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CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE QUALITY PERFORMANCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Andy Fred Wali - andim4u@gmail.com
UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD, UK AND FEDERAL UNIVERSITY WUKARI NIGERIA
Len Tiu Wright -
UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD, UK
N. Gladson Nwokah -
RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, NIGERIA
Paul Reynolds -
UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

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KOZMINSKI UNIVERSITY

Customer Relationship Management and Service Quality Performance: a qualitative study

ABSTRACT

This study examined customer relationship management effectiveness and Service quality on international customers in a single University in the UK higher education sector. We adopted the qualitative research design with focus group interview approach. Focus group discussions were carried out with twelve purposively sample units of analysis from the case University. The study primary data was analysed using thematic template technique with Nvivo 10. The study found that the CRM programme of the case University is effective following the various students' oriented social and academic programs. Findings also showed that its CRM program influenced international students' satisfaction and positive advocacy behaviour. The study found six emerging themes for evaluating customer relationship management effectiveness in the higher education sector. Thus, recommended the need for strategic policy makers in the higher education sector to enhance investments on building stronger customer relationship management infrastructure.

Keywords: Keywords: CRM, Service Quality, Qualitative

Customer Relationship Management and Service Quality: a qualitative study

Andy Fred Wali[1]
Len Tiu Wright[2]
N. Gladson. Nwokah[3]
Paul Reynolds[4]
[1]Department of Strategy, Marketing & Economics
University of Huddersfield, UK and Federal University Wukari, Nigeria
All correspondence to: andim4u@gmail.com or a.f.wali@hud.ac.uk
[2&4]Department of Strategy, Marketing & Economics, University of Huddersfield, UK
l.t.wright@hud.ac.uk/p.l.reynolds.hud.ac.uk
[3]Department of Marketing, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined customer relationship management effectiveness and Service quality on international customers in a single University in the UK higher education sector. We adopted the qualitative research design with focus group interview approach. Focus group discussions were carried out with twelve purposively sample units of analysis from the case University. The study primary data was analysed using thematic template technique with Nvivo 10. The study found that the CRM programme of the case University is effective following the various students' oriented social and academic programs. Findings also showed that its CRM program influenced international students' satisfaction and positive advocacy behaviour. The study found six emerging themes for evaluating customer relationship management effectiveness in the higher education sector. Thus, recommended the need for strategic policy makers in the higher education sector to enhance investments on building stronger customer relationship management infrastructure.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Service Quality, Qualitative Study

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to evaluate the influence of customer relationship management effectiveness and service quality delivery on international students in a single UK University. The concept of customer relationship management is at present gaining attraction in firms across the world. Because businesses have come to terms with the opportunities inherent in the adoption and implementation of CRM initiative, these are evidenced in most organizations across the world. I.e. the establishment of divisions such as: customer experience, customer complaint, customer relations, customer value and advancement respectively. The UK higher education sector is at present experiencing huge international market patronage as against the trends in the past two decades; with international consumers taking advantage of its reputable 'English' education from virtually every continent of the world.British Universities as at the year 2000 hosted over 5,000 and by 2013 about 30,000 international students, with an average tuition per student at £7000 (UK Higher Education Academy, 2014). Therefore, it becomes germane for institutions to continually strategize in order to enjoy international students' loyalty and commitment. Several studies had examined the application of CRM initiatives in the higher education sector (Tapp et al. 2004; Seeman & O'Hara; 2006; Hill, 1995; Clewes, 2003; Wright & O'Neill, 2002). These studies examined CRM from an investment and input perspectives. However, there are a few reports in literature on the influence of customer relationship management and service quality on international students in the UKHE sector. Also, fewer studies had reported on CRM investment output in the UKHE sector using the qualitative focus group approach. This is thus the gaps which the study intends to fill in literature. More so, this study draws upon the customer relationship management behaviour theory which examines the systematic, interdependent and total interactions between firms and its customers Labus & Stone (2010). Consequently, this research adapts two constructs on CRM from Lawson-Body & Limayem (2004): understanding customer expectations and service personalization, whilst, customer satisfaction and customer advocacy behaviour drew upon Zeithaml et al. (1993). The justification behind the selection of these key constructs is that understanding customer expectations and service personalization were perceived to be critical in the relationship between the case University and its customers, whilst customer satisfaction and advocacy has been used extensively in literature to predict service quality. Finally, the theoretical contributions of this study will be the emerging themes, whilst exposing policy makers in the HE sector on possible best ways of improving their institutions CRM initiatives.

 Wali, Wright & Reynolds are members of the Global Advances in Marketing Branding and Innovation (GAMBI). The Business School, University of Huddersfield, UK.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Customer Relationship Management

Customer Relationship Management has been defined in different ways in the literature perhaps based on the definers' academic and professional backgrounds. Woodcock et al. (2001) defined Customer Relationship Management as a set of methodologies, technologies and e-commerce capabilities used by companies to manage customer relationship. CRM is the act of acquisition, analysis and use of knowledge about customers to sell more goods and services effectively and efficiently by providing profitable service for both the firm and its customers (Bose, 2002). CRM is a comprehensive marketing strategy of acquiring, retaining and partnering with selected customers to create superior value for the company and customers (Parvitiyar & Sheth, 2001). According to Swift (2001) CRM is an organizations approach to understanding and influencing customer behaviour through meaningful communication to improve customer retention, profitability, loyalty, satisfaction and customer acquisition. However, it can be deduced that these schools of CRM researchers believed in using CRM strategies in understanding customers' expectations so as to serve them satisfactorily. Croteau & Li (2003) described CRM as a customer oriented strategy targeted at creating and increasing customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer retention by offering specific, responsive and unique services to individual customer.

