



**A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF DND SERVICE 2442  
SHORT CODE IN EFFECTIVE TELECOMS CONSUMER  
COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Telecommunications, which is a transmission of signals over long distances for the purpose of sharing information is considered today as a vital engine of economic growth and an essential infrastructure that promotes the development of other sectors such as agriculture, education, industry, health, banking, defense, transportation and tourism. Communication technology as a matter of fact as evidenced globally, is a major component in the new era of globalization, transforming the world to a knowledge driven economy, and a connected world.

The impact of the Communications Sector has been succinctly felt in Nigeria as it has globally. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) as the Telecoms Regulator in Nigeria has guided the growth of the Sector from less than 400,000 phones lines in year 2000, to 205,252,058 active lines by September 2020. Along the way, the Consumer has remained King and a primary Stakeholder in the Commission's discharge of her mandate of ubiquitous and affordable Telecommunications Services for all in Nigeria. In addition, the Nigerian Communications (NCA) Act 2003 in Section 1(g), mandates the Commission to "Protect the rights and interest of service providers and consumers within Nigeria:" and Sector 7(1) focuses on Consumer Protection and Quality of Service<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission has various channels through which it relates to the Consumers such as The Consumer Outreach Programmes (COP); The Consumer Town Hall Meetings (CTM); Monitoring Telecoms providers helplines daily; Conducting of bi-annual nationwide surveys on Consumer satisfaction; Provision of Second Level Support to Consumers who have called their Service Providers but have their issues either unresolved or unsatisfactorily resolved; Monitoring of NCC outsourced contact center; and Coordinating the Industry Consumer Advisory Forum (ICAF). In addition, it has provided various options with which Consumers can complaint directly to the Commission about any service problem, namely, through the Commission's Consumer Portal email address, the Twitter handle, the Facebook Page, the Dedicated Toll free number, by sending in letters and SMS to the Commission, and by intervening in Dispute Resolutions between the Operators and the Consumers.

It can be said that the NCC has worked assiduously towards the protection of the Consumers in the Telecommunication Industry. However, notwithstanding the initiatives listed above and the above Regulatory efforts, Consumers still grapple with various occasioned challenges in their use of mobile services, and Consumer complaints increased with the major complaints being unacceptable Service Quality by the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in the following areas: Billing issues; Value Added Services

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://www.ncc.gov.ng/accessible/documents/128-nigerian-communications-act-2003/file>

issues; SMS issues, Call set-up, Data Services issues, SIM issues, recharge card issues amongst others. Unsolicited text messages was deemed one of the major issues and main area of complaint amongst the vast majority of Consumers.

Due to serious complaints of unsolicited text messages by the Consumers the Nigerian Communications Commission as a foremost Regulator, after various efforts at mitigating the problem, issued a Direction to the Mobile Network Operators with effect from July 1, 2016, to activate the “DO NOT DISTURB” facility which gives Subscribers the freedom to choose to receive or not to receive Promotional messages from the various networks and other telemarketers through their phones. With this Direction, the Operators were mandated to dedicate a common Short Code (2442) which will provide Subscribers control to reject all promotional SMS and calls (Full DND), or from only select categories of telemarketers (partial DND).

The purpose of this Research is to study the impact of DND service ‘2442’ short code in effective telecoms consumer complaints management. The Research showed that complaints related to DND service ‘2442’ short code in effective telecoms consumer management has drastically reduced since the inception of DND service ‘2442’ as follows:

1. There was a 96.6% decline in the number of complaints about unsolicited text messages from 2017 to 2019.
2. The percentage of resolved DND complaints within 72 hours went from 84%, 75% and 100% resolution in 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively.
3. Since the inception of DND there has been an increase in the total number of subscribers to the service. There are currently 448,985 and 22,038,864 representing 305% and 250% for partial and full DND respectively.

The Research also highlighted the key challenges that pose a threat to the full effectiveness of the DND implementation in Nigeria these include:

1. The lack of flexibility in the Opt-in and Opt-out options of the DND which prevents MNOs from alerting their Subscribers of new products and services in case they might wish to amend their status.
2. Inadequate awareness of the DND service by Consumers in the rural areas.
3. The DND service does not cater for Nigerians who do not speak English, or for those with accessibility challenges due to disability.

In general, the introduction of DND service ‘2442’ has positively impacted the curbing of the menace of unsolicited text messages and has therefore resulted in a drastic reduction in Telecoms Consumers Complaints.

Conclusively, to ensure the gains of reduction in the Telecoms Consumer Complaints, the following are recommended:

1. The Commission should champion the enforcement of 2442 short code by all MNOs.
2. As Consumer tastes and lifestyles change, the Communication should once a year, permit the MNOs to remind Consumers on the available Sectors for which they have promotional data, in case Consumers might wish to adjust their DND status.
3. There should be additional effort in raising awareness of DND to Telecoms Subscribers in rural areas, using the most appropriate method.
4. As the additional review enjoyed by MNOs is of importance for Business Continuity, the Commission can encourage them to broadcast promotional materials for their clients on their official website.
5. All the Commission's information concerning DND in either audio, print or electronic formats should also be made available in accessible formats for the 20 Million Nigerians living with disability.
6. A large proportion of the Nigerian population would be unable to use DND due to language limitations as complaints can only be lodged in English, which is disadvantageous to people in rural area as these ones find it very hard to communicate in English. As well as having these materials in the major local languages, the Commission could also consider developing a free low data App where all the major information about the Commission and Regulatory propaganda is posted in various local languages.
7. The Commission should develop a FAQ explaining what unsolicited commercial communications are all about, the risks/implications of using them, including how to opt out of them especially where they are accruing subscription costs.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 Telecommunications in Nigeria

Telecommunications is the transmission of signals over long distances for the purpose of sharing information. It is a vital engine of economic growth and an essential infrastructure that promotes the development of other sectors such as agriculture, education, industry, health, banking, defence, transportation and tourism (*Hassan et al 2009*)<sup>2</sup>.

Nigeria's telecommunication history takes its roots from the colonial era in 1886 when telegraphic submarine cable lines were laid in 1886, by the British firm, Cable & Wireless Ltd, connecting Lagos to London. This led to the installation of phone lines, connecting the famed commercial hub to Jebba, Ilorin, Calabar, Ibadan and other parts of the country. It is worthy of note that the establishment of telephone lines aided other forms of communication in Nigeria like the radio, television, and internet (*Joseph, 2019*)<sup>3</sup>.

Communication technology as a matter of fact is evidently a major component of the new era of globalization. This is because knowledge of economic success elsewhere in the world could be a powerful incentive for positive change. Furthermore, telecommunication networks not only promote global information exchange, but also put citizens in touch with each other, their media and their Government institutions. They also provide valuable feedback where it is needed (*Thompson and Garbacz 2007*)<sup>4</sup>. Advancement in telecommunications technology is indeed one of the driving forces of globalization and the rapid growth of the world's economy. Evidently, developments in Satellite, optical fibre, mobile technology, the Internet and the World Wide Web have greatly improved global communications and facilitated the exchange of information between different peoples of the world. Technological innovations especially in telecommunication have also reduced communications costs and facilitated the globalization of production and markets (*Pun-Lee and Shiu 2010*)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Hassan, Omowunmi et al. 2009. "Evaluation of Nigeria's Telecommunication Policy." *Journal of Mobile Communication* 3 (1): 1 – 7.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Olaoluwa, (2019) "Then and now: Nigeria's telecommunication history." Retrieved from <https://nairametrics.com/2019/10/02/then-and-now-nigerias-telecommunication-history/>

<sup>4</sup> Thompson, G. Herbert and Garbacz, Christopher. (2007). "Mobile, fixed line and Internet Service Effects on Global Productive Efficiency."

