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Article

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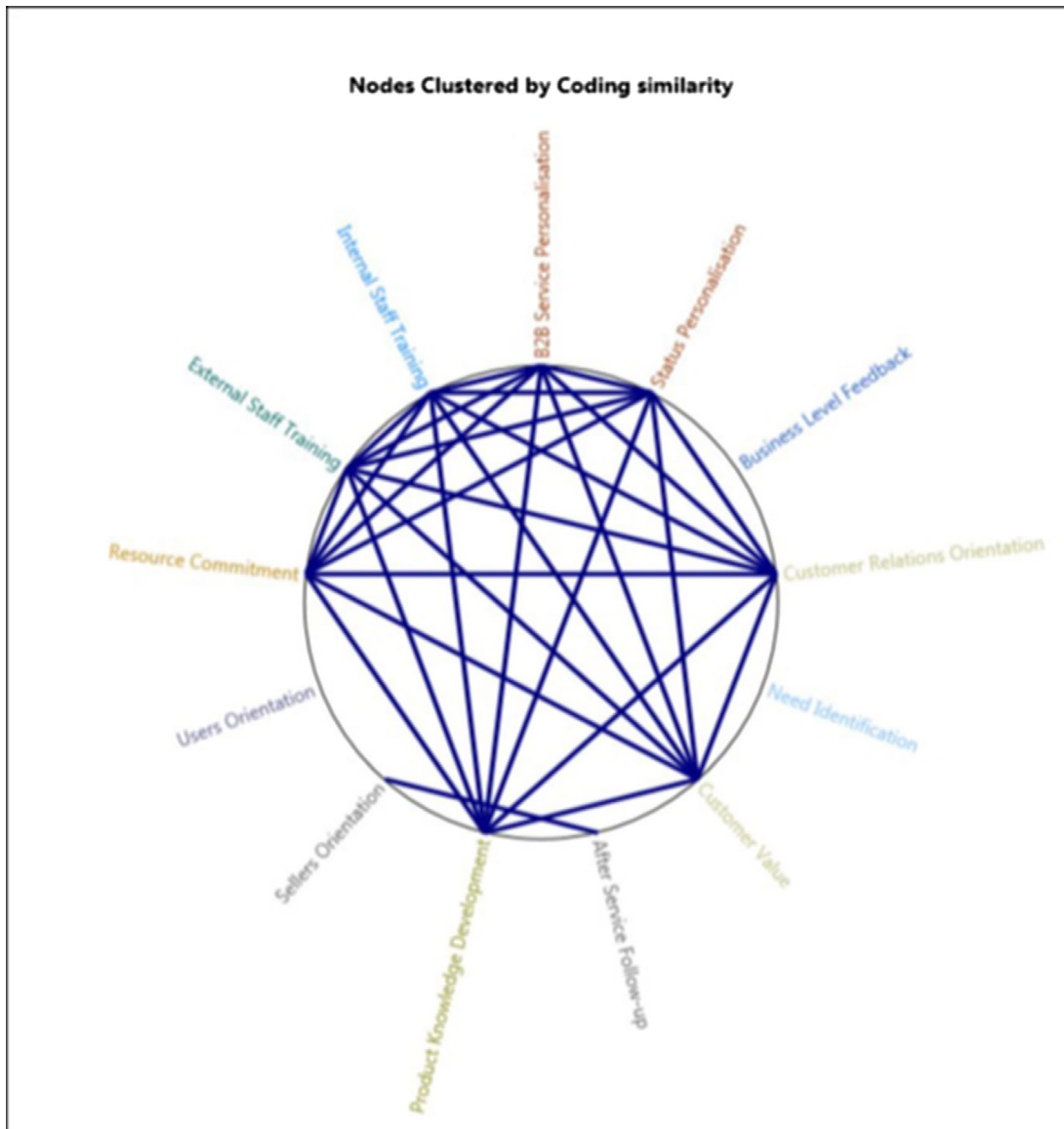
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MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Customer relationship management (CRM) experiences of Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing firms: A qualitative study

Andy Fred Wali^{1*}, Idika Awa Uduma² and Len Tiu Wright³

Abstract: This study explored customer relationship management (CRM) experiences of business-to-business (B2B) marketing firms in the mobile telecommunications sector using the qualitative focus group approach and the study drew on the resource-based view. The qualitative focus group approach was adopted and two focus groups were held, which comprise 10 staff of mobile telecommunications B2B firms. The interview data were analysed using thematic template and content analysis, respectively, with the aid of Nvivo 10 software. The study found four emerging themes, which characterise CRM experiences of mobile telecommunications B2B marketing firms and they include: resource commitment; product knowledge development; customer orientation behaviour; and B2B service personalisation. The study concluded that the nature of relationship between B2Bs and their principal operators is product/sale oriented rather than customer oriented. This study validates the RBV and offered recommendations based on its thematic findings.

Subjects: Marketing; Marketing Management; Relationship Marketing; Services Marketing

Keywords: CRM; B2B; mobile telecommunications; qualitative; Nvivo 10; Nigeria



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study explored customer relationship management (CRM) experiences of business-to-business (B2B) marketing firms in the Nigerian mobile telecommunications sector (MTS) and adopts the qualitative focus group approach. The study drew on the resource-based view. B2B firms in the Nigerian MTS have created an estimated 5,000 direct and indirect employments since the sector's liberalisation in the year 2000. The sector currently contributes to Nigeria's treasury through corporation and employees taxes. However, inadequate commitment from the side of mobile telecommunications operators had limited service delivery capacity of their B2B intermediaries towards customers and consumers alike. This study exposes four themes which influence relationship management experiences of B2Bs and these themes serves as practical framework for improving business relationships between operators and B2Bs for effective customer and consumer service. These findings if adopted will help reduce buyers and users' service frustrations, and enhance users' trust with operators for maximising their satisfaction.