Understanding Customer Expectations

One of the primary goal of a firm is to understand its customers' needs and wants in order to provide targeted service, targeted satisfaction and targeted profit. Understanding Customer expectations in the higher education sector is higher germane; especially in the United Kingdom higher education sector that is currently experiencing high international market patronage. Knowing what customers expect is the first and the most crucial aspects of quality service delivery (Zeithaml et al. 1990: 22). Understanding customer expectations is a set of tactics and methods adopted by an organization to generate more knowledge on what the customer expects, based on their needs and wants with the aim of providing best service in order to win their loyalty (Szeinbach et al. 1997). Understanding customer expectations stresses the identification of core customer desires and availing those customers' products and services that will deliver expected satisfaction at a profit (Lawson-Body et al. 2004; Evans & Laskin, 1994).

Service Personalization

Service personalization can be defined as a market differentiation strategy targeted at meeting customers' demands based on their individual needs and wants for the purpose of keeping them satisfied at a profit (Wali & Opara, 2013). Also, service personalization enables a business to match the right product or service to the right customer for the right price, at the right time, with a view of giving each customer a unique consumption experience (Coner, 2003). Further, in the view of Kambil & Nunes (2001) they described service personalization as an approach used by organization in generating intelligent details of customers and analysing their characteristics in order to make recommendations for effective planning and effective service provision. Whilst Berg et al. (2001) in their opinion noted that personalization is a strategy designed and tailored towards addressing customer needs across all customer-interfacing departments such as sales, marketing, and customer service, etc. Another aspect of service personalization has to do with the distribution of customized mails or by customizing the business and customer's relationship (Lawson-Body & Limayem, 2004).

Service Quality: Customer Satisfaction and Customer Advocacy Behaviour

Service quality is perceived as mediator between the producer and its customers. It has received wide attention in literature in the past decades; recently scholars are of the opinion that Service quality should be defined from the consumers' perspectives rather than the firm's perspective (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1990; Hill, 1995). Service quality is a measure of service delivery against customers' expectations (Berry et al.1990 & 1985; Parasuraman et al. 1985; Gronroos, 1984; Hill, 1995). Customer satisfaction is very illusive to define and measure due to its subjective nature of experiences and its relativity. This is because if a sample from a pull of one thousand consumers on their perception of satisfaction may surprisingly generate one thousand divergent perceptions. Therefore, customer satisfaction can be defined as the customers intrinsic and extrinsic feeling of fulfilment derived from a provided product or services. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2010) customer satisfaction is described as the value the consumer enjoyed from consuming a product by specifically meeting his need and want. Customer advocate is a customer or group of customers who devote their time to preach to others about their favourite products and services with the aim of attracting prospects to patronize such product or services (Jacob, 2005). Further, Wali & Uduma (2014) described customer advocacy as an act carried out by an individual customer or group of

customers to preach the value embedded and derived from in a products based on their positive consumption experiences with the aim of wining new customers to its supplier.

Customer Relationship Management and Service Quality in Higher Education

The marketing concept holds that the problem of all business firms in an age of abundance is to develop customer loyalties and satisfaction, and the key to this problem is to focus on the customer's needs. Perhaps the short-run problem of business firms is to sell people on buying the existing products, but the long-run problem is clearly to create the products that people need; by recognizing that effective marketing requires to focus on consumer orientation instead of a product orientation (Kotler & Levy, 1968). Studies have found that employee's trained with requisite CRM skills perform their services efficiently and effectively by handling customers' demands and complaints which results in market retention and enhanced profitability. Also, Tapp et al. (2004) found that the use of direct and data base marketing strategy generated through CRM system have high chances of boosting the universities recruitment potentials. Further, it is found that the implementation of CRM using information technology software positively impact on students' satisfaction, loyalty and retention behaviours in line with their expectation (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006). This means that the adoption of CRM strategy in gaining students' insight can enable its service provider to deliver services that will specifically meet the expectations of customers. Also, another study found that customer relations and service personalisation strategy impact positively on customer loyalty, and leads to the creation of customer advocate (Lawson-Body & Limayem, 2004). However, potential customers are likely to hear about positive service experiences from consumers rather than negative experiences. Hill (1995) in his study found that there is a correlation between students' service expectation and satisfaction. He argued that there is need for Universities to identify the expectations of their prospects from the entry points all through to graduation. CRM system will provide students' with interactive touch points through pre-admission and post-admissions, registration, teaching evaluation and financial aid and it has shown to have impacted on students' satisfaction and loyalty (Grant & Anderson, 2002). Other studies had found that meeting service quality expectations as key customer needs have a positive impact on students' satisfaction (Clewes, 2003; Wright & O'Neill, 2002). Figure one is the theoretical framework that shows the perceived relationship between the two main constructs of the study.
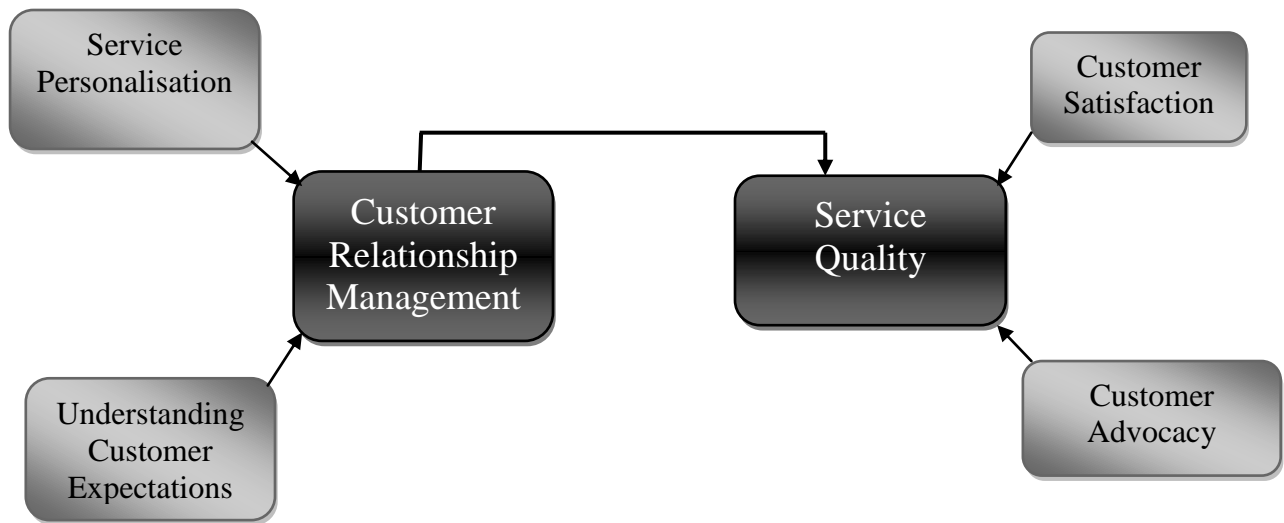
Figure 1: Model linking customer relationship management effectiveness and service quality
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Understanding Customer Expectations & Customer Satisfaction

