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Customer Relationship Management and Service Quality: Influences in Higher Education

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Abstract

This study with international students in the UK Higher Education (HE) sector adopts a qualitative research approach to examine the impact of customer relationship management (CRM) and service quality. From the literature six construct themes for measuring customer relationship management were suggested and the interview data with focus groups from a university in the north of Britain were analysed using a thematic template analysis technique. The study showed that an effective CRM programme to improve service quality has the ability of inducing positive advocacy behaviour from its international students. The paper makes a recommendation for policy makers in the higher education sector to embrace investment in CRM.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management (CRM), service quality, service personalisation, customer advocacy.

Introduction

The aim of this research is to examine the impact of customer relationship management (CRM) effectiveness and service quality delivery on international students in the UK higher education sector. The concept of customer relationship management is at present gaining attraction in firms across the world as the adoption and implementation of CRM initiatives can be witnessed in most organizations across the world through organisations setting up internal departments to record and assist customer experiences, complaints, development of good customer relations and customer value. The UK higher education sector is important in that international students as consumers continue to have demand for its reputable education from every continent of the world. British Universities had by 2013 around 30,000 international students (Greenaway & Haynes, 2003; UK Higher Education Academy, 2014). The study draws from the CRM behaviour theory by Labus & Stone (2010) which examined the systematic, interdependent and total interactions between the organization, its customers and other interfacing factors, such as the influence of culture amongst key players in a business relationship. This study contributes to the literature in that there are few academic papers in this field published in the academic literature. Consequently, this research adapts two main constructs on CRM from Lawson-body & Limayem (2004) about: (i) understanding customer expectations and service personalization to measure CRM effectiveness; and (ii) customer satisfaction and customer advocacy behaviour drawing upon Zeithaml et al (1993) to measure service quality.

Aim and objectives

The aim of the study in this paper is to examine CRM effectiveness for understanding customer expectations and service quality delivery for UK international students. So the objectives are to research customer expectations and service personalisation leading to customer satisfaction and customer advocacy.

Literature review

Woodcock et al. (2001) defined CRM as a set of methodologies, technologies and e-commerce capabilities used by companies to manage a 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 a profitable service for both the firm and its customers (Bose, 2002). It represents a comprehensive marketing strategy for acquiring, retaining and partnering with selected customers to create superior value for the company and customers (Parvitiyar & Sheth, 2001). For Swift (2001) CRM is an organizational approach using meaningful communications to improve customer retention, profitability, loyalty, satisfaction and customer acquisition. Croteau & Li (2003) lends support to 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 customers. Employees, therefore, are required to be trained with requisite CRM skills to perform their services efficiently and effectively by handling customers' demands and complaints if market retention and enhanced profitability are to be achieved (Gupta et al., 2013). Tapp et al. (2004) indicated that the use of direct and database marketing strategies generated through CRM systems have high chances of boosting their universities' recruitment potential. The adoption of CRM strategies in gaining students' insights could enable a service provider to deliver services that would meet the expectations of customers and generate student satisfaction, loyalty and

retention behaviours (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006). Potential customers are likely to hear about positive service experiences from other customers. Hill (1995) in his study found that there was a correlation between students' service expectation and satisfaction. He argued that universities needed to identify the expectations of their prospective students from the entry points through to graduation successes. CRM system would provide students' with interactive touch points through pre-admission and post-admissions, registration, teaching evaluation and financial aid, shown to feed through to improved student satisfaction and loyalty (Grant & Anderson, 2002). Other studies (Clewes, 2003; Wright & O'Neill, 2010) have found that meeting service quality expectations in key customer areas led to positive impact on student satisfaction. CRM is therefore, a complex field of study. However, an adaptation of two important concepts about CRM and Service Quality by the authors of this paper could be simplified and shown in Figure 1.

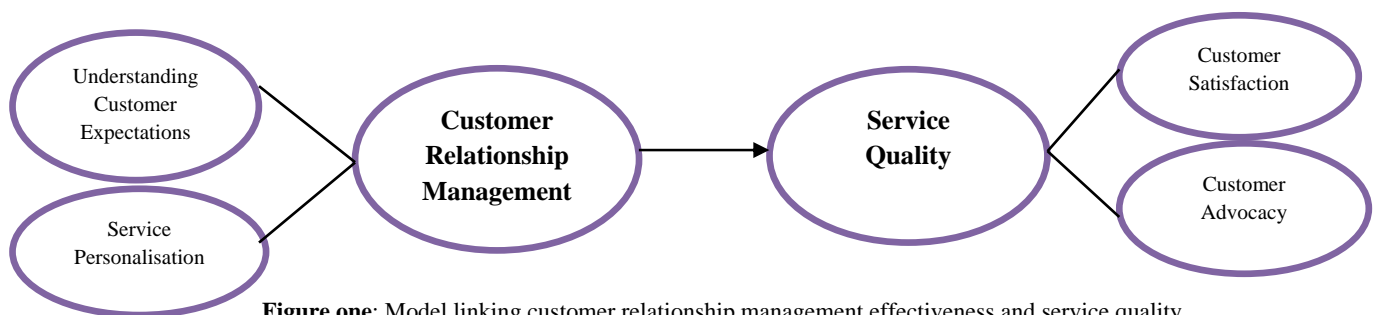


Figure one: Model linking customer relationship management effectiveness and service quality
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

The diagram on figure one shows the perceived relationship between the sub-constructs of customer relationship management and the sub-constructs of service quality.

Methodology

This study adopts the constructivist paradigm as CRM has multiple realities and requires the active involvement of researchers.

Participants

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 of the case university for the focus group discussion. The rationale is that these employees' responsibilities directly deal with international students' issues. Further, seven international students' were purposively selected from the case University for the focus group discussion. These participants were purposively selected because they possess the relevant experiences for the questions under consideration by this study, having worked in the University for over four years as a staff and as students' over one year, thereafter we had a total of twelve participants. This is in line with (Brown and Lloyd, 2001).

Method of 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 with regards the nature of customer relationship management practices of their current University after responses were received from them. Secondly, the selected staffs was sent emails to ask if they would be willing to be part of an interview on the CRM practices of the University, after five days we receive

full confirmation from them to participate in the study focus group discussion. Additionally, we informed the interviewees of the purpose of the study through emails earlier before the meeting.

Data Collection

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 discussion was recorded using a recording device which will enable the researchers' to transcribe and analyse the data thereafter.

