Assessment of Acceptability of Unsolicited Mobile Advertisements among Nigerian Students

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Abstract
The study surveys opinions of Nigerians about unsolicited mobile advertisement from all the telecommunication companies in Nigeria. Using the purposive sampling method, a total number of two hundred students were selected as research subjects from two higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Data were collected through questionnaire and analyzed by simple percentage. The result of the study shows that majority of the respondents do not find unsolicited mobile advert very appealing. The appeals of the advertisements are unproductive as indicated from the study. The study concluded that unsolicited mobile advertisements are un-educative, non-entertaining and non-informative to the respondents.

Key words: Mobile Advertisement, Global System for Mobile Communication, Unsolicited Messages, Telecommunication Consumers, Telecommunication Companies.

The advent of the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) in Nigeria has been unequivocally invaluable, but it has cast enormous burdens on its subscribers. Today, our mobile phones are incessantly bombarded with several irksome bulk messages. Many companies use mobile marketing as a way to engage audiences, asking questions or giving alerts about upcoming events. Whether a company has upcoming deals, daily coupons or new products, text messaging proves to be a popular method of informing consumers. Messages that actively engage recipients rather than merely advertise are those that find greater results.

Mobile advertising holds a strong promise to become the best targeted, one-to-one, and most powerful digital advertising medium offering new ways to target messages to users in which existing advertising channels can never do (Ramin and Asil, 2007). In order to perform mobile marketing activities more effectively, marketers and researchers pay more attention to mobile advertising which is considered to be an important marketing tool and a continuous area for research.

When many people hear the words "mobile advertising," they probably think of mobile banner ads. But the reality of mobile advertising is that the industry is expanding to encompass many different formats and interactive experiences. Mobile advertising has come a long way from the days when a "mobile ad" was just a small banner to tap. Today, mobile advertising is becoming a more crucial part of the marketing mix for app publishers & brands of all sizes, as companies develop more sophisticated methods to engage with consumers, influence their buying behavior, and even complete the sale via mobile device.

Statement of the Problem: The growth of mobile advertising has opened a new area for research. The questions are: will this new medium have the same effect as other media? What do consumers think about SMS-based advertisements? What mechanisms would be more effective for advertising? Answer to these questions critical is to effective use of mobile advertising. It is especially important to know how consumers feel about the ads delivered to their mobile phones.

Although some extant literature reported positive attitudes toward advertising, studies have found that consumers generally have negative attitudes toward ads (Zanot, 2009). However, Internet advertising seems to generate positive consumer attitudes. This is because Internet advertising is often thought of as informative and entertaining. Given the difference between consumer responses to general advertising and to advertising over the Internet, it is unclear how consumers feel about advertising messages on their mobile phones.

Despite the proliferation of mobile advertising campaigns, as well the glory and attention paid to it, there is insufficient empirical studies concerning the effectiveness of mobile advertising and the factors contributing to its success (Leppaniemi & Karjaluoto, 2005; Bamba & Barnes, 2007). This research aims to fill the gap, specifically in the Nigeria context. This study surveys the attitudes of consumers concerning consistent, unsolicited mobile adverts.

Research Questions:

The study is driven by the following research questions:

1. What are the reactions of consumers of telecommunication services to unsolicited bulk messages sent by telecommunication companies?
2. How can telecommunication companies better manage the dispersion of bulk unsolicited messages to consumers of telecommunication services?
3. How receptive is mobile advertising to telecommunication service consumers?

Literature Review: Brackett and Carr (2011) observed that "informativeness", entertainment, irritation and credibility are perceived as crucial factors to the effectiveness of web advertising. Based on Barckett and Carr's study, Tsang, Ho and Liang (2004) verified the effect of perceived informativeness, entertainment, irritation and credibility on consumers' attitudes towards mobile advertising. Their study revealed that entertainment

and credibility, rather than informativeness and irritation, affect attitudes of consumers toward mobile advertising.

David (2006) did a similar study using a Chinese sample to examine the effect of entertainment, irritation, informativeness, credibility, and personalization on consumer attitudes toward wireless advertising. He found out that irritation is not a factor that affects consumer attitudes toward wireless advertising. Jong and Lee (2007) got a slightly different conclusion from the previous studies. They proposed seven factors that may affect consumer attitudes toward mobile advertising, including mobility/convenience, fashion, information, entertainment/relaxation, functional service, multimedia service, and sociality. However, only convenience and multimedia service showed a significant effect in the empirical study.

When worldwide studies are analyzed, Tsang et al (2004) have stated that fun and informative SMS advertisements from a credible sender have positive impact on consumer attitudes and behaviors. On the other hand, irritating content of the advertisement would yield a negative impact.

Okozaki (2004) has asserted that there are two important attitudes towards mobile advertising. These are perceived informativeness-amusingness and perceived annoyingness. According to Okozaki, while the perceived informativeness-amusingness have positive effect on attitudes towards mobile advertisements, perceived annoyingness have negative effect on attitudes towards mobile advertisements. In a study to determine consumer attitudes towards mobile advertising, Enpocket (2006) notes that consumers generally perceive advertisement messages aimed at their self-needs in a better way.

