An institutional approach to public relations professional project

A case study of Nigeria

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Dedication

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to

my late dad, Elder Michael Akinola Fashakin…ma man…R.I.P Dad

my mum, Oladoyin Oyindamola Fashakin (nee Shobakin). Thanks for all your efforts in raising four children all through University on your own and thanks for believing in me

and

my mother-in-law, Friedrike Kelch, who recently passed away. R.I.P, Kristoffer’s Oma
Appreciation

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Oludotun Kayode Fashakin
October 2018
...in the past it was seen as a function of errand people, but it has evolved to become a management function ....NIPR 3

There is no professional status of PR in Nigeria, anybody can wake up and say they are a PR person....EDU7

... because the profession is not as strictly regulated, you have pretenders, interlopers all parading themselves as PR practitioners...EDU1

Picture: Lagos PR industry Gala and Awards event organized by the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (Lagos Chapter) in December 2016.

From left to right:
Adesola Adewopo (Communications Manager, Chevron Nigeria),
Prof. Ralph Akinfeleye (Head of Mass Communications Department, University of Lagos)
Dr. Rotimi Oladele (NIPR President)
Mr. Olusegun McMedal (NIPR Chairman - Lagos State Chapter)
Mike Okereke (Veteran PR practitioner and Educator)
Honorable Tunde Braimoh (Member Lagos State House of Assembly)
# Table of Contents

Summary in English ............................................................................................................. 8
Summary in Danish ............................................................................................................. 11

**Chapter 1: Introduction** ........................................................................................................ 18

1.1 Evolve or be doomed ........................................................................................................ 19
1.2 PR professionalization in Nigeria .................................................................................... 21
   1.2.1 History, professionalization and professional status and recognition .................... 21
   1.2.2 PR’s image in Nigeria ............................................................................................... 23
   1.2.3 The NIPR code of conduct enforcement in Nigeria .................................................. 24
   1.2.4 PR education in Nigeria ............................................................................................ 25
1.3 Interrelated concerns for the PR profession in Nigeria ...................................................... 27
   1.3.1 Tensions emerging from the workplace, professional bodies and PR educational curriculum .......................................................................................................................... 28
   1.3.2 Insufficient insights into PR professionalization in Nigeria ...................................... 29
1.4 Professionalization and the PR field .................................................................................. 29
   1.4.1 Problematic direct approach to PR professionalization .......................................... 31
   1.4.2 The subtle approach to PR professionalization ....................................................... 33
1.5 Research Purpose ............................................................................................................ 37
   1.5.1 Research questions ................................................................................................... 38
1.6 Contributions .................................................................................................................. 39
1.7 Overview of the structure ............................................................................................... 39

**Chapter 2: Literature Review** ............................................................................................... 42

2.1 Brief overview of approaches to the study of professions within PR ............................... 43
   2.1.1 The traits approach ................................................................................................. 44
   2.1.2. The power approach ............................................................................................ 45
   2.1.3 The institutional approach ..................................................................................... 45
2.2 The power approach to PR professionalization ............................................................... 47
   2.2.1. PR practitioner autonomy myth ........................................................................... 49
   2.2.2 Controlled and Uncontrolled autonomy ................................................................. 50
   2.2.3 Controversial PR Practitioner role and pursuit of dominance in the workplace ...... 52
   2.2.4 Complex dominant coalition .................................................................................. 59
   2.2.5 What existing literature reveals about practitioner role and the way forward .......... 63
   2.2.6 Power to the practitioners ...................................................................................... 64
2.3 Towards an institutional approach for PR’s professional projects .................................... 71
2.4 Going beyond the traits and illusion of professional power ........................................... 73

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework - a neoinstitutional approach to PR professionalization ................................................................................................................. 76

3.1 Neo-institutional theory, a brief overview ................................................................. 77
  3.1.1 NIT roots and the institutionalization process and product .......................... 78
  3.1.2 Early conception of NIT .............................................................................. 79
  3.1.3 Recent conception of neoinstitutional theory ........................................... 83
  3.1.4 Drive for legitimacy and the PR field .......................................................... 86
3.2 Institutional logics for PR professional projects ...................................................... 88
  3.2.1 Constellation of logics .................................................................................. 90
3.3 Organization field where institutional actors interact .............................................. 92
3.4. SC as a theoretical foundation for studying the perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria .................................................................................................. 94
  3.4.1 Positioning this study on professional projects and the legitimacy of PR ...... 101
  3.4.2 More recent NIT as a theoretical framework for studying PR legitimacy in Nigeria ......................................................................................................... 102
  3.4.3 Tentative snapshot Nigeria’s PR organization field and a constellation of logics ........................................................................................................... 104
  3.4.4 Power relations within the constellation of logics ......................................... 105
3.5 Summary .................................................................................................................. 107

Chapter 4 Methodology ................................................................................................. 111

4.1 Applying Yin’s Case Study model ......................................................................... 112
  4.1.1 Research method ......................................................................................... 114
4.2 Analysis method ..................................................................................................... 124
4.4 Summary ................................................................................................................ 129

Chapter 5- Findings from the thematic analysis of the underlying perspectives affecting the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria ........................................................................... 131

5.1 Prominent themes of Nigerian corporate managers’ perception of PR ............... 131
  5.1.1 Organizing theme: Demographics - personal characteristics of top management 132
  5.1.2 Organizing theme: PR understanding ............................................................ 134
  5.1.3 Organizing theme: Professional status assessment ...................................... 140
  5.1.4 Organizing theme: Management Relations with in-house PR practitioners ... 142
  5.1.5 Organizing theme: Management’ Interactions with NIPR ............................ 144
  5.1.6 Summary of top managements’ perspectives of PR in Nigeria .................. 148
5.2 Prominent themes of Nigeria's Professional PR association’s perception of PR in Nigeria

5.2.1 Organizing theme: Demographics: personal characteristics of NIPR Interviewees

5.2.2 Organizing theme: PR Understanding

5.2.3 NIPR’s professional project for PR

5.2.4 Organizing theme: PR education

5.2.5 Organizing theme: NIPR membership and Code of conduct

5.2.6 Organizing theme: Interactions with management

5.2.7 Summary of NIPR’s perspective

5.3 Prominent themes of the PR educators’ perception of PR

5.3.1 Demographics

5.3.2 Organizing theme: PR understanding

5.3.3 Organizing theme: NIPR’s professional project by PR educators

5.3.4 Organizing theme: PR education programs

5.3.5 Organizing theme: PR educators’ interactions with NIPR

5.3.6 Summary of PR Educators’ perspective

5.4 Summary of findings

Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion

6.1. Developing the actors’ perspectives into institutional logics

6.1.1 Corporate logics

6.1.2. Professions logic (PL)

6.1.3. Educator logics (EL)

6.2. Contradictions emerging between the coexisting logics for PR in Nigeria

Contradiction 1: Misconception of PR as including sales and marketing management

Contradiction 2: Organizational resource needs instead of formal credentials

Contradiction 3: Compliance and enforcement of the NIPR’s laws

Contradiction 4: Overbearing accreditation demands caused by a lack of perceived benefits

Contradiction 5: Lack of awareness of NIPR’s initiatives

6.3 Applying a constellation of logics for understanding their effects on the perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria

6.3.1 The effect of the dominating corporate logics on the perception of the legitimacy of PR and PR professional project
6.4 A strategic response to the institutional complexities within Nigeria’s PR context…219

6.4.1 Applying a compromise strategic response to the institutional complexities for PR in Nigeria …………………………………………………………………………..220

6.4.2 An institutional approach to PR’s professional project in Nigeria …………………...226

6.5. Final thoughts on analysis of the perception of the legitimacy of PR, institutional complexities and PR’s professional project ………………………………………229

**Chapter 7: Conclusion** ……………………………………………………………………………………..232

7.1. RQ1 Which underlying perspectives affect the legitimacy of PR? ……………………232

7.1.1. RQ1a. How is PR perceived by Nigerian top managements? ……………………..233

7.1.2 RQ1b: How is PR perceived by Nigeria’s Professional association for PR - NIPR? ………………………………………………………………………………235

7.1.3 RQ1c: How is PR perceived by PR educators in Nigeria? …………………………236

7.2. RQ 2 How do perceptions of the legitimacy of PR differ from one another and affect the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria? ……………………………………………………237

7.3 RQ 3: How can we develop an institutional approach to the legitimacy in PR based on empirical evidence from a country-specific context? ………………………………………238

7.3.1 RQ3a. To what extent do these contradictions reflect theoretical approaches to professional legitimacy in the field of PR? …………………………………………239

7.3.2 RQ3b. Which contradictions between the actors’ perspectives on PR could be used to rethink theoretical approaches to professional legitimacy in the field of PR? ………240

7.4. Contribution ……………………………………………………………………………………………241

7.5 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research ……………………………244

**References** ………………………………………………………………………………………………246

Appendix 1: Interview guide for Management …………………………………………………264

Appendix 2: Interview guide for NIPR ……………………………………………………………265

Appendix 3 Interview guide for PR Educators ……………………………………………………267

Appendix 4: Interview request letter for NIJ ………………………………………………….269

Appendix 5: Interview request letter for NIPR …………………………………………………..270

Appendix 6 Collection of email interview requests and correspondences …………………271

Appendix 7: LinkedIn Interview request messages and responses …………………………275

Appendix 8 Nvivo Codes …………………………………………………………………………………276
Summary in English

The field of public relations (PR) is motivated by two interrelated ambitions of becoming (1) an autonomous social scientific discipline and (2) a respected and recognized profession (e.g., Frandsen & Johansen, 2010; Grunig, 1992). The latter motivation is of utmost interest in this research work. However, the application of the traits, power (e.g., Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016, Pieczka & L’Etang, 2001), and neoinstitutional approaches (e.g. Bartlett, Tywoniak, & Hatcher, 2007) for PR professional projects are yet to achieve recognition and legitimacy.

Despite the extensive research interest on PR professionalization, issues pertaining to the publics’ scepticism (e.g. L’Etang, 1996; Callison, 2004; Gabrielsen, 2004; Olatunji, 2014), perceived practitioner incompetence, misrepresentation of PR (Amujo & Melewar, 2011), difficulty in documenting PR’s value to organizations (e.g. Grunig, 1992; Laborde & Pompper, 2006; Lindenmann, 1997), and competition from communication professions (Lauzen, 1992; Hutton, 2001) etc. hinders PR’s legitimacy. More so, PR continues to develop at different rates across the world (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2009) while stigmatization against the profession persists (e.g. Merkelsen, 2011). Therefore, the field of PR is at a crossroad whereby it may have to evolve its professional project or remain a profession that lacks legitimacy in specific country-specific contexts.

Nigeria is the country-specific context for this study where PR arguably lacks legitimacy especially in workplace arena despite fulfilling the traditional traits for decades (e.g., Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Olatunji, 2014; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013; Samaila, 2015). This offers an opportunity for an original empirical study that contributes to research on professional projects in country-specific contexts. Therefore, the overall purpose of this study is to explore how and why the PR field could better explain and theorize its professional projects to gain legitimacy in the corporate workplaces. For this purpose, this study uses an institutional approach to examine PR’s professional project and legitimacy based on a case study of Nigeria. The following is the overarching research question of this study, which is followed by the main sub-questions:

How and why could the perspectives of top management, the professional association (NIPR) and PR educators influence PR’s professional project, and thereby contribute to the professional legitimacy of PR in country-specific contexts?
1. Which perspectives affect the legitimacy of PR?

2. How do these perceptions of the respective actors contribute to the underlying perspectives on the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria?

3. How can we develop an institutional approach to the legitimacy of PR based on empirical evidence from a country-specific context?

The epistemological orientation of this study is based on Berger and Luckmann’s (1991) social constructionism. This facilitates an exploration of the socially constructed meanings and perceptions of the macro-institutional actors influencing PR’s legitimacy in Nigeria. Based on this understanding, top managements, the professional association (NIPR) and educators are viewed as belonging to different disparate communities or enclaves. Their social realities are argued to influence their perceptions of the legitimacy of PR as a profession in Nigeria. Moreover, social constructionism also functions as the theoretical foundation for the core elements of this study’s theoretical framework and research design.

The overall research design is guided by Yin’s (2014) single-embedded case study design whereby Nigeria’s PR environment is the single case/context of interest. The top managements, the professional association for PR in Nigeria – NIPR, and PR educators make up the multiple units of analysis. A total of 26 semi-structured interviews were conducted with respective actors’ communities’ interviewees. Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic analysis tool that includes Nvivo was used to organize, interrogate, and code the collected data. The prominent themes include personal characteristics, description of PR, PR understanding, professional status assessment/ NIPR’s professional projects, relations with NIPR/organizations, relations with in-house practitioners, PR education programs, and NIPR membership and code of conduct. Two global themes were derived from these themes which include - PR education and PR experience.

The key findings from the actors demonstrate varied and distinct perceptions of PR in Nigeria. Three categories of managements with different levels of PR understanding presented varied perceptions of PR. While the perceptions of the professional associations share similarities, their accounts also demonstrate certain differences between their perceptions of the legitimacy of PR. These perceptions are redefined as corporate, professions and educator logics respectively. An analysis of the constellation of the logics
reveals that the professions and the corporate logics dominate Nigeria’s PR institutional context. Consequently, the NIPR’s professional projects were found to be confronted by institutional complexity, which arises from multiple logics with contradicting expectations for legitimacy.

Based on an analysis of the institutional complexities, a compromise strategy was proposed. This comprises reproducing or properly implementing the expected traits of the professions logics i.e. balancing. This was followed by pacifying, whereby corporate expectations are integrated into PR’s professional project for appeasing the corporate logics. Lastly, bargaining entails negotiating with dominant institutional actors towards reaching a mutually beneficial agreement in exchange for meeting their expectations.

This study demonstrates that a passive response to institutionalized norms for legitimacy may be insufficient for understanding and theorizing organizations or professions behavior for gaining legitimacy. Instead, an understanding of their institutional complexities and strategic response for managing multiple legitimating expectations offers a more plausible explanation.

Therefore, the study contributes to an institutional approach process model for PR’s professional projects. At a theoretical level, the institutional approach process model guides organizations toward an appropriate response to institutional complexities. This offers a more plausible explanation of organizational behavior and the pursuit of legitimacy within their institutional contexts. At a practical level, this institutional approach process model facilitates a deeper understanding and thereby offers professions an opportunity to reflect on how to evolve at different points in accordance with the ever-changing external demands for legitimacy within their institutional context.
Summary in Danish


Nigeria udgør i dette studie en kontekst, hvor PR netop mangler legitimitet på trods af, at faget har udført sine opgaver i årtier; særligt i arbejdslivets arena (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Olatunji, 2014; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013; Samaila, 2015). Det giver plads til at tilvejebringe et originalt empirisk studie, som bidrager med forskning i PR-faget i en specifik national kontekst. Studiets overordnede formål er derfor at undersøge hvordan og hvorfor PR-feltet kan blive bedre til at forklare og danne teorier om dets faglige ambitioner for at opnå og fastholde legitimitet i virksomheder. Dette studie anvender en institutionel tilgang til at undersøge PR-fagets projekter og legitimitet baseret på Nigeria som case. I det følgende er det overordnede forskningsspørgsmål formuleret, efterfulgt af de primære underspørgsmål:

Hvordan og hvorfor kan top-ledelsers perspektiver, den faglige organisation (NIPR) og gruppen af PR-undervisere øve indflydelse på PR-fagets faglige projekt og dermed bidrage til den professionelle legitimering af PR i en specifik national kontekst?

1. Hvilke perspektiver påvirker PR-fagets legitimitet?
2. Hvordan bidrager disse perspektiver hos de respektive aktører til de underliggende opfattelser på PR-fagets legitimitet i Nigeria?

3. Hvordan kan vi udvikle en institutionel tilgang til PR-fagets legitimitet baseret på empiriske fund i en specifik national kontekst?


De primære fund demonstrerer varierede og distinkte opfattelser af PR i Nigeria. Tre ledelseskategorier med forskellige niveauer af PR-forståelse viste forskelligartede opfattelser af PR. Mens opfattelserne blandt de faglige organisationer havde visse ligheder viste de også uoverensstemmelser i deres opfattelser af PR-fagets legitimitet. Disse opfattelser defineres som henholdsvis virksomheds-, faglige og underviser-logikker. En analyse af sammensætningen af disse logikker afslørede, at de faglige og virksomhedsmæssige logikker dominerer den institutionelle kontekst for Nigerias PR-profession. Som følge heraf
identificeres en modsætning mellem NIPR’s faglige projekt og den institutionelle kompleksitet der opstår, når flere logikker med modstridende forventninger til legitimitet er i spil.


Dette studie viser, at passiv respons på institutionaliserede normer for legitimitet kan være utilstrækkeligt for at forstå og danne teori om organisationernes adfærd for at opnå legitimitet. Derimod udgør forståelsen af organisationernes institutionelle kompleksiteter og strategiske handlinger i forhold til at håndtere legitimerende forventninger en mere plausibel forklaring.

På den baggrund bidrager dette studie med en institutionel proces-model for PR-fagets faglige projekt. På et teoretisk niveau leder denne model organisationer mod en hensigtsmæssig handling i en situation med institutionelle kompleksitet. Dette bidrager med en mere plausibel forklaring på organisationers adfærd og deres jagt på legitimitet indenfor deres institutionelle kontekst. På et praktisk plan muliggør den institutionelle proces-model en dybere forståelse, som giver fagfællesskaberne en mulighed for at overveje hvordan de kan udvikle sig i forskellige retninger i overensstemmelse med de foranderlige eksterne behov for legitimitet indenfor deres institutionelle kontekst.
List of Tables