Data Analysis

Primary data was analysed using thematic template analysis technique with the ease of Nvivo 10 software. The first stage in the data analysis process was the transcription of the primary data, by importing the recorded discussions into writing to enable the researchers' carry out detailed analysis. However, each of the focus group took about 25 hours to transcribe. The second stage was about data reading and re-reading the transcripts in order to make sense out of it as well as to eliminate typing errors. Thereafter we did the primary data coding, through which we identified the emerging themes from the study. Finally we carried out the respondents' validity on findings and received 98% positive affirmation, that the themes found influences students' and staff experiences within the case HE University (see Bryan, 2014 & 2012; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Mason, 1996).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Interviewees Attribute Data

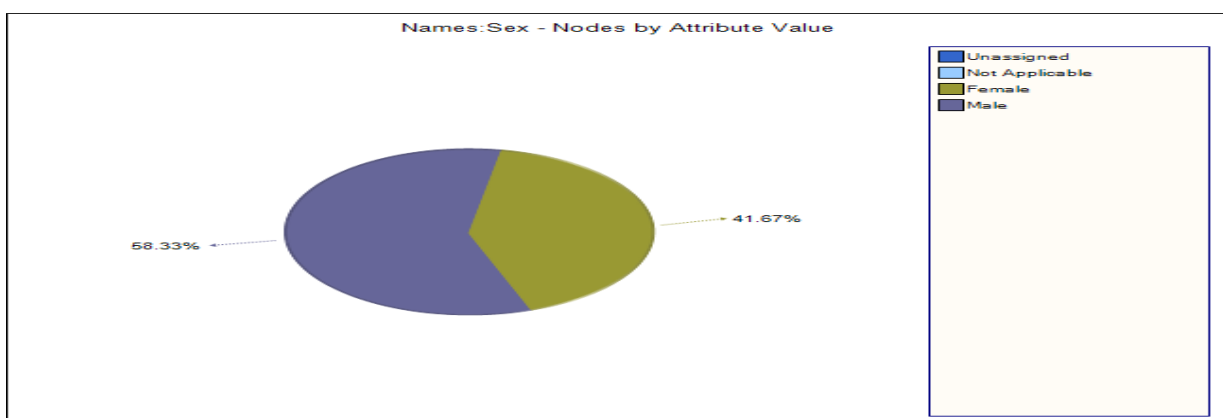


Figure two: Nvivo10 analysis on respondents' sex
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Nvivo result on figure two shows that 58.33% of the interviewees were males and 41.67% were females. It's implication to this research is an indication that both sexes were given fair representation in the focus groups from the staff to students' perspectives.

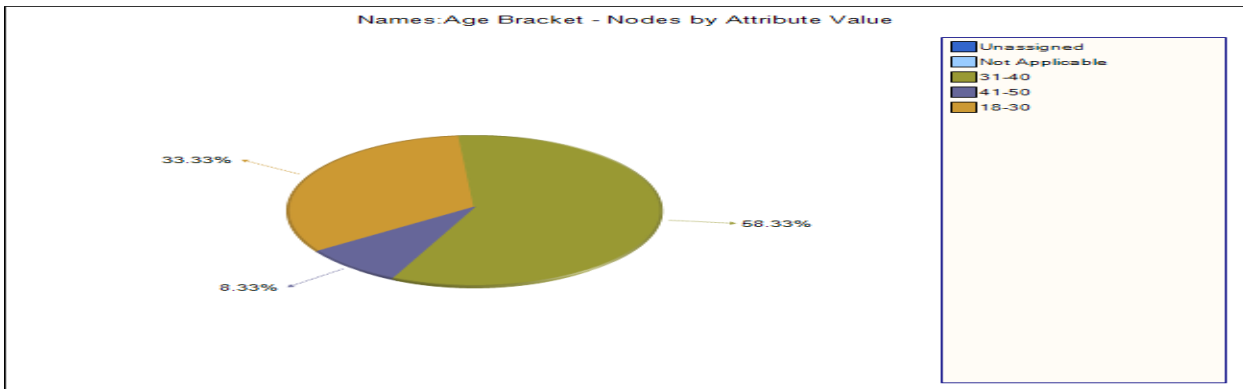


Figure three: Nvivo 10 analysis on respondents' Age
Source: Qualitative Research (2015).

Nvivo 10 result on figure three indicates that 58.33% were between the ages of 31-40years. 33.33% were between the ages of 18-30years. This shows that majority of the interviewees were between the ages of 18-40years. The importance of analysing interviewees age is that, at 18years a person is deemed to have developed an independent mind which allows him to make decisions and take responsibility. This implies that members of the focus groups were adults whose service experiences/responses cannot be questionable.

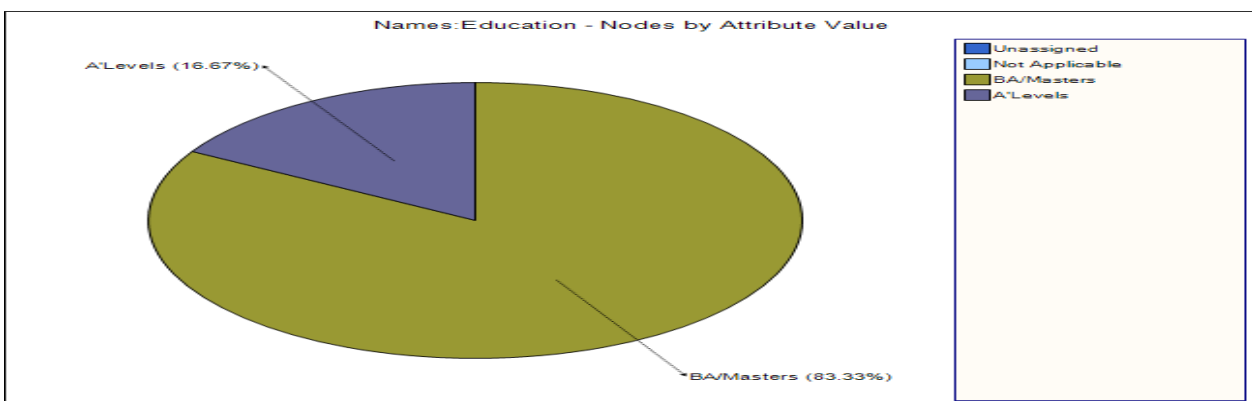


Figure four: Nvivo 10 analysis on respondents' educational level
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Nvivo 10 result on figure four indicates that 83.33% of interviewees' which is the majority were holders of at least Bachelor Degrees or at most Masters Degrees. While 16.67% were holders of A/Levels. This shows that a fewer numbers of the respondents were undergraduate international

students' and majority were post graduate international student' and staff of the University. The implication for interviewees' educational status to this study is that the interviewees who are enlightened understood would understand the questions to be asked and be able proffer answers based on their experiences. Seeing that 83.33% of the interviewees were holders of Bachelor Degrees or at most Masters Degrees, it indicates that interviewees understood the questions and their responses represent their true experiences.