Okozaki, Katsura and Nishiyama (2007) have asserted that trust directly and positively affects attitudes towards mobile advertising. The findings of their study support the fact that the effect of trust towards mobile advertising is meaningful and strong. Carroll et. al (2007) stated that factors such as the content of the message, consent, the control of service providers over sent message, dispatch time and frequency of the messages were crucial to acceptance of mobile advertising.

In their study, Drossos, Giaglis, Lekakos, Kokkinaki and Stavraki (2007) noted that incentive, interaction, location/time and source of advertisement are the factors which influence consumers' attitude and purchase behaviors. The results of the study shows that these factors need to be further emphasized in order to augment the effectiveness of SMS advertising.

In another study, Hanley and Becker (2008) stressed that college students mostly do not favor receiving SMS advertisement, but are keen to read about advertisements regarding monetary incentives. Xu, Lino and Li. (2008) insisted that the amusingness, credibility and intimacy features of mobile advertisements have fundamental impact on consumers' attitudes, while Waldt, Rebello and Brown (2009) believed that mobile advertising should

have features like consent, incentive, award and informativeness in order to achieve success.

Research Design: The researchers surveyed the attitudes of consumers of telecommunication services towards unsolicited SMS used by telecommunication companies as means of mobile marketing. The instrument adopted in collecting survey data was the questionnaire. Copies of questionnaires were administered to undergraduate students of two institutes of higher learning: a private university, Wesley University, Ondo and a public university, Federal University of Technology, Akure. The sample size of two hundred (200) students was selected through convenience sampling.

Data Presentation and Analysis:

Table-1: Demographic information of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	126	63.0
Male	74	37.0
Total	**200**	**100**

Table-2: Distribution of the Respondents according to their Age

level of Study	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16 – 20	11	5.5
21-25	66	33
26-30	72	36
31- 35	48	24
Above 36yrs	3	1.5
Total	**200**	**100**

Table-1 reveals the distribution of the gender of the respondents: 126(63%) are female while 74 (37%) are male. This indicates that majority of the respondents are female.

Table-2 above reveals the age distribution of the respondents; eleven(11) respondents showing 5.5 percent are from the age range of 16-20years, 66 signifying 33 percent are between 21-25years, 72 indicating 36 percent are between 26-30 years, 48 constituting 24 percent are between 31- 35years while 3 respondents which represent 1.5 percent are above 36years old.

What are the reactions of consumers of telecommunication services to unsolicited bulk messages sent by telecommunication companies?

Table-3: Reactions of consumers of telecommunication services to unsolicited bulk messages

Sl. No.	ITEMS	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	It provides essential information for me.	28	14	36	18	72	36	64	32
2	It is educative.	32	16	41	20.5	46	23	31	15.5
3	I find the messages entertaining	19	9.5	26	13	81	40.5	74	37
4	It provides opportunity for lottery	18	9	31	15.5	86	43	65	32.5
5	It is informative and interesting	22	11	38	19	98	49	42	21
6	It offers job opportunity.	27	13.5	39	19.5	91	45.5	43	21.5

SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree,   D- Disagree, SD- strongly Disagree

Table-3 above shows the reactions of telecommunication service consumers to the unsolicited bulk messages doled out by telecommunication companies. The table indicates that majority of the respondents disagreed that unsolicited bulk messages sent by telecommunication companies provide essential information to them. This means the information received were not essential to the respondents. Furthermore, majority of the respondents disagreed that messages in the unsolicited SMS are educative. This indicates that information received by the respondents were not educative. Also, majority of the respondents disagreed that the SMS information they received from their network providers were entertaining. To the respondents, unsolicited SMS messages sent by telecommunication companies are not entertaining, educative and informative to the respondents.

A majority of the respondents disagreed that the SMS information received from their network providers provide lottery opportunities. Further, majority of the respondents say the SMSs do not provide job and career opportunities. One wonders the benefit of unsolicited SMS to telecommunication service consumers if it does not in any significant ways educate, entertain and inform and offer other positive benefits to respondents.

Table-4: Showing whether the respondents anticipate the SMS

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	19	9.5
No	181	90.5
Total	**200**	**100**

Table-4 shows that 181 (90.5%) of the respondents do not normally anticipate the bulk messages, while 19 (9.5%) respondents readily anticipate it. This statistics confirms the fact that majority of the respondents do not derive any benefit from unsolicited SMSs.

Table-5: Showing the frequency of mobile advertisements received per day

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-2 messages per day	43	21.5
3-4 messages per day	57	28.5
5-6 messages per day	79	39.5
Over 6 messages per day	21	10.5
Total	**200**	**100**

Table-5 shows that 136 (68%) of the total respondents, majority of whom are females, received between 3-6 messages per day from their telecommunication companies. We note that majority of respondent receive a heavy dose of unsolicited and unanticipated SMS every day as inferred from the statistics shown above. It is clear from the statistics above that unsolicited SMSs from telecommunication companies are irksome and do not serve the interest of majority of the respondents.