<sup>5</sup> Pun-Lee, Lam and Shiu, Alice. 2010. "Economic Growth, Telecommunication Development and Productivity Growth of the Telecommunication Sector: Evidence from Around the World." *Telecommunication Policy* 34: 185 – 199.

It is self-evident that over the past few decades, ICT has succeeded in transforming the world. Its potential for reducing poverty and fostering growth especially in developing countries have also increased rapidly. Whereas mobile telephones provide market links for farmers and entrepreneurs, the Internet as well as meeting these needs, also delivers vital knowledge to schools and hospitals, even as computers improve public and private services while increasing productivity and participation. In fact, by connecting people and places, ICT has played a vital role in national, regional and global development. It also holds enormous promise for the future (*The World Bank, 2006*)<sup>6</sup>.

## 1.2 Telecommunications Regulatory Agency on Consumer Protection in Nigeria

The impact of the Communications Sector has been succinctly felt in Nigeria as it has globally. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) as the Telecoms Regulator in Nigeria has guided the growth of the Sector from less than 400,000 phones lines in year 2000, to over 205,252,058<sup>7</sup> active lines by September 2020. Along the way, the Consumer has remained King and a primary Stakeholder in the Commission's discharge of her mandate of ubiquitous and affordable Telecommunications Services for all in Nigeria.

The National Communications Act 2003, in Section 1(g), states that one of the Commission's mandate is to "Protect the rights and interest of service providers and consumers within Nigeria". In addition, Sector 7(1) focuses on Consumer Protection and Quality of Service<sup>8</sup>. These show the mandate of the NCC includes the protection of the interest of all classes of Consumers of telecoms services, which include the Telecommunications companies also<sup>9</sup>. As a result, the concern of the NCC is to ensure Consumer satisfaction.

In furtherance of their mandate, the Nigerian Communications Commission established the Consumer Affairs Bureau, charged with the responsibility of protecting, informing and educating the Nigerian Telecommunications customers.<sup>10</sup> Through this Body, the Commission has organized various conferences, fora, seminars and the monthly Telecoms Consumers Parliament, a novel regulatory initiative that earned the Nigerian Government and Commission commendations from International

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<sup>6</sup> The World Bank. (2006). Information and Communications for Development 2006: Global Trends and Policies.

<sup>7</sup> Available at <https://www.ncc.gov.ng/statistics-reports/industry-overview>

<sup>8</sup> Available at <https://www.ncc.gov.ng/accessible/documents/128-nigerian-communications-act-2003/file>

<sup>9</sup> The various Subscribers of telecommunications services who are also Stakeholders to be satisfied include the Government, Consumers, the Media, and the International Community, among others.

<sup>10</sup> Available at <http://consumer.ncc.gov.ng/>



Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) professionals and groups across the globe (Okom, 2018)<sup>11</sup>.

Some other NCC-led noteworthy initiatives targeted at meeting Consumer needs include:

- The Consumer Outreach Programmes (COP);
- The Consumer Town Hall Meetings (CTM);
- Conducting research and investigations into topical issues/complaints;
- Monitoring Telecoms providers spread of customer care centers and quality of service delivery;
- Monitoring Telecoms providers helplines daily;
- Conducting of bi-annual nationwide surveys on Consumer satisfaction to ascertain Consumer perception of services rendered;
- Conducting annual review of the regulation and Individual Consumer codes of practice submitted by all NCC licenses;
- Provision of Second Level Support to Consumers who have called their Service Providers but have their issues either unresolved or unsatisfactorily resolved;
- Monitoring of NCC outsourced contact center;
- Coordinating the Industry Consumer Advisory Forum (ICAF);
- Support and participation with Consumer Advocacy Groups on specific groups or issues such as ICT provisioning for Challenged groups and Child Online protection;
- Provision of Consumer-centric information in various mediums eg, leaflets, pamphlets, radio jingles, etc to keep consumers aware of their Telecoms Rights and how to contact the NCC<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, the Commission has created a dedicated Consumer website<sup>13</sup>, which can be linked through the Commission's website. On the Consumer Bureau website, it lists the various ways in which consumers can reach the Commission to lodge any complaints or seek redress. This has helped to create awareness of the rights of Consumers and the regulations of service providers in the resolution of their problems and concerns.

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. M. P. Okom, 2018. "The Impact of the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency on Consumer Protection in Nigeria" .IJSRM Volume 06 Issue 07 July 2018

<sup>12</sup> Available at <http://consumer.ncc.gov.ng/about-us/>

<sup>13</sup> Available at <http://consumer.ncc.gov.ng/>

The NCC in the discharge of her duties, responsibilities and mandate, must ensure that the Consumers of telecom services continue to enjoy their expected services, and ensure that the Operators are equipped to provide those services. It is imperative for the Commission to perform this role in a manner that engenders balance and fairness. In accessing the performance of the Industry Regulator therefore, it is pertinent to appreciate the various dimension of its role in order to have an objective consideration of this impact.

Notwithstanding the deregulation of the industry and its attendant consequences, telecommunications services providers have often been accused of delivering poor services to subscribers in Nigeria<sup>14</sup>. The Nigerian Communications Commission through its various Consumer portals, recorded 271,112 complaints from January 2015 till July 2019<sup>15</sup> of which 95 per cent has been successfully resolved. The NCC continually monitors the level of resolution of each and every Consumer query to ensure that telecoms service delivery is improved and to protect Consumers right and ensure they get value for their money.

### 1.3 Complaints Management by NCC<sup>16</sup>

Complaints from Consumers are given high priority in the Commission through various means:

- Written, SMS, letters
- Email: [consumerportal@ncc.gov.ng](mailto:consumerportal@ncc.gov.ng)
- Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/ngcomcommission>
- Facebook:  
<http://www.facebook.com/nigerian.communications.commission>
- Calls to our Toll free line 0800-CALLNCC (0800-2255-622)
- Dispute Resolutions between the Operators and the consumer.

Consumer satisfaction is key to sustainable telecommunications industry. Effective monitoring and enforcement are essential in meeting telecoms consumers' expectations. With the toll free lines, web portal, face book, twitter, email, text messages, and consumer watch magazine, an unsatisfied consumer can reach the Commission to escalate complaints for poor services and experiences.