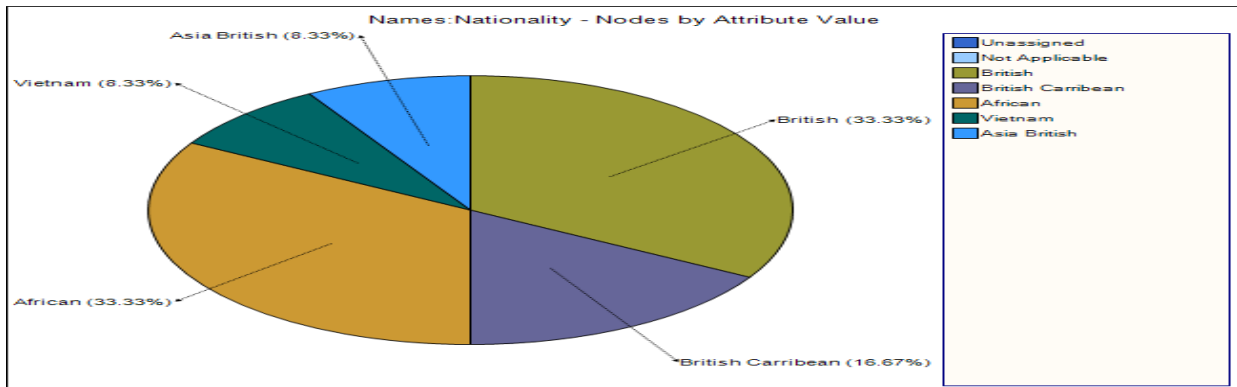


Figure five: Nvivo 10 Analysis on respondents' nationality
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Result on figure five indicates that the study's international students' respondents were mainly nationals on Africans (33.33%), Vietnamese (8.33%) and Caribbean's (16.67%). While majority of staff respondents were Britons (33.33%). This implies that the students' interviewees' represented international voices from Africa, Asia and North America.

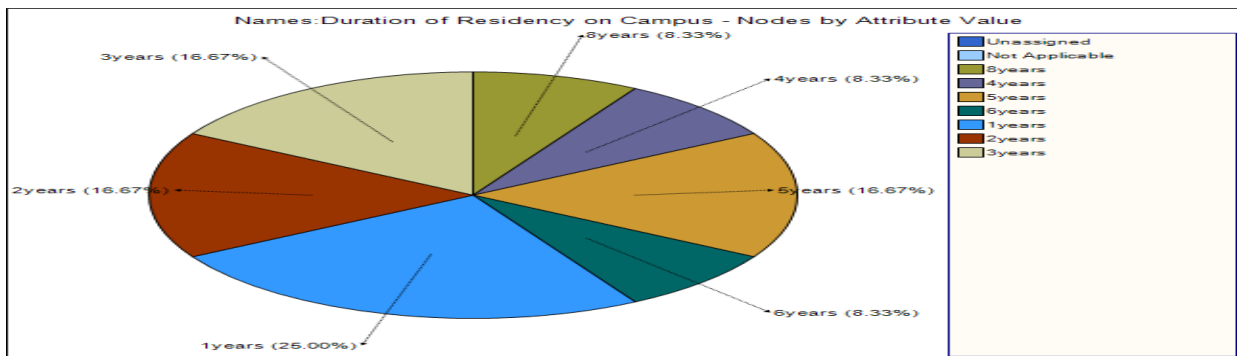


Figure six: Nvivo 10 analysis on respondents' University residency
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Result on figure six indicate that majority of the interviewees had spent between 2-5 years in the case University. Which implies that they had acquired some level of rich experiences about the services offered by the University and was better positioned to comments on the research questions.

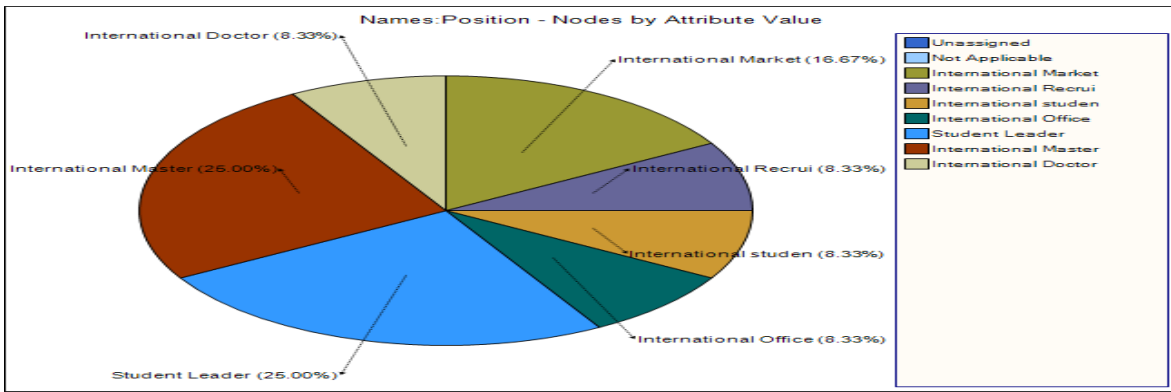


Figure seven: Nvivo 10 analysis on Respondents' position
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Figure seven 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.