1. Background

The purpose of this paper is to investigate customer relationship management (CRM) experiences of business-to-business (B2B) marketing firms and how this experience influences their performance in the mobile telecommunications sector (MTS) of Nigeria. However, the role of B2B firms in facilitating positive experiences of producers and final consumers cannot be carpeted. This is obviously because its origin is traceable to centuries ago as it emerged to bridge the supply and purchasing gap between producer and manufacturers, and wholesalers/retailers as well as the final consumers. The review of related literature revealed that there is no generally accepted definition of B2B organisation, but researchers had described B2B establishment by their operations and practices. Therefore, we conceptualise B2B firms in the mobile telecommunications context as channel intermediaries who buy or distribute products and services of mobile telecommunications operators from the point of production to small buyers (retailers) who buy and sell to final consumers. Also, in some cases, in Nigeria for example, the B2B firms also sell certain services directly to final consumers (Figure 1).

However, the Nigerian MTS is presently adjudged as one of the largest and fastest growing markets in Africa with about 128 million GSM users and as well one of the largest sources of revenues to the Nigerian Government of about US \$30 billion as of December 2013 (NCC, 2013). The sector has created about 20,000 direct first-tier employment for vendors, Public Relations agencies, operators' call centres and security firms between the years 2005 and 2013, as well as an estimated 30 million indirect employment. Furthermore, available reports have shown that B2B firms in the MTS have specifically created about 5,000 direct and indirect jobs (NCC, 2013). This is also an indication that the sector contributes financially to the treasury of the three tiers of government (federal, state and local government, respectively) through direct and indirect taxes. The B2B sector in the Nigerian telecommunications industry has contributed to the growth in National GDP (from 0.1% in 2002 when Nigerians began to invest into the B2B sector to 3.2% in 2013) (NCC, 2013). Hence, the intervention of B2B firms in the sector is believed to have contributed to increasing the rate of service complaints' responses from the main mobile telecommunications operators in Nigeria. However, despite this much lauded impact of B2B firms in the MTS on the Nigerian public, much is still needed to be known about how the parent mobile telecommunications operators in Nigeria relate with B2B firms to provide business support and boost B2B capacity in order to eliminate the perceived hitches experienced by customers of mobile telecommunications operators.

2. Theoretical foundation and literature

This paper draws on resource-based view (RBV) which emphasises the application of firms' tangible or intangible resources aimed at turning potentials of immediate competitive advantage into a sustained long-term competitive advantage (Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984). Hooley and Greenley (2005) argued that firms' competitive advantage and performance depend on their resource strengths. However, several researchers have raised arguments against and for the RBV, like Newbert (2007) argued that RBV ought to be anchored on firms' capabilities rather than resources. For example, firms need to know how to drive impactful performances using available resources. Also, Liao, Kickul, and Ma (2009) in their view also propose greater importance for firms' capabilities rather than resources. Consequently, in our opinion, earlier proponents of the RBV founded the theory on the basis of those firms' capabilities for competitiveness, which could be realised through a holistic combination of financial, technological and human resources capabilities, respectively. Therefore, this study drew on the financial, technological and human resource perspectives of RBV in understanding the CRM experiences of B2B marketing firms in the Nigerian MTS. "CRM is everything in business, because it is the catalyst for a responsible, profitable and customer-focused organization" (Wali, Wright, & Uduma, 2015, p. 45). It is viewed as a process because relationships between firms and their

Figure 1. How B2B marketing firms operate.

Source: Wali, Uduma and Wright (2015)



customers take the processes of prospecting, offering, acceptance, purchase and consumption (Ata & Toker, 2012; Iriana & Buttle, 2006; Payne & Frow, 2005; Sin, Tse, & Yim, 2005; Zablah, Bellenger, & Johnston, 2004). Furthermore, CRM has been defined as technological tools that help improve the degree of interaction between customers and firms, and it is key to predict business success (Mendoza, Marius, Pérez, & Grimán, 2007; Peppard, 2000). Also, Wali et al. (2015) defined CRM from the human capacity perspective and they argued that CRM employees play a critical role in executing CRM programme, more so, because employees help in harnessing and directing CRM process and technology infrastructure in order to optimise customer service and profitability (Mendoza et al., 2007). Researchers “have argued that a reason for the low level of academic research in business markets could be the complexity of studying this area, and point to a need for further research on understanding customer satisfaction in B2B marketing” (Sheth & Sharma, 2006 cited in Ata & Toker, 2012, p. 497). Therefore, some overarching research questions in this study include:

RQ1: What is the nature of relationship between B2B marketing firms and their principal mobile telecommunications operators?

RQ2: What factors influence CRM experiences of B2B firms, in the marketing of services of mobile telecommunications operators in Nigeria?

3. Research value

Following the aim of this study, the value is therefore to understand the CRM experiences of B2B marketing firms and to unearth the potential collaborative customer relationship competencies between B2B marketing firms and their principal operators using the resource-based theory (RBT). Furthermore, the study also attempts to strengthen existing progress on CRM literature that emphasises the imperative of building positive CRM experiences with B2B intermediaries.

However, searching through the extant literature (see Table 1), it is observed that most studies had concentrated on B2Bs’ CRM process infrastructure and investment potentials in the B2B industries of Asia, Middle East and Europe. But there is an absence of studies into CRM experiences of B2B marketing firms in the Nigerian MTS using a holistic CRM approach (technology, people and process); hence, this study is designed to fill the gap.

3.1. Research strategy

The interpretivist qualitative research approach was used in this research. Interpretivism is a contrasting ontology to the positivist doctrine and argues that the difference between people, institutions and object under investigation requires the interactional involvement of the social actor to understand the subjective meaning of the phenomenon (Bryman, 2012; Wali & Nwokah, 2016; Wali et al., 2015). Therefore, considering this study’s research questions, we therefore found the qualitative interpretivist approach the most suitable. This is because it allows the social researchers to interact and play an active role in the process of collecting qualitative data for understanding the meaning and behaviour of the phenomenon. More specifically, the social constructivist focus group interview approach is used for collecting data from representatives of firms and our justification for choosing the FGA is because it saves time and money as well as allows for collection of rich and quality data from respondents (Bryman, 2012; Wali & Wright, 2016).