### 1.4 The Major Consumer Complaints by Telecoms Subscribers

It can be said that the NCC has worked assiduously towards the protection of the Consumers in the Telecommunication Industry. However, notwithstanding the initiatives listed above and the above Regulatory efforts,

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. M. P. Okom, 2018. "The Impact of the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency on Consumer Protection in Nigeria" .IJSRM Volume 06 Issue 07 July 2018

<sup>15</sup> Available at <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/347715-ncc-records-271-112-complaints-in-four-years.html>

<sup>16</sup> Available at <https://consumer.ncc.gov.ng/complaints-management/>

Consumers still grapple with various occasioned challenges in their use of mobile services, and Consumer complaints increased with the major complaints being unacceptable Service Quality by the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in the following areas: Billing issues; Value Added Services issues; SMS issues, Call set-up, Data Services issues, SIM issues, recharge card issues amongst others. Unsolicited text messages were deemed one of the major issues and main area of complaint amongst the vast majority of Consumers.<sup>17</sup>

From our analysis of data on the various Consumer Complaints received, most complaints received were regarding billing issues, value added services issues, SMS issues, call set-up, data services issues, SIM issues, recharge card issues among others. However, the receipt of unsolicited text messages was listed amongst the major complaints the vast majority of Consumers complained about.<sup>18</sup>

At the inception of GSM operations in Nigeria in 2001, subscribers were treated as kings. At the time, subscribers received Short Message Service (SMS), otherwise known as text messages from Telecoms Operators, only when the Operators wanted to pass vital information such as information on network failures in some parts of the country and when they would be fixed. Subscribers were also sent SMS on new coverage areas, especially when operators expanded services to new areas. Information on systems maintenance/upgrade and the period of maintenance, which were usually sent to subscribers at midnights, were also communicated via SMS. These SMS were received without complaints because they were informative.

But over the years, as the use of Telecommunications services for delivery of Business services increased, Operators on behalf of their business clients, began to send out broadcast bulk SMS to millions of subscribers on their networks. Most of the current messages were no longer informative. Instead, Consumers received unsolicited promotional SMS broadcast across networks with subscribers sometimes receiving up to 12 or 20 SMS in a day<sup>19</sup>, which not only overloaded their phone storage capacity, but constituted a constant drain/nuisance. (*Emma, 2016*)<sup>20</sup>.

In March 2016, the Federal Public Complaints Commissioner in charge of Lagos State Mr. Funso Olukoga has called for support on the part of

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<sup>17</sup> <sup>17</sup> Dr. M. P. Okom, 2018. "The Impact of the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency on Consumer Protection in Nigeria" .IJSRM Volume 06 Issue 07 July 2018

<sup>18</sup> Available at <http://consumer.ncc.gov.ng/complaints-reports/>

<sup>19</sup> Available at <https://dailytrust.com/the-nuisance-of-unsolicited-sms-and-voice-calls>

<sup>20</sup> Emma Okonji, (2016) "Nigeria: Curbing the Menace of Unsolicited Texts", *This Day*, 21 July.

Nigerians for the Bill in the Federal House of Representatives to discourage unsolicited text messages by sanctioning any GSM service provider sending unsolicited SMS to subscribers<sup>21</sup>. In the first quarter of 2016 alone, NCC received a total of 2,325 complaints on unwanted and disturbing telemarketing, and a total of 4,304 complaints<sup>22</sup> on unsolicited marketing in 9 months.

### 1.5 Introduction of DND Service ‘2442’ In Nigeria

Following complaints of unsolicited text messages by the Consumers, the Nigerian Communications Commission continually engaged the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) on the need to address this trend. As a final solution and in line with international standards, the Commission issued a DO NOT DISTURB (DND) direction to the MNOs in Nigeria.

As a resolution to the constant menace of unsolicited messages, the Commission introduced two major initiatives as part of measures to empower Consumer choice in service delivery and acceptance. These are the Do-Not-Disturb (DND) 2442 Short Code, and the 622 Toll-Free Line.

1. The DND 2442 Short Code is used by Consumers to determine ahead what messages or calls they can receive on their phones.
2. The 622 Toll-Free line managed by the NCC was initiated to sure improvement in service delivery by providing Consumers with a toll free number where they can air their grievances or make complaints.

So far, 21 million Subscribers had signed up for the Do Not Disturb (DND) initiative and the Commission has continued to create more awareness on it through various outreach programmes and other stakeholder engagement fora. Consumers can call the 622 number to escalate their unresolved complaints to their service providers for effective resolution through the Commission’s intervention. The Commission had commenced aggressive enforcement of compulsory compliance with the NCC’s Code of Corporate Governance for Telecommunications Industry<sup>23</sup>

Effective 1 July 2016, all Operators in Nigeria activated the DO NOT DISTURB facility on their platforms, thereby giving Subscribers the freedom to choose what messages to receive from their networks. With this Direction the Operators have been mandated to dedicate a common Short Code (2442) which will enable Subscribers take informed decisions on which of the broad

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<sup>21</sup> Available at <https://guardian.ng/features/public-complaints-commissioner-backs-bill-against-unsolicited-text-messages/>

<sup>22</sup> Available at <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/11/ncc-receives-4304-complaints-unsolicited-telemarketing-9-months/>

<sup>23</sup> Available at <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/347715-ncc-records-271-112-complaints-in-four-years.html>

range of telecoms related services they wish to be informed about, or to subscribe to<sup>24</sup>.

Taking cognizance of the broad range of services which include: Banking/Insurance/ Financial Products, Real Estate, Education, Health, Consumer Goods and Automobiles, Communication/ Broadcasting/ Entertainment/ IT, Tourism and leisure, Sports, Religion (Christianity, Islam, others), the Commission directed the Operators to give the necessary instructions and clarifications that will enable subscribers subscribe to a particular service/services /none at all, using either A Full DND or a Partial DND on the dedicated 2442 short code number, where Subscribers have the power to pick and choose from a bouquet of services for which they wish to be kept abreast about. This Direction does not affect personal messages as they are the private communication of Subscribers. (*"NCC enforces 2442 "Do Not Disturb" Shortcode", 2016*)<sup>25</sup>.

### 1.5.1 Definition of Terms

#### **What is DND?**

DND stands for Do-Not-Disturb. DND service as mandated by the NCC enables mobile subscribers to opt out of marketing/promotional messages of which bulk SMS is classified as one. Hence, mobile numbers that have been added on the DND list by their owners are unable to receive bulk SMS. This can be either a bar of bulk messages from all industries (Full DND), or only from select categories of telemarketers (partial DND)<sup>26</sup>.

#### **What is a DND list?**

A DND list is mobile numbers of a list of Subscribers managed by the Operators, who choose not to receive any promotional messages or in some cases, transactional types of messages<sup>27</sup>.

#### **What is a DND number?**

As explained in the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Regulations, if a person registers his or her number in DND then they will not receive any kind of promotional or marketing SMS/calls and hence the number becomes a DND number<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Available at

[https://www.ncc.gov.ng/thecommunicator/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1363:ncc-enforces-2442-qdo-not-disturbq-shortcode&catid=25&Itemid=179](https://www.ncc.gov.ng/thecommunicator/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1363:ncc-enforces-2442-qdo-not-disturbq-shortcode&catid=25&Itemid=179)

<sup>25</sup> "NCC enforces 2442 "Do Not Disturb" Shortcode", (2016). Retrieved from [https://www.ncc.gov.ng/thecommunicator/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1363:ncc-enforces-2442-qdo-not-disturbq-shortcode&catid=25&Itemid=179](https://www.ncc.gov.ng/thecommunicator/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1363:ncc-enforces-2442-qdo-not-disturbq-shortcode&catid=25&Itemid=179)

<sup>26</sup> Available at <https://help.bulksmsnigeria.com/article/show/80223-what-is-dnd>

<sup>27</sup> .Dina Dessouky, 2019. "Do Not Disturb (DND) Lists: A Growing Challenge to Promotional SMS". Retrieved from <https://www.cequens.com/story-hub/do-not-disturb-dnd-lists-a-growing-challenge-to-promotional-sms>

<sup>28</sup> Available at <https://exotel.com/phone-number-dnd-location-operator-details/>

## 1.6 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this Research is to study the impact of DND service ‘2442’ short code in effective telecoms consumer complaints management in Nigeria

## 1.7 Aims and Objectives of Study

- a. To determine the impact of DND service ‘2442’ in effective telecoms consumer management.
- b. To identify the major consumer complaints in relation to DND service ‘2442’.
- c. To identify the total number of DND service ‘2442’ short code subscribers.
- d. To determine the effectiveness of DND service in consumer complaints management.
- e. To know the level of awareness of DND service.