Presentation and Analysis of Study Data

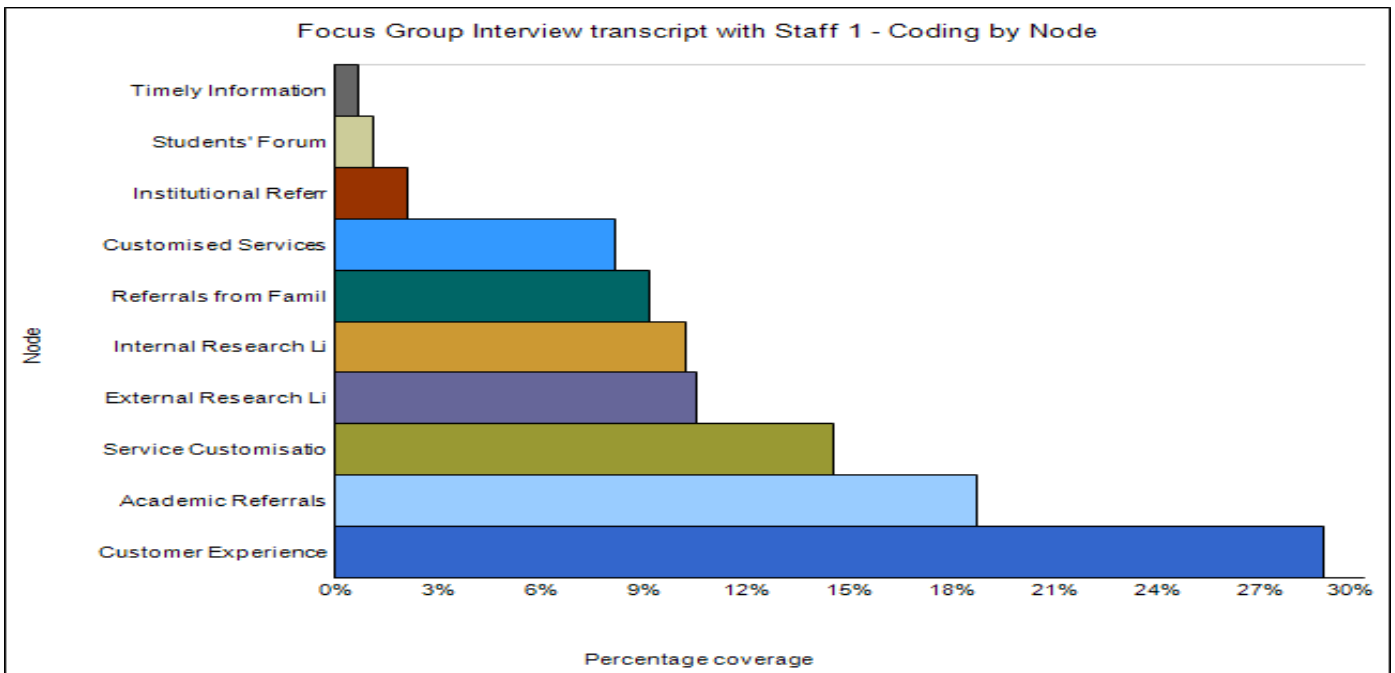


Figure eight: Nvivo 10 Analysis on the study primary data
Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Drawing upon Nvivo 10 analysis result on the study themes as provided by staff respondent and represented on figure eight. The theme "Customer Experience Feedback" was the most coded by their experiences. Also, the child theme timely information was least coded. Further, putting the

region of coding acceptance at 3% it shows that the staff experiences were mainly about the themes: Customer Experience Feedback; Academic Referrals; Service Customisation. This also implies that these “themes” were keys to effective customer relationship management and customer satisfaction. See further clarity on parent and child themes on figure 10.

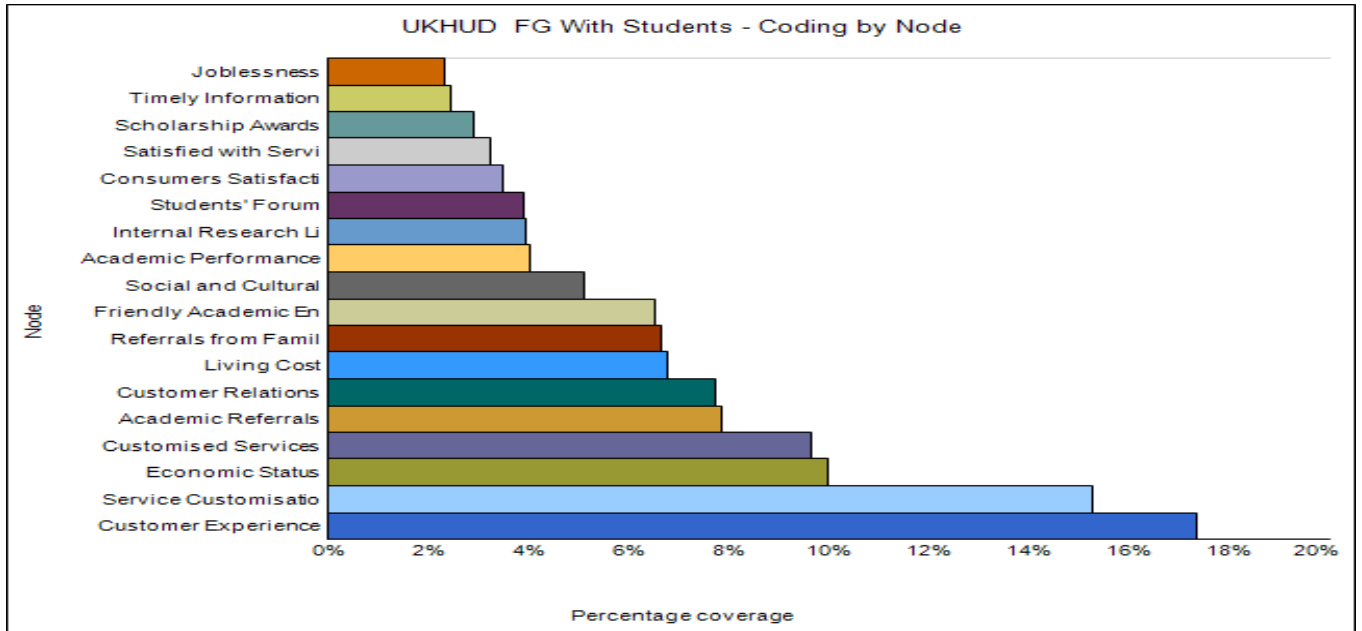


Figure nine: Nvivo 10 Analysis on the study primary data
 Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

Available result from Nvivo 10 analysis on the opinions and experiences of the students’ as shown on figure nine, implies that the theme Customer Experience Feedback was the most coded. Also the least coded was the “child theme joblessness”. Thus putting the region of coding acceptance at 3%, it indicates that the “themes”: Customer experience feedback; Academic referrals; Service customisation; Customer relations; Economic status and Academic performance reward constitutes bulk of their student experiences. This further implies that these themes were important in evaluating student-university relationship, student satisfaction and student advocacy behaviours. See further clarity on initial themes as well as the map showing the parent and child themes on figure 10 and 11 respectively.