Table 1.1 Professionalizing PR in Nigeria.................................................................26
Table 1.2 Direct and subtle typology of PR professionalization..........................30
Table 2.1: Activist practitioners’ resistance against dominant model (Berger, 2005)......58
Table 2.2: PR Practitioner roles.............................................................................59
Table 2.3: Dominant coalitions...........................................................................64
Table 2.4: Sources of Power...............................................................................66
Table 2.5: Strategic Contingency theory..............................................................59
Table 2.6: Literature Review..............................................................................71
Table 3.1: Institutional Pillars............................................................................82
Table 3.2: Early version of the neo-institutional theory.........................................83
Table 3.3: Strategic Responses to Institutionalized Practices..............................85
Table 3.4: Key contributions to the more recent neo-institutional theory.............86
Table 3.5: Constellation of logics......................................................................93
Table 3.6: Two levels of Analysis...................................................................103
Table 3.7: Various conceptions of Organization field..........................................107
Table 4.1: Topic areas, Actors and Theoretical Support.................................117-119
Table 4.2: Topic areas for coding.................................................................119
Table 4.3: Criteria for selecting Interview respondents...................................120
Table 4.4: Primary data..................................................................................122
Table 4.5: Secondary Data..............................................................................123
Table 5.1: Top Management’s personal characteristics presented as organizing theme ………………………………………………………………………………………………………134
Table 5.2: Top management description of PR as basic theme.........................136
Table 5.3: Top Management’s perception of the image of PR in Nigeria as basic theme...137
Table 5.4: Top management’s preferred practitioner qualifications as basic theme……138
Table 5.5: Practitioner specialization, role, and internal structure of PR as basic themes …139
Table 5.6: Top management’s PR professional status assessment presented as organizing theme.................................................................141
Table 5.7: Top management’s perception of practitioner decision making as basic theme...........................................................................................................142
Table 5.8: Top management’s perception of autonomy as basic theme.............144
Table 5.9: Top management’s perception NIPR as basic theme.......................145
Table 5.10: Top management’s interactions with NIPR as basic theme.............145
Table 5.11: Top management’s expectations of the NIPR as basic theme...........147
Table 5.12: NIPR Interviewees personal characteristics presented as an organizing theme...........................................................................................................153
Table 5.13: NIPR’s description of PR as basic theme.......................................154
Table 5.14: NIPR’s Perceived image of PR in Nigeria as basic theme...............155
Table 5.15: Ideal practitioner role and tasks composition as basic themes.........157
Table 5.16: Ideal practitioner qualifications..................................................157
Table 5.17: Determinants of professional recognition as basic theme..............159
Table 5.18: NIPR’s perception of workplace reality as basic theme.................160
Table 5.19: Response to workplace realities and perceived skills deficiencies as basic theme.......................................................................................................160
Table 5.20: Constraints to the professional status attainment as basic theme.....161
Table 5.21: NIPR’s opinion on PR programs’ structure in Nigeria as basic theme......163
Table 5.22: Compliance with NIPR’s code of conduct as basic theme.........164
Table 5.23: NIPR’s types and purpose of interactions with management.........165
Table 5.24: PR educator’s Personal characteristics as organizing theme........169
Table 5.25: Educator’s Description of PR as basic theme……………………………………170
Table 5.26: PR educators Perceived image of PR in Nigeria as basic theme………………171
Table 5.27: Perceived practitioner role and task composition as basic themes……………173
Table 5.28: Perceived practitioner qualifications as basic theme…………………………174
Table 5.29: Perceived determinants for professional status of PR as basic theme……175
Table 5.30: Questionable professional status of PR in Nigeria by PR educators…………176
Table 5.31: PR educator perceived professional autonomy as basic theme………………177
Table 5.32: The structure of PR programs as basic theme………………………………..178
Table 5.33 PR educators’ opinion on the structure of PR programs as basic theme……179
Table 5.34: PR educators’ perception of Practitioner specialization……………………180
Table 5.35: PR educators’ extent of control over PR curriculum…………………………181
Table 5.36: PR educators’ Interaction with NIPR: accreditation of PR programs………182
Table 5.37: Awareness of NIPR’s activities…………………………………………………183
Table 5.38: Perceived compliance and enforcement of NIPR’s code of conduct……184
Table 5.39: PR educators’ expectations of NIPR as basic theme…………………………184
Table 6.1: Parallel Corporate logics……………………………………………………………194
Table 6.2: Profession and Educator logic……………………………………………………199
Table 6.3: Misconception leading to the misrepresentation of PR……………………….201
Table 6.4: Resourceful practitioners vs. certified practitioners…………………………203
Table 6.5 Compliance and enforcement of NIPR laws…………………………………….204
Table 6.6: Overbearing accreditation demands caused by lack of perceived benefits……206
Table 6.7: Lack of awareness NIPR’s initiatives for enhancing the standard of PR……207
Table 6.8: Example of an aligned contradicting multiple logics…………………………218
Table 6.9: NIPR Strategic response to institutionalized norms for professional legitimacy in Nigeria………………………………………………………………………………220
Table 6.10: The compromise strategic response to institutional complexities in Nigeria’s PR institutional context……………………………………………………………………229
List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Interconnected Macro-environment Actors for PR professionalization in Nigeria……………………………………………………………………………………………………..27
Figure 2.1: Professionalizing Public Relations………………………………………………46
Figure 2.2 In-house PR practitioner role enactment……………………………………………56
Figure 3.1: Social Constructionism as Institutionalization process (based on Berger & Luckmann, 1991)……………………………………………………………………………98
Figure 3.2: Multiple realities and internally fragmented interpretations and implementations………………………………………………………………………………………..100
Figure 4.1: Overview of Methodology………………………………………………………..112
Figure 4.2: Single embedded Case Study design……………………………………………113
Figure 4.3: Seven Stages of Interview Investigation………………………………………..115
Figure 4.4: List of respondents, mode of recruitment and Snowball connections……….121
Figure 4.5: Six Steps for Thematic Analysis…………………………………………………125
Figure 5.1: The structure of the thematic network of Top Management’s perspective of PR in Nigeria………………………………………………………………………………….133
Figure 5.2: The structure of the thematic network of PR Professional association - NIPR’s perception PR in Nigeria…………………………………………………………………152
Figure 5.3: The structure of the thematic network of how PR is perceived by PR educators in Nigeria…………………………………………………………………………………..168
Figure 7.1: The Institutional approach to legitimacy process model (Original)…………..243
List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACSPN</td>
<td>Association of Communication Scholars &amp; Professionals of Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APBN</td>
<td>Association of Professional Bodies of Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APCON</td>
<td>Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Corporate Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL1</td>
<td>Corporate Logics 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL2</td>
<td>Corporate Logics 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CL3</td>
<td>Corporate Logics 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COREN</td>
<td>Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDU</td>
<td>PR Educators</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFCC</td>
<td>Economics and Financial Crimes Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>Educator Logics</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMCG</td>
<td>Fast Moving Consumer Goods</td>
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<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>General manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HND</td>
<td>Honorary National Diploma</td>
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<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>ICAN</td>
<td>Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria</td>
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<td>NIT</td>
<td>Neoinstitutional Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIJ</td>
<td>Nigerian Institute of Journalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPEE</td>
<td>Non-PR Educated-Experienced</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIM</td>
<td>Nigerian Institute of Management</td>
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<td>NUC</td>
<td>National Universities Commission</td>
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<td>PGD</td>
<td>Post-Graduate Diploma</td>
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<td>PR</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
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<td>PL</td>
<td>Professions Logic</td>
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<td>PR Educated-Experienced</td>
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<td>PSG</td>
<td>Professional Standards Guide</td>
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<td>RDT</td>
<td>Resource Dependence Theory</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>Social Constructionism</td>
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<td>SOP</td>
<td>Sociology of Professions</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Recently at a confirmation party in Aarhus, my friend Willie narrated how he was summoned, threatened with a lawsuit and fined by the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON). Willie lives in Denmark and works as an engineer for Vestas. On the side, he started a solar and battery solutions company targeting the African countries. He had earlier placed a few advertisements for his company in Nigerian newspapers. The issue was that APCON exercises zero tolerance to conducting advertising in Nigeria without the services of an advertising professional, i.e. an APCON member. The professional association has a reputation for publicly naming, shaming, and prosecuting corporate organizations and/or individuals who violate its laws. There is also a common understanding in Nigeria that the council strictly enforces its code of conduct for its members in Nigeria. Therefore, the Nigerian public and corporate organizations recognize and respect the professional association and advertising professionals in Nigeria and hold them in high regard. Willie now knows APCON and he is more aware of the laws surrounding advertising in Nigeria. I recently introduced him to someone who can help him with his advertising needs such that he can work according to APCON’s guidelines and thereby avoid the cost of non-conformity.

Interestingly, the same cannot be said for PR in Nigeria. The public relations profession is commonly viewed as an “all comers affair”, in which almost anyone is believed to be able to practice PR without the stipulated formal qualifications and without any repercussion. Besides, public relations practitioners have been regarded as “errand boys” i.e. those undertaking personal-assistant tasks for CEO, in the Nigerian media and therefore are not well-respected. In addition, PR is often associated with unethical communications. The accumulation of these issues for PR in Nigeria has not done much to enhance its professional legitimacy.

As we will see in this dissertation, this study is about the professional project of public relations (PR). The current state of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria warrants academic research efforts to address the above issues. This would reflect a reorientation for PR’s professional project, which manifests as an evolution for the PR profession. Therefore, this introduction presents the frame of reference about the professionalization of PR and its obstacles, which in turn motivates this study. This is followed by an overview of the professionalization of PR in Nigeria, which covers PR’s history and developments over the years along with interrelated concerns for PR, which are presented to set the scene about the Nigerian country-specific context for this dissertation. In addition, the themes and discussions within the direct and subtle approaches to PR professionalization within the PR field and their problematic outcomes are presented. These are used to clarify the knowledge gap that this dissertation hopes to fill. Based on the above issues and identified knowledge gap, the research purpose and clusters of research questions of this dissertation are presented. The last
part of this introductory chapter highlights both the contributions of this dissertation to research on PR as a profession and the structure of the rest of the dissertation.

1.1 Evolve or be doomed
The field of PR is currently at a crossroad whereby it may have to evolve or remain a profession that lacks legitimacy in the Nigerian context. Few professions have threaded a straight and narrow path all through their existence. Instead, professions at crucial points are compelled to evolve quickly and adapt their professional projects and priorities to environmental uncertainties, technological developments, as well as public and workplace demands respectively. In an evolution that is based on the demands of this nature, it is crucial for professions to possess critical resources that organizations depend upon and therefore value professions with such resources.

One profession that has had to quickly evolve at different points is journalism, which started out as newspaper journalism (e.g. Paine, 2015). Changing audiences’ demands for instantaneous news, listening to and/or watching the news, interactivity, etc. caused by the development of radio newscasts (Horn, 1945), tv broadcasts (Fuchs, 1966) and more recently new media (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) compels the profession to evolve. While the news organizations converged news across media platforms and formats, journalism’s professional project’s production of journalists with writing for newspapers capabilities alone became insufficient for being considered a legitimate profession. A change of this nature emphasizes the extent to which environmental uncertainties along with organizations’ goals and expectations represent some of the key drivers for professions’ evolution, which manifests as changes in professional projects (e.g. Larson, 1977, Abbott, 1988). Besides, an organizations capacity to influence aspects of professional projects such as the definition of legitimacy and tasks composition i.e. jurisdiction (Malsch & Gendron 2013; Kipping & Kirkpatrick 2013) are well noted within professions research (e.g. Ramirez, 2013). The PR profession has been faced with a similar predicament. The outcome of its professional project has only reinforced stigmatization, misconceptions, misrepresentations, and doubtful legitimacy for the profession, especially in country-specific contexts such as Nigeria.

The field of public relations (PR) is motivated by two interrelated ambitions of becoming (1) an autonomous social scientific discipline, and (2) a respected and recognized profession (e.g., Frandsen & Johansen, 2010; Grunig, 199). The latter motivation is of utmost interest in
this research work. In other words, in this dissertation PR is first and foremost defined as a profession and investigated from the perspective of the sociology of professions. The goal at the end is to develop an institutional approach to the professionalization of PR. Nigeria is the country-specific context for this study where PR arguably lacks recognition, respect and/or legitimacy respectively (e.g., Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Olatunji, 2014; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013; Samaila, 2015). This offers an opportunity for an original empirical study that contributes to research on professional projects in the PR field.

The ongoing stigmatization along with a lack of recognition and legitimacy concerns for PR (Merkelsen, 2011) has led to a growing interest in the professionalization of PR. However, research into PR’s pursuit of professional recognition has predominantly been based on the so-called traits approach (e.g., Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Wylie, 1994; L'Etang, 1999; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Broom, 2009; Noordegraaf, 2011; Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016). Among the frequently mentioned traits, one finds: (a) body of knowledge (Bissland & Rentner, 1988; Hainsworth, 1993); (b) complex and rigorous formal education (White, Oukrop & Nelson, 1992; Ehling, 1992; Wakefield & Cottone 1992); (c) establishment of a professional association (Lages & Simkin, 2003; Edwards, 2014); and (d) a code of conduct that guides the practitioners (Jefkins, 1980; Samaila 2015; Ajala 2001; Oko, Nnolim & Nwaizugbo 2014; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013); and lastly, (e) autonomy, i.e. PR practitioners’ discretion over their work, due to their perceived expertise skills (e.g. Grunig, 1992; Serini, 1993; Wallace, 1995).

According to the traits approach (e.g. Greenwood, 1957), PR should be recognized as a legitimate profession that can contribute to organizations’ strategies from a managerial role in Nigeria simply by fulfilling the traits. Consequently, the primary focus of discussion in academic literatures has been assessing the standard and professionalization of PR across the world (e.g. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Noordegraaf, 2011; Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016), including Nigeria (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013; Otubanjo, Amujo, & Melewar, 2013). In the case of Nigeria, PR’s professional association (i.e. Nigerian Institute of Public Relations- NIPR) fulfilled the traits and gained international recognition through its membership to Global Alliance for Public Relations Institutes (Global Alliance, 2015).
However, the PR profession still finds it hard to command the respect of organizations and fellow professions and as such continues to struggle for a voice and professional recognition in Nigeria, and especially in corporate workplaces. The traits have been successfully applied in Nigeria with the intended outcomes by professions such as accounting (ICAN)\textsuperscript{1}, journalism (NIJ)\textsuperscript{2}, and advertising (APCON)\textsuperscript{3}. Nevertheless, the opposite outcome has been the case for PR in Nigeria (Amujo & Melewar, 2011), which suggests that the traits have either been ineffective for PR’s recognition, improperly implemented or a combination. While Amujo & Melewar (2011) in recent times identified certain issues with the implementation of the traits in Nigeria, this dissertation is of the view that the issues may go beyond the mere implementation of the traits. Therefore this study has been carried out. However, not enough research works have been dedicated to PR professionalization in Nigeria. This introduction continues by presenting the most important and available research contributions into PR professionalization in Nigeria.

1.2 PR professionalization in Nigeria
PR is not new to Nigeria; however, research interest on PR professionalization in Nigeria is minimal. The few studies on this subject area in Nigeria concentrate on its history and the image that has resulted from PR professionalization efforts through formal education and a code of conduct.

1.2.1 History, professionalization and professional status and recognition
Otubanjo, Amujo, and Melewar’s (2013) conceptual review of the academic and professional literature is one of the very few works that provide a comprehensive account of the history and developments of PR in Nigeria. These scholars contend that PR in Nigeria has developed over four eras that are influenced by the social-political events and issues in Nigeria at those times. PR practices during these eras were observed to correlate with one or more of Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) PR models. What began as “\textit{iwe iroyin}” i.e. the news journal in the 1930s broadcasting era (Salawu, 2004) for disseminating religious, social and political information (Ajala, 2001) was later hijacked in the political propaganda era for broadcasting propaganda across Nigeria (Nicholas, 1998; Kerslake, 1997).

\textsuperscript{1} ICAN-Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria produce world-class chartered accountants
\textsuperscript{2} NIJ- Nigerian Institute of Journalism
\textsuperscript{3} APCON Advertising Practitioners Association of Nigeria was established to control and regulate the advertising practice in Nigeria
The following public information era marked a rise in the creation of PR departments in the public and private sectors for disseminating vital information to the public (Otubanjo, Amujo, & Melewar, 2013). Alleged human rights abuses and genocide by the Nigerian Army during Nigeria’s Civil War (Madiebo, 1980; Uwechue, 1971; Achuzia, 1986; Ademoyega, 1981) accelerated the Army’s need of PR practitioners to dispel and/or respond to such accusations. Corporate organizations equally needed PR officers to manage their corporate communications, external relations initiatives, and image respectively. However, an insufficient amount of trained PR practitioners were noted as the reason why senior army officers and private citizens were sent for PR training locally and abroad. And as proactive as this might sound, Otubanjo, Amujo and Melewar (2013) contend that PR remained a reactive function consisting of predominantly press releases, press conferences and sponsorships throughout the 1950s up until the late 1970s.

The continued increase in demand for PR services in the late 1960s kick-started the professionalization era (the early 1960s to the early 2000s) in which the Public Relations Association of Nigeria (PRAN) was created and later renamed the NIPR. The association was mandated to reposition PR in Nigeria through high-quality professional services and training programs that include professional PR Certificate and Diploma programs. Educational institutions in Nigeria gradually began to offer PR programs at Diploma, BA, MA and PhD levels and have been in place for decades now. Research within the PR field identified these initiatives as crucial traits for professional recognition (e.g. Paluszek, 1988; Lauzen, 1992; Hainsworth, 1993; Wylie, 1994; McElreath and Blamphin, 1994; Saunders and Perrigo, 1998).

Furthermore, Nigeria’s economic boom in the 1970s increased the demand for professional PR services in the corporate sector and the consequent influx of PR consulting firms led to the establishment of the Public Relations Consultancy Association of Nigeria (PRCAN) was formed in 1984 (PRCAN, 2017). Additionally, the privatization and commercialization of state-owned corporations increased the demand for corporate advocacy, events management, employee relations, and financial and marketing PR for corporations in Nigeria (Otubanjo, Amujo, & Melewar, 2013). With these came an influx of non-qualified practitioners. The Nigerian government’s decree 16 of 1990 granted NIPR a chartered status i.e. a professional identity. This means that only certified NIPR members are allowed by law to practice PR in Nigeria thereby curtailing the influx of non-members and especially quacks from practicing
PR, which damages the profession’s image (Mollela and Alhassan, 2006; NIPR, 2008). However, enforcing this law remains aspirational at best (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Oko, 2003; Samaila, 2015).

Nevertheless, PR services continue to be offered by in-house PR practitioners working under marketing, corporate communications, public affairs, communication departments, or the equivalent. Their role and tasks composition vary depending on the employing organizations’ understanding of PR, internal structure and industry sector (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Idemudia, 2007). PR consultants and freelance practitioners with journalism, PR or other backgrounds equally offer basic and specialized PR services to their clients (Otubanjo, Amujo, & Melewar, 2013).

Despite the developments for PR in Nigeria, PR scholars and industry experts question the execution of the above so-called milestones/traits and remain unconvinced about the professional status of PR in Nigeria (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Oko, 2003). However, the professional status of PR varies across countries and regions of the world, therefore uncertainties about the status and expected recognition are not unique to Nigeria (e.g. Wylie, 1994; Zerfass, Verhoeven, Tench, Moreno, & Vercic, 2011). While NIPR believes that PR is a growing profession, Nigerian PR scholars argue for a stagnation in its growth rate (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Oko, Nnolim, & Nwaizugbo, 2014 etc.). The latter’s conclusion about PR’s growth rate is based on their assessment of the NIPR’s code of conduct implementation and the quality of PR education programs in Nigeria. The literature on these traits about PR in Nigeria is discussed in the following sections.

1.2.2 PR’s image in Nigeria
Boland and Tempel (2004) argue that a professional body must be active and effective in their duties to attain and/or uphold the PR profession’s credibility and image (Abdullah, 2012). However, PR practitioners are still viewed as “errand boys”, bribery agents, protocol officers and assigned a subordinate role in Nigeria (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011). The Nigerian government’s decree number 16 of 1990 provided the legal backing, government recognition and chartered status for PR to be recognized as a profession locally and internationally. The decree delegates the government’s regulatory function of PR practice to
the NIPR, thereby negating the government as a relevant institutional agent in Nigeria’s PR environment.

However, the extent to which this development has enhanced PR’s professional recognition and image i.e. public perception (see Cornelissen, 2014) in Nigeria is unknown, since this has received limited research interest. More so, the widespread view of PR as an “all comers affair”, and low-level technician/support role amongst other problems (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011) suggests that the decree may only be effective as a political development, or official recognition in theory but has little bearing on certain top managements’ perspective of PR in practice.

More so, Olatunji’s (2014) comparison of PR’s identity and image reveals that the Nigerian public believes that practitioners are only loyal to their employers’ and clients’ interests and not to the public. Lack of public trust is also attributed to close relations of leading NIPR members with Nigeria’s former military leader who (a) annulled the 1993 presidential election, (b) granted the NIPR a chartered status, and (c) assigned a former NIPR president as his information minister (Olatunji, 2014). Affiliations and associations of this nature have altogether instilled a perception of PR as part of society’s problem in Nigeria (see also Otubanjo & Amujo, 2013). Moreover, Ajala (200) contends that a vast majority of Nigerians remain uninformed about what PR represents as well as its value for organizations, which distorts its image and partially hinders professional recognition in Nigeria (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011).

1.2.3 The NIPR code of conduct enforcement in Nigeria

According to PR scholars, the laws establishing professional bodies guide its members’ practices (e.g. Samaila 2015; Pratt & Rentner 1989) such that they engage in socially acceptable conduct when discharging their duties (Udomisor & Osademe, 2013). However, existing literature found issues with the content of the NIPR’s code of conduct and its implementation. In their critical assessment of the regulation of PR practice in Nigeria, Udomisor and Osademe’s (2013) observe that NIPR codes are a replica of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), Institute of Public Relations (IPR) and Code of Athens. These laws have been criticized for their disregard for country-specific beliefs and differences (see Eden-Green 1967-68) which may hinder their effectiveness in different contexts.
In addition, research into the code of conduct across country-specific contexts reveals that compliance to these codes is voluntary in most PR institutes (e.g. Skinner & Mersham, 2009) including Nigeria (Amujo & Melewar, 2011). Ajala (2001) contends that the NIPR’s codes must be rooted in Nigeria’s values for it to be effective in curtailing unethical practitioners and practices (Oko, Nnolim & Nwaizugbo 2014). In the case of Nigeria, this means that the NIPR’s laws may be disobeyed without repercussions due to the voluntary nature of compliance, which explains the influx of non-members into PR practice. Moreover, PR scholars contend that the codes lack the capacity to regulate practitioners’ conduct in Nigeria where disregard for laws prevails (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013; Samaila, 2015).