3.2. Qualitative sampling strategy

Two B2B firms in the MTS were purposively sampled in this study (Bryman, 2012). Our rationale for selecting two B2B firms was due to the fact that these firms were the leading trade partners of MT operators in Nigeria. Secondly, they were the first two entrants into the MT B2B sector in 2002, after the liberation of the industry in Nigeria, which implies that they have been operating in this sector for over 13 years. Thirdly, because they individually have over 30 branches across Nigeria with staff strength of over 100. Further, the purposive sampling approach was used to identify and recruit the participants for this study. Thereafter, we carefully selected five key staffs each from both firms, which includes: operations managers, sales managers, customer care managers and supervisors

Table 1. Key literature

Author (s)	Description/Context	Setting	Key findings
Ata and Toker (2012)	Investigate the effects of CRM (CRM) practices on customer satisfaction and firm performance in Turkish B2B markets	Quantitative	Their study found that CRM adoption has a significant positive effect on both B2B customer satisfaction and organisational performance in B2B settings. Also, CRM adoption significantly affects B2B organisations' sales and market share performance
Perez et al. (2013)	Learning about customers: managing B2B alliances between small-technology start-ups and industry leaders	Qualitative case-based approach	Their study found four key learning themes: specialisation; discovery; building business alliance from inception; and joint learning strategy. According to their findings, this learning helps in increasing understanding, internal and external learning cooperation between the business partners which emerges from an exchange of existing knowledge to develop new knowledge
Yang (2015)	Attempted to understand the impact of B2B customer loyalty in the mobile telecommunications industry in China	Quantitative	His study showed that dedication, B2B customer satisfaction and trust in mobile network operators have a positive influence on B2B-specific relationship investments as well as contend providers' loyalty towards continuous dispensation of mobile network service. Also that switching cost and dependence on mobile network operators have a negative influence on B2B loyalty towards the services of MNOs
Zeng et al. (2003)	Investigated the role of CRM in B2B sectors	Literature Review	They found that holistic CRM adoption in the B2B sectors is essential to the success of sales, marketing, customer service and information support departments of B2B firms
Rauyrue and Miller (2007)	Investigated how relationship quality influences B2B customer loyalty in Australian SMEs	Quantitative	Their study reported that trust, commitment, satisfaction and service quality influence B2B attitudinal loyalty, whereas satisfaction and service quality alone had a positive influence on B2B behavioural loyalty
Tsiros et al. (2009)	Examined how commitment influences B2B Exchange relationships	Quantitative	Found that positive commitment influences and reduces B2B firms' quest for exploration of alternatives, curtails bias for evaluation of alternatives and curtails action towards switching to available B2B alternatives
Streukens, van Hoesel, and de Ruyter (2011)	Investigated returns on marketing investments in B2B customer relationships management context	Quantitative	They found that investment on B2B customer relationship has a significant positive impact on optimising marketing investment in terms of profitability and resource allocation
Pine (2015)	Examined how B2B firms create economic value by designing and transforming the experiences of their customers	Case study approach	They found that firms identify what their customers want through their previous transaction experiences and produce the transformation that they need to create an ever greater level of economic value
Gil-Saura et al. (2009)	Explored how relationship value, trust, commitment and satisfaction intention are created and defined in a B2B relationship context in the Spanish manufacturing sector	Quantitative	They found that relationship value has a positive impact on trust, commitment, satisfaction and loyalty towards the B2B suppliers. More specifically, trust showed a direct positive impact on commitment, while loyalty also showed a positive impact on the satisfaction of B2B suppliers
Naumann, Haverila, Sajid Khan, and Williams (2010)	In their study attempted to understand the triggers of defection among satisfied B2B service customers in the B2B service industry of UAE	Quantitative	They found that switching motives and reasons for satisfied B2B customers were better price, better service system, better value reputation and better relationship communication
Barry et al. (2008)	Carried out a cross-cultural investigation of relationship strength in B2B services on service buyers in 42 countries	Quantitative	Their study showed that relationship strength has a positive influence on B2B customer satisfaction, trust and affective commitment. More specifically, relationship quality influences the perceived value on relationship strength and switching costs further showed an influence of relationship quality on relationship strength which, in turn influences substitution scarcity
Lee and Park (2008)	Investigated the impact of mandatory adoption of mobile information technology on marketing performance in the B2B service sector using the technology satisfaction model (TSM)	Quantitative	Their study found that perceived loss of control has a negative influence on B2B user satisfaction. Also, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness showed a positive influence on user satisfaction and user satisfaction positively impacts perceived marketing performance
Zahay (2008)	Examined the factors that make for successful B2B customer database management in the B2B industry	Quantitative	The study found that successful B2B organisations distinguish their services from competitors in terms of the adoption and practice of positive customer information management system and these capabilities showed a positive influence on the B2B firms' performance

because these officers' responsibilities allow them to interface with operators and final customers; thus, they possess the right knowledge and experiences in helping to achieve the study objectives.

4. Ethics, conducting focus groups and sizes

We formally wrote two separate letters to the chosen B2B firms via their official email addresses soliciting their interest and permission to be joined in the study. Secondly, after one week, we received a positive response; thereafter, we wrote again requesting for a suitable time for the focus group interview. The two B2B focus groups were conducted in September 2014 in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The first B2B focus group interview lasted for 1 hour and 48 minutes and the second lasted for 1 hour and 39 minutes. Summarily, two B2B focus groups were held by this study with five employees each in each of the group, making it a total of 10 participants. Studies in the literature have demonstrated that number of participants in a qualitative research is not necessarily important, but the quality of data collected is. Thus, researchers proposed as follows the number of participants: 6–12 (Wali & Wright, 2016); 2–8 (Silva & Wright, 2005); 4–9 (Warr, 2005); 5–10 (Livingstone, 2006; Livingston & Bober, 2003); and 2–8 (Bennett et al., 2009). Hence, based on these propositions, we therefore present that the number of participants sampled in this study was adequate considering their wealth of experiences.

4.1. Coding and data analysis

We used the thematic template and content analysis techniques, respectively, in analysing the data we generated with the aid of Nvivo 10 software for data reduction, thematic coding and weight. The data analysis process started first by transcribing the raw interview data; secondly, we carefully read through the data for correction. Thirdly, we read through the corrected transcripts to make sense of CRM experiences as reported by interviewees in order to identify initial themes and thereafter transcripts were imported into Nvivo 10 software for proper coding and further rigorous analysis (Figure 2).

4.2. Definition of key themes

The quotes on Nvivo 10 coding summary by node report are used to define the themes emerging from this study because it helps justify that the themes actually emerged from the study and not from the researchers' imagination (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Result on thematic coding analysis for B2B focus group 1.