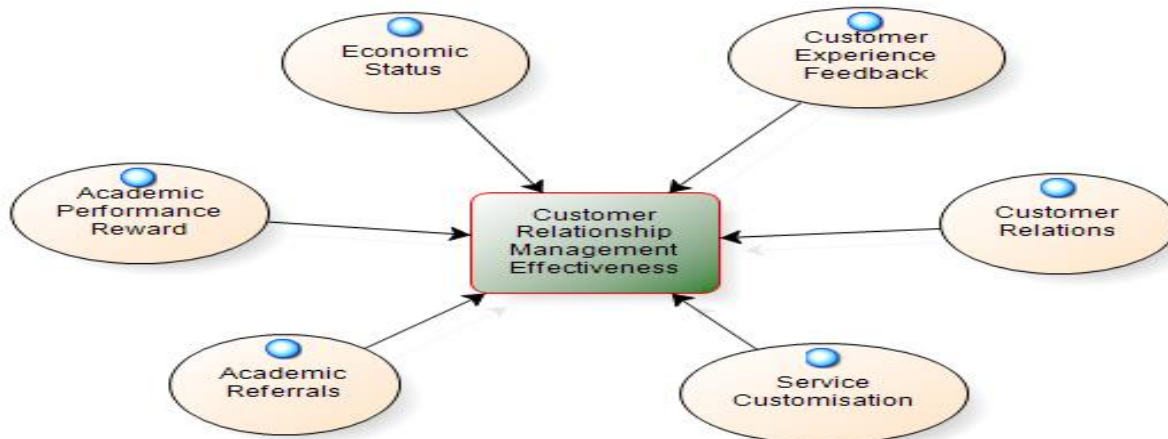


Figure ten: Map of Initial Themes Relating to CRM
Source: Qualitative Research 2015

Definition of Themes

2/4/2015 4:02 PM

Coding Summary By Node

CRM & SQ In UKHE Sector

2/4/2015 4:02 PM

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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Node

Nodes\\Academic Performance Reward

Document

Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\UK FG With Students

No	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
	0.0404	3	1	AFW	2/1/2015 5:00 PM
			2	AFW	2/1/2015 5:05 PM

There are some strategies the University adopts which favours some schools and not all, school here mean like Business School, Engineering school etc. Now I know that there is this policy here that if you make distinction you will get a PhD scholarship, but it does not favour my own school. This has reduced my interest in pursuing certain grades in my module.

I will disagree with the last speaker about what he said on scholarship not available in his department. The Vice Chancellor's scholarship for students' with distinction and First Class is for every student in all the departments in this University irrespective of your colour or tribe. I know of people who have enjoyed this.

3 AFW 2/1/2015 5:10 PM

Again, the University understood that their students and parent will be happy if their high performing sons and daughters are rewarded with things like free scholarship, I must tell you it makes us work harder so we can receive one.

Nodes\\Academic Referrals

Document

Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\Focus Group Interview transcript with Staff 1

No 0.1868 4

1 AFW 1/25/2015 4:16 PM

Yes I hope so and we do have some; though there is no formal or official way this is confirmed. Like we have situations where father studied here and after graduation and return to his home country he sends his other children to our University; that what we call "word of mouth". In some market it work like after a worker in an organization have come to study here, upon graduation he refers our University to other colleagues who will later seek for admission and begin to study here for themselves and some for their children. But this referral work more in the small countries like Bahrain (Middle East) where we work with oil companies send us 2 to 3 students and staff every year, because some of their staff had studied here. Another example is that 2 staff in one of the organization just sent two of their children to this University this year for study.

We have evidence that shows that we do receive referrals from old students' based on the quality of services and friendship we display to our

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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2 AFW 1/25/2015 4:20 PM

The Alumni Association also refer prospective customers the advocate of this University that an Alumnus is, is directly proportional to the experiences he or she have derived while they were here. Off course if you have a positive experience you are more likely to tell only 1 prospect whereas if you have negative experiences you are likely to tell 10 people. However, the whole impact the Alumni has on this University is not measured using any barometer or is not officially measured with any scale. But we have had sometimes when prospects tell us that a former student called A, B & C told me about the University. Also, we have what is called family and institutional referral in this sector especially based on my experience on this job, but unfortunately we do not have any means of detecting who referred who in real terms.

3 AFW 1/25/2015 4:44 PM

Yes I am convinced they do because sometimes our new students do report that they heard about the school from other people. That is why we are always having high number of international students'

4 AFW 1/25/2015 4:48 PM

Like there is an African student who was not performing well and he owed fees, he never told his parent what was happening, do you know what? I was on him and followed him up thinking he will change. Until the University reached the decision asking him to leave, now I have seen him in Africa since and he recommended other friends to University despite what happened. Perhaps I think he realized that the University was

so kind to him, I did everything we could to keep him on the course, but it was his own decision and behaviour that forced us to send him back to home.

Like my colleagues said the students' do tell their peers and other people about our services, but it is also dependent on the students' experience.

Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\UK FG With Students

No 0.0785 8

1 AFW 2/1/2015 5:28 PM

Yeah, I will preach the good services of my university, in fact I heard about this University from my cousins' who graduated from this university that's why I came here. I will tell others about this University anytime.

2 AFW 2/1/2015 5:29 PM

Yes, I will still talk about this University to my colleagues, families and friends back home in as much as the University have their weaknesses, their strengths is higher and stronger than their weaknesses. I will always talk about this university positively to outsiders.

3 AFW 2/1/2015 5:30 PM

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.

4 AFW 2/1/2015 5:31 PM

I think it is only normal that when a person is satisfied he tells other people about his experience. I will keep talking good about the University to friends and family back home like I am currently doing now, except they change then I may likely change as well.

5 AFW 2/1/2015 5:31 PM

Yes, I will keep convincing friends and family to come to this University based on what I can see and experiencing now.

6 AFW 2/1/2015 5:53 PM

Yes I will, like I mentioned earlier I am already doing so, at the moment I have some converts 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.

7 AFW 2/1/2015 5:55 PM

Yes, I will represent the University anytime by positively telling people back home in Nigeria how good the University is and why they need to study here. At the moment I have friends I have spoken to who are already negotiating their admission now.