Consequently, PR researchers in Nigeria bemoan the continued influx of non-NIPR members into PR practice, lack of enforcement of the NIPR code of conduct and/or the absence of disciplinary mechanism against unethical conduct (Oko, Nnolim & Nwaizugbo, 2014; Udomisor & Osademe, 2014). For instance, Oko, Nnolim and Nwaizugbo’s (2014) survey of private and public sector PR practitioners and clients found ethical breaches were treated with levity, while non-registered practitioners practiced without punishment. Support for this argument comes from Udomisor & Osademe’s (2014) critical assessment of the regulation of PR in Nigeria in which NIPR members, scholars, and practitioners confirmed this reality, which they believe stagnates PR’s growth in Nigeria (Odubela, 2007; Oko, 2003; Oko, Nnolim, & Nwaizugbo, 2014).

1.2.4 PR education in Nigeria

Questions abound about the robustness and consistency of PR education in Nigeria. This may result in insufficient competences and/or hinder practitioners’ ability to meet expected performance standards in the workplace (Badarocco & Webb, 1995). Through expert interviews and document studies, Amujo and Melewar (2011) found that the NIPR’s certification programs lack specialized components, management and theory-building courses and broad-based liberal arts respectively. PR education programs offered by Nigerian universities are found to copy NIPR’s curriculum while inserting PR as a subset of mass communication, corporate communication or in combination with marketing or advertising in Nigeria (Otubanjo & Amujo 2013). The latter in particular may lead to varying PR
practitioner orientations and scope of competencies for professional practice due to the
different structures of PR education across universities.

Amujo and Melewar (2011) maintain that existing education programs merely prepare
graduates for the technician role (Broom & Dozier, 1986). Consequently, encroachment
arises which is caused by practitioners’ inability to enact their role (Amujo & Melewar, 2011;
Lauzen, 1992) alongside competition from international relations, labor relations, marketing,
advertising and journalism professionals respectively (e.g. Udomisor & Osademe, 2014).
Encroachment theory describes situations whereby the PR practitioner is unable to enact the
manager role and therefore someone with no PR knowledge or experience heads and
implements PR activities of organizations (Lee, 2005; Lauzen, 1991, 1992). Amujo and
Melewar (2011) found the majority of practitioners occupy the technician role, and often
report to non-PR practitioners in Nigeria. From the PR field’s perspective, this suggests a
lack of professional recognition and the loss of autonomy (see also Grunig, 1992a; Broom,

Nevertheless, there are still issues about the limitations of the traits approach as well as
concerns raised by about the implementation of the traits in Nigeria. These issues raise
questions about the limitations of the NIPR’s professional project, as well as its perception
about PR’s legitimacy and the means to obtain it in Nigeria. Instead of simply focusing on
upholding the traits, more empirical research into Nigeria’s country-specific challenges to
professional recognition is needed, especially since the literature on PR in Nigeria is scarce.
Such research may need to go beyond the traits and role typologies that are all from the
profession’s perspective to also consider workplace realities that may be equally relevant.
Besides, implementation-related issues are equally worth looking into because awareness of
an approach is not sufficient for achieving intended outcomes if it is not properly
implemented.

Table 1.1 Professionalizing PR in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject area</th>
<th>Key Scholars</th>
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<tr>
<td>History and professionalization efforts</td>
<td>Abodunrin, 1988; Ajala, 1993; Alhassan, 2005; Salawu, 2004; Nicholas, 1998;</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR’s Image in Nigeria</td>
<td>Olatunji, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oko, Nnolim, &amp; Nwaizugbo, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR Education in Nigeria</td>
<td>Amujo &amp; Melewar, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Interrelated concerns for the PR profession in Nigeria

In the absence of sufficient research work into PR professionalization in Nigeria, I conducted a pilot study in 2015 to understand Nigeria’s PR environment from a broader perspective. The study indicated that PR in Nigeria might be affected by four interrelated concerns. One of the concerns is *perceived practitioner incompetence*, (T. Otubanjo, personal communication, May 25, 2015; D. Idagu, personal communication, May 19, 2015). Research into PR manager role enactment identified competence as a key determinant for practitioners’ role, involvement in strategic decision making, and the capacity to counsel management on issues and policies, while the lack of it results into exclusion from these tasks (e.g. Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000). The latter has been the cases in Nigeria, which led to vast encroachment whereby people with little to no PR education or experience making decisions or implementing PR strategies (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Lauzen, 1991, 1992; Lee, 2005).

Secondly, *predominantly one-way PR* (see Grunig & Hunt, 1984) with the sole preference for media relations through people with contacts in the media or journalists as preferred PR persons (D. Idagu, personal communication, May 19, 2015). Top managements’ limited PR knowledge (see also Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000) and PR’s historical affiliation with journalism are found to be responsible for the practice in Nigeria (e.g., Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Otubanjo & Amujo, 2013). In addition, CEO image laundering, protocol and/or personal assistant tasks, propaganda peddling etc. are often categorized as PR tasks (Amujo & Melewar, 2011), which earned Nigerian PR professionals the “errand boy” title in Nigeria (D. Idagu, personal communication, May 19, 2015).

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**Figure 1.1**
Interconnected Macro-environment Actors for PR professionalization in Nigeria

**Top management**
- Require competent practitioners for:
  - Image & reputation management
  - Crisis management
  - Relationship management
  - Public information
  - Boundary spanning work
  - Counselling
  - Technician tasks etc.
- Acknowledge professional legitimacy
- Determine practitioner role enactment

**NIPR**
- Pursue Professional project
- Formal education
- Certify qualified practitioners
- Implement Code of conduct
- (Re) train Practitioners
- Influence PR Curriculum
- Produce practitioners
- Impact the quality of practitioners

**PR Educators**
- Disseminate theoretical PR knowledge to future practitioners
- Contribute to PR’s body of knowledge
Thirdly, lack of clear jurisdiction persists as PR exists in a highly contested space and has historically been unable to exercise a legal hold or monopoly over a particular set of tasks in Nigeria (see also jurisdiction, Abbott 1988). Consequently, PR practitioners compete with well-respected and often preferred professions, which include: marketing, advertising, law, journalism, etc. Fourthly, a lack of consistent structure and robust scope of PR education programmes, in which PR is either a module under mass communications, journalism, integrated marketing communications, and/or paired with marketing or advertising (Otubanjo, Amujo, & Melewar, 2013). Amujo and Melewar (2011) found the PR education curriculum and programmes in Nigeria to be suitable for the technician role and not the managerial role. Yet, PR scholars view the latter role as an indicator of professional status recognition (e.g. Broom, 2009; Dozier & Broom, 1995).

1.3.1 Tensions emerging from the workplace, professional bodies and PR educational curriculum

These concerns influence and are a result of the PR practices of Nigerian organizations, NIPR and PR educators respectively. They are understood as interconnected macro environment actors in this study because their actions affect one another and the environment they share. Top management of corporate organizations influence practitioners’ workplace reality such as practitioners’ role or tasks composition and evaluate their contribution to the organizations. The public also judges the practitioners based on implemented PR activities and the interests they protect, which altogether impacts PR’s professional recognition and/or legitimacy in both society and organizations (Olatunji, 2014; Merkelsen, 2011).

Secondly, there is NIPR who is responsible for (1) PR’s professional project; (2) certification, production, and regulation of PR practitioners; and (3) obtaining PR’s recognition and legitimacy in their environment. Thirdly, PR educators are responsible for equipping future practitioners with the basic theoretical PR knowledge. Such knowledge is further developed with NIPR’s certification, which altogether influences practitioners’ capacity to contribute to the objectives to corporate organizations with their publics.

Moreover, Berger (2005) talks about how complexities emanate from the dissonance between top managements’ understanding of what PR comprises as well as practitioner role, tasks, and decision-making capacities respectively, and that of the PR field (see also workplace arena claims, Abbott 1988). Engestrom (2010), contend that contradictions in the activities of
Interdependent actors within an environment lead to tensions between them. Such tensions, in this case, are believed to contribute to the lack of PR’s professional recognition and/or legitimacy.

1.3.2 Insufficient insights into PR professionalization in Nigeria
In the case of Nigeria, not enough is known about PR’s professional recognition. Despite extensive studies that have been dedicated to PR in country-specific contexts in peer-reviewed journals, textbooks, and handbooks, empirical studies going beyond the traits and managerial role are scarce. In the case of Nigeria, published PR research works are mostly based on anecdotal evidence. There is the exception of a relatively few empirical studies in peer-reviewed internationally distributed journals (e.g. Pratt 1986: Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013; Olatunji, 2014, Samaila, 2015; Otubanjo, Amujo, & Melewar, 2013). Grey literature such as master’s thesis and doctoral dissertation (e.g. Odubela, 2007; Oko, Nnolim, & Nwaizugbo, 2014; Ubwa, 2014) are other sources of literature on PR in Nigeria. Nevertheless, this literature is insufficient for understanding how PR could be professionalized and become recognized in Nigeria because they focus on the traits alone.

As we will see in the literature review in the next chapter, the institutionalized traits approach and assumptions reflected across country-specific studies on the professional status and standard of PR practice may be counterproductive to the desired recognition. Therefore, this study aims to contribute an original study that can extend an institutional approach for studying PR professionalization for PR in country-specific contexts. More so, the PR field can really benefit from this dissertation since PR in Nigeria is confronted by the core challenges and stigmatization facing PR across country-specific contexts.

1.4 Professionalization and the PR field
The PR field’s pursuit of professional recognition has been towards obtaining respect, prestige, positive image (e.g., Park, 2003; Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008; Li et al., 2012) and professional legitimacy from organizations and the public (Merkelsen, 2011; Abbott, 1988). This has prompted considerable research works that could be summed up in a typology of direct and subtle approaches towards developing a power and neoinstitutional approach to the study of the PR professionalization. However, it remains uncertain whether professional recognition and legitimacy have been achieved across country-specific contexts.
The direct approaches rely heavily on the traditional traits, which are the minimum requirements for professional recognition (Grunig & Hunt 1984; Wylie, 1994, Broom, 2009 Hoffman & Hamidati 2016). Additionally, controversial roles typologies (Broom & Smith, 1979, Broom & Dozier, 1986; Broom, 2009), disputed assumptions about in-house practitioners’ workplace reality regarding roles, decision-making and dominant coalition membership, coupled with top managements' influence hinder the PR field’s ambition (Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009; Abbott, 1988). The latter in particular is reminiscent of the power approach for professional projects which highlight assumption about practitioners’ unique expertise as a means to dominate organizations and exercise discretion over their work (e.g. Pieczka & L'Etang, 2001; Freidson, 1986, 2001; Larson, 1977).

Table 1.2 Direct and subtle typology of PR professionalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct approach</th>
<th>Subtle approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Professional legitimacy</td>
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<td>Professional status recognition</td>
<td>Demonstrate PR’s strategic contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish PR as strategic management function</td>
<td>Highlight practitioners’ unique expertise for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practitioner as manager</td>
<td>- strategic/managerial role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practitioner’s dominant coalition membership</td>
<td>- counseling management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional uncontrolled autonomy</td>
<td>- participating in decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision-making powers</td>
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<tr>
<th>Traits approach: Occupational professionalism</th>
<th>Avoid the PR title but embrace appealing PR tasks such as:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Formal education</td>
<td>- Strategic communication</td>
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<td>- Professional association</td>
<td>- CSR</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Body of knowledge</td>
<td>- Crisis communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Code of conduct</td>
<td>- Corporate communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<th>Power approach i.e. occupational dominance through</th>
<th>Adopts the NIT tradition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Role typologies:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Technician role</td>
<td>Pursue and/or argue for the institutionalization of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Manager role</td>
<td>through:</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Activist role</td>
<td>- Passive adoption</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dominant coalition</td>
<td>- Translation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Decision-making powers</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>- PR’s lack of professional recognition</td>
<td>- Doubts about PR’s professional legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Public scepticism towards PR and PR activities</td>
<td>- Doubts about individual practitioner’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- PR’s lack of respect from organizations, publics, and other professions</td>
<td>credibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Stigmas against PR</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promoting competing communication</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disciplines ahead of PR</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Continued competition from other disciplines</td>
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Moreover, the PR field is plagued by various stigmas, one of which is the publics’ perception of practitioners’ sole concern for corporate’ interests and not that of the public (Gabrielsen, 2004; Olatunji, 2014). As a means to avoid stigmatization, the subtle approaches work with...
the neo-institutional theory (NIT) tradition. Scholars working with this tradition avoid the PR title and instead appeal to aspects of PR such as CSR, corporate communications (see also, Zerfass et al. 2011) or Public affairs. However, these disciplines end up competing with PR as a practice and discipline, thereby undermine its professional legitimacy (Merkelsen, 2011).

Consequently, PR continues to be described as a nascent discipline (Motion, Davenport, Leitch, & Merlot, 2013), with a poor theoretical base (van Ruler & Vercic, 2008), which lacks respect from established academic fields (Cheney & Christensen, 2001), professions and top management respectively (Amujo & Melewar, 2011). More so, PR continues to develop at different rates across the world, while the desired recognition or legitimacy has arguably still not been obtained. Therefore, the lack of professional recognition is not a Nigerian problem, but throughout the whole PR field, which spreads across country-specific contexts, thereby making this research of equal importance to the field as a whole.

The sociology of professions lays out three distinct approaches to professionalization. As we will see in the following direct approaches to PR professionalization, the focus on the five traditional traits and professional power through role typologies and managerial role enactment have been predominantly focused upon in PR research. An institutional approach has recently been developed, which may be why it has received almost no interest from the PR field in professionalization research. This approach focuses on workplace realities, managements’ interaction with practitioners, and their influence on professional projects (Muzio & Kirkpatrick 2011; Muzio, Brock & Suddaby, 2013). This could extend knowledge about professionalization and recognition.

1.4.1 Problematic direct approach to PR professionalization

Studies on PR professionalization working with the direct approach focus on the traits. The sociological literature argues that the traditional traits differentiate occupations from professions (e.g. Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1933; Greenwood, 1957). Therefore, emphasis is mostly placed on the standard of practice or status across country-specific contexts based on the extent to which the traits have been established (e.g. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Wylie, 1994; L’Etang, 1999; Broom, 2009; Noordnegraaf, 2011; Abdullah, 2012; Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016).
The other stream of direct approach studies attempts to emphasize practitioners’ importance and contribution to the strategic management of organizations due to their unique expertise. The emphasis here includes practitioners’ capacity to help organizations to manage mutually beneficial relationships with key publics and stakeholders from a managerial role (e.g. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Ledingham & Bruning, 2000). Excellence theorists in particular argue that PR should be a management function with its own department, which should be headed by a PR manager (e.g. Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Broom, 2009) who is a dominant coalition member with decision making powers (Plowman, 1998; Grunig, 1992). Additionally, corporate communication scholars viewing PR as one of their tasks, talk about the importance of PR’s contribution towards enhancing organizations’ corporate image and reputation (e.g. Argenti, 2007; Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007; Goodman, 2006).

A look at literature assessing the traits and the PR field’s expectations for the profession in the workplace reveal dissonance and disconnect between their assumptions and their organization’s practices. The PR field expects certified practitioners to occupy the managerial role (e.g. Sallot, Cameron, & Weaver-Lariscy, 1998; Berkowitz & Hristodoulakis, 1999), possess decision-making powers and autonomy in the workplace (Broom, 2009). In contrast, organizations mostly view practitioners as technicians and managers (e.g. Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009; Zerfass et al., 2008; Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Dozier, 1984; Bowen, 2009; Zerfass et al. 2011).

Dominant coalition membership is found to be temporary and/or contingent on organizations’ contingencies, environmental uncertainties (Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009; Berger & Reber, 2006; White & Dozier, 1992; Broom & Dozier, 1986), or on whether they have exclusive access to critical organizational resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; L. A. Grunig, 1992). Similarly, professional autonomy is found to be fought for (Strauss, 1963) or granted mostly during a crisis when organizations feel helpless and must rely on practitioners to manage crises (Serini, 1993; Berger, 2005).

This reality could best be understood from Strauss’s (1963) contrasting notions of occupational professionalism (see also Scott, 1965; Wallace, 1995) and organizational professionalism. The former is based on the professions expectation of professional recognition and benefits awarded to it in the workplace after fulfilling established traits. In contrast, organizational professionalism relates to Weber-like traditional bureaucratic values.
of authority, preferred hierarchical structure, the division of labor and loyalty to the organization (see also Oppenheimer, 1973; McCann, Granter, Hyde & Hassard, 2013). Additionally, organizations’ have been found to determine professions’ role, power, and tasks (e.g. Leicht & Fennell, 1997; Muzio, Brock & Suddaby, 2013) and overall workplace reality, which is independent of professional norms (Abbott, 1988).

The lack of recognition for PR across countries (Reed, 1996) suggests that merely fulfilling the sociological traits may be insufficient for obtaining professional recognition. The continued reliance on the traits approach as recently as a 2016 comparative study of PR’s status and professionalization across continents (e.g. Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016) questions the PR field’s underlying assumptions about professionalization. Moreover, the traits have been criticized within the sociological literature on professions for merely being an oversimplified differentiation of professions from occupations (e.g. Hoyle & John, 1995). Greenwood (1957) in particular contend that occupations that have not attained a professional status may also possess the traits, but to a lesser degree.

In addition, Abbott (1988) contends that the traits are merely internal control measures for maintaining the standard of practice, control over members conduct, and entry barriers into the profession respectively. Control measures of these types have little to no impact on practitioners’ workplace realities and recognition, which may explain why the traits have been ineffective in the PR field. Suggestions have been made for more studies to be dedicated to the influence of organizational contexts on professions’ practice (e.g. Pieczka & L'Etang, 2001). Such understanding could help in developing an effective theory-inspired approach to professionalizing PR in country-specific contexts.

1.4.2 The subtle approach to PR professionalization
The inability of the traits and the power approach to help the PR field obtain recognition shifted research focus on PR professionalization from the pursuit of recognition to legitimacy. Merkelsen (2011), views this as both a subtle approach and a pragmatic solution to the stigmatization, lack of trust and unflattering reputation of PR. Subtle approaches embrace the neo-institutional theory (NIT) research tradition that works with a broader sociological perspective that focuses on interactions between organizations (including professions) and their external environment. Particular emphasis is placed on organizations’ passive (e.g. Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2008a; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) or strategic
responses to external pressures which impacts their validity, effectiveness and legitimacy respectively (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Oliver, 1991; Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin, & Suddaby, 2008; Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996). In this sense, the PR field’s focus is on pursuing professionalization in ways that meet some socially constructed system of norms in exchange for public support and recognition (e.g. Suchman, 1995).

These studies avoid the PR title but explain how appealing PR tasks such as CSR, crisis management (e.g. Bartlett, Tywoniak, & Hatcher, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010; Chen, 2003, 2009; Steyn & Niemann 2010; Fredriksson, Olsson, & Pallas, 2014) and communication disciplines such as strategic communications (Grandien & Johansson, 2011) have been institutionalized as an organizational practice. Callison (2001) found improvements in the credibility of corporate messages when they are not associated with PR, while the reverse is noticed when associated with PR. A name change for PR has also been considered for PR (Theaker, 2004), while another set of studies argues for the institutionalization of evaluation of PR activities (e.g. Romenti, 2008; Invernizzi & Romenti, 2009).

However, most of these studies apply the NIT tradition for discussing and arguing for the previously held assumptions about PR and the practitioners’ competences, such as 1) PR as a strategic organizational function for image and reputation management through CSR and crisis management; 2) demonstrating PR’s strategic contribution to organizational goals through evaluation; which 3) highlights practitioners’ unique competences that qualify them for strategic/managerial role with which they can 4) counsel management and possess decision making power to contribute to key organizational decisions and overall vision (e.g., Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

Within the NIT tradition are passive adoption, (e.g., Meyer & Rowan, 1977, Zucker, 1977; Scott, 2008a) and strategic responses to institutionalized norms (e.g. DiMaggio, 1988; Oliver, 1991; Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996) respectively. However, the majority of these studies propose passive response i.e. conformity as the default response to institutionalized norms such as the traditional traits (e.g. Coombs & Holladay, 2009; Sandhu, 2008; Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010; Chen, 2003, 2009; Steyn & Niemann 2010) which is a form of external
pressure (Bartlett, Tywoniak, & Hatcher, 2007). This restricts discussion about professional legitimacy to the underdeveloped version of NIT, while the advanced version of the theory could expand theory building for PR professionalization. However, there are the exceptions of a few studies that have worked with translation from the Scandinavian NIT tradition (e.g. Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996) which is from the latter version (e.g. Grandien & Johansson, 2011; Fredriksson, Olsson, & Pallas, 2014). Nevertheless, the current state of PR’s legitimacy suggests a much broader understanding of professional projects which the more recent version can help with.