Source: Research Nvivo 10 analysis (2015).

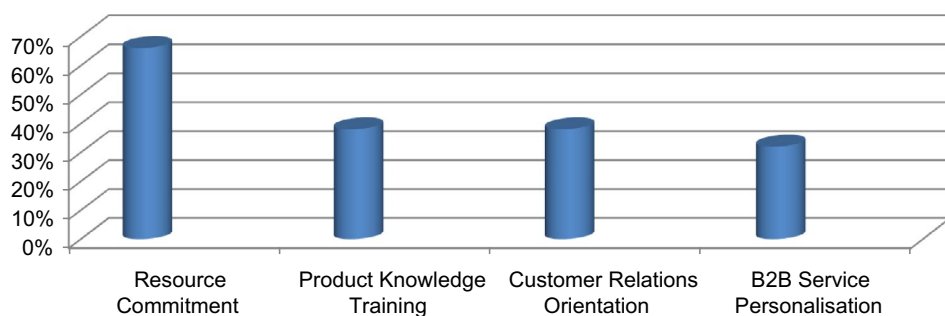
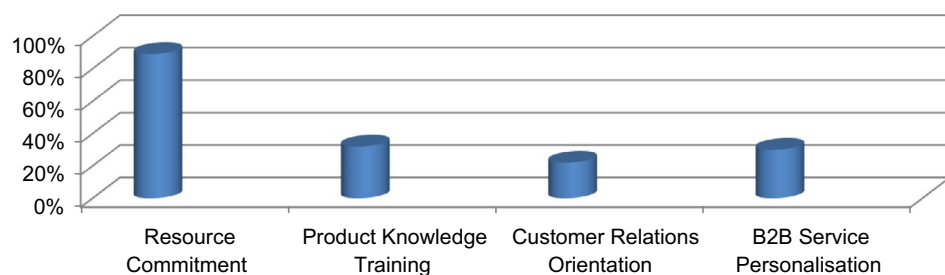


Figure 3. Result on thematic coding analysis for B2B focus group 2.

Source: Research Nvivo 10 analysis (2015).



Theme 1: Resource commitment

Resource commitment deals with the capacity development expectations of B2B firms from the principal operators they represent. The resource commitment emphasised organising training for personnels of channel intermediaries and provision of modern twenty-first-century IT infrastructure in order to be able to handle the quantum of complaints they receive from the final service consuming public. Further, reports from interviewees indicate that if operators would be committing more resources into their channel intermediaries, 40% of the overheated customer challenges would be handled. See sub-themes: internal and external staff trainings.

Well in my position as the customer care manager of ASS LTD I will say they do, but it may not be the way you expect. For example they usually advise that we handle our customers with care I mean each time we have a general meeting of service distributors. But I have not seen any strong commitment from any of the operators we represent. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 1)

Yes I believe the firms know the importance of CRM to their success, like my colleague mentioned they do emphasize it, but I expect that they should be giving our staff equal training like they give to their main staff, because we do more of the customer care job. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 2)

I mean if we have extra support from the operators in terms of giving us resources to help them boost customer experience from the grass root that will be fine. Because they have millions of customers and it is not possible for them to relate very effectively with all their customers in Nigeria but that can be made possible from the channel intermediaries. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 2)

Theme 2: Product knowledge training

Product knowledge training and development deals with experiences of staff of B2B firms regarding the regular product knowledge training that is offered by principal firms, which B2B firms (channel intermediaries) represent and how this product should be administered and used by the final consumers.

In the recent time we have had cases where some of our staffs are specifically selected for over one or two days training and these trainings were holistic. They are usually based on issues that has to do with all the operator's telecoms products and how it can be administered properly, so in cause of equipping us on product knowledge they also bring issue of how to manage customer relationship because that is the backbone of what we do. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 2)

Just to support Operation Manager every operator we represent like the four players have provided us with computer gadgets, data and other facilities that enables us to handle customer complaints that are within our powers. Like so far it is only the leading operator that has a better technology that support us to handle certain issues easily which is called chain technology. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 1)

Theme 3: Customer relations orientation

Customer relations orientation is about the experiences of B2B firms in which they reported that those principal operators whom they represent do not have customer relationship orientation, thus have not made serious commitments to training staff members of B2B marketing firms on the twenty-first-century CRM qualities whilst handling customer complaints, claiming that B2B marketing firms are rather closer to the final target market. This signals negative and weak customer orientation behaviour.

So from time to time in meetings, conferences and seminars as well as in other business contacts they emphasize the issue of CRM on the need to handle your customers more than you can even handle yourself, because they pay your bills. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 2)

We are here because of the customers and the customers are also there because of us, so I mean without the customers there will not be telecoms firms anywhere and so knowing how important this customers are to the operators they have also made that a top priority by educating their partners of need to have good rapport with customers so that there will be in terms of the administration of this products from them (operators) to customers. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 1)

Theme 4: B2B service personalisation

B2B service personalisation according to interviewees' report reveals their experiences of B2B service personalisation and how their principal operators offer B2B service personalisation. This is aimed at strengthening the business cordiality between operators and B2B intermediaries, which is currently believed to be absent in consumer market.

Each time a new product or service or there is a new development we usually receive emails and text messages from the operators and it is personally addressed to the name of the person who handles such responsibility in this company, for example: Attention John, the operations manager of ABC. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 1)