Research Question Two: How can telecommunication companies better manage the sending of bulk unsolicited messages to telecommunication service consumer?

Table-6: How telecommunication companies can manage unsolicited messages for effective advertising to their consumers

Sl. No.	ITEMS	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
11	Demographic structures of consumers should be used before sending messages to them	88	44	76	38	21	10.5	15	7.5
12	Consumers' attitudes should be recognized to know their target market before sending mobile Messages to them.	69	34.5	76	38	41	20.5	14	7
13	Personalizing mobile advertising would have an opportunity to accurately target certain groups of customers by speaking directly to their preferences	91	45.5	66	33	22	11	21	10.5
14	Bulk messages sent by telecommunication service to consumers should be entertaining, informative, credible and timeliness	81	40.5	102	61	9	4.5	8	4

15	Customers should be allowed to select type of information they needed before unsolicited messages are sent to them.	64	32	87	43.5	23	11.5	26	13

Table-6 above reveals how telecommunication companies can manage their unsolicited messages to their consumers for effectiveness. From the table above, 88 (44%) strongly agreed, 76 (38%), 21 agreed, (10.5%) disagreed while 15 (7.5%) strongly disagreed that demographic structures of consumers should be used before sending messages to them. Moreover, 76 (38%) agreed, 69 (38.5%) strongly agreed, 41(20.5%) disagreed while 14 (7%) strongly disagreed that consumers' attitudes should be recognized to know their target market before sending mobile messages to them. Nevertheless, 91(45.5%) strongly agreed, 66 (33%) agreed, 22 (11%) disagreed while 21 (10.5%) strongly disagreed that personalizing mobile advertising would have an opportunity to accurately target certain groups of customers by meeting directly to their preferences Also, 102 (61%) agreed, 81 (40.5%) strongly agreed while 9 (4.5%) disagreed and 8(4%) strongly disagreed that bulk messages sent by telecommunication service should be entertaining, informative, credible and timeliness. 87 (43.5%) agreed, 64 (32%) strongly agreed, 26 (13%) strongly disagreed while 23 (11.5%) disagreed that customers should be allowed to select type of information they needed before unsolicited messages are sent to them.

From the statistics above, respondents believe that unsolicited SMS, as a form of online advertising will be effective if the following are considered: first, telecommunication services companies should carried out demographic data base of the consumers, identify their interest, preferences as well as individual choices before sending unsolicited SMS. Second, unsolicited SMS messages should be entertaining, informative and credible.

Research Question Three: How receptive is mobile advertising to telecommunication service consumers?

Table-7: Decision taken after receiving a mobile advertising message

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ignore it completely	66	33
Read it occasionally	57	28.5
Read it after accumulating too many of them	26	13
Read it when I get time	32	16
Read it right away	19	9.5
Total	**200**	**100**

Table-7 shows the decision taken after receiving a mobile advertising message; a number of 66 respondents (33%) ignore the unsolicited messages completely, 57 (28.5%) read it occasionally, 32 (16%) read it when they have time, 26 (13%) read them after accumulation, while 19 (9.5%) read it immediately. Therefore, it means 168 (84%) of the

respondents are not inclined to pay considerable amount of time to unsolicited SMS messages.

Table-8: Reaction to unsolicited advertising message

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I delete it anytime I receive the bulk SMS	86	43
I am always duly informed	31	15.5
I like it when I receive the bulk SMS	21	10.5
I hate it when I come across the unsolicited bulk SMS	62	31
Total	**200**	**100**

From Table-8 above, 86 (43%) respondents delete unsolicited SMS anytime it is received, 62(31%) respondents indicated that unsolicited SMS induce a sense of hatred, 31(10.5%) respondents like it, while 31(15.5%) respondents declared that they were informed by the SMS from their network providers.

Table-9: Showing the believability and trust of mobile advertising message

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	57	28.5
No	143	71.5
Total	**200**	**100**

Table-9 above shows the level of credibility of unsolicited messages. A total number of 143 (71.5%) did not believe and trust the mobile advertising message the telecommunication companies sent to them, while 57 (28.5%) believe and trust them. The revelation of these statistics indicates that the use of bulk unsolicited messages as means for mobile marketing may not be fruitful.

Findings and Discussion: The study surveyed consumers' perception on mobile advertising (Bulk SMS) from two hundred (200) students from WUSTO and FUTA (private and public higher institutions respectively in Nigeria). Data were collected through questionnaire and analyzed with the use of simple percentage. Findings showed that consumers have negative and unpleasant perceptions on unsolicited mobile advertising messages they received, because the information in the advertisements were not essential to them. Further revelation indicated that telecommunication services companies should carry out adequate research to garner demographic and psychographic information about their target consumers in order to construct effective mobile advertisement messages. As indicated from this study, an effective mobile advertisement must recognize the interest of the target consumers and must be educative, entertaining and informative.

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