Understanding customer expectations is the first step in delivering quality services. This is because services provided to the right customer and at the right time will tend to produce satisfaction. Whilst right services offered to the wrong customer will create dissatisfaction. Therefore, this study intends to answer the following questions: (1) Do the case University understand its International customers' expectations? (2) Has understanding customer's expectations influenced international customers' satisfaction?

Understanding Customer Expectations & Customer Advocacy Behaviour

When customers' expectations are identified by service providers' it means that the firm stands a better chance of serving its customers uniquely and satisfactorily and this portends some positive influence on its customers' advocacy intention. However, this study would proffer answers to this question: (1) has understanding customer expectations enabled quality of services delivery in the case University?

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Service Personalization, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Advocacy Behaviour

Every consumer enjoys to be served uniquely; thus service personalisation is an initiative adopted by firms to provide individualized or customized services to their customers which is aimed at inducing the feeling of respect and customer value. Further, it has the ability to create and deliver the desired level of intrinsic satisfaction in customers, as well as inducing the feeling of loyalty behaviours on consumers. Consequently, this paper will answer the under listed questions: (1) Do the case University adopt service personalization strategy in handling international customers'? (2) Does service personalization strategy enhance international customers' satisfaction? (3) Does service personalization strategy of the case University influence its international customer's advocacy behaviour?

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research design was used for this. Qualitative interviewing is an important research method for understanding individual participants values, attitudes, believes and experiences and opinions about certain phenomenon (Silverman, 2006: 114 cited in Short, 2013). The organization's unit of analysis was a single University in the North of Britain. Whilst the employees units of analysis were five key officers purposively selected from the international recruitment and marketing office, as well as seven international students' from the case University for the purposes of the focus group discussions. The rationale was that these employees' were the once directly responsible for international students issues and the selected students' were mostly heads of international students' societies. Further these participants' were selected because they possess the relevant experiences for the questions to be answered by the study (Brown & Lloyd, 2001).

Recruitment

Firstly, we contacted the student interviewees' via email to ask if they will be interested to be part of an interview discussion whose objective is to explore their service experiences as it affects the nature of customer relationship management practices of their University. After two days responses were received from the target students'. Secondly, the selected staffs were sent emails to inquire if they were willing to be part of a group interview on the CRM practices of the University. Five days later we received positive affirmation from the staff target respondents to participate in the study. Additionally,

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we introduced the purpose of the study to the interviewees' through emails, two days before the meeting date.

Data Collection and Analysis

Two main focus groups were conducted, the first group interview was with students' this was because we needed to gain the insight into their experiences since they were at the receiving end of this service and information gotten from the first group was used to interface with the second focus group with staff. The method of data collection was semi-structure interview, which consisted of a list of questions to enable the interviewer probe deeply into customers' and staff experiences regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The discussions were recorded using a recording device which enabled the researchers' to transcribe and analyse the data thereafter. The study analysed the interview data using Thematic Template Analysis Technique aided with Nvivo 10 in analysing interviewees' attributes. The first stage in the data analysis process was the transcription of the recorded interview discussions. That is to enable the researchers' carry out detailed analysis. The second stage was about data coding, thereafter we identified the emerging themes from the data. Subsequently, we defined and reported on the themes using interviewees' responses. The interviewees' validation method was used to validate the themes (Bryan, 2014 & 2012; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Mason, 1996).

