those messages be annoying?					
Can those messages be interference from important tasks?					
Can you rely on the content of those messages?					
Are those messages relevant to you?					
Can those messages be misleading?					
Are those messages too repetitive?					
Do those messages contain highly informative details?					
Do you like receiving messages from unknown sources?					

7. Which of these statements best describe you? I dislike unsolicited text messages [] I am okay with receiving unsolicited text messages [] I would prefer that a message source seeks my permission to know if I would be interested in their services and be willing to receive text messages from them []
8. Have you at any time mistakenly accepted an offer by pressing the accept button unknowingly? Yes [] No []
9. If yes, how did you feel after that? Unhappy [] Manipulated [] Pleased []
10. Are there times when your credit was cut as a result of accepting an offer you are not aware of? Yes [] No []
11. How did you try to handle that? I tried calling the customer care line [] I tried to opt out [] I actually did not know what to do []
12. Are there times you tried to opt out from receiving some unwanted services but could not? Yes [] No []
13. If yes, why could you not opt out? The message did not indicate how to opt out [] The code for opting out did not work [] I did not know how to opt out []

14. Please, number the items below (1-5) in the order in which they are likely to determine how you would react to unsolicited text messages. Number the most important (1), and so on till you get to the least important (5).

Relevance of the information [] Source of the message [] Whether you are busy or not []

Time when the message entered [] Your mood []

15. Have you received text messages at odd hours (such as early mornings, late evenings) before? Yes [] No []

16. For the following statements, please tick the box that matches your view most closely.

	Always true	Sometimes true	Not sure	Almost never true	Not at all
I feel disturbed when I receive unsolicited messages during odd hours					
I feel distracted when unsolicited messages come in at a time when I am doing something important					
I feel that the content of some unsolicited messages contradict my personal values					
I consider unsolicited messages requesting for my personal details as being too forward					
I consider repetitive unsolicited mails as being invasive					
I feel that service providers should seek my consent before divulging my phone number details to other sources					

17. If you have the chance to block your line from receiving unsolicited messages, would you do that? Yes [] No []

SECTION B

1. Age: Under 18 [] 18 – 25 years [] 26 – 35 years [] 36 – 50 years [] Over 50 years []
2. Gender: Male [] Female []
3. Highest Educational level: Primary School [] Secondary School [] Diploma/NCE [] University/Polytechnic graduate [] Postgraduate []
4. Marital status: Single [] Married [] Widowed [] Separated []
5. What kind of phone do you use? Smartphone [] Ordinary phone [] Both []

Thank you.

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