## 1.8 Research Questions

This Research study aims to highlight the impact of DND service ‘2442’ on effective telecoms consumer complaints management in Nigeria and will seek to answer the following questions:

- a. Do consumers still have complaints related to unsolicited text messages?
- b. Are complaints related to DND service ‘2442’ always resolved and how long does it take for complaints to be resolved by the Telcos?
- c. What is the total number of activations of DND service ‘2442’, is there an increase since inception?
- d. What is the total number of DND service ‘2442’ subscribers as compared to that of mobile active lines subscribers?

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 Literature Review

#### 2.1 Definitions of Short Code

**Short codes**, or **short numbers**, are short digit sequences, significantly shorter than telephone numbers, that are used to address messages in the Multimedia Messaging System (MMS) and short message service (SMS) systems of mobile network operators. In addition to messaging, they may be used in abbreviated dialing (Neufeld, 2008)<sup>29</sup>.

Short codes are designed to be easier to read and remember than telephone numbers. Short codes are unique to each operator at the technological level. Even so, providers generally have agreements to avoid overlaps (Neufeld, 2008). A Short Code becomes a “Common Short Code” (CSC) when the same code is activated across multiple mobile phone networks, which greatly extends its reach to many more mobile phone customers (*"TXT Splash"*, 2017)<sup>30</sup>.

According to the NCC’s Guidelines on Short Code administration in Nigeria<sup>31</sup>, the Common Short Codes has its unique characteristics:

- While normal telephone numbers form a prefix code number, numeral used as telephone numbers acts simultaneously as the prefix of another.
- On a land line phone, one cannot use the short code 12345, since one could not dial the number 1 234 567 8901 or any number that shared the prefix 12345, but on a mobile phone there is no such ambiguity.
- The Short Codes function through the End Users, Carriers, Connection, Application Providers and Contents Providers.
- End Users are people or an entity that uses Short Codes for Communication; the carriers provide the Network infrastructure for the delivery of messages between end users and Connection Aggregators.
- Connection Aggregators provide connectivity between Carrier Networks and Application with Application Providers provide the technology platform for service application and Content Providers often license content Application Providers to end users.

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<sup>29</sup> Neufeld, Evan. "Common Short Codes: Cracking The Mobile Marketing Code" (PDF). Retrieved 2014-01-08.

<sup>30</sup> "TXT Splash". Txt.ca. Retrieved 2011-10-17.

<sup>31</sup> "NCC: Guidelined on Short Code operation in Nigeria", (2011). Retrieved From <https://www.ncc.gov.ng/docman-main/legal-regulatory/guidelines/141-guidelines-on-shortcode-operation-in-nigeria/file>

In some countries use Dedicated Short Codes, rather than the Common Shared Short Code. In Nigeria, the Regulator mandates the use of a Dedicated Short Code number 2442<sup>32</sup>, for use by all Operators.

### 2.1.1 Types and Uses of Short Codes

Short Codes are categorized by the type of service for which they are used. There are three categories of short codes:

1. **Type A** is designated for emergency service codes and other public services and Callers must be able to call these codes at any time from any and all networks and without charge.
2. **Type B** is for use as short codes, accessible from any network (“off-net”). All licensed service providers must ensure accessibility of these short codes from their networks.
3. **Type C** is for use as "on-net" codes for the purpose of accessing the services of a single licensed service provider on that provider's own network. Where more than one value added Service provider offers the service each network may select the appropriate call destination.

### 2.1.2 Short Codes and the Provision of Value Added Services

Short codes are most often utilized by various businesses and organisations that have a need for customer communications.<sup>33</sup> Businesses that don't or haven't started using short codes typically use a single long phone number to send over hundred bulk business. Because this medium puts business messages at risk of being marked as spam, organisations prefer the use of dedicated Short Codes. According to Wikipedia, Short codes are widely used for value-added services such as charity donations, mobile services, ordering ringtones, and television program voting. Messages sent to a short code can be billed at a higher rate than a standard SMS and may even be subscribed to a customer as a recurring monthly bill until the user texts, for example, the word "STOP" to terminate the service<sup>34</sup>.

SMS Marketing is one of the most valuable ways to increase sales for your business. One of the backbones of any SMS marketing campaign is SMS short codes<sup>35</sup>. This is because SMS Marketing aids the following:

- **Brand Recognition:** Just as consumer comes to recognize a brand's website address, or toll-free phone number, so will they with a brand's short code. Dedicated short codes provide complete exclusivity of the short code number.

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<sup>32</sup> “What is a short code and what are the benefits?”. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.cm.com/en-za/blog/what-is-a-short-code-and-what-are-the-benefits/>

<sup>33</sup> “What is a short code and what are the benefits?”. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.cm.com/en-za/blog/what-is-a-short-code-and-what-are-the-benefits/>

<sup>34</sup> Short Code- Wikipedia. 2020. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short\\_code](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_code)

<sup>35</sup> “SMS Short Codes – What Every Business Needs to Know”. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.tatango.com/blog/sms-short-codes-what-every-business-needs-to-know/>



- **Brand Security:** Dedicated short codes allow brands the ability to control the entire consumer experience from end to end. Dedicated codes ensure the consumer's mobile messaging experience is consistent with brand expectations.
- **Keyword Exclusivity:** With a dedicated short code, brands are free to use any imaginable SMS keyword, allowing for maximum creativity, and functionality.
- **Activity Control:** Dedicated short codes allow brands to have complete control of how their short code is used. Control in this instance is critical for any national brand.
- **Database Portability:** Customers come to know and expect your brand's messages on a specific number. It's important for brands to own that number in the case of a migration to another SMS provider.
- **Scalability:** Messaging speed is critical in SMS marketing. Dedicated short codes allow your brand to have direct access to wireless carriers<sup>36</sup>

### 2.1.3 Corporate Benefits of Short Codes

- Short Codes are the foundation of mobile marketing.
- They allow consumers to interact with media outlets, brands, retailers, governments and all kinds of other organizations via text messaging.
- A Short Code often spells a word or brand name.
- Short Codes add interactivity with your market to almost any marketing campaign.
- They help target your campaign by delivering to you an audience that has specifically asked to receive your messages.
- Some general guidelines that will help ensure a Short Code campaign is successful are they must be for a clearly defined goal to introduce a new product or for a contest; the SMS must be interactive to engage 2 way participation; There must be an Immediacy to the SMS for a current need, e.g. to vote in a contest; and finally, people must be able to choose to opt in or opt out.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.2 Use of Do Not Disturb Service across various Countries

In the past few years, the use of DND service increased in many countries and their Telecoms Regulatory Body have instructed the MNOs to apply it. Some of these countries include: India, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia,

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<sup>36</sup> "SMS Short Codes – What Every Business Needs to Know". (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.tatango.com/blog/sms-short-codes-what-every-business-needs-to-know/>

<sup>37</sup> "TXT Splash". Txt.ca. Retrieved 2011-10-17.

and Nigeria. Consequently, it became a hindrance to businesses who use promotional SMS as a main method to reach their clients (Dina, 2019)<sup>38</sup>.