1.4.2.1 Bottle-necks and dilemmas for PR's professional legitimacy
Valentini (2009) doubts the possibility of institutionalizing PR and obtaining legitimacy due to the various stages of development of PR across countries. In this sense, PR may not have matured enough to obtain professional legitimacy in certain country-specific contexts. She equally notes how the persistence of issues pertaining to the individual practitioner and the PR profession’s credibility may hinder professional recognition and thus legitimacy (see also, Olatunji, 2014; Amujo & Melewar, 2011). More so, vast encroachment whereby non-practitioners head PR units or decide on corporate PR activities (Lee, 2005; Lauzen, 1991, 1992) coupled with the institutionalization of the technician role for practitioners across country-specific contexts (e.g. Zerfass et al., 2008; Amujo & Melewar, 2011) may be harder to change.

Furthermore, Merkelsen (2011) uses his “double-edged sword” metaphor to highlight two dilemmas challenging PR’s legitimacy as a profession and an academic discipline. The first dilemma arises from lack of legitimacy arising from the publics’ perception of practitioners as only interested in protecting corporate interests (Gabrielsen, 2004; Olatunji, 2014). One such practice entails manipulating meanings to serve their bosses, organizations, and personal interests (Jackall, 1988). This leads to publics’ scepticism (e.g. Olasky, 1987; L’Etang, 1996) and lack of trust in PR as an organizational practice and profession respectively (e.g. Sallot, 2002, Callison, 2004). Consequently, practitioners’ capacity to support organizations’ PR objectives with their publics is also challenged by the stigmas, which equally influence their legitimacy in organizational contexts (Merkelsen, 2011). Additionally, the closeness between PR as a scientific discipline and professional practice causes the stigma against PR to be extended to the PR field (Merkelsen, 2011). Consequently, PR as a theoretical discipline
struggles for academic and professional prestige, which results to doubts about its legitimacy (e.g. Botan and Hazleton, 2006). These ultimately subject the PR field’s intellectual capacity to ridicule (e.g. Cheney and Christensen, 2001).

Although the subtle approaches may help the PR field to avoid stigmatization, they do not advance the profession’s legitimacy (Merkelsen (2011) but instead contribute to its identity crisis (Hutton, 1999) since other disciplines are promoted. Consequently, PR’s theoretical domain and practice are threatened by such disciplines, which compete against or may replace the PR profession (Merkelsen, 2011). More so, subtle attempts at professionalization may also be inapplicable because the profession that is to be legitimized must be known. Otherwise, hiding behind corporate communication, CSR, or crisis communications’ disguise raises ethical questions in the theoretical domain of PR, which may reinforce the lack of trust in PR (Merkelsen, 2011).

Secondly, the power approach within the sociology of professions contends that professional projects (Larson, 1977) should help professions to obtain legitimacy, i.e. social approval to define and control their work, and relationships with clients and the public (Pieczka & L’Etang, 2001; Strauss, 1963; Serini, 1993). Whilst stigmas against PR renders its professional projects unsuccessful, PR’s difficulty in documenting its value to organizations equally hinders its aspirations of becoming a top management function (e.g. Grunig, 1992). Moreover, interprofessional competition for prestige and intra-organizational power plays (Lauzen, 1992) between organizational units are part of the workplace realities (e.g. Abbott, 1988). Therefore, aside from the detrimental impact of promoting competing communication disciplines at the expense of PR, practitioners face competitions in the workplace for professional legitimacy, which the subtle approaches may prevent them PR from winning.

Hutton (2001) found the marketing discipline and its promotional mix, in particular, to be more appealing to corporate organizations because they provide free publicity and promote corporate interest with measurable results. Consequently, PR is often inserted as a subset of marketing and/or corporate communication (Argenti, 1996; Cornelissen, 2014; Goodman, 2006). Measuring PR’s value to organizations remains a challenge for the PR field (Broom & Dozier, 1983; Laborde & Pompper, 2006) as mutual understanding is hard to assess. Studies attempting to develop metrics for measurement focus more on how PR supports
organizational objectives and effectiveness (e.g. Lindenmann, 1997) which may not be sufficient for obtaining legitimacy in the workplace. In the end, these dilemmas make up the unresolved issues confronting PR’s professional legitimacy, which the subtle approaches are yet to address.

When put together, the PR profession’s journey towards achieving the desired recognition and/or legitimacy is at a crossroads as the two approaches appear counterproductive thus far. More so, tensions emerging from the Nigerian context do not propel the profession into a desirable path. This raises questions about the adopted approach and its implications for the Nigerian context concerning the way forward. For this purpose, further research into the approach for PR’s professional project which aims to depart from the norm and explore alternative explanations in the study of PR. Besides, the lack of recognition emanating from a reliance on the traits’ as well as doubts about PR’s legitimacy represents a knowledge gap that this study hopes to fill.

1.5 Research Purpose
Although the direct and indirect/subtle approaches attempt to resolve some concerns about the professional status recognition/legitimacy of PR, they have also introduced new dilemmas. These raise questions about the efficacy of the currently adopted approach(es) to professional projects and particularly raises doubts about their capacity to attain legitimacy for PR in Nigeria at least. More specifically, doubts abound about the capacity of the scope of available PR programs and certification to prepare practitioners for the desired managerial role, which scholars argue that practitioners should occupy. However, unmet corporate expectations which influence the definition of the legitimacy of PR while competition from prestigious communication professions persists.

Based on the above accounts, the overall purpose of this study is to explore how and why the PR field could better explain and theorize professional projects by inviting an alternative approach into discussions about PR’s professional legitimacy in Nigerian corporate workplaces. In doing so, this dissertation hopes to extend the understanding of the perception of the legitimacy of PR in country-specific contexts. Such an understanding is expected to inform the appropriate response to external pressures, workplace realities and expectations of
professional associations, thereby increasing the likelihood of PR’s professional legitimacy to be obtained.

1.5.1 Research questions
The following is the overarching research question of this study, which is followed by clusters of sub-questions:

How and why could the perspectives of top management, the professional association (NIPR) and PR educators influence PR’s professional project, and thereby contribute to the professional legitimacy of PR in country-specific contexts?

1. Which perspectives affect the legitimacy of PR?

1a. How is PR perceived by Nigerian top managements?

1b. How is PR perceived by Nigeria's Professional association for PR, NIPR?

1c. How is PR perceived by PR educators in Nigeria?

2. How do these perceptions of the respective actors contribute to the underlying perspectives on the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria?

2a. How do perceptions of PR by Nigerian top management differ from those of the Nigerian Professional PR association and that of educators?

2b. What are the contradictions emerging from the differing perceptions?

2c. To what extent do these contradictions affect the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria?

3. How can we develop an institutional approach to the legitimacy in PR based on empirical evidence from a country-specific context?

3a. Which contradictions between the actors’ perspectives on PR could be used to rethink theoretical approaches to professional legitimacy in the field of PR?
3b. To what extent do these contradictions reflect an institutional approach to PR’s professional project in the country-specific context of Nigeria?

1.6 Contributions
The contribution of this study is an institutional approach process model that has both practical and theoretical implications for the field of PR and professional associations respectively. At a theoretical level, the institutional approach process model guides organizations towards an appropriate response to institutional complexities, which also offers a more plausible explanation of organizational behavior and the pursuit of legitimacy within their institutional contexts. The model combines the institutional logics theory, constellation of logics, institutional complexity and a resource dependence oriented strategic response as the process for obtaining legitimacy within institutional contexts. At a practical level, this institutional approach process model facilitates a deeper understanding and thereby offers professions an opportunity to reflect on how to evolve at different points in accordance with the ever-changing external demands for legitimacy within their institutional context. The model enables users to build awareness from the outside-in, in contrast with a typical inside out, PR oriented perspective on their professional project. This is applicable at the theoretical and the practical levels respectively.

1.7 Overview of the structure
The plan of study provides an outline and overview of the rest of the chapters and what they cover for this dissertation. They include:

Chapter 2: Literature review is covered in the next chapter. It comprises a traditional review of the literature on theories, concepts, and approaches for PR professional projects. Key areas under review include the sociology of professions, professional power, autonomy, dominant coalitions, and professional power. Literature being considered appears in peer-reviewed journal articles, book sections, chapters in handbooks and conference papers. In addition, grey literature such as master’s theses and PhD dissertations covering the relevant subject areas are also considered.

The first section of the review provides an overview of approaches within the sociology of professions. This is followed by a section on the power approach from within the sociology
of the profession and how it is been applied for studying aspects of PR professional projects. Subjects under review here include practitioner autonomy, practitioner role typology and manager role enactment, dominant coalitions and professional power. The latter in particular includes professional power, which expands the understanding of the scope of dominant coalitions as it includes resource dependence theory, i.e. a view of professional power through critical resources and intraorganizational power play, which is a workplace norm. The last part presents the most recent contribution to studying professional projects which is the institutional approach.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework lays out the chosen frame for understanding the perspectives of and interactions between top management, the PR professional association (NIPR) and PR educators who impact the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria. Based on the literature review, the theoretical framework examines and discusses the institutionalized practices for PR’s professional projects. This is carried out to develop a framework for understanding how and why the NIPR could respond to them.

The first section discusses the early and recent conceptions of NIT, which highlights shifts from actors’ conformity and isomorphism to agency and strategic responses to institutionalized norms in relation to their drive for legitimacy. The second section looks into Institutional logics, which concentrates on the historical and socially constructed perspectives informing the respective actors’ practices, as well as interactions between the logics within the environment. The third section describes the context i.e. organization field where institutional actors interact; how and why particular actors become field members and the implications of their power relations on PR’s professional project in Nigeria. The last section presents the foundation of NIT, i.e. social constructionism, which is the underlying epistemological orientation of the core components of this theoretical framework.

Chapter 4: Methodology presents a plan of action for answering the research questions of this study. For this purpose, the sections in this chapter cover the single case study design, which includes the presentation of the relevant data sources, as well as data collection and analysis methods respectively.

Chapter 5: Findings comprises a presentation of the actors’ perspectives about the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria based on the thematic analysis of the respective interviewee accounts. Thematic analysis is efficient for identifying salient themes and developing
thematic networks from the interview transcripts. This chapter is divided into three sections that are organized in accordance with themes derived from the respective actor community’s interviewees’ accounts, which uncovers their perceptions.

**Chapter 6: Analysis** brings identified perceptions together and analyzes how they contribute to the underlying perspective on the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria as well as their meaning for theory and practice. The key findings of the interviewees’ perspectives are used to develop their respective institutional logics, which also highlights their assumptions and expectations for legitimacy to be obtained and/or adjudged. The logics are then examined critically to identify contradictions between them. The constellation of logics is then applied for understanding the nature of the interactions between the logics and the implications of the identified contradictions for each actor, the perception of PR’s legitimacy and professional project respectively.

**Chapter 7: Conclusion** provides a summary of the entire dissertation, identified perceptions and contradictions, their implications for institutional actors and future professional projects. These are followed by contributions and limitations of the study respectively, as well as suggestions for further studies.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 comprises a review of existing theories, approaches, and models to study PR professional projects and legitimacy. This is carried out for this dissertation to understand what the literature uncovers about organizations and professional associations’ influence on PR’s professional projects and their (un)intended outcomes. Therefore, the overall question guiding this review is: which theories/approaches have been used to explain PR professionalization in the previous research works; what are their limitations, and which new theory-based understanding could address such limitations in this study?

It has become commonplace to make a distinction between traditional and systematic literature reviews (e.g., Hart, 2006). I have chosen to carry out a traditional type of literature review in this study to critically examine the body of published works on PR’s professional projects. In doing so, this review will highlight gaps in the form of the limitations of the theories and approaches applied in previous research. These gaps are important to fill especially for PR in Nigeria, as the legitimacy, image and credibility of PR continue to suffer, due to the impact of theories and approaches currently applied. Therefore, this review examines relevant topics, concepts, and elements of professional projects. An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of prevailing approaches has been carried out to point out the gaps and issues hindering PR’s professional legitimacy, which this study will attempt to address.

Based on the research purpose and research questions of the study, relevant keywords were listed up and literature searches were conducted electronically using Google scholar and relevant Aarhus University library online databases. The search results comprised articles in peer-reviewed journals, book sections, handbooks, and conference papers. Some hardcopy textbooks and handbooks from the library and from colleagues were also sourced for literature. Moreover, references of retrieved articles and recommended literature by supervisors yielded additional literature. Although a wealth of literature was found for most of the keywords, a lack of journal articles on PR professionalization in Nigeria was found online. A more expansive search was conducted using online search engines, which

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4 PR professionalization, Professional project, sociology of professions, autonomy, professionalization, PR practitioner role, role typologies, role enactment, PR in country-specific context, institutionalization of PR, “neoinstitutional theory AND PR”, neo-institutional theory, dominant coalition, professional power, resource dependence, professional power, “PR AND Nigeria”, NIPR etc.
generated grey literature such as master theses and PhD dissertations (e.g. Schöpfel, 2010) on PR in Nigeria that are all considered in this review.

In order to ensure continuity and consistency in the review, the main body of the review is divided into key subject areas that have been researched with relevant concepts. Section 2.1 *Brief overview of approaches to the study of professions within PR* provides a brief overview of approaches that have been developed within the sociology of professions. This provides background information for discussions that will follow in the sections of this literature review. Section 2.2 *The Power approach to PR professionalization* introduces the core assumptions and limitations of the power approach. The section covers a review of academic literature on PR practitioner autonomy that has been researched through role typologies, manager role enactment, dominant coalition membership and professional power. This literature focuses on components leading to professional dominance in the workplace and therefore provides concrete evidence of the power approach within PR research. The knowledge gap and/or issues emanating from this literature represents the areas that this study attempts to resolve.

Section 2.3 *Towards an institutional approach for PR’s professional projects* presents the most recent approach and its capacity to extend the profession's understanding of workplace reality, which informs theory development for professional projects. Section 2.4 *Going beyond the traits and illusion of professional power* provides a synthesis of the approaches and the elements of the literature review.

### 2.1 Brief overview of approaches to the study of professions within PR

For the purpose of this study, Leicht and Fennell’s (2001) broad and traditional definition of professions is applied. This is because the PR field imitates the professional projects of classic and prestigious professions such as physicians, lawyers, accountants, scientists etc. (Greenwood, 1957; Strauss, 1963) and expects to be perceived and recognized as such (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994; Amujo & Melewar, 2011). Leicht and Fennell (2001) define professions as (a) an occupational group whose work is defined by the application of rigorous scientific and theoretical knowledge to tasks that are tied to core societal values; (b) where tasks are carried out with considerable autonomy (c) whose claims
to exclusive control over a task domain (jurisdiction) emanates from the application of the unique knowledge/expertise gained from professional training and certification.

The efforts of occupations’ to become professions have been explained and understood from approaches developed within the sociology of professions, which includes the (1) traits approach (e.g. Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1933; Greenwood, 1957) (2) the power approach allied with professional projects (e.g. Freidison, 1970, 2001; Larson, 1977) and system of professions (Abbott, 1988); and (3) the institutional approach (e.g Muzio, Brock, & Suddaby, 2013) respectively. These approaches highlight different routes for professions to attain the professional status with which they are recognized as a legitimate profession. Moreover, they work with differing understandings of the reality for PR practitioners within organizations, which contribute to incompatibilities emanating from differing understandings and consequent practices about the ideal and realistic routes to the desired recognition. Nevertheless, they have been developed to account for the critique of their predecessors.

2.1.1 The traits approach
The traits approach is *professional association centric*, because it predominantly assesses the extent to which professional associations and scholars have established the five traditional traits. Among the frequently mentioned traits one finds: (a) *body of knowledge* (Bissland & Rentner, 1988; Hainsworth, 1993); (b) complex and rigorous *formal education* (White, Oukrop & Nelson, 1992; Ehling, 1992; Wakefield & Cottone 1992); (c) establishment of a *professional association* (Lages & Simkin, 2003; Edwards, 2014); and (d) a *code of conduct* that guides the practitioners (Jefkins, 1980; Samaila 2015; Ajala 2001; Oko, Nnolim & Nwaizugbo 2014; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013); and lastly, (e) *autonomy*, i.e. PR practitioners’ discretion over their work, due to their perceived expertise skills (e.g. Grunig, 1992; Serini, 1993; Wallace, 1995).

However, the traits are viewed as mere internal control measures put in place by professional associations (Abbott, 1988), and only fulfill a prophecy (e.g., Hughes, 1958), and have proven ineffective for attaining the expected professional recognition for PR in country-specific contexts, such as Nigeria (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011). Furthermore, Abbott (1988) finds the traits approach to be misleading as it ignores practitioners’ actual work, inter-professional competition and management bureaucracies which are firmly under the control of management and not professions (see also the proletarianization thesis
Oppenheimer, 1972). Moreover, the traits have been developed based on the professional projects of well-recognized and undisputed professions such as medicine and accounting (Greenwood, 1957). This category of professions does not include PR which Sriramesh and Vercic (2009) in their global PR theory found to be accorded a subordinate status in many underdeveloped and developing countries, such as Nigeria.

2.1.2. The power approach
Criticism of this nature shifted research focus away from the traits to the professional/practitioner-centric power approach that concentrates on the professional autonomy trait. Professional autonomy has been described as the hallmark of professions (e.g., Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994), which has been researched and discussed through role typologies, managerial role enactment, dominant coalition membership, and decision-making powers. This literature helps to understand PR practitioners’ workplace reality, while also highlighting the limitations of existing approaches and assumptions hindering professional recognition from a top managements’ perspective.

2.1.3 The institutional approach
The workplace/organization centric institutional approach was developed to attend to the power approach’s lack of consideration for the professions’ actual work, top managements’ expectations and the capacity to influence practitioners’ roles, tasks, and power in the workplace (Muzio, Broc, & Suddaby, 2013). The institutional approach has been recently developed and has received least interest in PR research. The PR field’s over-reliance on the traits and power approach, coupled with little interest on managements’ influence on PR professionalization and recognition suggests a partial understanding and knowledge gap within existing literature explaining PR professionalization. More so, an alternative understanding, which goes beyond the role typologies as a means to professional power, could be brought into the discussions to deepen the understanding of this subject matter.

Additionally, the literature on PR’s development and professionalization from the institutional perspective would deepen the understanding of the context of research, Nigeria in this case. Some studies within the power approach have studied managerial role enactment in the workplace, which focuses on certain elements that could be linked to the institutional approach. However, the underlying focus of those studies was on how practitioners could be
part of the dominant coalition and decision making, which are reminiscent of the power approach, thereby contrasting the core arguments of the institutional approach. In the following section, these approaches and related concepts in academic research on PR professionalization are reviewed.

Figure 2.1 maps the core components, related concepts and desired outcomes of the approaches within the sociology of professions.

Figure 2.1: Professionalizing Public Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>key assumptions</th>
<th>Practitioner role</th>
<th>Desired outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traits approach</td>
<td>Body of knowledge</td>
<td>Managerial role (Autonomy)</td>
<td>Professional status/recognition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Formal education</td>
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<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professional body</td>
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<td>Dominant Coalition membership</td>
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<td>Code of conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td>Decision making Power</td>
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<td>Power approach</td>
<td>Direct Approach</td>
<td>Managerial role</td>
<td>Professional Dominance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unique expertise → Jurisdiction</td>
<td>Technician role</td>
<td>Management trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupational dominance</td>
<td>Activist role</td>
<td>Decision making Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtle Approach</td>
<td>Manager role</td>
<td>Professional status/recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutionalization of CSR and Crisis communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dominant coalition membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>System of professions</td>
<td>Managerial role</td>
<td>Professional role enactment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approach</td>
<td>Interprofessional competition</td>
<td>Technician role</td>
<td>Professional legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unique expertise = Jurisdiction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Possession of critical organizational resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>legal + societal+ workplace claims</td>
<td></td>
<td>Intraorganizational Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proletarianization thesis</td>
<td>Managerial role</td>
<td>Organizationally determined role and tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptive thesis</td>
<td>Technician role</td>
<td>Professional power through critical resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we will see in the following sections, a review of the literature of PR’s professional projects based on approaches developed within the sociology professions will be carried out. Since the core elements, assumptions, limitations, and outcomes of relying on the traits approach have been touched upon the introduction chapter and above, the review continues with a review of the literature on the power approach and related concepts. These offer insights into the key assumptions, outcomes, capacity to facilitate the legitimacy of PR and its limitations of the approach.
2.2 The power approach to PR professionalization

Professional status is the outcome of professionalization efforts (Evetts, 2014). This has been described as professional projects (Larson, 1977) with which professional recognition is obtained in the society, granted by legal authorities, and acknowledged in the workplace respectively (Abbott, 1988). The idea of professionalization is relevant for emerging professions that are pursuing or are uncertain about their professional status (Brint, 2001; Ruiz Ben, 2009). PR is one of such professions that lacks consensus amongst PR scholars. For instance, Jackson (1988) views PR as an established profession that should not be relegated to a subset or specialization of journalism and mass communication (Kruckeberg, 1998). In contrast, others scholars disagree and instead concentrate their research efforts on evaluating the professional status based on the functions performed by practitioners and practitioners attributes within organizations (e.g. Grunig L. A. 1990; Hainsworth 1993; Wylie 1994; Ryan and Martinson 1990; Cameron et al. 1996; Sallot, Cameron, & Weaver-Lariscy, 1998).