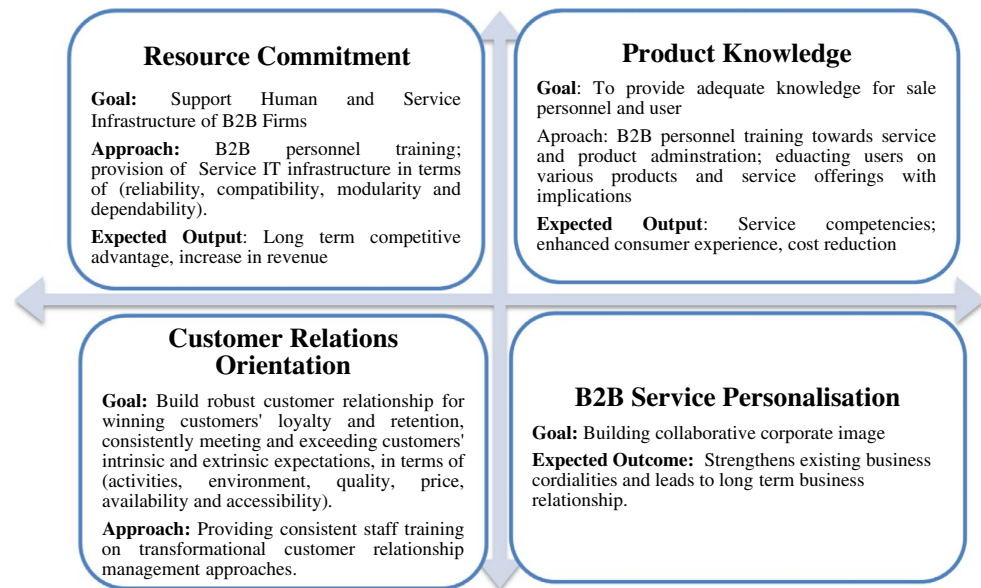
But as an organisation we do receive emails and text messages that is personally referenced to my position and my name on it as the operations manager of this firm, especially when we are invited for a meeting on new developments, I mean with respect to specific operator. (Participant in B2B Focus Group 2)

5. Discussion of findings and conclusions

Key findings evolve around four major themes, which include: resource commitment behaviour; product knowledge training initiatives; customer relations orientation; and B2B service personalisation strategy. More so, these four keys provide answers to research question one, which considers the factors that underpin CRM experiences of B2B firms in the MTS of Nigeria. More specifically, in-depth explanation into each of the key themes indicates that the nature of relationship between B2B firms and their principal was more on the product orientation rather than customer orientation. This is so because findings illustrate that operators were performing positively well on B2B product knowledge development and B2B service personalisation, whilst performance on resource commitment and customer orientation initiatives was poor. This finding provides answers to research question two on the nature of relationship that exists between the principal operators and intermediaries. More specifically, finding on operators' poor attitude towards resource commitment and customer orientation behaviours on B2Bs' capacity development is inconsistent with the findings of (Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro, & Cervera-Taulet, 2009; Tsiros, Ross, & Mittal, 2009). This is because findings from these sources reported that relationship value had a positive influence on B2B firms' brand commitment, whereas our study finding demonstrates that poor resource commitment had a negative influence on B2B firms' staff capacity development and productivity. Inadequate provision of CRM infrastructure by principal operators underpins experiences of B2B marketing firms in the Nigerian MTS.

Additionally, this study shows that adequate resource commitment into B2B firms' CRM infrastructure leads to positive B2B service performance (see also Ata & Toker, 2012; Barry, Dion, & Johnson, 2008; Pine, 2015; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007; Yang, 2015; Zeng, Wen, & Yen, 2003). This implies that organisations, which are customer conscious, would prioritise CRM programmes so as to enable their intermediaries to serve customers satisfactorily (see also Lee & Park, 2008; Perez, Whitelock, & Florin, 2013; Zahay, 2008). Further this study contributes to advancing the existing bowl of knowledge in RBV of (Hooley & Greenley, 2005; Liao et al., 2009; Newbert, 2007; Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984). This is because our findings illustrate that there is need for principal operators of mobile telecommunications services to build strong business partnership or alliances with B2Bs by committing resources for improving human and physical infrastructure of partners for satisfactory service delivery. In conclusion, the purpose of this study has been actualised and we therefore conclude that:

Figure 4. B2B CRM matrix for building effective CRM collaboration and service delivery.



- (1) Resource commitment behaviour, product knowledge development, customer relations orientation and B2B service personalisation underpin CRM experiences of B2B marketing firms in the MT sector of Nigeria.
- (2) The nature of relationship that exists between the B2B marketing firms and principal mobile telecommunications firms is a product–sale relationship. In other words, profit underpinned their relationship rather than customer satisfaction (see also Figure 4).

6. Implications and recommendations

The implication of this study's findings is that it has high strategic importance to policy-makers and policy-drivers in the MTS of Nigeria, especially when the key themes and recommendations are explored, though the findings are not intended to be generalised. Also, for researchers, it will set the riding pace for theoretical and operational literature in advancing the knowledge of B2B firms' CRM experiences. However, the recommendations of this study rest on its thematic findings. Thus, we recommend as follows: for resource commitment, mobile telecommunications firms should build strong business/customer partnership by making resource commitment that would assist to improve the human capacity of their B2B partners. This partnership would empower employees of B2B marketing firms in rendering swift customer service with the aim of reducing loads of customer complaints. However, a consideration of this recommendation on resource commitment will transcend into positive customer orientation behaviour from principal operators to the B2B marketing firms. Secondly, for product knowledge training and development, we recommend for operators to improve upon their trainings for their B2B marketing firms, by carrying out regular and holistic product, service trainings on current as well as new products in the market. This is because reports from B2B staff interviewees indicate that trainings-based product knowledge was lopsided and limited; however, it would help build upon existing B2B service personalisation with channel intermediaries. Consequently, this study is limited in terms of sample size, 10 interviewees, and to the Nigerian MTS. Thirdly, qualitative examination into CRM experiences of B2B marketing firms in other utility sectors in Nigeria with higher sample size could form a basis for further research. Furthermore, it is also important to explore the implications of B2B service personalisation between B2B marketing firms and their principal partners on B2B service loyalty using the mixed method strategy.

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Appendix A

Qualitative B2B in the GSM telecoms sector 03/09/2015 13:26

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
<i>Node</i>						
<i>Nodes\B2B service personalisation</i>						
<i>Document</i>						
<i>Internals\Focus group for ASS\Focus group interview data with second B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0203	4			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:06
The Telco's also send personalise SMS and emails to company like myself I have received personalised SMS from almost all the operators we represent with my name on it in the capacity of GM sales of this company.						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:07
If it is to their trade partners' yes they personalised it, I mean they mostly do their personalised service to their trade partners or channel partners.						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:09
Each time a new product or service or there is a new development we usually receive emails and text messages from the operators and it is personally addressed to the name of the person who handles such responsibility in this company, for example: Attention John, the operations manager of ABC.						
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:10
Yes they do personalise the messages or text they send to our company.						
<i>Internals\Focus group for MUN\Focus group interview data with first B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0199	3			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:44
But as an organisation we do receive emails and text messages that is personally referenced to my position and my name on it as the operations manager of this firm especially when we are invited for a meeting on new developments, I mean with respect to specific operator						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:47
For over many years that I have been with two mobile firms sincerely I have not received any email or text to me that bears my names on it and that is not good enough, I say so because at our level as trade partners we send such sensitive SMS's to our customers those whom we have their details talk less of the operators, they do not. But like my partner said as an organisation we do receive personalised messages and emails directed to my office with my name on it, sometimes when they are informing me about voucher issues which I had submitted to their office, yes they do.						
I have not received any message that sound like this from my providers, but in my office I have received well addressed SMS for meeting purposes.						
<i>Nodes\B2B service personalisation>Status personalisation</i>						
<i>Document</i>						
<i>Internals\Focus group for ASS\Focus group interview data with second B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0113	3			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:06
Like myself I have received a personalised SMS from almost all the operators we represent with my name on it in the capacity of GM sales of this company.						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:07