### **India**

In India, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has created a NDNC Filter i.e. National Do Not Call Registry which is fully run by the Indian Government. The main purpose for creation of NDNC is to prevent unwanted Marketing SMS and calls from Telemarketers. If a subscriber does not want to receive any promotional SMS or calls from any company, you can add your number in the NDNC registry. To add a number in NDNC list a subscriber needs to send a SMS to 1909. Instantly an SMS is received for registration in NDNC list. It may take up to 2-3 days to activate it and all Operators have a common code<sup>39</sup>.

### **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

In the UAE, subscribers are given provision to choose to opt out from receiving any marketing SMS. Precise which is an App, provides the Unsubscribe platform to all its customers with a help of a short code (7726) or via a portal service. Apart from this customers can also opt out directly with either of their two relevant Telecoms Operators; Etisalat or DU. Subscribers can block or receive unsolicited SMS by sending a message to 7726. To know the name of all Senders whose messages were blocked for your number, Subscribers send a text message “GET” to “7726”. SMS to 7726 is free, takes 1-3 working days to activate and the number is common to all Operators<sup>40</sup>.

### **Saudi Arabia**

DND list is regulated by the Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC). Subscribers have the option of adding their number into specific Operator’s DND list by using the mobile application, calling the support center or by sending an SMS to a short code. Based on the MNO, subscribers send messages to either Short Code number 900, 959 or 60445. In Saudi Arabia, Operators have different codes from one another and usually takes 1-2 working days for activation<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Dina Dessouky, 2019. “Do Not Disturb (DND) Lists: A Growing Challenge to Promotional SMS”. Retrieved from <https://www.cequens.com/story-hub/do-not-disturb-dnd-lists-a-growing-challenge-to-promotional-sms>

<sup>39</sup> Available at <https://ndnc.net>

<sup>40</sup> Available at <https://www.tobeprecisesms.com/blog/faq/how-does-dnd-unsubscribe-list-work-in-uae/>

<sup>41</sup> Available at <https://www.tobeprecisesms.com/blog/faq/how-does-dnd-unsubscribe-list-work-in-saudi-arabia-ksa/>

## **Qatar**

Only one MNO, Ooredoo has implemented DND option to its customers. Customers send the keyword “UNSUB” to 92600 short code or by calling the call center directly. Delivery report for these DND listed numbers will come as undelivered, but no specific reason will be mentioned. It takes 2-4 working days for activations<sup>42</sup>.

### **2.3 Do Not Disturb (DND) Lists: A Growing Challenge to Corporate Marketing**

Part of the needs of the Telecoms providers is to promote their businesses as well as other businesses who pay them to use their huge subscriber base to market their products, goods and services. This is because Promotional SMS is a cost effective and efficient marketing tool that helps to promote a Company, service or products direct to the recipients’ mobile phone. It is also an effective and cost effective way to keep customers informed of discounts, sales promotions and offers to help increase sales and maintain customer interaction, as these campaigns can be time based, relevant to the recipient, delivered quickly and easy to read.

They provide benefits such as Cost effectiveness, Enhances marketing campaigns, Increases brand awareness, Encourages customer loyalty and engagement, Improves customer communications.

Consequently, for almost the past decade in Nigeria, promotional SMS has become one of the main effective marketing tools for businesses to advertise, communicate, and reach their target customers.

However, with the new directive on DND, Operators as mandated by the NCC, must activate DND, providing options to their Subscribers for their acceptance of promotional messages delivered from third party services<sup>43</sup>. As a result, Brands who want to send out promotional messages to their Customers or potential Customers, must first obtain permission from those recipients through the SMS opt-in text message, a web-based signup page, or even a physical signature through their Mobile service provider. Where Customers are uninterested in starting or continuing the receipt of SMS marketing, they have the right to use the STOP opt-out option.”<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Available at [https://www.tobeprecisesms.com/downloads/SMS\\_Rules\\_MENA\\_EP.pdf](https://www.tobeprecisesms.com/downloads/SMS_Rules_MENA_EP.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Dina Dessouky, 2019. “Do Not Disturb (DND) Lists: A Growing Challenge to Promotional SMS”. Retrieved from <https://www.cequens.com/story-hub/do-not-disturb-dnd-lists-a-growing-challenge-to-promotional-sms>

<sup>44</sup> “The Difference Between Promotional and Transactional Messages”. (2017) Retrieved from <https://www.mobivity.com/2017/04/the-difference-between-promotional-and-transactional-messages>

## 2.4 Advantages of DND to Consumers <sup>45</sup>

1. DND puts your mobile number on the Do Not Disturb (DND) Register. This means your phone number will not be available as paid database to the companies.
2. It allows you to register your DND preferences as to what kind of numbers do you want to block or whether you want to block all kind of commercial communication.
3. DND allows you to change the DND preferences in case you wish. This means you can unblock some categories of numbers, for instance, from banks while other numbers will continue to be blocked.
4. In case you still happen to receive any unsolicited call (s), you can lodge a complaint as directed by the Commission.
5. After you file a complaint, you can check the status and receive updates on the action taken (if any) on the complaints.

## 2.5 Challenges of DND Implementation in Nigeria

So far, 21 million Subscribers had signed up for the Do Not Disturb (DND) initiative and the Commission has continued to create more awareness on it through various outreach programmes and other stakeholder engagement fora. Consumers can call the 622 number to escalate their unresolved complaints to their service providers for effective resolution through the Commission's intervention.

Nonetheless these interventions, there are still certain challenges challenges that pose a threat to the full effectiveness of the DND implementation in Nigeria and they include:

1. The lack of flexibility in the Opt-in and Opt-out options of the DND which prevents MNOs from alerting their Subscribers of new products and services in case they might wish to amend their status.
2. Inadequate awareness of the DND service by Consumers in the rural areas.
3. The DND service does not cater for Nigerians who do not speak English, or for those with accessibility challenges due to disability.
4. Continued Consumer complaints of unsolicited messages. Although between February and April 2017, about 4 million telecom subscribers had activated the DND code on their phone, nonetheless some subscribers still complain of receiving unsolicited messages from

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<sup>45</sup> "Rules on Unsolicited Calls and SMS". Retrieved from <https://consumer.ncc.gov.ng/rules-on-unsolicited-calls-and-sms/>

service providers. In year 2016, a Federal High Court in Abuja imposed a ₦5 million fine on Airtel Nigeria after a subscriber<sup>46</sup>, filed a case against them for continuous disturbance through unsolicited text messages to his phone number. In year 2017, an MTN Nigeria subscriber<sup>47</sup>, filed a case against MTN for sharing his subscriber information with third party service providers. Despite MTN's claim that it did not disclose the subscriber's detail to third parties, the Court of Appeal held the ruling of the Federal High Court in Abuja and awarded him the sum of ₦3 million as damages. As a reaction to this, the Commission launched a toll-free number "622" where telecom customers can directly log complaints to the Commission.