Notably, practitioners’ inability to establish a professional jurisdiction through a distinct functional area and strategic management’s role with decision-making powers respectively reinforces the idea that professional status still needs to be attained (e.g. Grunig & Hunt, 1984). This shifted the PR field’s research attention to the autonomy trait which is expected to be the source of professional power through the practitioner role, dominant coalition membership and decision making powers for dominating organizations, which are reminiscent of the power approach to professions. Therefore, this section reviews PR literature that worked with the core assumptions and concepts related to the power approach within the PR professionalization research. This provides insights into how the PR field views these concepts and how such understanding informs their expectations regarding practitioners’ role and power in the workplace.

The criticism of the trait approach in the 1970s led to the development of the power approach that focused on the power struggles between distinctive groups over jurisdictions through professional projects (Larson, 1977). The power approach emphasized occupational dominance (Freidson, 1970) and control over work and specific tasks/services (see jurisdiction in Abbott, 1988). In this sense, professions use their expertise, superior political and organizational resources to retain professional power and autonomy to self-regulate, gain financial rewards and determine who qualifies to practice particular professions (Abbott,
In addition, professional projects as laid out by Larson (1977) emphasize the agency of professions in achieving market power and social status as well as the importance of retaining jurisdiction over services and using scarcity of skills to maximize rewards (Parkin, 1979).

Ben-David (1963) stresses how domination gained through professional projects protect professionals from bureaucratic control, and prevent demotivation and dissatisfaction for professionals in the workplace (Freidson, 1994, 2001). However, Abbott (1988) was critical of the self-interested goal of dominating organizations which ignores professions’ actual work and top managements’ power in the workplace arena. He points out that organizations are not created to attend to or uphold the norms and expectations of professions, but their commercial interests instead. In addition, Freidson’s (1970) argument is based on the medical profession, which is traditionally a prestigious and recognized profession, which is not generalizable across all professions (see Greenwood, 1957) and especially PR.

In contrast, the literature on professions’ reality in the workplace reveals that they are generally subjected to bureaucratic controls, a division of labor and organizationally-determined roles (Oppenheimer, 1972; Leicht & Fennell, 1997). More so, PR faces ongoing competition from communication professions such as marketing (Hutton, 2001), corporate communication (Cornelissen, 2014; Goodman, 2006), journalism (Amujo & Melewar, 2011) etc. and as such lacks jurisdiction. Consequently, professional projects according to Freidson (1970) Larson (1977) and colleagues give little cognizance to the broader institutional context or complex organizations where professionals work and are influenced (Hinings, 2005; Leicht and Fennell, 1997). These contexts are characterized by managerial pressures and proletarianization which erodes professions’ norm, expectations (see Oppenheimer, 1972) such as the managerial role and autonomy argued for by PR (e.g. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, 1992a; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

Still within the power approach is Abbott’s (1988) system of professions that views professional projects differently. For Abbott, projects are characterized by interprofessional competition between occupational groups’ who use their unique abstract knowledge and expertise to obtain jurisdiction and professional legitimacy within their societal, legal and workplace arenas. Unlike Freidson and Larson’s argument for professionals’ dominance, Abbott (1988) argues that the workplace arena is the most powerful of all three as top
management can overthrow claims made in the other arenas towards achieving their own goals.

This could be better understood by Pfeffer and Salancik’s (1978) resources dependence theory (RDT). The premise here is that organizations cultivate needed resources internally by employing professions with such resources (e.g. Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Therefore, professions’ with expertise that can be deployed for resolving organizations’ contingencies and environmental uncertainties are able to win interprofessional competitions in the workplace, which negates the professions’ norms or expectation of dominance. More so, organizations are argued to act in ways that protect their own interest, which professions must understand when navigating the workplace arena (Abbott, 1988; Evetts, 2014; Hinings, 2005; Leicht and Fennell, 1997). Support for this line of argument is found in the case of PR in Nigeria whereby legal arena claims i.e. government approval and chartered status is overthrown by top management viewing practitioners as support staff and technicians.

Critical PR scholars (e.g. Pieczka & L’Etang, 2001) refer to the power approach specifically when explaining and theorizing PR’s professional projects, which aims for professional status and social legitimacy. However, key concepts such as autonomy, practitioner role, dominant coalition and decision making powers, are elements focused upon when investigating in-house practitioners’ domination and power in the workplace. Therefore, the PR field’s core assumptions and arguments regarding these concepts are discussed in relation to PR’s professional projects in the following sections.

2.2.1. PR practitioner autonomy myth
Autonomy has received a lot of research attention within the PR field because it is viewed as a key component of professional recognition. The PR field, in particular, expects autonomy (e.g. Strauss, 1963; Serini, 1993) to reflect on practitioners’ role enactment (e.g. Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000), dominant coalition membership (Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009), capacity for strategic contribution and decision making powers in organizations (e.g. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Ledingham & Bruning, 2001; Grunig, 1992a). However, as we will see in the discussion, the PR field’s assumptions about these concepts suggest a partial understanding
of the realities of complex workplaces, as well as top managements’ understandings and prioritizations.

Within the sociological literature, professional autonomy has been described in terms of professionals’ expertise power (e.g. Freidson, 1970; Abbott, 1988), a legal claim or right, as well as something to be wrested from top management (Strauss, 1963). The former views autonomy as synonymous to professional power that is obtainable with the professions’ exclusive expertise, with which they should exercise control over the determination of the substance of their work (Freidson, 1970, 1994; Larson, 1977). In the same vein, Strauss (1963) defines autonomy as professionals’ claim and “right to decide how their function is to be performed free from lay restrictions” (p. 8). For Abbott (1988) and Wilensky (1964), autonomy represents professions means to relate to organizations with discretion and control over their jurisdiction and position within organizations. In essence, autonomy permits the performance of jurisdictions and capacity to advise management without being subjected to control (Strauss, 1963).

2.2.2 Controlled and Uncontrolled autonomy

Strauss (1963) recognizes that autonomy is not always possible in the workplace and stresses the variation in professions’ access to autonomy. He contends that “professionalism beckons as a means of raising the status and winning autonomy - if the occupation can get away with it” (1963, p. 22). The first part of this statement suggests an ideal situation whereby reputable professions possess the power to negotiate with management for strategic decisions and implement them instead of being subjected to management control (e.g. Freidson, 1970, 1994; Larson, 1977). Support for this argument is found in Scott (1965) and Wallace’s (1995) studies on autonomous professions and adaptive thesis, whereby expertise grants “prestigious” professions (e.g. medicine, accounting, law) discretion over the structure and performance of their work without interference from superiors within the organization (e.g. Freidson, 1970, 1994; Larson, 1977).

While these scholars were very optimistic about professions chances of obtaining autonomy in the workplace. Strauss’s statement: “if the occupation can get away with it” (1963, p.22) suggests that autonomy is something that professions fight for or convince management about. The literature on PR practitioner autonomy reveals that PR researchers expect
practitioners’ expertise to grant them autonomy (Price & Mueller, 1986) and the capacity to contribute at a strategic level (e.g. Grunig, 1992; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

However, this is only partially accurate as practitioner autonomy has been found to be unstable and only granted when practitioners’ expertise matches the issues to be dealt with (e.g. Grunig, 1990; Serini, 1993). Grunig’s (1990) work on PR departments found autonomy to exist between the two extremes described as restrictive and non-restrictive autonomy (Grunig, 1990). Similarly, Serini (1993) found that practitioners negotiate between a “totally controlled and totally uncontrolled” autonomy continuum. A concrete example of this is provided by Bowen (2009) who found that organizations accord PR professionals’ full control mostly when confronted with a crisis, whereby practitioners needed managing and rarely had full in other cases. This points to workplace realities regarding PR practitioners’ jurisdiction from the top managements’ perspective (Abbott, 1988; Strauss, 1963). Consequently, practitioner autonomy is to be understood as contingent on organizations’ decisions and not an automatic attribute or standard for the PR profession, thereby demonstrating a disconnect between the PR fields expectations and that of organizations.

2.2.2.1 Understanding workplace realities: organizational practice versus profession’s norm

Disconnects between the PR profession’s norms regarding autonomy and that of organizations are crucial for effective professional projects. While practitioners’ workplace realities have received growing attention over the years, the PR field may have ignored such findings in their professional projects. Berger (2005) found PR professionals to be confronted with a dilemma regarding whether to pledge their allegiance to their professional body or to their employer (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Serini, 1993; Amujo & Melewar, 2011) especially as these entities often have incompatible values and/or assumptions of the profession and its jurisdiction (Abbott, 1988; Strauss, 1963).

Organizations implement bureaucratic structures for their goal attainment (Blau & Scott, 1962), commercial interests (Singh & Jayanti, 2013) and overall effectiveness (Oppenheimer, 1973). Bureaucracy compels professionals to adopt the organizations’ values (Suddaby & Viale, 2011) which is found to deny professions’ autonomy (McCann, Granter, Hyde & Hassard, 2013) while subjecting them to rigid routines, division of labor, formalized role

Furthermore, Leicht and Fennell (1997), Muzio, Brock and Suddaby (2013) maintain that powers, status and activities of professionals are conditioned by opportunities and control allowed by organizations. More so, Brint and Karabel (1991) argue that professionals are only able to exercise their power through their position/role, which is also determined by organizations. These contradict the enormous powers that power approach scholars argue that (e.g. Larson, 1977, Freidson, 1970, 2001) practitioners could use to dominate organizations. These understandings of workplace realities provide further insights that may be relevant for PR professional projects. However, this workplace oriented approach should not be restricted to autonomy alone but extended to other related factors such as practitioner role, dominant coalition membership and decision making powers that are equally influenced by top management as will be discussed in the following sections.

2.2.3 Controversial PR Practitioner role and pursuit of dominance in the workplace
Controversial practitioner roles’ expectations in the workplace in the PR field are viewed as a key contributor to the ongoing lack of recognition for PR. According to Katz and Kahn (1978), roles guide the activities of people within organizations, which mesh with the activities of others within the organization and leads to predictable outcomes. Practitioners’ role(s) indicates their professional status, hierarchy, and powers, which determines whether they are able to influence decision making (Dozier, 1992) or simply receive decisions of others and implement them (Broom & Dozier, 1986).

A remarkable expansion of academic research into PR practitioner roles in organizational contexts has taken place in the past decades (Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1990; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Lauzen, 1992; Lauzen & Dozier, 1992; Toth & L. A. Grunig, 1993; Toth, Serini, Wright, & Emig, 1998; Holtzhausen, 2000; Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Berger, 2005). In their pioneering work on PR practitioner roles in the organization, Broom and Smith (1978, 1979) developed and tested their typology of four practitioner roles which reflect varying powers, responsibilities, and capacity to partake in decision making. Dozier’s (1983)
study of these roles enactment led to their reduction in the technician and managerial role
typology, which is empirically and conceptually distinct from one another. According to
Dozier (1992), the “manager–technician typology provides a parsimonious way to
operationalize roles and test relations with antecedent and consequential constructs” (p. 334).

The technician role is a non-management position whereby practitioners are mostly tasked
with producing communication materials for PR efforts, working with the media, or
implementing PR programs that are solely determined by management (e.g. Broom & Dozier,
1986). Although technicians are not held responsible for the outcomes of the implemented
programs, their role limits their work to a low-level support function (Broom, 1982).
Managers, on the other hand, are viewed as experts who contribute to organizations’ policies,
programs, and their implementation, thereby playing an active role in resolving
organizations’ PR related problems, and are held responsible for the outcome of
implemented programs (e.g. Dozier, 1984).

Based on their task distinction, level of responsibilities, hierarchy, and capacity to influence
the decision, Dozier (1984) describes technicians as the powerless role and managers as the
powerful role in the workplace (see also Broom & Dozier, 1985; Broom & Dozier, 1986).
The role typology orientates and/or is adopted in role related studies across country-specific
contexts (e.g. Wu & Taylor, 2003; Amujo & Melewar, 2011). Nevertheless, Dozier and
Broom’s (1995) comparative analysis of the tasks composition enacted by practitioners reveal
that all practitioners enact certain technician tasks irrespective of their role. Subsequent role
studies focused solely on the managerial role enactment and concluded that practitioner
experience, education, department size (Dozier & Broom, 1995), environmental uncertainty
(White & Dozier, 1992), and management expectations or understanding of PR (Broom,
1982) are the key determinants for the managerial role enactment.

However, the bipolar practitioner role typology is too limited in scope and capacity to explain
managers’ work in organizations. According to DeSanto and Moss (2005), PR scholars
including Broom assume a singular view of PR managers, such that they are believed to
perform similar tasks that could be summed up as managing communication activities and
processes. This view is flawed by the methodological approaches and different country and
organizational contexts where the typology is expected to be applied (e.g. DeSanto & Moss,
2005). For instance, Broom’s (1982) role typologies are developed based on consulting
literature, and primarily focused on practices in the US. Moss and Green (2001) contend that a PR manager’s role may vary or be practiced at different levels, whereby some work at a senior executive capacity, while others simply manage the implementation of strategies but at a level higher than that of the technician practices in the workplace (e.g. Steyn, 2000; Moss & Green, 2001). Therefore, the typology lacks rich insights about workplace realities that are informed by a management perspective, dimensions of manager role types and enactment across country-specific contexts and organizations, which empirical studies could provide (e.g. Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000).

2.2.3.1 Managerial role enactment
Criticism of the typology and the managerial role, in particular, shifted academic research focus into cross-country empirical studies focused on senior in-house PR practitioner’s work in the UK, US, and African respectively. Although these studies confirm the previously identified determinants for the manager role-enactment (e.g. Dozier & Broom, 1995), they equally highlight dimensions with which manager role types are developed based on management’s expectations, task composition, level of involvement in strategic management of organization and decision making capacity, societal expectations and environmental uncertainties (e.g. Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000; DeSanto & Moss, 2005; Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005; Steyn, 2009; Steyn, 2000).

In their review of the role of in-house practitioners in strategy and strategizing, Frandsen & Johansen, (2015) highlight the instrumental and symbolic dimensions of managements’ expectations for practitioners. The former arises from organizations perceiving communication to be a strategic management function in which practitioners are dominant coalition members, participates in decision making and are therefore expected to produce strategies for their external and internal communication activities. In the latter, this level of responsibility positions practitioners as a powerful organizational member with a high status as they are part of the strategic work of the organization.

Moss, Desanto and colleagues in the 2000s applied a management theory lens when investigating PR manager's actual work (DeSanto & Moss, 2005; Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005; Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000). Management scholars’ traditional conception of the tasks constituting managerial work suggests a more political dimension.
This is characterized by informal interactions with other managers/or departments with whom they engage in power struggles for control over resources and/or informal interpretation, negotiation and implementation of corporate policy (Hales, 1986; Horne & Lupton, 1965; Kotter, 1982 amongst others). The first set of managers work at a higher order level where they carry out (a) strategic problem solving and decision-making activities due to their (b) robust set of competences and capabilities that include operational knowledge of their employers business and financial management knowledge with which they are able to (c) demonstrate PR’s contributions to the bottom line, which grants them (d) access to and membership to dominant coalitions (DeSanto & Moss, 2005; Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000; DeSanto & Moss, 2005; Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005).

Similarly, Steyn (2009) developed the PR reflective-strategist role. Practitioners in this role work at the macro-organizational level with dominant coalition membership and capacity to influence top management decisions. The role is based on her study of CEO expectations of communication managers across African countries with which she developed the PR strategist role (Steyn, 2000) and Hollstrom’s (2000) reflective-boundary spanning practitioner role. The reflective-strategist practitioner is characterized by a social responsibility perspective that is concerned with the consequences of organizational behavior on their external environment while working more like an advocate for public interest and aiming to balance organizational goals with societal well-being. Through environmental scanning, a proactive approach to stakeholder and issues management gathered information is used to enlighten management, influence organizational strategy such that it reflects an adaptation to the external environment. These are expected to help in building trusting relationships with stakeholders that are critical to organization wellbeing (Steyn, 2009).

The second set of managers perform at the lower order level (e.g., Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000) which is similar to Steyn’s (2009) PR manager role who works at the meso level of the organization. They are responsible for (1) developing a corporate communication strategy for supporting the overall corporate strategy, (2) carrying out routine activities such as facilitating liaison and day-to-day control of the public relations function, (3) managing the planning, implementation and evaluation of PR campaigns towards stakeholders etc. Although they report directly to senior management and CEOs and may support their decisions, they are seldom part of top management or contribute to broader operational problem-solving decisions because they are believed to lack the competences to do so. Based
on these findings, Moss, Warnaby, and Newman (2000) contend that managerial role enactment within PR may be explained more effectively by integrating management and PR conceptualizations of the manager’s role.

Consequently, research into managerial role enactment expands the understanding of organizational and environmental factors influencing the managerial role. Besides, they equally suggest a broader cognitive base for enacting macro organization/higher-order roles, which may go beyond the focus of PR programs. While the boundary spanning and stakeholder management knowledge are part of PR programs, this means that practitioners with PR education programs may be equipped with the higher order managerial/reflective-strategist role.

Figure 2.2 In-house PR practitioner role enactment

However, the inherent complexities of operational and the financial orientation of the strategy-making process and business experience (e.g. Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005) emphasizes the need for a strategic understanding and approach respectively to the external and internal communication activities (Frandsen & Johansen, 2015). These require that business education and a management perspective is integrated into PR education for the practitioner to develop such competences and thereby increase their probability of occupying their desired role. This warrants further research for practitioners to be able to enact the higher order manager role and not be restricted to the technician role. Nevertheless, aside roles that practitioners could be assigned by management, the literature on PR practitioner’s roles proposes an alternative yet radical activist role that practitioners can take upon their own free will (Holtzhausen, 2000; Berger, 2005).

2.2.3.2 The activist manager role enactment

Whilst, most research into managerial role enactment is focused on roles assigned by management, role theories have been extended by a self-attained activist managerial role enactment which is both social and political in nature (Holtzhausen, 2000; Berger, 2005). Perceived individual practitioner power based on a postmodern perspective (Holtzhausen, 2000) and “power to” notion of power (Berger, 2005) are central to this role. Postmodernists resist dominant ideologies held by the dominant and privileged group (Holtzhausen, 2000) such as top management, for maintaining power and exploiting society (e.g. Jameson, 1993). The conception of PR as a management function and two-way symmetrical communication (e.g. Grunig & Hunt, 1984) are viewed in this regard while existing roles are perceived as practitioners’ complicity in the process (Holtzhausen, 2000). They focus instead on individual practitioners’ values and capacity to invoke power from within to resist managements’ decision through dissent that is aimed at protecting the powerless society (e.g. Birch, 1992).

Additionally, Berger (2005) acknowledges that the practitioners’ are often faced with conflicting interests of protecting organizations, profession and society’s interests (e.g. Rakow, 1989) but often end up serving that of organizations because they lack the power to act otherwise. Nevertheless, he contends that PR managers in decision making roles will do the “right thing”, i.e. work towards shaping organizations’ ideology and decisions to benefit the profession, the organization, and society (Grunig & Grunig, 1989; Grunig, 1992).
Such practitioners would go beyond the role and tasks they have been assigned and act in a socially responsible manner by activating the “*Power to relations*” (Berger, 2005). This refers to “approaches, processes, and resources that public relations managers may use to counter or resist a dominance model” using sanctioned and/or unsanctioned resources (Berger, 2005, p.18). Jensen (2001) is of the view that practitioner activism could foster organizational learning, self-reflection, and alignment of private-public values and norms, which may enhance the PR’s profession’s legitimacy.