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
I mean they mostly do their personalised service to their trade partners or channel partners.						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:09
It is personally addressed to the name of the person who handles such responsibility in this company, for example: Attention John, the operations manager of ABC.						
<i>Internals\Focus group for MUN\Focus group interview data with first B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0120	3			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:44
But as an organisation we do receive emails and text messages that is personally referenced to my position and my name on it as the operations manager of this firm especially when we are invited for a meeting on new developments.						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:46
But like my partner said as an organisation we do receive personalised messages and emails directed to my office with my name on it, sometimes when they are informing me about voucher issues which I had submitted to their office.						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:48
I have not received any message that sound like this from my providers, but in my office I have received well addressed SMS for meeting purposes.						

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
<i>Nodes\Customer relations orientation</i>						
<i>Document</i>						
<i>Internals\Focus group For ASS\Focus group interview data with second B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0129	1			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:46
Here we perceives CRM as been very important, in the sense that gone are those days when organizations have customers and you do not know their needs, their problems, what they facing and you do not know their concerns; "so haven known this as an organization what we observe is that customers need to be treated very well, customers need to be closer to us and we also embark on ensuring that at every point in time we reach out to our customers' needs and wants						
<i>Internals\Focus group for MUN\Focus group interview data With first B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0383	6			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:36
We are here because of the customers and the customers are also there because of us, so I mean without the customers there will not be telecoms firms anywhere and so knowing how important this customers are to the operators they have also made that a top priority by educating their partners of need to have good rapport with customers so that there will be in terms of the administration of this products from them (operators) to customers.						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:37
So from time to time in meetings, conferences and seminars as well as other forum they hammer on the issue of CRM on the need to handle your customers more than you can even handle yourself because they pay your bills.						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:50
So after we do the sim swap we do call the line immediately to know if the line is now working or we ask you to fix it on in the next three to four hours or we request as they live to give alternative number to get in touch with them to find out if the sim we swapped is working or not otherwise we ask that you come back for further upgrade.						

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:52
<p>Just like after sale service you know just to add to what she said, we usually follow up customers because as they come to this centre for instance we collect their data and from your data we also demand for any alternative number which we can use should any issue arise.</p>						
				5	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:52
<p>We usually call back on several other issues like recharge cards, so provided we have your number and service network is intact we always call back to follow up on customers. This after service calls is funded by our firm.</p>						
				6	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:54
<p>Yes we do follow up on our customer after we have sorted out their problems, for example in my department which is voucher printing and sales, if some business retailers return vouchers which deals with over recharge card, we will take it and sort the problem then the next day I or any of my staff here will call that business retailer to find out if the voucher recharge was successful.</p>						

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
<p><i>Nodes\Customer relations orientation\After service follow-up</i></p> <p><i>Document</i></p> <p><i>Internals\Focus group for MUN\Focus group interview data with first B2B firm</i></p>						
No		0.0114	3			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:51
<p>We request as they live to give alternative number to get in touch with them to find out if the sim we swapped is working or not otherwise we ask that you come back for further upgrade</p>						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:52
<p>We usually call back on several other issues like recharge cards, so provided we have your number and service network is intact we always call back to follow up on customers. This after service calls is funded by our firm</p>						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:54
<p>We will take it and sort the problem then the next day I or any of my staff here will call that business retailer to find out if the voucher recharge was successful</p>						
<p><i>Nodes\Customer relations orientation\Customer value</i></p> <p><i>Document</i></p> <p><i>Internals\Focus group for ASS\Focus group interview data with second B2B firm</i></p>						
No		0.0067	1			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:47
<p>So haven known this as an organization what we observe is that customers need to be treated very well, customers need to be closer to us and we also embark on ensuring that at every point in time we reach out to our customers' needs and wants.</p>						
<p><i>Internals\Focus group for MUN\Focus group interview data with first B2B firm</i></p>						
No		0.0083	2			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:37
<p>So knowing how important this customers are to the operators they have also made that a top priority by educating their partners of need to have good rapport with customers so that there will be in terms of the administration of this products from them.</p>						
<p>They hammer on the issue of CRM on the need to handle your customers more than you can even handle yourself because they pay your bills.</p>						