As a foremost Regulator, the NCC has continued with the imposition of sanctions, education, and engagement with the Operators to ensure only Subscribers who give their full permission are sent bulk SMS.

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<sup>46</sup> Available at <https://techpoint.africa/2017/06/15/fight-unsolicited-messages/>

<sup>47</sup> Available at <https://techpoint.africa/2017/06/15/fight-unsolicited-messages/>

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

The Research design is a structure which guides the collection, execution and analysis of data. The Research design ensures that the Researcher ponders on each stage of the process. The nature of this Research is analytical. In analytical research “the Researcher has to use facts or information already available and analyze these in order to make a critical evaluation of the material” (Kumar, 2008)<sup>48</sup>.

#### 3.2 Research Methodology

(Leedy and Ormrod, 2001; Williams, 2011)<sup>49</sup> describe the Research methodology as the holistic steps a Researcher employ in embarking on a Research work (p. 14). In carrying out a research, the method adopted can either be quantitative method or qualitative. The quantitative method of research is used in this research. Therefore, a quantitative research method deals with quantifying and analysis variables in order to get results. It involves the utilization and analysis of numerical data using specific statistical techniques to answer questions like who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how. Expatiating on this definition, Aliaga, and Gunderson (2002)<sup>50</sup>, describes quantitative research methods as the explaining of an issue or phenomenon through gathering data in numerical form and analyzing with the aid of mathematical methods; in particular statistics. Going by the above definition, it could be deduced that the first thing a research tackles or deals with is explaining of an issue, be it qualitative or quantitative.

#### 3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

Secondary data will be used to analyze and carry out this research work. In this research a questionnaire has to be developed and given to Consumer Affairs Bureau Department for data. Answers obtained will be used to compare to get all the relevant data needed for this research and also to help in analyzing and answering the research questions. Below is the questionnaire:

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<sup>48</sup> Kumar, R. (2008) “Research Methodology” APH Publishing Corporation

<sup>49</sup> Leedy, P. & Ormrod, J. (2001). Practical research: Planning and design (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ:

<sup>50</sup> Aliaga, M. and Gunderson, B. (2002) Interactive Statistics. [Thousand Oaks]: Sage Publications.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What was the total number of complaints on unsolicited text messages in 2017?
2. What was the total number of complaints on unsolicited text messages in 2018?
3. What was the total number of complaints on unsolicited text messages in 2019?
4. What was the total number of partial and full DND service '2442' activations in 2017?
5. What was the total number of partial and full DND service '2442' activations in 2018?
6. What was the total number of partial and full DND service '2442' activations in 2019?
7. How many DND service '2442' complaints were resolved in 2017?
8. How many DND service '2442' complaints were resolved in 2018?
9. How many DND service '2442' complaints were resolved in 2019?
10. What was the average time taken to resolve DND service '2442' related complaints by the Telcos in 2017?
11. What was the average time taken to resolve DND service '2442' related complaints by the telos in 2018?
12. What was the average time taken to resolve DND service '2442' related complaints by the telecommunications companies in 2019?
13. How would you rate the level of telecoms consumer awareness on DND service '2442' within the last 3 years?
14. Kindly state any recent development that might be useful to the objectives of these study
15. What are the major current consumer complaints? Select Below:

Unsolicited SMS	SIM Issues	Billed for unsent SMS
Unable to send SMS	No network service coverage	Inability to recharge
Forceful data renewal	Arbitrary deduction of credit	Dropped calls

### 3.4 Research Questions

This Research study aims to highlight the impact of DND service '2442' on effective telecoms consumer complaints management in Nigeria and will seek to answer the following questions:

- e. Do consumers still have complaints related to unsolicited text messages?
- f. Are complaints related to DND service '2442' always resolved and how long does it take for complaints to be resolved by the Telcos?
- g. What is the total number of activations of DND service '2442', is there an increase since inception?
- h. What is the total number of DND service '2442' subscribers as compared to that of mobile active lines subscribers?



## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 Results and Findings

Following a Direction to the Telecommunications service providers in the country, the Operators, with effect from July 1, 2016, activated the DO NOT DISTURB facility which gives subscribers the freedom to choose what messages to receive from the various networks (*"NCC enforces 2442 "Do Not Disturb" Shortcode", 2016*)<sup>51</sup>.

**We would now review the level of success of the DND on managing consumer complaints with data received from the Consumer Affairs Bureau on the questionnaire below:**

**FEEDBACK ON DND SERVICE '2442'**

The Research and Development Department is conducting a research on the topic "A study on the impact of DND service '2442' short code in effective telecoms consumer complaints management" and consequently administer this questionnaire purposely for data collection. Kindly provide the appropriate data to the questions below. All information shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and shall be used for the purpose of this research only.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. What was the total number of complaints on unsolicited text messages in 2017?
2. What was the total number of complaints on unsolicited text messages in 2018?
3. What was the total number of complaints on unsolicited text messages in 2019?
4. What was the total number of partial and full DND service '2442' activations in 2017?  
Partial  Full
5. What was the total number of partial and full DND service '2442' activations in 2018?  
Partial  Full
6. What was the total number of partial and full DND service '2442' activations in 2019?  
Partial  Full

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<sup>51</sup> "NCC enforces 2442 "Do Not Disturb" Shortcode", (2016). Retrieved from [https://www.ncc.gov.ng/thecommunicator/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1363:ncc-enforces-2442-qdo-not-disturbq-shortcode&catid=25&Itemid=179](https://www.ncc.gov.ng/thecommunicator/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1363:ncc-enforces-2442-qdo-not-disturbq-shortcode&catid=25&Itemid=179)

7. How many DND service '2442' complaints were resolved in 2017?

62 2,157 1,816

8. How many DND service '2442' complaints were resolved in 2018?

27 971 727

9. How many DND service '2442' complaints were resolved in 2019?

3 74 74

10. What was the average time taken to resolve DND service '2442' related complaints by the telcos in 2017?

24hrs 48hrs 72hrs

11. What was the average time taken to resolve DND service '2442' related complaints by the telcos in 2018?

24hrs 48hrs 72hrs

12. What was the average time taken to resolve DND service '2442' related complaints by the telcos in 2019?

24hrs 48hrs 72hrs

13. How would you rate the level of telecoms consumer awareness on DND service '2442' within the last 3 years?

High Moderate Low

14. What are the major current consumer complaints?

Unsolicited SMS <input type="checkbox"/>	SIM Issues <input type="checkbox"/>	Billed for unsend SMS <input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to send SMS <input type="checkbox"/>	No network service coverage <input type="checkbox"/>	Inability to recharge <input type="checkbox"/>
Forceful data renewal <input type="checkbox"/>	Arbitrary deduction of credit <input type="checkbox"/>	Dropped calls <input type="checkbox"/>