The activist role has not attracted much research interest; therefore sufficient studies have not been conducted to ascertain the tendency for its enactment in organizations. Dozier and Lauzen (1998), proposed and found evidence of practitioners learning from activists or engaging in activism (Mayhew, 1997). Holtzhausen’s (2000) provides anecdotal evidence of the activist role by a South-African public sector corporate communication department against unethical decisions by their ministry’s heads on two occasions that were not in the favor of the publics and employees interests respectively.

**Table 2.1: Activist practitioners’ resistance against dominant model (Berger, 2005)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanctioned resistance</th>
<th>Unsanctioned resistance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assumptions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assumptions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancing PR functions that are acceptable by organizational standards (Rakow, 1989) but carried out to counter the dominance model, and elevate others’ interests through:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) adapting to best practices and documenting of results</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) enhanced professional skills for obtaining power in the dominant coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) building alliances with colleagues, groups, and across functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) constructing legitimate claims based on calculations that document economic advantages of embarking on PR activities,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) being knowledgeable about: the formal and informal decision-making processes key organizational actors and their strengths and weaknesses and how to use the system to own advantage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical forms of activism that are unacceptable to the organization because they challenge practitioners’ allegiance to the organization. These includes:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) covert actions: leaking sensitive information to the media</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) planting rumors and information in the public domain</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) whistleblowing,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4) PR association’s offering training and encouraging its members to become activist practitioners or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) issuing statements or staging demonstrations to protest their concerns in corporate contexts.</td>
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</table>

In addition, Holtzhausen and Voto’s (2002) discourse analysis of interview data of 16 experienced US-based PR managers provides empirical evidence by practitioners demonstrating concern for employees by resisting managements’ unethical decisions, albeit implicitly. Nevertheless, the possibility for the widespread enactment of the activist role remains uncertain in the absence of more empirical research to better understand if this set of evidence is isolated or could be generalized across contexts.
Table 2.2: PR Practitioner roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practitioner roles</th>
<th>Key contributors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Technician role</td>
<td>Broom &amp; Dozier, 1986; Broom, 1982; Broom, Cutlip &amp; Center, 2009; Grunig, Grunig, &amp; Dozier, 2002; Noordegraaf, 2011; Sallot, Cameron, &amp; Weaver-Lariscy, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Manager role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial role enactment</td>
<td>DeSanto &amp; Moss, 2005; Moss, Warnaby, &amp; Newman, 2000; DeSanto &amp; Moss, 2005; Moss, Newman, &amp; DeSanto, 2005; Steyn, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist role</td>
<td>Holzhausen, 2000; Holzhausen &amp; Voto, 2002; Berger 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand promotion facilitators</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public information specialists</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Media relations counsel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict management experts</td>
<td>Li, Cropp, Sims, &amp; Jin, 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides, practitioners’ capacity to act as activists may be hindered by opportunities granted by top management in the workplace while resistance may lead to job loss and/or inability to enact the role (e.g. Abbott, 1988). In addition, practitioners’ ability to serve society’s interests from inside or outside the dominant coalition remains a contested issue (e.g. Motion & Leitch, 1996; Bowen, 2009; Berger, 2005). An understanding of the dominant coalition would further explain PR practitioners’ probability use of their “expertise” to dominate organizations (Freidson; 1970, 2001; Larson, 1977) or work with top management’s dictates (Abbott, 1988) as laid out respectively within the power approach. Therefore, the next section introduces the dominant coalition concept and looks into the membership and internal dynamics of the group in relation to practitioners’ workplace reality and professional project.

2.2.4 Complex dominant coalition
The dominant coalition is a key concept within PR theory as it represents the powerful group which practitioners desire to be part of. Academic research in this area has been in studies related to PR practitioner role, decision making power and professionalization respectively. According to Berger (2005), the group represents the locus of power that makes strategic decisions, allocates resources, and influences public relations practices of organizations (Grunig, 1992; Bowen, 2009). They often include the CEO and the C-suite or board of directors with formal authority and decision-making powers. Therefore, scholars argue that practitioners must be part of the group in order to influence and ensure that organizations are socially responsible in their conduct and nurture cordial relationships with their publics (e.g. Daugherty, 2001; J. E. Grunig, 2001).

PR research on dominant coalitions reveals that practitioners’ membership remains elusive (e.g. L. A. Grunig, 1992) for knowledge related issues, the ad hoc nature of membership in relation to organizational contingencies, and the internal dynamics of the group. Knowledge
related issues emanate from the organizations’ perceived practitioner incompetence caused by limited education and experience (Dozier et al., 1995; Ehling, 1992; J. E. Grunig, 1992) finance, business management and employing organizations’ operational knowledge (e.g. Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000) or management’s lack of PR understanding (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011). This motivated streams of research for developing a means that fosters practitioners’ membership and enhances their workplace recognition.

In his research on routes to practitioners’ dominant coalition membership, Bowen (2009) questions practitioners’ cognitive level, in relation to their competences, decision capacities and ability to help organizations solve PR related problems. PR scholars in several country-specific studies have found the technician role to have been institutionalized for practitioners (e.g. Zerfass et al., 2008; Amujo & Melewar, 2011). Research interest into practitioner competence found that PR managers with (a) problem-solving and strategic-thinking capabilities, (b) demonstrable contributions to the bottom-line, (d) sufficient experience, and (e) managerial understanding are more likely to gain membership (Broom & Dozier, 1985, 1986; Dozier, 1992).

Additionally, specific types of expertise such as conflict resolution through the dialogic two-way symmetrical communications for nurturing and/or managing relationships with organizations’ publics’ (Dozier et al., 1995; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Plowman, 1998; J. E. Grunig, 2001) are equally argued to enhance membership probability. Support for this line of arguments is found in Moss, Warnaby and Newman’s (2000) higher-order managerial role whereby members are characterized by broader business education and management perspective (e.g. DeSanto & Moss, 2005; Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000; Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005). However, focus on competences alone underestimates realities within the group.

2.2.4.1 Internal dynamics of the dominant coalition
Competences alone may be insufficient for practitioners’ dominant coalition membership. Berger (2005) and Bowen (2009) opened up myths about the group in their respective studies on the internal dynamics hindering practitioners’ membership. According to Stevenson et al.

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5 i) crisis management, and readiness for decisive actions, ii) capacity to counsel and advise top management on ethical dilemmas, issues management, news/media agenda, iii) capability of voicing opinions on important issues, offering correct analysis for gaining credibility, and being a great leader.
(1985), dominant coalitions are not formed for the PR profession's interest or ambitions. Links have been found to exist between the dominant coalition members’ agenda and implemented PR activities (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig; Plowman, 1998). In addition, Plowman (1998) asserts that the group comprises those with formal top management positions based on his qualitative study of PR managers, external publics and top management. These are the reasons for the growing argument in favor of the practitioners’ manager role (e.g. L. A. Grunig, 1992) and dominant coalition membership within PR literature. These are viewed as means for practitioners to influence an organization’s PR agenda (Daugherty, 2001), work with uncontrolled autonomy, and thereby advance the desired professional recognition (e.g. J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1989; L. A. Grunig, 1992).

Whilst dominant coalition has an influence on organizational policies and decisions, Childs (1972) contend that formal authority based on position does not guarantee dominant coalition membership (see also Stevenson, Pearce, & Porter, 1985). Within PR literature, Berger (2005) explains the ad hoc nature of the membership composition which is often dependent on environmental contingencies such as industry volatility (e.g. Broom & Dozier, 1986) and power gained through exclusive access to critical organizational resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; L. A. Grunig, 1992). Resources in this sense include capital/finance, access, expertise, tacit knowledge/authority over a specific topic or issue (Heath, 1994; Berger, 2005), position in a network (Burt, 2009) and crises prone (Coombs, 2007) etc.

Furthermore, Bowen (2009) found that organizations’ top management may not always include a communication or PR manager either as a member or one reporting to them, but instead as the one receiving directives and implementing them from a technician role. Berger (2005) asserts that this may be partly due to managements’ PR understanding and the importance of communications for their adaptation to their environment. On one hand, Berger (2005) argues for top managements’ tendency to value and expect PR practitioners’ technical skills and not their strategic contributions (Zerfass et al, 2011). On the other hand, Idemudia (2007) found that top management within highly volatile and well-regulated industries value practitioners contribution to and the implementation of CSR and community relations policies and initiatives, which are crucial for organizational survival (see also, DeSanto & Moss, 2005).
In addition, Bowen (2009) stresses the often temporary and situationally determined nature of membership. According to his study of PR and communication executives, practitioners are often invited into the group during a serious crisis, ethical dilemma, and/or issues high on the media agenda. Membership ceases when practitioners’ expertise is irrelevant for issues to be managed by management. More so, the accumulation of credibility gained over time through correct analysis of these instances enhances practitioner’s image and the tendency for more inclusion in the group, but not on a permanent basis (Bowen, 2009). The conditional membership is further compounded by the internal dynamics of the group. Berger (2005) uses his dialectic between “power over” and “power with” relations to investigate the complexities in power relations, structural practices, and processes constraining or creating opportunities for PR practitioners to contribute to or make decisions. He equated the PR scholars’ assumption of equal power sharing to the feminine ideology of mutuality or cooperation. This was found to be rare within the group as the masculine ideology of dominance prevails in organizational contexts (e.g. Bologh, 1990).

Moreover, while most of the literature on role typologies and enactment suggests a single dominant coalition exists at a time within organizations, Berger (2005) found the tendency for sub-coalitions to exist within the dominant coalition. This internal division suggests coexistence of multiple coalitions and as such fragmented decision-making avenues and power plays. The most powerful coalition under this condition is determined by the culmination of the powers (resources) held by each coalition’s members in relation to decisions or issues to be resolved. Consequently, even when practitioners gain membership, they cannot be certain to always be part of the most powerful coalition or influence decision making.

Besides, practitioners’ counsel may be lost as decisions made in one coalition could be changed by another coalition due to shifting venues decision making from the formal (e.g. scheduled meetings) to informal (unannounced meetings) venues. This may erode the significance and meaning of practitioners’ contributions when they are not in the decision-making meeting, while someone else conveys their counsel to the CEO (Berger, 2005).

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6 According to Berger (2005:6) Power over relations refers to a traditional dominance model where decision making is characterized by control, instrumentalism, and self-interest. Public relations is an influence variable in this view. Power with relations reflects an empowerment model where dialogue, inclusion, negotiation, and shared power guide decision making. Here, public relations is a relational variable.
In the face of the masculine-oriented and internally divided dominant coalitions, Berger (2005) instead calls for power relations and their influences on PR practitioners, practices and strategies respectively to be incorporated into PR theorizing. These are argued to be an important step towards more permanent or frequent dominant coalition membership, which necessitates the PR field’s consideration and further research into an alternative power source that goes beyond the highly undermined managerial role.

2.2.5 What existing literature reveals about practitioner role and the way forward

Existing literature reveals that the PR scholars’ assumptions about the vulnerable practitioner role typology, manager role enactment and dominant coalitions’ respectively show a partial understanding of these concepts in relation to PR professionalization and workplace realities. Berger (2005:19) argues for organizationally acceptable approaches, processes, and resources, which includes enhanced robust education and experience that manifests into expertise (e.g. (Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000; Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005; Amujo & Melewar, 2011; L. A. Grunig, 1992) that organizations view as critical resources (Bowen, 2009; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Additionally, PR scholars recognize the importance of practitioners’ interactions with dominant coalition members for obtaining top management buy-in, approval and financial backing for PR initiatives (e.g. Cardwell, Williams, & Pyle, 2017). While external stakeholder relations management has been prioritized within by the PR field (e.g. Ferguson, 1984; Kent & Taylor, 2002; Smith, 2012), internal stakeholder-relationship management is important for PR professionalization. Berger (2005) stresses the importance of (1) building alliances and full participation in organizational political terrain (see Suddaby, Viale, & Gendron, 2016) as well as providing undeniable facts about PR’s contributions to an organization’s bottom-line (Berger, 2005).

PRSA includes “Managing Relationships” in its Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) exam for measuring practitioners’ internal relationship building competencies. However, this subject area has received insufficient research attention in general when compared to its external counterpart and in relation to professionalization specifically (see also Pieczka & L’Etang, 2001). Therefore, more research into practitioners’ interactions with powerful people in the workplace arena in relation to professional recognition is needed (see Cardwell,
Williams & Pyle, 2017). The links between practitioner autonomy, role, and dominant coalition membership all reflect the power they possess. Going by the routes to power relations and overall reality within dominant coalitions for PR practitioners, power appears to be a central theme and as such discussed next.

Table 2.3 Dominant coalitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key scholars</th>
<th>Key contribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardwell, Williams &amp; Pyle, 2017</td>
<td>Internal Stakeholder- Relationship management</td>
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<tr>
<th>Key Conceptualizations</th>
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<tr>
<td>A network of individuals with decision making influence</td>
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<td>Power holders of organizations</td>
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<td>Locus of power within organizations</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key scholars</th>
<th>Key Contribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thompson, 1967, Hage, 1980; Mintzberg, 1983; Childs, 1972; Plowman, 199)</td>
<td>The group with power through their expertise, position, influence on organization goals, control over resources</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Berger, 2005</th>
<th>Dominant coalition dynamics and membership constraints</th>
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<tr>
<td>Power relations occurring in multiple dominant coalitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficult ongoing participation as coalitions shift from formal to informal</td>
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<tr>
<td>The absence of leading power broker, mostly CEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decisions made by one dominant coalition is subject to changes in another coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>The dominant coalition may value practitioners counsel but mostly perceive them as technicians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practitioners need to meet organizations bureaucratic or institutionalized expectations that may sometimes hinder ethical or professional practice</td>
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<tr>
<th>Bowen, 2009</th>
<th>Routes to dominant coalitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious crisis, ethical dilemma, issues high on media agenda, credibility through correct analysis, leadership</td>
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2.2.6 Power to the practitioners

Professional power for dominating organizations through unique expertise is the core argument of the power approach within sociological literature (e.g. Friedson 1970; Larson, 1977). However, professions capacity to exercise power in organizational contexts has been found to be determined by top management who control workplaces and not professions (Abbott, 1988). Before looking into the literature on PR practitioner power in organizational contexts, this section starts by first attempting to understand the organizational power concept.

Various perspectives and sources of power have been developed within organizational contexts which could be summed up as an individual, organizational or department’s influence over someone (e.g. Grunig, 1992; Morgan, 1998). The political scientist, Dahl (1957) conceptualizes power in terms of relations between people in which one is able to alter another’s behavior. Dahl (1957:201-202) puts power simply as “A has power
over B to the extent that he can get B to do something he would not otherwise do”. He incorporates verbs such as command, compels, control, and order in his description of power, thereby suggesting an application of some form of force or coercion to get others to do something they would not have otherwise done. In this sense, ones’ action is determined by another person who has the right and capacity to influence one (Morgan, 1997). Such powers are argued to (1) come from various sources e.g. charisma, formal position, resources, (2) exerted through various means or instruments e.g. threats or promises, and (3) has a specific scope e.g. department, organization or industry-wide (Morgan, 1998).

Organizational management scholars link Dahl’s (1957) conception of power to organizations’ decision making powers, which has inspired subsequent studies. For instance Power is defined as "the ability to evoke a change in another's behavior” (Gaski cited in L. A. Grunig, 1992: 485), and the potential to get others to do what one wants them to do while having the capacity not to be compelled to do what one is not interested in doing (Kotter, 1979). Hage and Aiken (1970:19) focus on the power holder’s organizational position to argue for “the capacity of one social position to set the conditions under which other social positions must perform”. This is in line with Webers’ conception of power as emanating from the legal authority of one occupying an office/position in modern organizations (cited in Morgan (1998). For Morgan (1997), formal authority is legitimized power that is respected and acknowledged by those with whom they interact (see also Pettigrew, 2014). Wilcox, Ault, and Agee’s (1992, p. 74) maintain that authority exists at different levels ranging from authority in advisory terms with no obligation to follow to a command that must be followed.

According to Morgan (1998), authority is one of the fourteen power sources that organizational members can use to enhance their interest. He views organizations and management as an intrinsically political process comprising members with diverse interest, which brings about conflicts that are resolved using power from various sources. For him, Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved, while also influencing who gets what, when, and how (1998:170). In essence, power then becomes the means for conflict management, obtaining interests and dominating the scene. This emphasizes the importance of power when explaining interactions between those occupying different positions and being in control of certain organizational resources.
The literature on PR practitioners’ power could be traced to the previously discussed professional autonomy, managerial role (L. A, Grunig, 1992: 498), and dominant coalition membership respectively (e.g. Dozier, 1990; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Broom, Cutlip & Center, 2009). An earlier review of the literature about practitioners’ decision making power reveals an illusion of power. This is partly responsible for the lack of recognition. Within PR, the emphasis appears to mostly be in line with the influence dimension of power and legal authority through the managerial position (Morgan, 1998), which remains an ideal at best (e.g. Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009). This reality calls for further research into the alternative source of power for practitioners.

PR practitioner power in organizational contexts has been well studied within the PR field. Practitioner power is described as the by-product of the autonomy trait (e.g. J. E. Grunig, 1992, which is gained through practitioners’ manager role-enactment (e.g. Broom & Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995) access to dominant coalition and decision making (e.g. Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009; DeSanto & Moss, 2005). Based on Morgan’s (1997) sources of power, power within PR literature is understood as influence gained through formal authority (managerial role) for dominating organizations using decision-making processes and scarce resources (expertise). Besides, expertise is only implied and rarely described as a strategic resource for participating in decision-making and influencing corporate policies within PR literature.
Nevertheless, literature investigating these links found an illusion of practitioner power to persist. The expertise that is supposed to be the means to power is derived from PR and the profession’s perspective and not that of organizations (Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000). More so, the probability of enacting the individual activist practitioner power for resisting dominant management ideologies in the workplace (Holtzhausen, 2000; Berger, 2005) may be merely prescriptive as it is difficult to implement or sustain due to encroachment, interprofessional competition (e.g. Lauzen, 1992; Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Hutton, 2001; Abbott, 1988) and proletarianization (Oppenheimer, 1972). The focus on expertise from the profession’s perspective hinders the field’s capacity to understand and explain how practitioners could develop organizationally consistent expertise. Berger (2005, p.23) remains critical of PR scholars’ negligible interest in practitioners’ power relations within organizational contexts.

Empirical research into managerial role enactment suggests that organizationally consistent expertise, which includes a broad range of perceived and tested expertise and experience for resolving organizations’ critical challenges, increases the likelihood for practitioners’ decision making powers (Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000; Abbott, 1988). The robustness and rigor of the components of this expertise are reminiscent of well-recognized professions such as medicine, law, and accounting with which they have obtained and retained professional recognition (e.g. Freidson, 1970, 2001; Abbott, 1988; Wallace, 1995; Pieczka & L'Etang, 2001). By focusing on the expertise that is understood as resources, discussions about practitioner power shifts to critical resource cultivation and not manager role attainment. In this sense, Morgan’s (1998) conception of power from control over scarce resources could be applied whereby unique expertise is understood from an organization’s perspective using Pfeffer and Salancik’s (1978, 2003) version of the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), which is discussed next.

2.2.6.1 Professional power through critical resources
Pfeffer and Salancik’s (1978) Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) focuses specifically on the unique and indispensable problem-solving expertise deployed by professionals for an organizations’ benefit. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) view organizations as open systems, meaning that organizations are influenced by uncertainties and contingencies from their external environment. This includes competition, regulations, social forces, and unforeseen
events. Therefore, organizations take strategic actions to manage or reduce such dependences by cultivating resources from internal (subunits/departments, the composition of the board of directors, executive succession) and external (mergers, joint ventures) sources or a combination (political action) for responding effectively to their environment.

Employing PR practitioners or creating a PR department is one of the internal sources, for organizations to benefit from practitioners’ unique expertise, which then becomes critical resources and their source of power (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978:27). For Georgiou (1973: 306) the organization is “a marketplace where incentives are exchanged” and where “the possession of power is a function of the capacity to contribute incentives”. The outcome of this organizational reality is *intraorganizational* power, which entails power held by a unit or department within the organization that can be exercised over other units (Pfeffer, 1987: 26-27). Intraorganizational power is a key component of RDT, which is obtainable through control over critical resources (Ulrich & Barney, 1984).