2/4/2015 4:02 PM

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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8 AFW 2/1/2015 5:55 PM

Yes, I will advertise the University to friend and family and colleagues back home and anywhere.

Document

Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\UK FG With Students

No 0.0351 6

1 AFW 2/1/2015 5:21 PM

Yeah, so far I am satisfied to the tune of 60% 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 I wish they improve.

2 AFW 2/1/2015 5:23 PM

My satisfaction rating is at 70%.

3 AFW 2/1/2015 5:23 PM

Yes I am very satisfied, but not one hundred percent. I can rate my satisfaction at 80%. I think the University is doing well compare to what my friends say about their Universities.

4 AFW 2/1/2015 5:24 PM

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

5 AFW 2/1/2015 5:25 PM

I am satisfied with the quality of lecturers that teach me. The friendliness of staff of the University. They are always willing to help when you have a problem. I will put my satisfaction for 80%, they have done well.

6 AFW 2/1/2015 5:37 PM

In terms of satisfaction I am okay

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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Nodes\\Customer Experience Feedback

Document

Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\Focus Group Interview transcript with Staff 1

No 0.2884 8

1 AFW 1/25/2015 3:57 PM

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. This is done all through the whole buying process from the first contact, applying, enrolling, to study on campus, seating for exams, graduating and going back to their country or working here in the UK, and to become

2 AFW 1/25/2015 4:00 PM

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 throw surveys.

3 AFW 1/25/2015 4:01 PM

We carry out regular students' survey which has enabled us to improve on our services to the students'

4 AFW 1/25/2015 4:06 PM

Yes we do rely on the external survey and our own internal survey. Based on the answers the students give us against the hundreds of questions they answer and this has to do with their experiences around the university. It is done two times a year in September and April, during the entering wave certain questions like easy was your enrolment? How good was the joining instruction to get here for you? While at Esther April 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 facilities? Etc. 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. 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 UK. This is how we can do comparison about the results we get and make improvements, establish what is working and what is not working. Another example here is that every year we run an internal students survey based on what our students building and sports facilities, but results always shows a negative on the graph, but now that we have built a new students sports complex we will elicit the students feelings during our next survey in March or April this year. 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 have outlived its best, and so we decided to build a new structure to meet the needs of the students in this regards

5 AFW 1/25/2015 4:11 PM

Going on the only evidence from 2010 when the survey was not as positive as it was in the last year we were top ten in the world; we were first in the world in terms of our position based on the students' feedbacks telling us what their experiences was across those criteria.

6 AFW 1/25/2015 4:12 PM

Yes, I do believe the survey helps in making here a better place, it is not only about the national barometer mechanism; 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.

7 AFW 1/25/2015 4:42 PM

Simple the students' barometer may not be good enough to measure things per time because it is not carried always and some students may want to register their complaint, but because you are unable to receive that information does not represent bad customer relations. What's important is how the University handled the problem at that time after receiving the complaints and there is a follow up to find out if the solution provided has solved the complaints sufficiently. "Complaints help our University to improve.

8 AFW 1/25/2015 4:49 PM

Students should support the University by filling out the online evaluation form on time so that the University will understand the currency of their experiences and where improvements are needed.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\UK FG With Students

No 0.1735 13

1 AFW 2/1/2015 4:26 PM

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. I think it is a good approach in terms of service provision.

2 AFW 2/1/2015 4:35 PM

Education wise I know they try a lot; the lecturers are very understanding & gentle, they will always see us the MSc students as their colleague as such condescend to a level to make us understand, who are willing to speak with us at all times to know what our academic challenges are so we can be able to meet our goal in the end.

3 AFW 2/1/2015 4:39 PM

I will just buttress some of the points made so far. I agree that on a scale of one to ten, I will rate the university eight. Well am very excited because if am to compare the university I attended during my undergraduate in Nigeria and the behaviour of my current University here is very better. Here I have noticed that lecturers although not all of them are always ready to help when students are in need of some clarification and encouragement.

4 AFW 2/1/2015 4:54 PM

Yes I can agree to an extent, because I am talking for myself now. Two years ago we hadn't this kind of magnificent sport centre we have now, may be they came to find out through their research that the existing theatre can no longer accommodate the number of students' they are getting every year so they felt it was important to build a new one so as to satisfy us.

5 AFW 2/1/2015 4:56 PM

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 growth whilst others are bias. If I am allowed to mention names, no she laughs. For example there is this module lecturer who always tries to find out if you have done your assignments, he understands that my purpose of coming to the UK is to pass all my courses and be successful in future, and so if my lecturers encourage me then my aims will be achieved after all. But reverse will be the case if we depend on the support of the other category of lecturers.

6 AFW 2/1/2015 4:58 PM

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.

7 AFW 2/1/2015 5:10 PM

I think yes, because like I said before they understood that we needed a befitting sports centre and so they built us a good sport centre, like you know "all work no play makes Jack a dull boy"

8 AFW 2/1/2015 5:13 PM

They are trying their best. I have been here for over 2years and I can tell you that things are improving every year, because we receive online questionnaire from our University from time to time to comment on our experiences on this campus. Every new year things gets better than the previous and the improvements are targeted towards what we need, so I think they understand this through our responses on the questionnaires. But remember that nobody can be perfect in knowing what every students want.

9 AFW 2/1/2015 5:14 PM

Yes I have always related with my lecturers always to discuss some challenges our colleagues do face. But if you mean holding general meeting where we have consensus? Then yes, I think we have had such meeting only once, they sent an invite and I went.

10 AFW 2/1/2015 5:15 PM

Yes that is true. There are timely meeting with course representatives. I know this because I have once been a course representative.

11 AFW 2/1/2015 5:19 PM

Yes issues about our academic and social experiences were discussed. Like I said I believe it's from our reports based on those meetings that we see this kind of improvements as well.

12 AFW 2/1/2015 5:20 PM

There is no fixed time but like I said when I was a course representative I have got some invites for a meeting with some senior staff or students union on issues that pertain to our academic welfare here.

13 AFW 2/1/2015 5:26 PM

Nodes\\Customer Relations

Document

Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\UK FG With Students

No 0.0773 4

1 AFW 2/1/2015 4:49 PM

If you mean socially, can I talk about the int'l students' week? Yeah, I think that the int'l students' festival is actually cool, for me. Because this last 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 o display what they have, who they are its very good.

2 AFW 2/1/2015 4:51 PM

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. Sometimes I tone on my laptop you just see one country flag and Independence Day and I shout wow so this country exists? They unite the world I will always rate them high for that.