✓ Billing  
✓ Poor network Service  
Data Service

✓ Unauthorized sim replacement

15. Please kindly state any recent development that might be useful to the objectives of these study

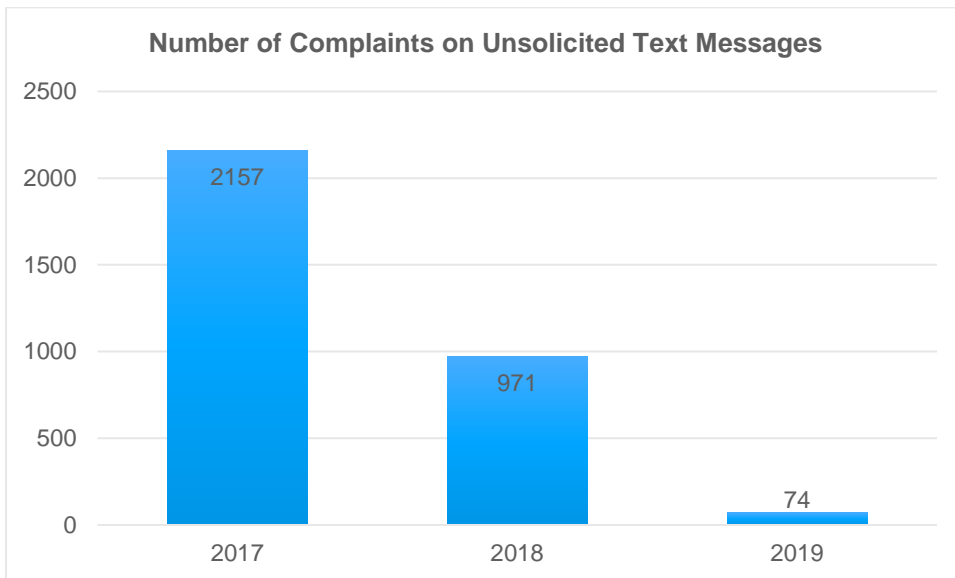
The Commission is in receipt of a request from organizations to bypass the DND facility for the purpose of authentication and verification of services (use of one-time password). Consequently, the Commission set up a committee to review the request and make recommendations to management in that regard.



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CamScanner

## 4.1 Data Analysis

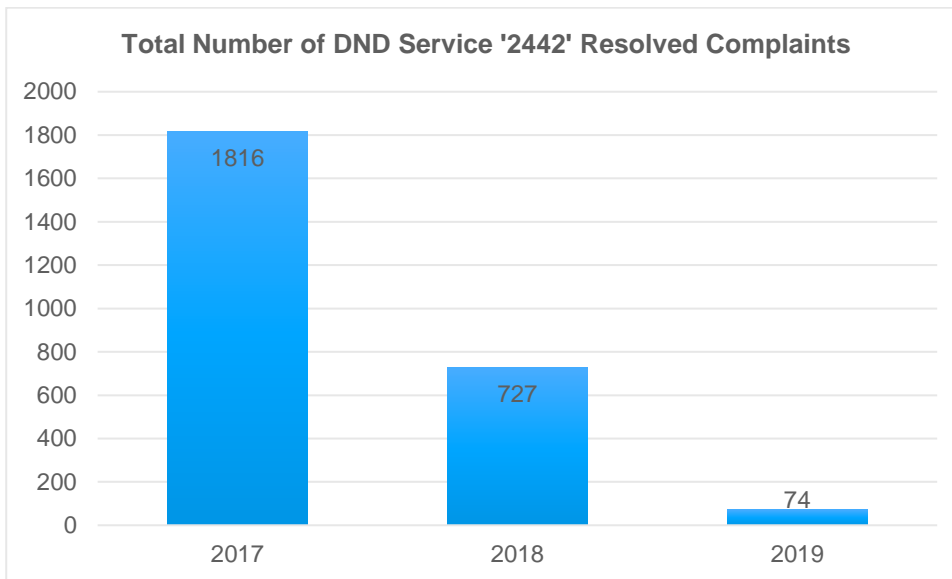
### 4.1.1 Research Question 1: Do Consumers still have complaints related to unsolicited text messages?



After the inception of DND service ‘2442’ short code there was a drastic decline of number of complaints received in respect to unsolicited text messages.

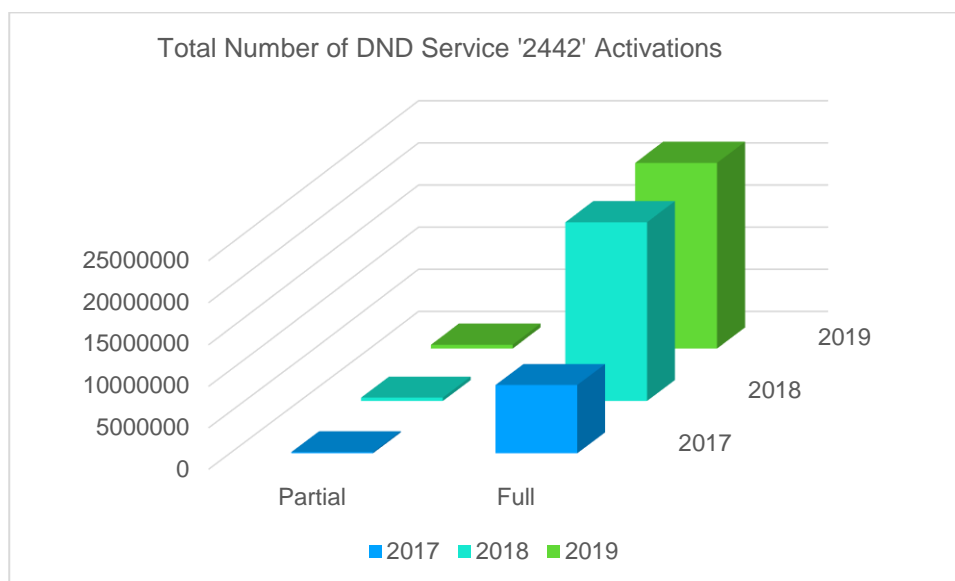
1. In the year 2017, a total number of 2,157 complaints were lodged. By the following year 2018, only 971 complaints were lodged, which was a 55% decrease from the total complaints of 2017, and represented only 45% of the total complaints lodged in 2017.
2. Year 2019 indicated a major decline in the number of complaints from 2,157 in year 2017 to only 74 in 2019. This figure represents just 3.4% of the total of 2017, and shows there was a reduction by 96.6% from 2017.
3. From the above Graph, it can be said that the number of complaints related to unsolicited text messages has drastically reduced and hence DND service ‘2442’ has really made an impact in resolving consumers complaints on unsolicited text messages.

#### 4.1.2 Research Question 2: Are complaints related to DND service '2442' always resolved and how long does it take for complaints to be resolved by the Telcos?



1. In the year 2017, of the total complaints of 2157, 1,816 complaints were resolved, indicating an 84% resolution rate.
2. Complaints were resolved by the MNOs within 72 hours of receipt of complaint.
3. In year 2018, of the total complaints of 971, 727 complaints were resolved within 72 hours, indicating 75% resolution rate.
4. In 2019, of the total complaints of 74, all 74 complaints were resolved, indicating a 100% resolution rate. In addition, complaints resolution time reduced from 72 hours to 48 hours in the resolution of all complaints.
5. We can therefore conclude that DND complaints are being resolved effectively and timely as our Research has shown 84%, 75% and 100% resolution rates, within a maximum of 72 hours in years 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively.