**2.2.6.2 Intraorganizational power for PR practitioners**

Organizations’ environments determine who possesses intraorganizational power. For Pfeffer and Salancik (2003:230) power is the ability of the subunit to influence organizational decisions in ways that produce outcomes that favored the unit. Such influence extends to other units or entire organizations which indicates the importance of its resources. Pfeffer & Salancik, (2003) rely heavily on Hickson et al.’s (1971) strategic contingency theory of intraorganizational power. The theory views organizations as systems of interdependent units whose power emanates from their unique capabilities for resolving environmental uncertainties and critical issues confronting parts or an entire organization. Moreover, Boyd’s (1990) “resource-rich” concept describes organizational members with abundant resources for enhancing an organization’s bottom line, which includes business expertise, support specializations or community/external relations (Hillman, Cannella, & Paetzold, 2000) etc. The contribution to entire organization survival and bottom line, in particular, emphasizes the unit’s importance (Crozier, 1964; Perrow, 1970) and justification for power.

There is support for RDT’s core arguments within PR literature. Lauzen and Dozier’s (1992) investigation of the relationship between conditions in organization’s external environments, the PR function and practitioner role in the United States highlights the tendency for environmental challenges to determine PR practitioner roles. In addition, practitioners critical
resources for attending to highly volatile, well-regulated and crises prone organizational environment have been found to drastically increase the likelihood for practitioners to have decision-making powers (e.g. Idemudia, 2007; Bowen, 2009; DeSanto & Moss, 2005; Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000) and uncontrolled autonomy (Serini, 1993).

Table 2.5 Strategic Contingency theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Contingency theory (Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck, &amp; Pennings, 1971)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to cope with uncertainties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centrality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact on the work of other subunits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workflow immediacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of the absence of such capabilities on other subunits</td>
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<tr>
<td>activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitutability</td>
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<tr>
<td>The extent to which subunits activities can be substituted</td>
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2.2.6.3 Competition for intraorganizational power

Nevertheless, organizational contexts are characterized by struggles between conflicting interests of organizational members who are attempting to retain their established power. Abbott (1988) stresses how interprofessional competition is a workplace norm for retaining or gaining power (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Thompson, 1967). Consequently, organizational unit(s) or specific member(s) may apply cognitive bias by categorizing new problems in familiar ways and developing solutions based on their unit’s specialty and capabilities (Dearborn & Simon, 1958). In these cases, organizational structure is determined not only by environmental contingencies but mediated by dominant coalition member(s) agenda (e.g. Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Thompson, 1967; Simon, 1976; Cyert & March 1963; Dearborn & Simon, 1958). This weakens the link between environmental contingencies, critical resources, and intraorganizational power (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

Furthermore, subunits’ competition for intraorganizational power is further explained by the power-control perspective in which dominant coalitions apply satisficing7 and not optimizing responses to resolving environmental uncertainties (Simon, 1976). However, since satisficing is not the most effective response to environmental contingencies, it often fails and leads the organization back to units or organizational members with critical resources for ensuring

7 Evidently, organisms adapt well enough to satisfice; they do not, in general, optimize…..A “satisficing” path, a path that will permit satisfaction at some specified level of all its needs…”.(Simon, 1956: 129,136)

While dominant coalition may still influence decisions, Childs (1972), Pfeffer & Salancik (2003) contend that the top management equally responds to the demands of organization members or even subordinates depended upon to accomplish organizational goals and survival (Bowen, 2009). This has less to do with hierarchy, such as the managerial role, but more to do with contingencies and critically needed resources (Mechanic, 1962; Bowen, 2009, Berger, 2005). In addition, PR scholars argue for the addition of internal relationship management into PR education so that practitioners can be effective participants in an organization’s politics, which includes intraorganizational power plays (Cardwell, Williams, & Pyle, 2017; Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000).

Nevertheless, control over critical resources and RDT view are generally neglected within PR literature. The only exceptions are Lauzen (1992), and Lauzen and Dozier (1992) who applied Hickson et al’s (1971) strategic contingencies theory when studying the link between PR practitioner roles, intraorganizational power, and encroachment (Lee, 2005). Moreover, PR scholars are yet to frame their expertise in helping organizations with relationship management (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, 2000), crisis management (Bowen, 2009), reputation management (Heath, 1997:11) etc., which are critical for organizational survival, as critical resources that could be leveraged for intraorganizational power. Besides, professional power through influence from the hierarchical managerial role is yet to yield the desired outcomes for in-house practitioners.

Consequently, further studies that explore RDT could extend the understanding of practitioner power in the workplace. Such a study would build on the prior PR studies on professional projects, practitioner role theory, and PR certification respectively by integrating RDT elements into the discussion towards cultivating organizationally consistent resources. These would reflect in a much more robust PR education that includes internal stakeholder relationship management, finance, and management, which would increase the likelihood for higher-order manager role enactment and the legitimacy of PR in the workplace respectively.

The links between professions, practitioner role enactment, and organizational power have been touched upon by Abbott’s (1988) system of professions. However, literature within the
sociology of professions has extended Abbott’s (1988) theory with the institutional approach to professions. This represents an alternative approach that links professionalization to the influence of powerful actors within their organizational contexts. Its core assumptions for PR professional projects and legitimacy are worth exploring and are therefore discussed as part of the theoretical framework in the next chapter.

Table 2.6: Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject area</th>
<th>Key components</th>
<th>Key contributors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Autonomy</td>
<td>Practitioner Autonomy</td>
<td>(Freidson, 1970; Abbott, 1988; Strauss 1963, Engel, 1970; Serini, 1993; Bissland &amp; Rentner, 1988; Cutlip, Center, &amp; Broom, 1994; Broom &amp; Dozier, 1986; (Grunig, Grunig, &amp; Dozier, 2002)</td>
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2.3 Towards an institutional approach for PR's professional projects

Muzio, Brock, and Suddaby (2013) proposed the institutionalist approach as a much more realistic alternative to the trait and power approaches. Instead of focusing on the professional association oriented traits or professional dominance oriented power approach, they emphasize the connections between professionalization and institutional contexts that are
viewed as inseparable components. They recognize that professions are only able to exercise their power based on the position they are assigned by top management (e.g. Brint and Karabel (1989) and not the profession’s norm or expertise alone (Suddaby & Viale 2011; Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003; Abbott, 1988; Burrage, Jaraush, & Siegrist, 1990).

Research into workplace realities for professions could be understood from the proletarianization and adaptive theses respectively. Oppenheimer’s (1973) proletarianization thesis asserts that a profession’s encounter in organizational contexts may be characterized by controls from authority, routines, a division of labor, and formalized role structures etc. Professions in this context are compelled to abandon their expectations and professional norms and instead conform to practices that have been put in place by top management (Suddaby & Viale, 2011; McCann, Granter, Hyde & Hassard, 2013). From an organizational perspective, these practices are a means to attain efficiency and commercial goals (Singh & Jayanti, 2013). Moreover, organizations determine what, how and who should carry out functions and thereby influence and reconfigure professions’ jurisdictions.

In his system of professions, Abbott (1998) stresses the tendency for professionals’ powers and jurisdiction to be eroded at the workplace, which Wallace (1995:237) described as the epitome of deprofessionalization. According to Ramirez (2013) research on organizational bureaucracies and professional associations reveal that top management often interfere with professional associations’ activities by (1) influencing their norms of practices, (2) redefining legitimacy, and (3) reconfiguring professional fields thereby disrupting jurisdiction (Malsch & Gendron 2013; Kipping & Kirkpatrick 2013). Consequently, top management has an immense influence on elements of professional projects and workplace jurisdiction (Abbott, 1988; Muzio, Brock, & Suddaby, 2013).

In contrast, Wallace (1995) recognizes the tendency for profession’s proletarianization but equally contends that this is not the case for all professions. With her adaptive thesis, she maintains that prestigious professions are able to use their technical expertise to exercise legitimate discretion over the structure and performance of their work within organizations (see also Greenwood, 1957; Scott, 1965). DiMaggio (1991) observes that professionals use their expertise to reconfigure organizations bureaucracies in their preferred way of working
While PR is not one of such professions, the PR field would benefit from further studies that explore the institutional approach to PR professionalization. The approach offers an alternative explanation about professionalization, as it integrates top management perspectives, workplace realities, and organizationally consistent expertise. According to resource dependence theory (RDT) (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), such expertise becomes critical resources that organizations depend upon for survival, thereby increasing the likelihood of professional recognition and/or legitimacy in the workplace.

The institutional approach to professions offers a more realistic outlook of professions within organizations, especially as this study is situated within organizational contexts. The contradicting positions provide an overview of how organizations deal with PR professionals, their power relations and their role or influence on PR’s professional project. This also reflects practitioner role, function and powers permitted in the workplace, which overall helps to understand organizations’ influence on professional projects, which not enough is known about. Pieczka and L’Etang (2001) note that the social reality and relations between PR professionals and people with power within organizations such as top management have received little attention. A shift in focus to the reality of PR professionals’ proximity to their expertise power, organizationally determined jurisdiction and power play would extend knowledge and theory development of PR’s professional projects and legitimacy respectively.

2.4 Going beyond the traits and illusion of professional power
In this chapter, a traditional literature review was conducted to critically evaluate academic literature covering the key approaches, concepts, and assumptions that have been used to explain PR’s professional projects. Gaps found through these reviews are the basis for an institutional approach for addressing the limitations of prevailing explanations. The chapter started with a description of the method applied for a literature search, an overview of the main approaches to reviewing the literature on PR professionalization in Nigeria, as well as the power approach in general.

In the quest for professional recognition, the earliest and even recent PR literature focuses on establishing the traditional traits while expecting autonomy to manifest through a managerial
role for obtaining and exercising decision making power and autonomy in the workplace. These approaches represent the traits and part of the power approach respectively. While the traits may be sufficient for prestigious professions to recognized and practice as expected, the opposite has been the outcome for PR. A combination of (1) low prestige, (2) perceived practitioner incompetence, (3) negative associations caused by historical affiliations, stigmatizations, and most especially (4) interprofessional competition against other respected communication professions, altogether render the desired legitimacy an ideal at best so far.

The literature on the application of power approach revealed that the PR profession understands power as something emanating from the practitioner’s formal role and expertise with which they expect the in-house practitioner to occupy a managerial role, become dominant coalition members, dominate organizations and gain management trust. In contrast, management was more interested in the professions’ exclusive resources. The latter is of more interest to organizations because they are critical for organizational survival, while organizations are unconcerned about professions’ norms and/or expectations of the workplace. The approach does not prepare practitioners for workplace competition, while autonomy varied from restricted to non-restricted depending on organizations’ circumstance. Similarly, dominant coalition membership and decision making powers are found to be contingent on environmental uncertainties or contingencies to be resolved by organizations. Besides, perceived practitioner incompetence, management’s PR understanding and the internal dynamics of and power play within dominant coalitions often erode practitioners’ counsel to the top management and hinder practitioners’ participation in decision making.

The prevailing approach allied with its misguided assumptions, inapplicability for PR’s desired and pursued autonomy represents gaps in the literature on PR’s professional projects. While the literature on manager role enactment and dominant coalition membership proposes robust PR education, industry specialization, and internal stakeholder relationship management as factors that could increase the likelihood, the extent to which these have been integrated into PR education are unfounded, at least in Nigeria. Based on this review of the literature of PR professional projects, further research is necessary to explore an alternative approach for explaining PR’s profession project. Based on the above review, such an approach may need to integrate (1) workplace realities that includes interprofessional competition and internal stakeholder relations management (2) cultivation of critical organizational resources for resolving organizational contingencies and environmental
uncertainties, instead of assuming PR expertise’s sufficiency for organizational dominance, (3) a reevaluation of the scope of competences that constitute PR expertise for higher-order managerial role enactment.

The combination of findings of these key subject areas may altogether increase the probability of recognition for practitioners’ contribution to value creation into an organizations’ bottom-line. Consequently, this would reflect in PR professional projects that are organization-centric and are based on robust PR education and certification programs that help practitioners develop a broad scope of competences for corporate practice at the highest level.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework - a neoinstitutional approach to PR professionalization

Chapter 3 lays out the chosen frame for understanding the perspectives of and interactions between top management, the PR professional association and PR educators. The core elements of this frame are applied for explaining how and why these actors influence PR’s professional project and capacity to be recognized as a legitimate profession in Nigeria. Therefore, this chapter comprises a selection of relevant theories, concepts and analytical models for explaining relevant variables or issues impacting in-house practitioners’ workplace realities. These are important to look at because they inform top managements’ assessment of PR as a profession. Additionally, discussions in this chapter provide a solid basis for designing an appropriate research method for inquiring about key subject areas that must be understood from the respective actors’ perspectives in the next chapter.

Understanding the complexities of the interconnected but diversely oriented actors necessitates a complex theoretical framework. Their interconnectedness emanates from corporate organizations expectations of in-house PR practitioners’, capabilities for managerial role enactment, decision-making powers and overall workplace reality. Moreover, the capacity for PR to be pronounced a legitimate profession could be understood from top management’s perceptions of PR, management orientation, and the assessment of practitioners’ performance in the workplace. This partly contributes to the likelihood for practitioners to be recognized as professionals and to be granted decision making powers. More so, in-house practitioners are taught by PR educators and certified by the NIPR who stipulates their code of conduct, curricula content, ideal practices and professional standards. The performance of PR graduates in the workplace reflects the quality and robustness of PR education and the NIPR’s certification. In the end, the web of interactions between these institutional actors and their influence on one another’s conduct and the legitimacy of PR respectively bring about complex inter-relations between them.

Based on this background, the following three sections examine and discuss the components of the framework for studying the institutionalized practices for PR’s professional projects and the NIPR’s response(s) to them. Section 3.1 Neoinstitutional theory, a brief overview presents a brief history of NIT, as well as the early and more recent versions of the theory. This highlights the institutional actors’ shift from conformity and isomorphism to agency and
strategic responses to institutionalized norms. More so, the pursuit for, and assessment of professional legitimacy between institutional actors are also covered. Section 3.2 Institutional logics concentrates on the historical and socially constructed perspectives informing the respective actors’ practices and how their coexisting perspectives influence one another’s conduct based on the constellation of logics. These explain the link between individual actors’ agency, cognition and expected behavior, as well as interactions between the logics constituting the environment.

Section 3.3: Organization field describes the dynamics of the various contexts where institutional actors interact, which may play a role in the way they perceive or pursue the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria. The focus here is on how and why particular actors create a field or become field members, relations between them, and the implications of their power relations and their underlying motivation/agenda for coming into the field. Section 3.4: SC as the Theoretical foundation for studying the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria presents the epistemological orientation that guides the core components of this theoretical framework. This section also provides a tentative snapshot of NIPR’s organization field, power relations between institutional actors within the constellation of logics in Nigeria. Section 3.5 provides a Summary of the chapter.

3.1 Neo-institutional theory, a brief overview
This section presents a brief history of NIT as well as the institutionalization process and product. Following these are the early and recent conceptualizations of NIT, as well as the drive for legitimacy within the institutional environment. At its core, NIT pinpoints and explains why organizations’ actions are shaped, mediated and/or influenced by external pressures from their institutional environment, and how they respond to such pressures. Consequently, an organization’s action could be understood as a reflection of the pressures within the actors’ institutional environment, or the outcome of the actor’s strategic response to such pressures. Organizations in this sense include corporate organizations and professional associations. Therefore, NIT provides this study with a framework for understanding the NIPR’s professional project based on its response to external pressures
influencing its chosen approach and how such an approach impacts the legitimacy of the PR profession in Nigeria.

3.1.1 NIT roots and the institutionalization process and product
NIT is rooted in Selznick’s (old) institutional analysis of organizations (Scott, 2008a: 21–23) that focused on the micro-processes that happen to an organization over time. As Selznick (1957, p. 16–17) noted, to institutionalize is to *infuse with value* beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand. This takes place through the institutionalization process that happens to an organization over time. He distinguishes "organization" from "institution". For him, organizations were initially a rational but expendable tool to do a specific job. However, they take on a special character and capacity for responding to external pressures after being infused with values that are salient to their context, which grants them legitimacy. This represented the early signs of what became manifested and evidenced in the early conceptions of NIT, which is discussed below.

Additionally, institutionalization is to be understood both as a *process and product*. As a process it begins with a jolt(s) (Meyer 1982) or disruptive event(s) such as technological or regulatory discontinuities (e.g. Davis, Diekmann, & Tinsley 1994; Fox-Wolfgramm, Boal & Hunt, 1988; Clemens & Cook, 1999). Events of this nature activate the process, which eventually leads to institutional change (Tolbert & Zucker, 1999; Greenwood, Suddaby & Hinning, 2002). Tolbert and Zucker (1999) refer to institutionalization as an unconscious process that emerges from the collective sensemaking and problem-solving behavior of actors confronting similar situations. Their definition leans towards Berger and Luckman’s (1991) assertion that transmitting shared beliefs to third parties solidifies the objectivity of such institutional context. As shared beliefs diffuse, they become best practices and as such institutionalized ways of doing things.

However, the unconscious aspect of the definition appears inconsistent with the collective sensemaking and problem-solving behavior. The latter in particular suggests actors’ reflexivity (Suddaby, Viale, & Gendron, 2016) and conscious effort when transmitting the information and attempting to solve a particular problem within their institution. The active and reflexive actor components of the process are stressed through institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988), strategic responses (e.g., Oliver, 1991), and institutional work (e.g., Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) respectively towards institutionalized norms. These conceptions emphasize the activities of self-motivated actors that purposefully engage in
institutional (re)construction, which leads to change in their environment. Changes made this way are diffused across the environment, internalized as taken-for-granted practices, while existing as an outcome/product as long as it continues to deliver desired outcomes to adopters (Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000).

Thus institutionalization as a process presents it as something that goes from being fluid to become stable, and then meaningful, such that it guides organizations decisions and behavior respectively. Even though it starts from an individual/institutional entrepreneur, it eventually becomes accepted and adopted by the entire social collective, group or community after its validity and capacity to uphold its promises are scrutinized. The outcome of the process is the product (DiMaggio, 1991), which is a property or state of an existing social order within a context (Scott 2008a).

While the process is as important as the product, it is the latter that is of utmost importance to this study. Although, the processes can be mapped to a certain extent, for example, jolts regarding lack of legitimacy of PR, this study will not be able to study the entire process based on this study alone. While a longitudinal-ethnographic study can unearth the process, this is not feasible within the time frame of this study, and the purpose of this study can still be achieved without it. Therefore, this study is more concentrates on the existing product of the institutionalized traits and power approaches and their implications for the legitimacy of PR. In addition, the potential product of an alternative approach to studying the professionalization and legitimacy of PR in Nigeria is under consideration.

3.1.2 Early conception of NIT
Notable works by Meyer and Rowan (1977), Zucker (1977), DiMaggio and Powell (1983), and Scott and Meyer (1983) extended NIT within organizations, especially about their drive for legitimacy (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). Based on Berger and Luckman’s (1966) social construction of reality, Meyer and Rowan (1977) defined institutionalization as the process

8 In developing the institutionalization process, Tolbert and Zucker (1996, 1999) simplified Berger and Luckman’s (1976) objectification process into a three stage process comprising habitualization, objectification and sedimentation. This was expanded into a complex six stage process model from an institutional change perspective by Greenwood, Suddaby and Hinnings (2002). The process is activated by “jolts” or disruptive events (stage I) that lead to deinstitutionalization (stage II) whereby existing practices are abandoned and new ideas are introduced. This is followed by pre-institutionalization (stage III) where organizations independently develop viable solutions to their own perceived problems. Solutions are then scrutinized in theorization (stage IV) to assess the justification and moral legitimacy for accepting the new solution respectively. The compelling presentation of the pragmatic components of the solution ensures its diffusion (Stage V) within the field (similar to semi-institutionalization in Tolbert & Zucker 1999). Reinstitutionalization (Stage VI) takes place once the solution becomes taken-for-granted and sustained as long as it continues to deliver desired outcomes to adopters.
by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rule-like status in social thought and action (p. 341). They rejected rational-choice decision making of organizations. Instead, the importance of cognitive and cultural processes is argued to be central to understanding organizations’ actions and the adoption of rationalized myths. Consequently, organizations are viewed as agents within institutional contexts who adopt “organizational recipes”. Recipes in this sense entail socially constructed norms for how an organization must be led and/or structured at all times (Røvik, 1998, cited in Frandsen & Johansen, 2013b, p. 207). In the same vein, Zucker (1977) stresses the power of cognitive beliefs, i.e. social knowledge within the so-called organizational recipes, that once institutionalized becomes accepted as fact and objective reality (see also Berger & Luckman, 1966).