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
<i>Nodes\Product knowledge development</i>						
<i>Document</i>						
<i>Internals\Focus group for ASS\Focus group interview data with second B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0328	3			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:21
<p>So some of the customers do not understand some very aspect of the services they subscribe to and that is what I mean by understanding. Also some of the challenge is also that most of the customers that are using this facilities are not well grinded with the product 'I need a blackberry phone' and they just acquire a line and insert the sim when it develops trouble the term it as network service problem but in actual sense it is not, I think customers just lack of knowledge on the usage of those products.</p>						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:28
<p>I said that one of the challenges the customers have is to understand basic things about the products they buy, because not forgetting that the platform has been used for marketing so many products, some of this VAS messages you are seeing is for marketing and the people that has new products also use that channel to market their product.</p>						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:28
<p>For me some of this customers are the causes of their problem, because whatever the companies offer them they subscribe even when they have not read the service content and even when they do not need that service they will go ahead to subscribe, I mean they lack common sense on these services and products of the operators.</p>						
<p>In the recent time we have had cases where you know some of our staff specifically selected for over one or two or three days training and these trainings were holistic; they are not just dwelling on CRM. The trainings are usually based on issues that has to do with all the operator's telecoms products and how it can be administered properly, although I feel that the hallmark here is just customer relationship because if you are aware and you do not know how to administer the same product to the user it means you have not known the product. So in cause of equipping us on product knowledge they also bring the issue of CRM because that is the backbone of what we do.</p>						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:58
<p>Yes you know part of what the operators do in most training they organize is on product knowledge, so from time to time our officers do go for trainings on that; so there are so many devices available in handling such customer cases. Like my colleague said on her department's system it may not be only sim swap issues that they can treat but other issues through that system like data issues maybe a customer bought a plan and is not able to access it. So the system platform is well organise in such a way that we are able to handle those menial issue customers experience, the leading operator have established a kind of chain technology that enables us here because this customers cannot access them directly, so they empower us with good technology and gadget to attend to those customer issues within our coverage.</p>						
Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 09:00
<p>Just to support Operation Manager every operator we represent like the four players have provided us with computer gadgets, data and other facilities that enables us to handle customer complaints that are within our powers, like so far it is only the leading operator that has a better technology that supports us to handle certain issues easily which is called chain technology.</p>						
<i>Nodes\Product knowledge development\Sellers orientation</i>						
<i>Document</i>						
<i>Internals\Focus group for MUN\Focus group interview data with first B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0280	4			

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:44
The trainings are usually based on issues that have to do with all the operator's telecoms products and how it can be administered properly.						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:44
Because if you are aware and you do not know how to administer the same product to the user it means you have not known the product. So in cause of equipping us on product knowledge they also bring the issue of CRM because that is the backbone of what we do.						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:58
Part of what the operators do in most training they organise is on product knowledge, so from time to time our officers do go for trainings on that; so there are so many devices available in handling such customer cases. Like my colleague said on her department's system it may not be only sim swap issues that they can treat but other issues through that system like data issues maybe a customer bought a plan and is not able to access it. So the system platform is well organise in such a way that we are able to handle those menial issue customers experience, the leading operator have established a kind of chain technology.						
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 09:01
Every operator we represent like the four players have provided us with computer gadgets, data and other facilities that enables us to handle customer complaints that are within our powers, like so far it is only the leading operator that has a better technology that supports us to handle certain issues easily which is called chain technology.						

Nodes\Product knowledge development\Users orientation

Document

Internals\Focus group for ASS\Focus group interview data with second B2B firm

No		0.0127	3			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:22
So some of the customers do not understand some very aspect of the services they subscribe to and that is what I mean by understanding. Also some of the challenge is also that most of the customers that are using this facilities are not well grinded with the product						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:28
I said that one of the challenges the customers have is to understand basic things about the products they buy.						

Nodes\Resource commitment

Document

Internals\Focus group for ASS\Focus group interview data with second B2B firm

No		0.1522	21			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:42
Well in my position as the customer care manager of ASS LTD I will say they do, but it may not be the way you expect. For example they usually advise that we handle our customers with care I mean each time we have a general meeting of service distributors. But I have not seen any strong commitment from any of the operators' we represent.						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:44
Yes I believe the firms knows the importance of CRM to their success, like my colleague mentioned they do emphasize it, but I expect that they should be giving our staff equal training like they give to their main staff because we do more of the customer care job.						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:48

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
Reports\\ Coding summary by node report						
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:49
				5	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:51
				Page 7 of 13		

03/09/2015 13:26

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				6	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:53
				7	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:54
				8	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:56
				9	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:58
				10	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:00
				11	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:02
				12	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:12

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				13	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:15
The care centres is fully equipped with all it takes to handle a particular problem and our staffs there are well trained in handling specific issues if you visit any of them.						
				14	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:16
In every of our branches we have software given to us by the individual operators that we use in resolving problems and we are also given some level of powers and access to handle this issues, but our access is also restricted to sensitive issues.						
				15	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:18
We don't handle all kind of complaints but only those that we are empowered to do and that is within our ability.						
				16	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:25
We have here is laptops of operators and access codes to be able to resolve only permitted kind of customer issues, but we are trained on how to handle those issues like over scratch card problems about not specifically on managing customer relationship.						
				17	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:26
Again the problem we face with operators' is prompt response to issues that are transmitted to them for solution and that is according to them 'is attributed to the quantum of customers they are attending to' per time and so you cannot just report a particular problem now and it is resolved right away. We may have to wait for twenty-four hours before such issues will be resolved, however this is one reason why the operators said should commit resources to their trade partners to reduce these queues.						
				18	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:30
Again we are restricted by the operators to handle certain things whereas from their offices they are still unable to meet the complaints demand quickly, that was why I said they can collaborate with the intermediaries by funding them to help handle some of this major issues so as to reduce customer frustrations.						
Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding References	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				19	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:31
High volume of customer issues every day in fact I still insist that we are closer to the customers than the operators, so they should make our partnership more wider in order for us to help in reducing these challenges.						
				20	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:32
The short of the challenge I see is that we are only empowered to do little by the telecommunication operators, but we receive more complaints and pressure here than we are empowered to handle.						
				21	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:32
I think the telecommunication operators should increase the collaboration commitment with their channel partner to handle the increasing service challenges we and the final consumers are facing. I re-emphasize that they should train us sophisticatedly like they train their main staff because we are even doing bulk of the crazy work at the grass root.						
I think they should decentralise their service commitment by using the trade partners to handle this problem at the grass root.						
Internals\Focus group for MUN\Focus group interview data with first B2B firm						
No		0.0646	10			

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding References	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:39
<p>However they only say it like they are advising us, but they have not formally organised training for our staff that specifically concerns CRM just as they do for their staff I believe.</p>						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:39
<p>But for the area of the telecoms companies emphasizing CRM yes they have said it by mouth, but they have not spent their money and time to train us specifically for this.</p>						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:40
<p>Our employer is trying based on their strength to train us on this but for the operators we represent, I will say a capital NO they have not invited our staff for a specific training called "CRM" this is what we expect because we are faced with several customers complaint every day, so that is it.</p>						
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:45
<p>Yes that is true I also mentioned it earlier that there has not been a specific training for our staff on "CRM".</p>						
				5	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:46
<p>I do not think there has been a specific program or seminar or training organized where we are asked to present ourselves for the particular purpose called CRM development. But all the one's we have been attending which are organized by this operators are on general ground, 'but specifically, we have not', although I know they have so many plans towards this purpose because from time to time they roll our plans and back it up with trainings. So specifically I do not have any record when we attended training specifically on CRM skill development.</p>						
				6	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:48
<p>We expect specific training from the operators we serve which are four in number, if they are really sincere about relating with their customers we have all it takes to make their relationship with customers effective if only we are equipped because we face more customer complaints at this level than they do in their big office.</p>						