DATA PRESENTATION, CODING TEMPLATE AND DEFINITION OF THEMES RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAHICS
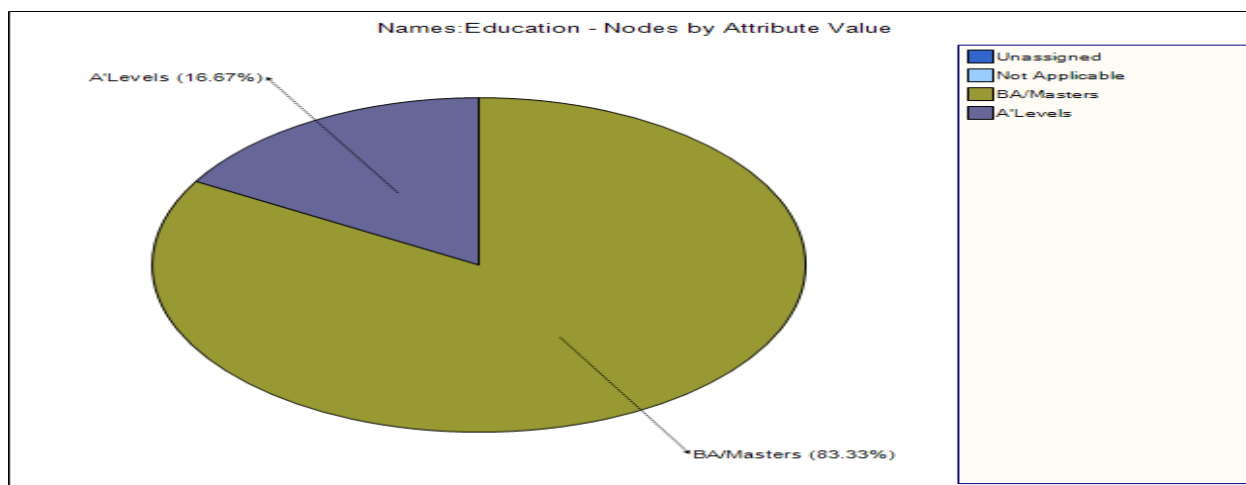

Figure 2: Nvivo 10 Analysis on respondents' educational
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Nvivo 10 result on figure two indicates that 83.33% of interviewees' were holders of Bachelor or Masters Degrees. While 16.67% were holders of A/Levels. This shows that a fewer numbers of the

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respondents were undergraduate international students' and majority were post graduate international student and staffs of the University. The implication of the interviewees' educational status to this study is that the interviewees' were enlightened and understood the questions we asked and proffered answers based on their experiences.
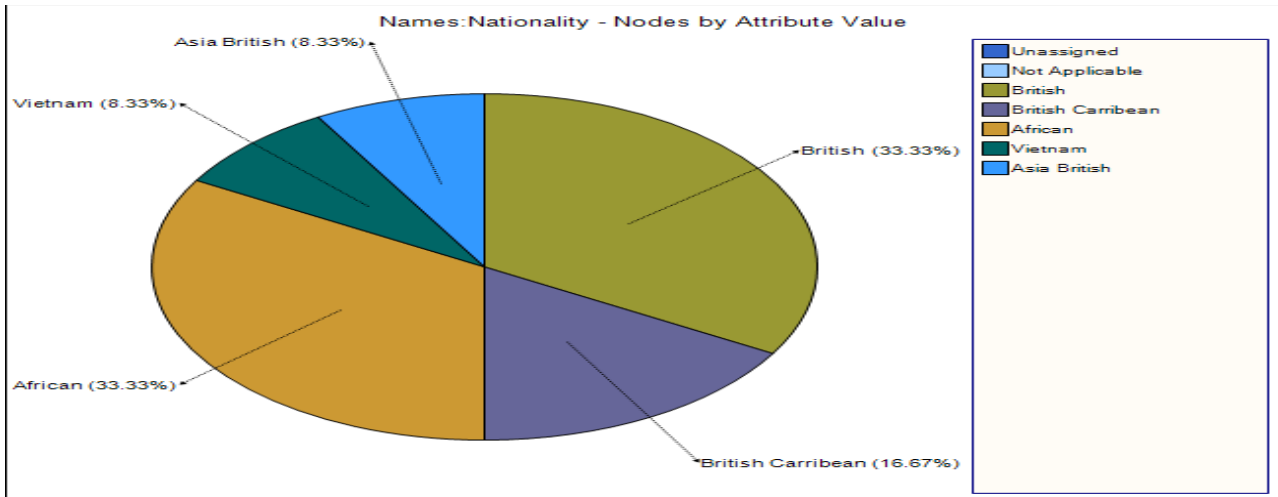

Figure 3: Nvivo 10 Analysis on respondents' nationality
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Result on figure three indicates that the international students' respondents were mainly nationals on Africans were 33.33%, Vietnamese were 8.33% and the Caribbean were 16.67%. While the staff respondents' were British citizens with 33.33% representation. This implies that the students' interviewees' represented international voices from Africa, Asia and North America.

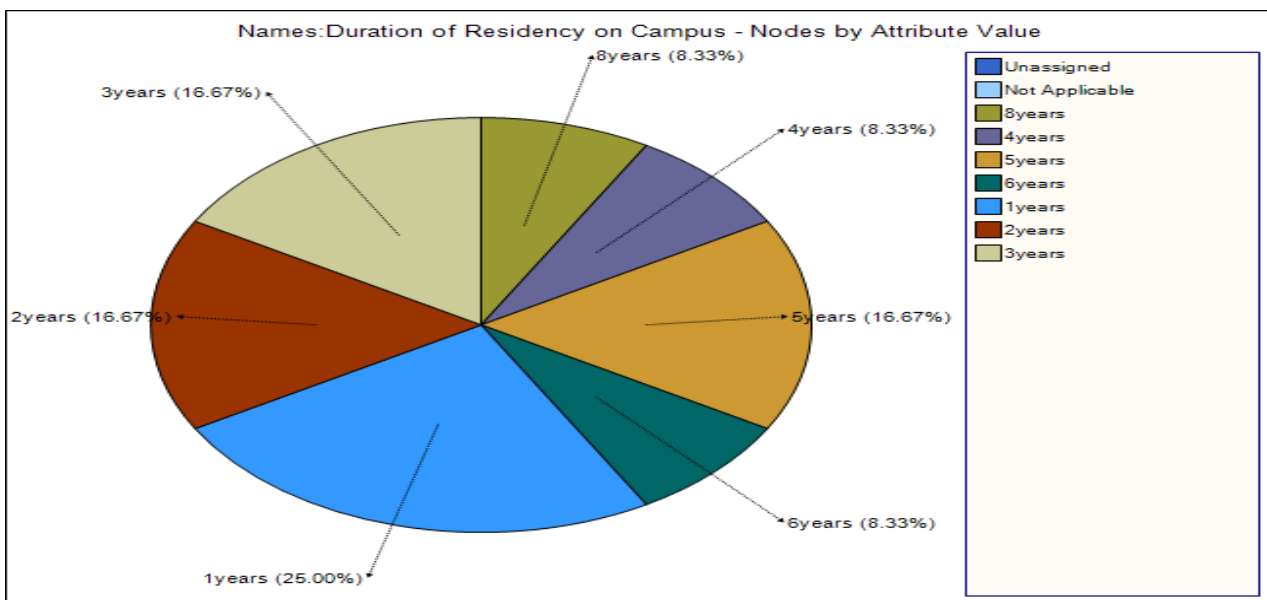Figure 4: Nvivo 10 Analysis on respondents' university residency
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