3 AFW 2/1/2015 5:02 PM

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, this meets my expectation in these sense too. Also, the University needs to work harder to compete very closely with other top Universities within the UK and the world at large.

I will disagree with the last speaker about what he said on scholarship not available in his department. The Vice Chancellor's scholarship for students' with distinction and First Class is for every student in all the departments in this University irrespective of your colour or tribe. I know of

4 AFW 2/1/2015 5:09 PM

Again other social activities organized by the school are a clear indication that they understand our needs, though they might not be perfect in identifying our needs.

Nodes\\Economic Status

Document

Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\UK FG With Students

No 0.0997 6

1 AFW 2/1/2015 4:28 PM

In terms of accommodation, it's very high for international students, whereas there are no jobs provided at least to support the students recoup. If the Universities can consider the reduction of accommodation fees for its international students it will be really fine.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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2 AFW 2/1/2015 4:36 PM

Yes if I go by what my colleague just said about jobs and accommodation, I think the cost of living is increasing everyday in this town and I believe the University can as well be of help in seeing that its students are not over stretched. They can help their international students with menial jobs so that the effect can be small on them. This is my thinking.

3 AFW 2/1/2015 4:43 PM

No, I cannot afford the university property that's why and I am currently living outside. The University hostel is very expensive.

4 AFW 2/1/2015 4:43 PM

No I live in a private property because I realised that the University property is more expensive than those of outsiders.

5 AFW 2/1/2015 5:59 PM

In one of my module assignment I mentioned this suggestion I am about to give now; that is for the University to partner with local employers with the community where this University is, to provide jobs even if they are menial job for its international students. Also, the University should reduce its accommodation fees as well as partner with independent landlord (house owners) to reduce rent for its students. Another way the University can handle the accommodation fees reduction will be to reduce its accommodation fees to accommodate enough international students in that case the market for external property will fall drastically, just to help its students.

6 AFW 2/1/2015 6:01 PM

Nodes\\Service Customisation

Document

Internals\\Interviews with Staff & Students\\Focus Group Interview transcript with Staff 1

No 0.1450 6

1 AFW 1/25/2015 3:51 PM

CRM means relating with students very well by creating a good relationship with student. In fact we relate with our customers (students) everyday through emails, targeted Emails and brochures.

2 AFW 1/25/2015 4:25 PM

We do provide such personalised services to our students' at all times. Like we are in the field and we meet with these students all the time, so I am telling you that yes we do practice such here.

3 AFW 1/25/2015 4:27 PM

Yes, like online application and communication plan, 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?

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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4 AFW 1/25/2015 4:32 PM

Much of it we try to do through self-help, any information is given, like if you want to find out about accommodation, you can see it on the website; if you want to move from Manchester Airport you can see the information online. This is because some people may know how to find their way to the University whilst others cannot, we do try but it's not perfect as we are monitoring robustly every individual person's needs every second of the day and having appropriate response in place is not often feasible to have that level of monitoring going on so we can detect, therefore we need to batch people up on a monthly basis who have been made offer & have not accepted the offer get some personalized messages. Like dear "Fred" we noticed you have not accepted your offer.

5 AFW 1/25/2015 4:36 PM

The University do provide such students with services personified to their needs, in line with the British law regarding students with disability, where necessary we provide such individual students with facilities so they can be and aim the same outcome with other colleagues.

Our customer relationship management programme is effective because this can be witnessed in the number of international students' we admit every year, we have never had less number of students. The number has been on the increase year by year.

Internals\Interviews with Staff & Students\UK FG With Students

No 0.1526 12

1 AFW 2/1/2015 4:22 PM

From my own perspective, if am to rate the university in a scale of one to ten, then I will rate them eight. Now why did I say that? Now as an international student there is some very important information which the university pass across to us which is very good through emails. I mean personal names on the emails and everything

2 AFW 2/1/2015 4:27 PM

The University relate with us through different means like emails, teaching and other social activities. I think they are trying.

3 AFW 2/1/2015 4:32 PM

I know they give us information on courses or rather workshop and seminars that are geared towards the development & growth of its international student. I mean they try as much as they can to get our own understanding.

4 AFW 2/1/2015 4:40 PM

Here I have noticed that lecturers although not all of them are always ready to help when students are in need of some clarification and encouragement. I think on the emails we receive, I think it's not enough.

5 AFW 2/1/2015 5:33 PM

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.

6 AFW 2/1/2015 5:34 PM

Service personalization 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? I don't if they are always asking me these questions because I am the course rep. but I later realized it was a normal trend for the lecturers to find out if we are meeting our individual goals here.

7 AFW 2/1/2015 5:36 PM

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. Lets keep watching and receiving their services till the end of my program to see if there will be any reason for increased satisfaction percentage or negative experience.

2/4/2015 4:02 PM

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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8 AFW 2/1/2015 5:38 PM

I must mention that the University's targeted emails which are sometimes targeted at students who owe the university tuition fees. This is obviously done because every creditor would need to go after its debtor, that's exactly what the school does. Secondly, the University do send emails which bear my personal names on it for workshops & seminars. Personally the University have not sent me any personal emails asking me how I am doing academically, socially and otherwise or even requesting that I can visit so and so office for advice if I have any problem well on a scale of one to ten I will rate my satisfaction on service personalization seven (7).

9 AFW 2/1/2015 5:46 PM

The University personal service option is good, the email greetings with my names clearly on it, like reminding me of some upcoming programs & workshop is fantastic.

10 AFW 2/1/2015 5:48 PM

Yes, there so called job targeted emails is just to fulfil all righteousness. Because, there are no commitment on the part of the University to fill this

11 AFW 2/1/2015 5:50 PM

Yes I receive emails from the school offices with my names on it. Like alert on expiration of borrowed books from the Library, seminars, trainings and other meaningful information. The messages are personally sent to me, I mean in my name.

12 AFW 2/1/2015 5:51 PM

I can generalise that every message sent to any student in this University is named after such student. They are not general mails but targeted emails that address us by our name. I think they are doing well in this regard.

Report on Themes

Theme 1: Customer Experience Feedback

Theme 1 examines the approaches or methods adopted by the institution to understanding its students' 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. External research links used in unravelling students' experience, internal research link were used to compare with the result gained from the external survey barometer. Also, student forum organised by the institution as a means of generating first hand experience feedbacks from its students. Friendly academic environment which considered as efforts by academic staff in providing academic advice to enable students achieve their expectations whilst studying. Summarily, the central theme emphasises the role customers' experience feedback in delivering expected service quality to students. See figure 11 for connections on parent and child themes.