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				7	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:42
<p>Yes like I said the success the organization have achieved today is because we do not take it lightly with anybody who either by commission or omission try to commit any act to the detriment of our customers; this is because the successes we have achieved over the years is as a result of good relationship and partnership with the customers. So the CEO prides himself so much on that each time new staffs are brought into the company and so the first training they give them is on customer relationship so that we all will know how to handle our customer's, so if we do not have good CRM trainings and orientations for the staffs we will not enjoy the influx of customers we record in this area.</p>						
				8	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:45
<p>The management of this firm is committed to CRM that is why you can see the volume of people coming into our office you are here, in fact if not that we are trained to be customer sensitive we won't even give you the opportunity to interview us you know what I am talking about.</p>						
				9	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:43
<p>Yes we are always smiling and patient with customers because we have been trained and taught to do so otherwise you will be shown the way out.</p>						

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				10	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:49
<p>That brings me again to what my colleague said in the beginning that if these operators wants to sincerely reduce customer problems they will be more committed like boosting the working capacity of trade partners and expanding their scope to help in resolving other kind of cases because the common customer is at peace coming to report here than reporting online where solutions do not come easily.</p> <p><i>Nodes\Resource commitment\External staff training</i></p> <p><i>Document</i></p> <p><i>Internals\Focus group for ASS\Focus group interview data with second B2B firm</i></p>						
No		0.0626	17			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:42
<p>But I have not seen any strong commitment from any of the operators' we represent.</p>						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:44
<p>But I expect that they should be giving our staff equal training like they give to their main staff because we do more of the customer care job.</p>						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:50
<p>I mean if we have extra support from the operators in terms of giving us resources to help them boost customer experience from the grass root that will be fine.</p>						
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:52
<p>I think the operators should also give us the resources to help in boosting our service relationship with final consumers.</p>						
				5	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:55
<p>At least we expect that they give our customer care team equal trainings like their main staff because we face more customers' complaints every day than they do.</p>						
Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				6	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:56
<p>But they have not written to us to say please nominate 3 of your customer care staff for a training on CRM between this date to that date, we expect this.</p>						
				7	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:59
<p>Whereas we would expect that because this companies are very rich they should individually train our staff on CRM initiatives.</p>						
				8	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:59
<p>Should organise specialised training for our staff.</p>						
				9	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:16
<p>We are also given some level of powers and access to handle these issues, but our access is also restricted to sensitive issues.</p>						
				10	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:16

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				11	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:18
We don't handle all kind of complaints but only those that we are empowered to do and that is within our ability.						
				12	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:25
But we are trained on how to handle those issues like over scratch card problems about not specifically on managing customer relationship.						
				13	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:26
However this is one reason why said the operators should commit resources to their trade partners to reduce these queues.						
				14	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:30
That was why I said they can collaborate with the intermediaries by funding them to help handle some of these major issues so as to reduce customer frustrations.						
				15	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:31
In fact I still insist that we are closer to the customers than the operators, so they should make our partnership wider in order for us to help in reducing these challenges.						
				16	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:32
We are only empowered to do little by the telecommunication operators, but we receive more complaints and pressure here than we are empowered to handle.						
				17	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:33
I re-emphasize that they should train us sophisticatedly like they train their main staff because we are even doing bulk of the crazy work at the grass root.						
I think they should decentralise their service commitment by using the trade partners to handle this problem at the grass root.						
Internals\Focus group for MUN\ focus group interview data with first B2B firm						
No		0.0233	8			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:39
They have not formally organised training for our staff that specifically concerns CRM just as they do for their staff.						
Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:39
But they have not spent their money and time to train us specifically for this						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:41
But for the operators we represent, I will say a capital NO they have not invited our staff for a specific training called "CRM".						
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:45
I also mentioned it earlier that there has not been a specific training for our staff on "CRM".						
				5	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:46

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
There has been a specific program or seminar or training organized where we are asked to present ourselves for the particular purpose called CRM development.						
				6	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:47
So specifically I do not have any record when we attended training specifically on CRM skill development.						
				7	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:48
If they are really sincere about relating with their customers we have all it takes to make their relationship with customers effective if only we are equipped.						
<i>Nodes\Resource commitment\Internal staff training</i>						
<i>Document</i>						
<i>Internals\Focus group for ASS\ focus group interview data with second B2B firm</i>						
No		0.0199	5			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:48
We are very committed here to handle customers' network service problems, like I have been seeing you here for some days do you not observe that our staffs are friendly? Our staffs are patient with customers so as to hear their complaints and sort it out.						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 07:53
They only assist yes they only assist; it is our employer as a trade partner that sponsors our staff training.						
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:00
When a new staff is employed he or she undergoes compulsorily the customer care training.						
Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:02
So the sales representatives in each of this branches are also made to undergo this training as to keep them updated, keep them well informed on how to relate with customers.						
				5	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:12
Our staffs there are well trained in handling specific issues if you visit any of them.						
Internals\Focus group for MUN\ Focus group interview data with first B2B firm						
No		0.0174	4			
				1	ANDY FRED WALI	01/09/2015 08:40
Our employer is trying based on their strength to train us on this.						
				2	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:42
So the CEO prides himself so much on that each time new staffs are brought into the company and so the first training they give them is on customer relationship so that we all will know how to handle our customer's, so if we do not have good CRM trainings and orientations for the staffs we will not enjoy the influx of customers we record in this area.						

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number of coding references	Reference number	Coded by initials	Modified on
				3	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:43
The management of this firm is committed to CRM that is why you can see the volume of people coming into our office you are here, in fact if not that we are trained to be customer sensitive we won't even give you the opportunity to interview us you know what I am talking about.						
				4	ANDY FRED WALI	03/09/2015 08:43
Yes we are always smiling and patient with customers because we have been trained and taught to do so otherwise you will be shown the way out.						



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