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Result on figure four indicate that majority of the interviewees had spent between 2-5years in the case University. This implies that they had acquired some level of experiences about the service offering of the University and were better positioned to comment on the research questions.
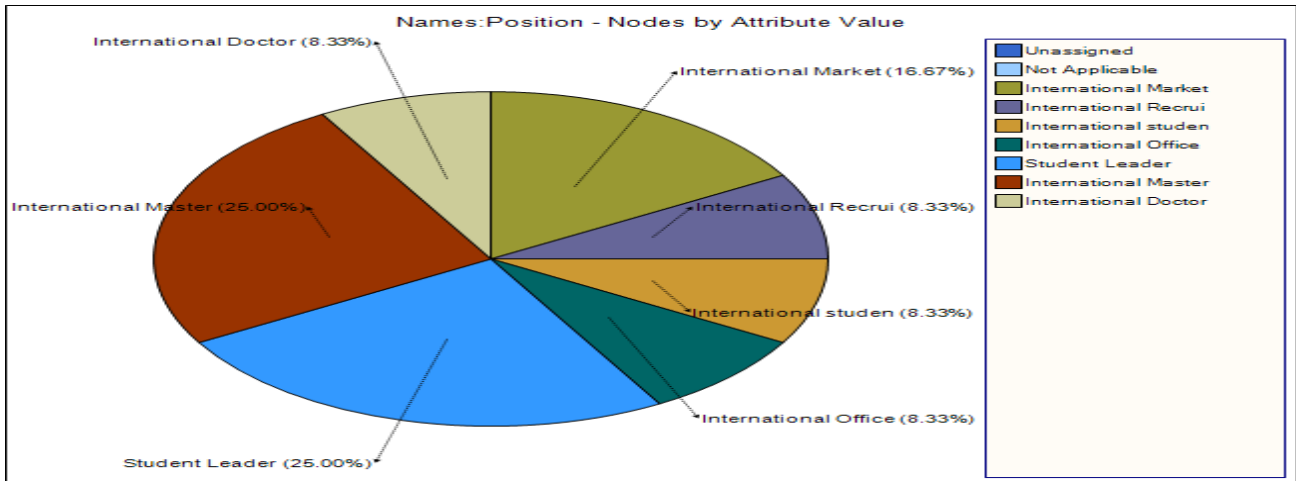

Figure 5: Nvivo 10 Analysis on respondents' position
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Figure five shows that most of the student respondents were international master's students and student leaders. Also, all staff respondents were from the international students' office. The implication is that responses from staff and students interviewees' were authoritarian opinions. Because the staffs interface daily with international students queries and students were on the receiving end.

Table 4: EMERGING THEMES

1 Customers' Experience Feedback 1.1 External Research links 1.2 Internal Research Framework 1.3 Students' Forum 1.4 Friendly Academic Environment	**2. Academic Referral** 2.1 Family and Friends Referrals 2.2 Institutional Referrals
3. Service Customization 3.1 Customised Service 3.2Timely Information **4. Economic Identity** 4.1 Joblessness 4.2 Living Cost	**5. Customer Relations** 5.1 Social and Cultural Activities **6. Academic Performance Reward** 6.1 Scholarship Award

Source: Qualitative Research Result (2015)

DEFINITION OF THEMES AND INTERVIEWEES' QUOTES

1 CUSTOMERS' EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK
The views of staff and students' on their experiences as customers and employees which has aided in the improvements of the quality of academic and social infrastructure

1.1 **External Research links**
Staff: We use the national international student's barometer the university subscribed to the survey is done every year just as international students' initiates an application and is repeated around April before they leave the University. These is a criteria covering academic, administration and quality of campus experience whilst they are here, from lecturers and lecture facilities aimed at getting feedbacks that will enable us to get a view on what is considered as our customer service.

Staff: In as much as the University gets feedbacks from the national student's barometer exercise, which takes the business process and putting up a standard competence. For example like through surveys.

Staff: Up to sixty Universities around the world are subscribed to this, so when you get your answers back, we extract the top ten priorities of our international students and make sure that this is reported in all our marketing data, and use them to match against other Universities.

1.2 Internal Research Framework
Staff: Based on the answers the students give us against based the hundreds of questions they answered which has to do with their experiences around the University. This is done two times a year in September and April, during the entering wave certain questions like how easy was your enrolment? How good was the joining instruction to get here for you? While at during [Easter] season in April, some second set of questions will be asked because such customers would have spent time within the University, like how can you rate your academic experience so far? How did you find the University facilities?