### 4.1.3 Research Question 3: What is the total number of activations of DND service '2442' In Nigeria, is there an increase since inception?

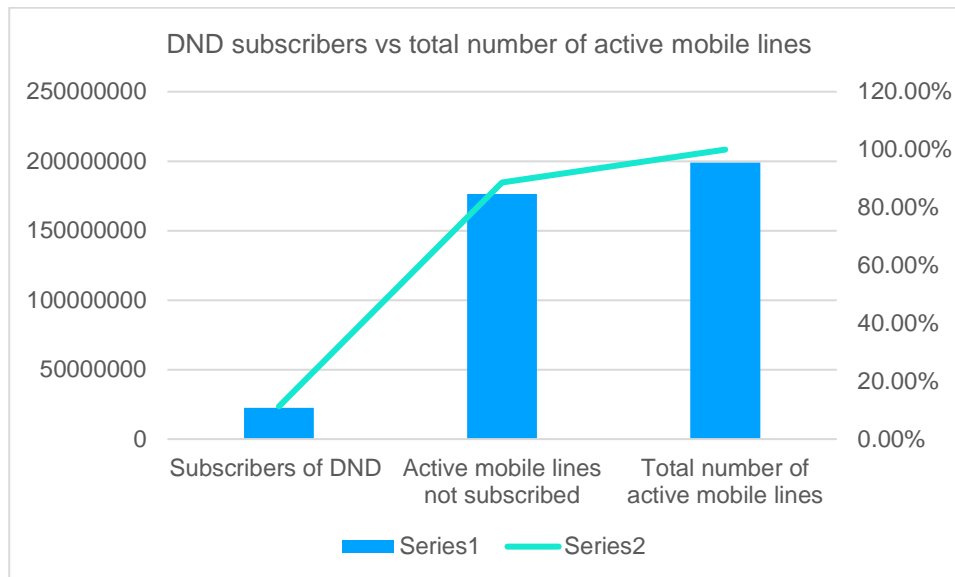


DND service '2442' has a partial activation and a full activation. The partial activation allows subscriber to choose the kind of message they wish to receive while the full activation blocks all unsolicited messages.

Since the inception of DND service '2442' it has been observed that there was an increase from year to year of the total number of subscribers to the service:

1. In year 2017 there were 132,100 and 8,230,670 subscribers for partial and full activations respectively.
2. In year 2018, there were 403,685 and 21,300,376 subscribers for partial and full activations respectively. There was a significant increase in total number of activations in year 2018, with an increase of 305% and 250% respectively from the previous year 2017.
3. In year 2019 there were 448,985 and 22,038,864 subscribers of partial and full activations respectively. It was also an additional increase from year 2018.
4. From the above figures it can be said that since the inception of DND service '2442' there has been an increase in the total number of DND uptake and Subscribers.

#### 4.1.4 Research Question 4: What is the total number of DND service '2442' subscribers as compared to that of mobile active lines subscribers?



1. Records indicate that a total of 22,487,849 subscribers have activated DND either fully or partially, a figure which accounts for about 11.3% of Nigeria's total active mobile lines subscribers ie 198,961,361 as at July, 2020 (NCC: Statistics and Report, 2020)<sup>52</sup>.
2. It can also be noted that 88.7% of active mobile line Subscribers are not activated on DND either fully or partially.
3. Exposure to unsolicited text messages by the Consumers declined drastically through the resultant activation of the Do-Not-Disturb (DND) Short Code 2442 facility by the subscribers.
4. Though, a voluntary service, a total of 22,487,849 Subscribers have now activated the DND service either fully or partially. As rightly stated by the Commission, Nigeria's telecoms sector recorded "impressive" statistics in 2019, despite the challenges confronting it (Stephen, 2020)<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> NCC: Statistics and Report, (2020). Retrived from <https://www.ncc.gov.ng/statistics-reports/subscriber-data>

<sup>53</sup> Stephen Charles kenechukwu, (2020) "22.3m Subscribers Decline SMS Adverts from Telcos", *The Cable*, 02 January.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 Conclusion

The complaints related to DND service '2442' short code in effective telecoms consumer management has drastically reduced since the inception of DND service '2442' and today, unsolicited text messages are no longer a menace to the consumers. Despite the fact that the total activations of the short code 2442 is 11.3% of the total active mobile lines, complaints are still relatively low. According to the data received from the Questionnaire, the major challenge facing the DND service '2442' short code is that the rate and level of telecoms consumer awareness within the last three years is relatively low especially in the rural area. Most people are not even aware of the DND service '2442' short code. The rural areas have a really high population and 99% of them are ignorant towards this services.

Total activations of DND service '2442' is still minimal as compared to number of mobile active lines. It is clear therefore that the DND service '2442' has really curbed the issues of complaints related to unsolicited text messages. Furthermore, it is indicative of the efforts by the MNOs to ensure collaboration with the Commission in adhering to the terms of the DND Direction, even though as business entities, the MNOs would have preferred to retain the sending of promotional SMS as it was a huge source of supplementary revenue as they provided marketing services for other businesses. Its financial impact therefore impacts both the books of the MNOs as well as other SMMEs in the Nigerian business place.

However, as Regulators, one of the main objectives of regulation is to ensure consumer satisfaction and the critical need to aim to balance the needs, rights and requests of various Stakeholders. In this case, the largest group of Stakeholders demanded the right to choose and as a foremost Regulator, the Commission introduced, mandated, monitored and is watching Subscribers reap the rewards of the Direction on Do Not Disturb.

Going forward as the DND albeit no longer a major source of complaint by Consumers, continues to be implemented, below are some recommendations the Commission can implement to ensure a win-win for all in the context of the 2442 Do Not Disturb Short code:

### 5.1 Recommendations to Management

1. The Commission should champion the enforcement of 2442 short code by all MNOs.
2. As Consumer tastes and lifestyles change, the Communication should once a year, permit the MNOs to remind Consumers on the available Sectors for which they have promotional data, in case Consumers might wish to adjust their DND status.



3. There should be additional effort in raising awareness of DND to Telecoms Subscribers in rural areas, using the most appropriate method.
4. As the additional review enjoyed by MNOs is importance for Business Continuity, the Commission can encourage them to broadcast promotional materials for their clients on their official website.
5. All the Commission's information concerning DND in either audio, print or electronic formats should also be made available in accessible formats for the 20 Million Nigerians living with disability.
6. A large proportion of the Nigerian population would be unable to use DND due to language limitations as complaints can only be lodged in English, which is disadvantageous to people in rural area as the people find it very hard to communicate in English. As well as having these materials in the major local languages, the Commission could also consider developing a free low data App where all the major information about the Commission and Regulatory propaganda is posted in various local languages.
7. The Commission should develop a FAQ explaining what unsolicited commercial communications are all about, the risks/implications of using them, including how to opt out of them especially where they are accruing subscription costs.

Although the problem of unsolicited calls and messages to Consumers have been relatively addressed, Consumers still grapple with other challenges of inaccurate billing, poor network service, unauthorized SIM replacement, data bandwidth depletion. However, as the Commission has been able to effectively address the earlier challenge, efforts are being made continually to find lasting solutions to the other Consumer complaints, and require the full and active participation and support of all Stakeholders in the value chain.

## CHAPTER 6

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