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 represents an internal yardstick for measuring the University's customer relationship management effectiveness. See figure 11 for connection on parent and child themes.

Theme 3: Service Customization

Theme three explores how the practices of service customisation were influencing customers' advocacy behaviour. This as reported has delivered intrinsic satisfaction required in evaluating the relationship between the University and student. See figure 10 for connections on parent and child themes.

Theme 4: Economic Status

Theme four emerged from the study, because students' were emphasizing the need to survive whilst studying. We found it interesting as a theme because it could be an abstraction of the special need services offered by the institution. This theme could be somewhat required to enhance student extrinsic satisfaction as reported. See figure 11 for connection on parent and child themes.

Theme 5: Customer Relations

Theme five discusses how the institution socially relates with its international students'. The social and cultural platforms provided by the institution were influencing students' experiences. It also reports how the University's social climate has enabled students to network with peers from different cultural and social background. This theme is crucial in measuring its CRM effectiveness because it induces the feeling of integration and opens up the gaps created by race, tribe, religion and other overarching tendencies. See figure 11 for connections on parent and child themes.

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 figure 11 for connections on parent and child themes.

Key Findings and Discussion

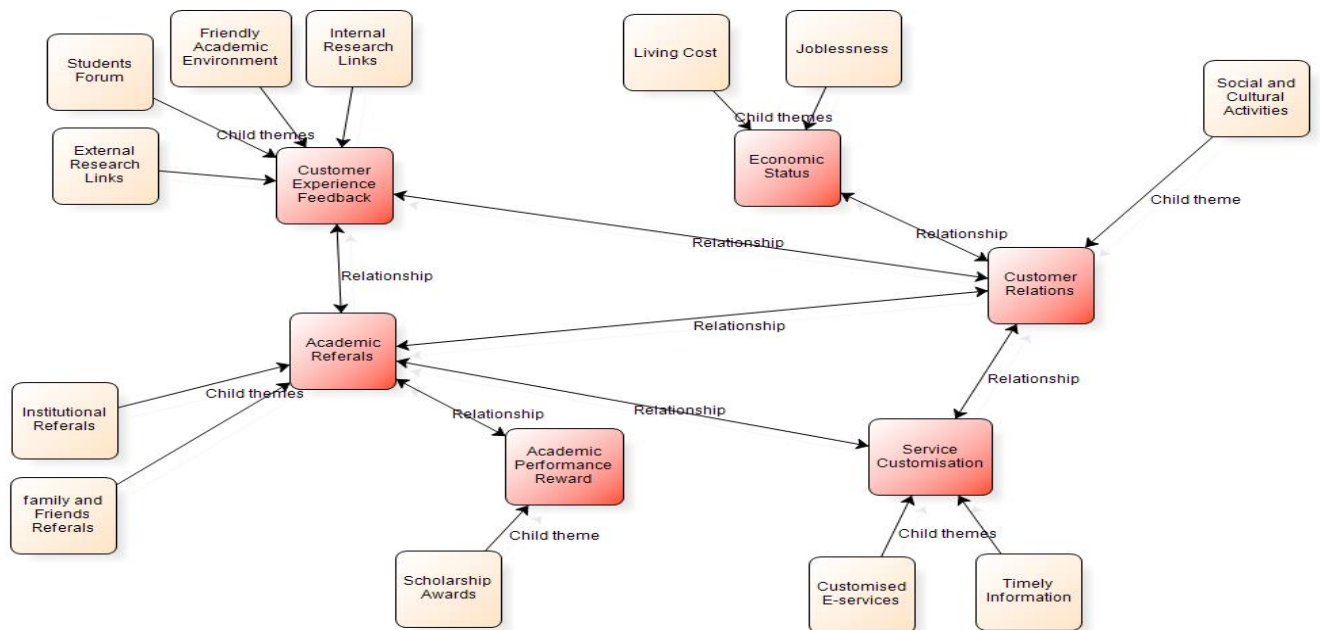


Figure eleven: Thematic Findings with connections between themes.
 Source: Qualitative Research (2015)

The findings showed that the HE University relies on results from internal and external surveys to identify the key needs of its international customers in the form of academic and administrative expectations. The results indicate that the key themes are relevant to explore with participants experiences. Also the university understands the character of its international student's academic, administrative and social expectations through its internal research framework. The HE University pays less attention to its international students economic expectations like job placements and costs of living. This perhaps might be underpinned by the UK financial requirement law on

international students' who wishes to study in the UK Universities. This is in agreement with the earlier findings of (Clewes, 2003 and Wright & O'Neill, 2010). Additionally, the results shows that the university's service improvements efforts are based on its customers survey feedbacks drawn from its internal customers' experience survey. This indicated a positive influence on its international students' advocacy behaviors. This could be anchored on the assumption that a positive service experience is a testimony to share. This finding is supported in the literature (Grant and Anderson, 2002; Hill, 1995; Clewes, 2003; Wright and O'Neill, 2010). Finding also shows that a key strength of the university is academic referral services in the form of family, friends and institutional selling from past customers. These account for the high level of international students it receives annually (Seeman and O'Hara, 2006). The university's service customization system in relating to its customers provides such touch points in the form of customized and targeted emails to make contacts with its international students. The focus group discussions around the themes showed the university's service personalization strategy delivers relative satisfaction to its international customers. The university's student academic performance reward system benefits best performing graduants with academic scholarships to pursue masters or doctoral studies. This is strategic positioning aimed at enhancing the economic and academic relationship with its clients. Customer advocacy is improved by the university's service customization systems through its improvement of its CRM system.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The emerging themes from this study are the researchers' theoretical contribution in exploring aspects of CRM implementation in a university. While the study was limited to a small sample and one university, there is support found for the findings in the literature. The qualitative research design appears appropriate for researching CRM effectiveness and the study could be expanded into further researches with other universities in the HE sector. The recommendation is for stakeholders in higher education to investment in CRM. It's monitoring to deliver results for its customers and employees alike are important in respect of services such as customer touch point and service customisation, in order to order to improve satisfaction and customer advocacy behaviour.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research should quantitatively test the emerging themes of this study, using a bigger sample size. Also, further qualitative investigation is still required on this study's phenomenon using other HE Universities in the UK and Europe at large.

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