Staff: For example our students can say accommodation is of high priority, whereas in the world accommodation can be seen as top 20. Now we ask ourselves is it that we do not provide good and affordable accommodation as well as good information to our international students? Or is there something different about the country? Based on the data we generate we are able to improve our services to our international students' and other students' at large.

Staff: Just to let you know that it was through the feedbacks we got from internal students' survey we carried that we knew that our students building and sports complex had outlived its best, and so we decided to build a new structure to meet the needs of the students in this regards.

1.3 Students Forum
Staff: Also there are times meeting of course representatives and lecturers are held, international students' societies give us feedbacks too. All these are aimed at solving problems at the local level before it gets to the national level.

Student: Yes, we talk about issues that pertain to general students' welfare and not specifically international students' issues. The meetings were arranged by the Students' Union and not the University. Perhaps it was the University that commissioned the SU to call for those meetings.

Student: The students' opinions on their experiences. I think from time to time the university not just this university alone should have a forum where students will come and air their views and suggest where they should improve on. I think the university is not doing much to understand our needs as international students.

1.4 Friendly Academic Environment
Students: For instance, like in my course any module we do the lecturers don't only focus on Examples from the UK environment only, rather they relate it to other countries, I think they do this knowing that they have students from different parts of the world.

Student: I think academically some of our lecturers actually understand while some are worst. The good ones actually are ready to help and encourage and support us grow.

Student: In terms of academic needs they are doing very well, I say this because I have engaged my lecturers at different times and aftermaths they try to personally find out what I need from my course of pursuit and if I am really enjoying the program?

Student: "Also, they are doing relatively well in personal academic services".

2 ACADEMIC REFERRALS
These are the views of employees regarding the nature of service referrals the institution enjoys from current and past customers

2.1 Family and Friends Referrals
Staff: "Like we have situations where a father studied here and after graduation he returned to his home country and sends his other children to our University"

Staff: "Another example is that 3 staffs in one of the organization abroad just sent four of their children to this University this year for study".

Student: "In fact I heard about this University from my cousins' who graduated from this University that's why I came here"

Student: Yes, I will still talk about this University to my colleagues, families and friends back home in as much as the University has their weaknesses. Their strengths are higher and stronger than their weaknesses. I will always talk about this University positively to outsiders.

Student: Yes, I will talk good about the University to people always. In fact at the moment I have already spoken to friends and family in Nigeria about this University. Some are already processing their admission and papers for September 2014 and some are preparing for 2015.

2.2 Institutional Referrals
Staff: "But this referral work more in the small countries like Bahrain (Middle East) where we work with oil companies send us 5 to 8 students' and staff every year, because some of their staff had studied here"

3. SERVICE CUSTOMIZATION
Experiences of customers on the nature of personalised services offered which has enhanced their satisfaction and quality of services received.

3.1 Customised Service
Staff: If you have not accepted your offer from the University and it is observed that you have not complied after one month, the system writes you as say "Dear John" we have made an offer to you but you have not accepted the offer, what's the problem?

Student: Well I think when I have paper need, like letter or reference from my University they are ready to give me. The last time I requested for such letter to enable me travel I got it and even got more than I expected as well as other important information that will help me. Well I receive emails bearing my name on it with information.

3.2 Timely Information
Staff: "We relate with our customers (students) everyday through emails, targeted emails and brochures"

Student: Now as an international student there is some very important information which the University passes across to us which is very good through emails, I mean personal names on the emails and everything.

Student: I know they give us information on courses or rather workshop and seminars that are geared towards the development & growth of its international students.

Student: "Well I receive emails bearing my name on it with information".

Student: "Secondly, the University does send emails which bear my personal names on it for workshops & seminars"

4. ECONOMIC IDENTITY
Experiences of customers on their economic wellbeing and how it impacts on productivity

4.1 Joblessness
Student: "Whereas there are no jobs provided at least to support the students recoup"

Student: "Yes, there so called job targeted emails is just to fulfill all [righteousness]. Because, there is no commitment on the part of the University to fill these gaps"

Student: "Friends and cousin that are already processing their admission to come to this University by

September 2014. But I will tell them to be financially prepared and not to feel that there is any job to be provided by the University"

Student: "The University to partner with local employers and the community where this University is, to provide jobs even if they were menial job for its international students"

Student: "Also, provide menial jobs for international students so that we can survive".

4.2 Living Cost
Student: "Again in terms of accommodation, the cost is very high for international students"

Student: "If the Universities can consider the reduction of accommodation fees for its international students it will be really fine"

Student: "No, I cannot afford the University property that is why I am living outside the University Hostel, it is very expensive"

Student: Also, the University should reduce it accommodation fees as well as partner with independent landlord (house owners) to reduce rents for its students'. Another, way the University can handle the accommodation issues would be to reduce its accommodation fee in order to accommodate enough international students'. In that case the market for private property owners will fall drastically, just to help its students.

Student: The University can build different category of students hostels like rating them average, middle and high maybe differing in facility. International students and other students who wish to live in it will evaluate their pocket and see which one they can afford it will be fantastic rather than living outside. For example I live in a very expensive house and up the hill or better put on the mountain. Sometimes I wake up in the morning feeling so tied, and it's so cold I begin to think how to journey 45mins to class. But if I was living in the University property I will only walk a short distance to class.

5. CUSTOMER RELATIONS
This theme emphasises on the social and cultural experiences of the customers'

5.1 **Social and Cultural Activities**
Student: Yeah, I think that the int'l students' festival is actually cool, for me. Because this last one they organized in 2014. I came to understand that I am not alone and I love the fact that I am able to meet people from other country of the world, their culture and everything so nice. The fact that the University gives its int'l students' the chance to display what they have, who they are its very good.

Student: "Now I am a member of the University gym, they have modern equipment's but the quantity are not enough at all, there are exercise that everybody really want to partake in, but you need to take turns, the equipment's are modern but not enough".

Student: "However when it comes to other social activities far and wide I think the University is doing a good job; the University stand to appreciate every countries culture by recognizing every countries independence day, so long as such country have one student represented here".

Student: "They unite the world I will always rate them high for that".

Student: "The reputation of my University in the world, like sometimes I tell people about my University and they shout oh yeah that cultural friendly University"

6. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REWARD
Experiences of the customers' how the academic performance incentive provided by the institution has influenced their academic inputs as students'

6.1 Scholarship Award
Student: "There are some strategies the University adopt like scholarship award which favors some schools and not all, school here I mean like Business School, Engineering school etc."

Student: "Now I know that there is this policy here, that if you make distinction you will get a PhD scholarship, but it does not favor my own school. This has reduced my interest in pursuing certain grades in my modules"

Student: "The Vice Chancellor's scholarship award to students who graduate with First class or distinction has really made me to work award to earn the best of grades in my modules so I can benefit from it". Let me correct my colleague, the Vice Chancellors scholarship award is for grandaunts in every school and not particular to certain schools. I mean that is for your information.

An Addition
1. SATISFACTION
Student: Yeah, so far I am satisfied to the tune of 75% with the whole thing, because like I said earlier I cannot compare it to where I am coming from, I am enjoying the facilities am just okay and wishes they improve.

Student: "Yes I am satisfied but not 80% to 100% I can put it at 70% in terms of satisfying my expectations here".

Student: Well the university personal service strategy is good and has satisfied me but to the tune of 70%, off course the evaluation is not yet over. Let's keep watching and receiving their services till the end of my program"

Student: "In terms of satisfaction I am okay"

Student: "If I have any problem well on a scale of one to ten I will rate my satisfaction seven (7)".

Student: I am highly satisfied with the services of the University. For example: we have world class teaching and learning facilities here, the local and international social events which the school sponsors is so mouthwatering, I am just at home here. Also students' who performs well academically will have scholarships, I mean what else can I say?
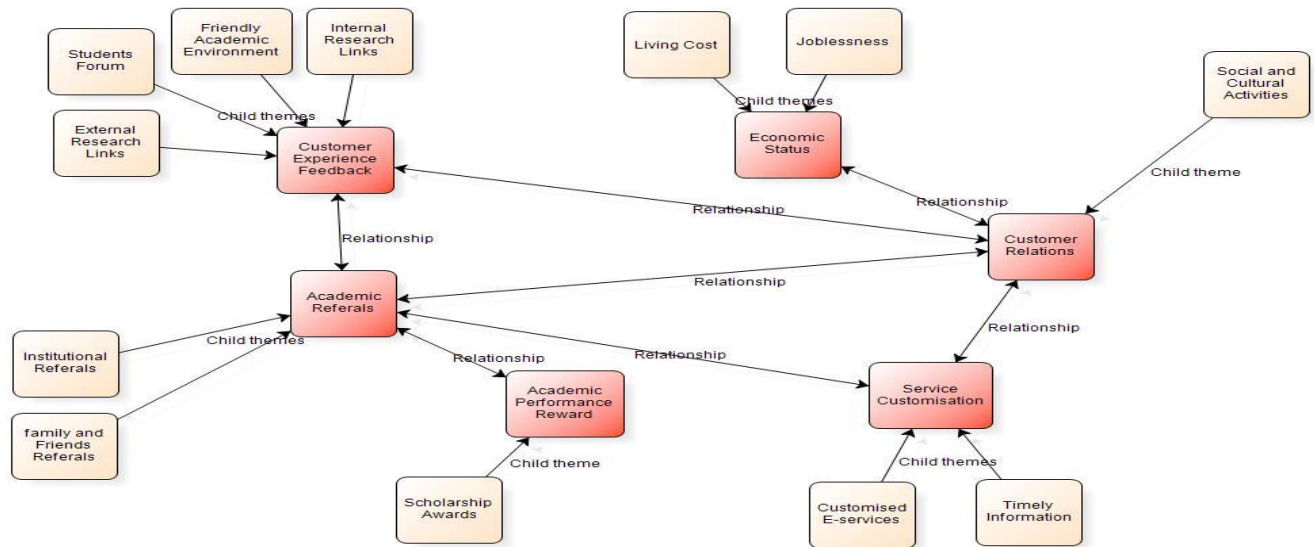
REPORT, FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Figure 6: Thematic Map with connections between themes.
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Theme 1: Customer Experience Feedback
Theme 1 examines the approaches or methods adopted by the institution to understanding its customers' expectations, and the degree to which using customer feedback could to improve on service quality might influence customers' satisfaction. This theme relates to four areas of customer relationship management in understanding customers' expectations which is important in managing customers' need and wants: (see 1.1) on external research links used in unravelling students' experience, (see 1.2) on internal research link which is used to compare with the result gained from the external survey barometer, (see 1.3) above on students forum organised by the institution as a means of generating first-hand experience reports from its students' regarding the services offered and how to improve upon existing infrastructure, (see 1.4) friendly academic environment which considers efforts by academic staff in providing academic advises to enable them achieve their expectations whilst studying. Summarily, the central theme emphasises the role customers' experience feedback in delivering desired maximally on service quality.

Theme 2: Academic Referral
Theme two considers the institutions relationship with customers influenced their service satisfaction and how past and present customers have been advocating and or referring friends, family and colleagues to the institution as a result of the satisfactory service experiences with the University. This according to the interviewees' is very critical for evaluating customer relationship management effectiveness, (see 2.1) on referrals from family and friends (see 2.2) on institutional referrals.

Theme 3: Service Customization
Theme three explores how the practice of service customisation influences customers' advocacy behaviour and delivering intrinsic satisfaction which is required in managing the relationship between

the service supply and consumer. This theme is consistent with two sub-themes (see 3.1) on customised service, also (see 3.2) on timely information dissemination.

Theme 4: Economic Identity
Theme four emerged from the study, because students' kept emphasizing the need to survive whilst studying, now we found it interesting as a theme because it could be an abstraction of the special need services offered by the institution. This theme is required to enhancing the extrinsic customer satisfaction as reported by the students: (see 4.1) on joblessness as well as (see 4.2) on living cost.

Theme 5: Customer Relations
Theme five discusses how the institution relates with its customers socially and how the social and cultural platforms provided by the institution has influenced experiences as students', it also reports how should socialization platform has enabled them to network with peers from different cultural and social background. This theme is crucial to the survival of CRM initiative because it induces the feeling of integration and breaks the gap created by race, tribe, religion and other overarching tendencies: (see 5.1) on social and cultural activities.

Theme 6: Academic Performance Reward
Theme six whilst drawing from the researchers' personal reflections is important in severing the relationship between supply and consumers' in the institution because it comes with it carries monetary value and the customers' are at the receiving end, this examines how the provision of academic performance incentive has influenced their academic input and output as well as customer selling tendencies. See 6.1 on scholarship award.

Findings and Discussion
Drawing upon the presented study data, findings showed that the institution rely on results from internal and external surveys to identify key needs of its international customers which is in the form of academic and administration expectations. Therefore with respect to **RQ$_1$** it thus indicates that the institution understands its international customer's academic, administrative and social expectations through its internal research framework. They are yet to understand customers' economic expectations like job placements and cost of living; this is in agreement with the earlier findings of (Clewes, 2003; Wright & O'Neill, 2002). Additionally, results showed that the University service improvements efforts are based on its survey feedback drawn from its internal and external customers' experience survey and this indicated a positive influence on its international customers' advocacy behaviors. This is anchored on the assumption that positive customer service experience is a testimony to share with friends and family. Further, with regards to **RQ$_2$**, it can be inferred that the survey result generated by the University has enabled the improvements of its services and this has the satisfaction of its international students' as reported by the participants. Although the term satisfaction is relative and subjective, this finding is therefore in accordance with that found by (Grant & Anderson, 2002; Hill, 1995; Clewes, 2003; Wright & O'Neill, 2002). Further, finding showed that the internal research framework in use by the institution, in unraveling customer expectations has enabled her improve upon services. Also the institution enjoys referral services in the form of family, friends and institutional selling from past customers. These thus answers **RQ$_3$** that understanding international customer expectations through external and internal survey framework has enabled the University improve its services with aim of meeting its students' expectations. Thus has positively influenced its students' advocacy intentions, these findings are in agreement with those of (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006; Tapp et

Wali, Wright & Reynolds are members of the Global Advances in Marketing Branding and Innovation (GAMBI). The Business School, University of Huddersfield, UK.

al. 2004). Available result from this study on service personalization showed that the University has in place services personalization system in its customer relationship template. This therefore gives answer to **RQ$_4$** that the institution uses service personalization system in relating with its customers thereby providing them with touch point services through customized and targeted emails. More so, on **RQ$_5$** findings also showed that the university's service personalization strategy delivers relative satisfaction to its international customers; as different customers have different expectations from the provided personalization services, this finding is consistent with those found by (Hill, 1995; Lawson-Body & Limayem, 2004; Grant & Anderson, 2002). Consequently finding shows that the institution has an internal student academic performance reward system, where best performing graduant of the institution are awarded academic scholarship to pursue further academic dream. This is a strategic positioning aimed at enhancing the economic and academic relationship with its clients; this is consistent with (Hill, 1995; Lawson-Body et al. 2004; Grant & Anderson, 2002).The responses on service personalization and customer advocacy behaviour answer **RQ$_6$** and shows that the university's service personalisation systems is effectiveness and impacts positively on its customer's selling tendencies. This finding is supported by the (Tapp et al., 2004; Seeman & O'Hara, 2006). We achieved 83% respondents' thematic validation.

CONCLUSIONS & RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS
This study examined the CRM effectiveness and service quality performance on international customers' using one case institution in the UK HE sector, and has thus provided a suggestive conclusion on the impact, and effectiveness of CRM programmes in the HE sector. It is suggestive because so much is yet to be examined about CRM effectiveness within other Universities in the UK HE sector at large. This study has contributed to the theoretical literature by affirming the validity and importance of adopting the customer relationship management behaviour theory in managing customers of higher education sector. The study subsequently argues that the theory is suitable to draw upon whilst researching into CRM issues in the sector. More so, the theoretical contributions of this study are the six emerging themes refer to figure six. Further, the two theoretical construct adopted to evaluate CRM is suitable but do not integrate other critical constructs crucial to CRM effectiveness in a single institution and by extension the Higher Education Sector such as depicted on figure six above. Therefore, this study provides a suitable construct for the evaluating and improving CRM effectiveness in the higher education sector. Consequently, in terms of methodological contribution this study has shown that the qualitative research design is suitable for understanding and evaluating the extent of CRM effectiveness in a single University in the UKHE sector. The implication of this research to stakeholders in the higher education sector, especially in the developed economies is to switch to a more robust CRM system that will create customer touch point services.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
Similar study needs to be replicated in other University in the UK higher education sector and Europe at large using the emerging themes from this study with a wider sample frame.

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