Like Meyer and Rowan (1977), DiMaggio & Powell, (1991) maintain that organizations’ structures, success and legitimacy are products of mimetic processes and a response to institutionalized norms. With their institutional isomorphism⁹, they focused on the structural dynamics of organization fields where increases in structuration i.e. institutional pressures for conformity (Giddens, 1979) lead to homogeneity in organizations’ forms and practices based on (1) Coercive force involving (in)formal regulative requirements by government or dominant organizations, (2) Mimetic processes: imitation of early successful organizations norms when facing uncertainty that mimicry helps to cheaply and legitimately resolve, and (3) Normative pressures from professional associations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The latter in particular relates to professional projects involving the collective struggle of an occupational group to define the conditions, methods of and control over their work respectively (Larson, 1977), which is guided by both coercive and mimetic processes as well.

According to institutional isomorphism, imitation of dominant and/or successful organizational practices eventually makes considerable diverse organizations become similar to one another in approaches and structures over time (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). For Tolbert and Zucker (1983), early imitators/adopters do so for efficiency purposes, while late adopters are driven by legitimacy concerns. Nevertheless, coercive pressures are adopted faster than mimetic pressures, which supports Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) argument that adherence to regulations is still a major determinant of an organizations’ structure and

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⁹ Isomorphism forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions (Hawley, 1968).
behavior. Therefore, DiMaggio and Powell’s (1991) institutional isomorphism becomes a useful tool for explaining how and why the NIPR adopts institutionalized norms for professional projects in the quest for obtaining legitimacy in Nigeria.

Further contributions to early NIT comes from Scott (2008) who incorporates earlier conceptions (e.g. Sleznick, 1957; DiMaggio and Powell’s, 1983; North, 1990) for developing his three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars. Scott (2008: 48) defined institutions as “comprising regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that together with associated activities and resources provide stability and meaning to social life”. The regulative pillar includes the coercive legal demands that must be obeyed, while the normative pillar is about public opinion, demands by external publics such as professional bodies and other stakeholders that influence organizations’ behavior. Lastly, the cultural-cognitive pillar deals with the taken-for-granted shared conceptions constituting social reality about how things ought to be done, which are imitated when confronted by uncertainties. Consequently, these guides, reproduce and sustain institutional actors’ behavior (Scott, 2008; Lounsbury, 2003), and as such the basis for legitimacy (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008).

Nevertheless, Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012) found inconsistencies between Scott’s (2008) integration of the pillars with the elements within DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) isomorphism. Scott’s normative conception of institutions based on Durkheim, Parsons, and Selznick works on institutions such as kinship and religious systems. This is inconsistent with DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983:84) isomorphism that is more about the state and professions rationalizing practices that lead to homogeneous organizational structures and practices (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012). In addition, Scott’s (1995) portrayal of the normative pillar as a morally governed element implies a narrow view of legitimacy. This differs remarkably from DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983:70) normative isomorphism, which is primarily about professionalization through expert knowledge, professional values, formal education, and training.

Also, Scott’s normative pillar did not differentiate potential conflict and/or incompatibilities between professions’ and religious prescriptions. Even though he recognizes how professionals exercise control via cognitive and normative processes, he does not distinguish between the normative and cognitive components of professions (Scott, 1995, p. 95). These inconsistencies diminish Scott’s arguments and thereby suggest caution when applying the
pillars for understanding institutions because his arguments disconnect with their roots without clear justifications for doing so. Yet, Scott aligns his cultural cognitive process with DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) mimetic process, which is driven by uncertainty and competition.

Table 3.1: Institutional Pillars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis of compliance</th>
<th>Regulative</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Cultural-cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basis of order</td>
<td>Regulative rules</td>
<td>Social obligation</td>
<td>Take-for-grantedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Binding Expectations</td>
<td>Shared understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>instrumentally</td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Constitutive Schema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td>Mimetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laws</td>
<td>Certifications</td>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Common beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of legitimacy</td>
<td>Legally sanctioned</td>
<td>Morally governed</td>
<td>Shared logic of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported by</td>
<td>Economists</td>
<td>Early Sociologist</td>
<td>Comprehensible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Propagandists</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Selznick</td>
<td>Recognisable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of formality</td>
<td>Formal institutions</td>
<td>Informal institutions</td>
<td>Culturally supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scott (2008)

3.1.2.1 Decoupling
Still within the early version of NIT which suggests a passive response to institutionalized norms (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Zucker, 1977), Meyer and Rowan (1977) propose decoupling as a remedy to the inefficiencies of such norms. This entails a deliberate and ceremonial adoption of norms through “trust building” initiatives i.e. logic of confidence (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 356) towards legitimating and formally sanctioned structures. In this sense, organizations decouple their practices to resolve logistical and production related issues that institutionalized myths cannot efficiently address. Such organizations utilize ambiguous goals and discourage close inspection of covering-up deviation from institutionalized rules.

However, more recent neo-institutional theorists reject ideas of decoupling as a passive and reactive strategy but view it as an impression management tool (Oliver, 1991, 1997) and a proactive strategy instead (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2008). Oliver (1991, 1997) is of the view
that decoupling functions as an impression management tool for acquiring legitimacy, especially when organizations depend on their environment for resources. The cognizance of such dependence and acting on it turns decoupling into a proactive strategy for achieving specific organizational goals (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2008) which ensures organizational validity and efficiency (e.g. Oliver, 1991). These ideas are part of the core arguments of more recent conceptions of NIT, which are discussed next.

Table 3.2: Early version of the neo-institutional theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholars</th>
<th>Key contribution</th>
<th>Relevance for study and fit in my lens</th>
<th>Research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meyer &amp; Rowan (1977)</td>
<td>Rejection of rational decision making Organizations’ structures as taken-for-granted, rationalized myths and rule-like norms for attaining specific objectives, legitimacy and survival capacity</td>
<td>How and why actors are compelled to passively respond to external pressures by adopting predominant practices within their environment in their drive for social acceptance i.e. legitimacy, even when such practices do not guarantee efficiency.</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zucker, (1977)</td>
<td>Institutionalized practices as taken for granted</td>
<td>Explains organization’s/actors’ practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolbert and Zucker 1983</td>
<td>Efficiency needs drive early adopters, while legitimacy by audiences expectations drives late adopters</td>
<td>Organizations’/ actors’ motivation for adopting institutionalized practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DiMaggio and Powell (1983)</td>
<td>Isomorphism via coercive, normative and mimetic processes</td>
<td>Organizations’ response to external pressure and drive for legitimacy</td>
<td>Q 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer &amp; Rowan (1977)</td>
<td>Organizations decouple formal structures from actual activities when formal structures contradict efficiency requirements</td>
<td>Explains why some organizations may not embrace institutionalized norms but parts of it for face-saving, while their actual practice differ</td>
<td>Q 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.3 Recent conception of neoinstitutional theory

The recent neoinstitutionalists reject their predecessors’ preference for passive adoption, conformity, and isomorphism as a means to obtaining legitimacy, with little concern for efficiency (e.g. DiMaggio, 1988; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Oliver, 1991, 1992; Powell, 1991; Boxenbaum & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2009). They argue instead for a heterogeneous and agentic view of organizations’ and propose strategic responses to institutionalized norms of practices of institutional contexts. This line of argument has roots in Giddens structuration theory (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1991) which suggests a proactive role of individual and organizational actors through agency within structures that are available in their environment. The theory works with an interactive view of the institutional process whereby individuals and the collective possess varying degrees of socially and institutionally constructed agency.
Giddens’ notion of agency refers to knowledgeable and reflexive institutional actor’s ability to affect their social world, alter rules or relational ties, and the distribution of resources, which influences the process (es) or state of affairs in such contexts (Giddens 1984; Fliigstein, 2001b). More specifically, Powell (1991) rejects portrayal of organizations as overly submissive and constrained by external pressures. DiMaggio (1988) uses his institutional entrepreneurship concept to describe well organized and motivated organizational actors in possession of sufficient resources to purposefully reconstruct institutional rules to attain their own ends (Powell, 1991).

Similarly, Oliver (1991) and Powell, (1991) stress the heterogeneous nature of organizations’ challenges which similar or established practices may not resolve efficiently for all adopters within an institutional context. More precisely Oliver (1991, p.151) states that organizational responses will vary from conforming to resistant, from passive to active, from preconscious to controlling, from impotent to influential, and from habitual to opportunistic, depending on the institutional pressures toward conformity that are exerted on organizations. Explicit recognition of the potential for variation in these dimensions of organizational behavior lays the conceptual groundwork for identifying alternative strategies in response to the institutional environment.

Such is the case in Nigeria, in which prestigious professions have applied the established traits (e.g. Greenwood, 1957) and obtained professional legitimacy, while the opposite remains the case for the PR profession. This buttresses the above point that a passive response may not always be the most appropriate or strategic response to external pressures. Oliver (1991) and colleagues contend that organizations cannot afford to ignore the active agency and should instead apply a range of strategic responses to institutional pressures with which efficiencies, legitimacy, and survival are obtainable respectively (DiMaggio & Powell; 1991; Powell 1991). Table 3.3. shows the range of responses that recent NIT scholar argues for the availability of various responses to institutional actors for responding to external pressures based on their self-interests, motivations and social skills. These include but are not limited to a passive response. They range from avoiding institutional pressures to negotiated mutually beneficial response. The other strategies include manipulation of the elements of external pressures, imitating or out rightly rejecting towards ensuring the organizational well-being and social validity.
Table 3.3: Strategic Responses to Institutionalized Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resist</td>
<td>Avoid (conceal, buffer, escape)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Compromise (balance, pacify, bargain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play one source of support and legitimacy over the other</td>
<td>Manipulate (co-opt, influence, control)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comply</td>
<td>Acquiesce (habit, imitate, comply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outrightly challenge external pressures</td>
<td>Defy (Dismiss, challenge, Attack)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the Scandinavian tradition of NIT extends the understanding of the agentic element of institutional actors with a social constructivist and translation approach. Boxenbaum and Strandgaard-Pedersen’s (2009) social constructivist approach go beyond processes within organizational fields to focus more on the complexities characterizing what happens inside organizations regarding the contextualization, reproduction, and modification of ‘organizational recipes’ to suit their individual circumstance (Røvik, 2007 as cited in Frandsen & Johansen, 2013b). The conception of organizations’ heterogeneous responses in this tradition is based on Weick’s (2001) sensemaking process of interpretation and reformulation of norms during the adoption process. For Weick, sensemaking is a source of strategizing through which actors gain awareness of several possible interpretations and use them strategically to further their own specific interests. Concepts such as institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006), have been also been used to describe the active nature and strategic decision making of organizations’ to suit their local context (Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2009).

Through translation, meanings espoused by institutionalized and/or generic rational myths are reconstructed based on a micro-level condition from their original meaning to one that is consistent with the unique organizational context (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Zilber, 2006; Kraatz & Block 2008). In this sense, translation stresses heterogeneity and diversity of processes when responding to institutionalized meanings. Therefore, such meanings do not simply diffuse in its initial top-down form throughout an institutional environment but interpreted from the bottom-up in various ways (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996, p. 78–79). This causes such norms to be reshaped (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996) by active institutional members who determine practices that are most suitable for their organizational goals (Zilber, 2006). In conclusion, recent NIT highlights the tendency for varied responses to external pressures in their drive for attaining organizational goals and legitimacy respectively10.

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10 Institutional entrepreneurship (e.g., DiMaggio, 1988) and Institutional work (e.g., Lawrence, Suddaby & Lea 2010) are other concepts used to describe active agents’ strategic responses to institutionalized practices. The former entails the “activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangement and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones”
Table 3.4: Key contributions to the more recent neo-institutional theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Scholars</th>
<th>Key contribution</th>
<th>Relevance for study</th>
<th>Research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DiMaggio (1988), DiMaggio and Powell (1991)</td>
<td>Actor agency, structuration and Interest towards creating and/or changing institutions through institutional entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Helps understand organizations heterogeneity and consequent varied response to institutional pressures in pursuit of own ends either by taking advantage of institutionalized norms or abandoning them</td>
<td>Q 1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver (1991), Powell (1991)</td>
<td>Heterogeneous organizational reality Varied/Strategic responses Passive and active response</td>
<td>Varied responses to institutionalized norms depicting strategic options that actors could adopt</td>
<td>Q 1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxenbaum &amp; Strandgaard-Pedersen’s (2009), Weick, (2001)</td>
<td>Happenings before and after the adoption of organizational recipes Sensemaking/strategizing Awareness of possible interpretations The pursuit of own interest</td>
<td>Explains how actors interpret institutionalized arrangements/practices and the reaction to them in a strategic manner such that it suits their own interests and circumstance respectively</td>
<td>Q 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czarniawska &amp; Joerges, 1996, Zilber, 2006</td>
<td>Translation: reshaping institutionalized norms to suit individual organizational goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q 2, 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.4 Drive for legitimacy and the PR field

Legitimacy is a key driver for PR’s professional projects because professions require social acceptability and cultural support within their environment (e.g. Merkelsen, 2011; Scott et al., 2000; Meyer & Scott, 1983a) which includes the workplace (Abbott, 1988). While early NIT prioritizes legitimacy through conformity to institutionalized norms, often at the expense of efficiency (e.g. Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008a), recent NIT argues for strategic responses for obtaining both outcomes (e.g. Boxenbaum & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2009; Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996; Oliver, 1991). While legitimacy has been variously understood as property, process and perception respectively (Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017), it is the latter that captures the PR profession’s drive for legitimacy in corporate organizational contexts in Nigeria.

Based on the view of legitimacy as perception, Suchman (1995, p. 574) defined it as the generalized perception or assumption that actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions. This definition has roots in Berger and Luckmann’s (1991) social construction of

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(Maguire, Hardy and Lawrence, 2004: 657). The latter examines the activities of individual and/or collective actors that are carried out for the sole purpose of creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions. They are not applied in this study because they overlap Oliver’s (1991) strategic responses which are a simplified approach which is easy to apply.
reality. Emphasis is on the role of individuals or collectives (evaluators) who construct legitimacy that is then used to assess or judge the appropriateness, validity or acceptability of another social entity’s (object) product, practice or characteristic (Bitektine & Haack, 2015) for legitimacy to be granted.

An example of evaluators in this study as are top management of corporate organizations who assess PR and in-house practitioners’ based on their (1) perspective of PR, (2) industry profile/volatilities, (3) individual or collective environmental uncertainties and contingencies, (4), possession of organizational critical resources i.e. robust competencies, (5) image and status, amongst others. Moreover, the view of legitimacy as perception recognizes the diversity of evaluators, as well as the diversity of their judgments and motives, irrespective of strong institutional pressures (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). The individual and collective evaluator component imply that legitimacy is theorized as an assessment of appropriateness based on the individual, the industry sector or the entire society’s perception or social cognitions respectively (e.g. Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990). However, judgment eventually produces macro-level effects (Bitektine, 2011; Hoefer & Green, 2016). Expression of deviance or demonstration of the inability to uphold evaluators’ expectations may lead to social sanctions that are perpetuated as lack of professional legitimacy.

Schuman (1995) applied a social approach for developing the pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy types that are obtainable based on the interests, evaluation, and cognition of important constituents within organizations’ environment. Pragmatic legitimacy rests on the self-interested calculations of key audiences that organizations depend upon from whom support is obtained based on (1) the value they expect to obtain from PR’s professional project, and (2) ongoing commitment to corporate interest in the form of robust scope of competences manifested as critical resources for contributing to the organizations’ bottom-line and survival.

Under moral legitimacy, constituents use their socially constructed value system for evaluating whether organizations’ leaders and representatives, strategies, techniques, procedures, categories, structures, outputs and resulting societal/environmental consequences promotes social welfare (see; Scott, 1977; Zucker, 1986; March & Simon, 1958; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). For PR, these include ethical conduct that is based on a common code of
professional practice (e.g. Globa-Alliance, 2018, Udomisor & Osademe, 2013; Samaila, 2015).

Lastly, cognitive legitimacy involves an evaluation of how coherent, consistent and understandable organizations activities are to its environmental constituents based on the taken for granted belief systems and expectations of institutional actors that organizations depend upon. This determines the expectations, which render such practices predictable, plausible, meaningful and acceptable in that context (Suchman, 1995) such as common curricula, traits, code of conduct etc. Understanding evaluators’ socio-cognition informs their perspectives could be understood through their institutional logics, which is presented next.

3.2 Institutional logics for PR professional projects
NIT offers a macro perspective that explains institutional actors’ actions, drives for legitimacy, influence over one another and the range of responses to institutional pressures. However, the micro-individual perspectives of these actors are equally important for understanding the underlying factors informing their perspectives, expectations and consequent actions. For this purpose, “institutional logics” is applied for capturing the assumptions and rules guiding the individual actors’ perceived “ideal” PR related practices and professional project respectively. Besides, the evaluators’ assessment and judgment of the object’s legitimacy, suggests interactions between their logics and the nature of their relations, which equally impact their mindful behavior.

Institutional logic was originally coined by Friedland and Alford’s (1991)\(^\text{11}\) in their attempt to bring society back into institutional theory discussion, for exploring interrelationships between individuals, organizations, and society. This has since has been extended by Thornton & Ocasio (1999, p. 804) who defines institutional logics as the “socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space and provide meaning to their reality”. When viewed this way, institutional logics provide a link between individual agency, cognition and socially constructed practices (Thornton,

\(^\text{11}\) Set of material practices and symbolic constructions which constitute the organizing principles of an institutional order and provides the vocabularies of motive and a sense of self to social actors (Friedland & Alford, 1991: 248)
2004), i.e. “cultural beliefs” (Lounsbury, 2007, p. 28) about appropriate behavior for attaining specific ends within an institutional context (Ocasio, 1997; March and Olsen 1989; Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012).

Institutional logics shape the perspectives of the object and the evaluators of this study respectively because it represents the set of persistent expectations for social relations and behavior (Goodrick & Reay, 2011) with which legitimacy is pursued or adjudged. For instance, Greenwood’s (1957) notion of “professional culture” refers to the social configuration that is unique to a profession which prescribes appropriate behavior for every aspect of interpersonal and social situations within the professional life of its members. Consequently, succeeding within such a profession goes beyond academic qualifications to include the internalization of social values, behavioral norms, symbols, and beliefs guiding appropriate and professional conduct.

The NIPR’s code of professional conduct, training, certification, conferences, and events are some of the examples of the profession’s efforts to encourage its members to act according to its logics in Nigeria (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; NIPR, 2014; NIPR, 1992; NIPR, 2017). Individual corporate organizations and/or collective/industry sector’s perspectives are equally shaped by specific belief systems, corporate values, goals, bottom line expectations, needs for survival etc. These, in turn, shape their behavior, expectations of in-house PR practitioners and ultimately their assessment and judgment of NIPR’s legitimacy (Bitektine & Haack, 2015).

Furthermore, central to institutional analysis is an understanding of institutional logics as “avenues of partial autonomy” which explains how institutions regulate behavior while also enabling agency within institutional contexts (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012, p. 7; Greenwood, Hinings, & Whetten, 2014). These scholars reject the rational choice of actors’ behavior but emphasize how their interests, identities, values, assumptions and consequent behavior are embedded within prevailing institutional logics (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008; Friedland and Alford, 1991). This is essentially captured in Friedland and Alford’s (1991) interinstitutional systems, which stresses how institutions are embedded within higher-order societal logics which influences their behavior. These include the logics of the market, state, corporation, professions, religion, family etc. (Thornton 2004:44-4) while contradictions between these logics lead to institutional complexities (e.g. Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004). Eventual behavior in such instance is a reflection of the dominating or cooperating
logics, which could be understood from the constellation of logics within the institutional context (Goodrick & Reay, 2011).

3.2.1 Constellation of logics
The constellation of logics explains how and why institutional actors’ order and predict one another’s actions (Goodrick & Reay, 2011). This is the outcome of the interactions and relations between coexisting logics of actors within an environment which reflects shifts in practices when dominant logic changes (e.g. Goodrick, 2002; Thornton, 2002). Hoffman (1999: 352) notes how institutional contexts usually contain multiple logics that compete over the definition of issues and logics that guide actors’ behavior. Contradictions emanate from their diverse perspectives and/or rationalities, which result in divergent prescriptions and expectations for social relations and behavior from multiple legitimating logics (Greenwood et al., 2011; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012).

Interactions between coexisting logics can be competitive or cooperative (Greenwood et al., 2010, Waldorff & Goodrick., 2013; Berg Johansen & Waldorff, 2016). With competing logics, increases in the strength of one logic decrease that of the other(s), whereby appropriate practices for the entire context are defined by and align with the dominant logic (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011). Cooperative logics imply that all logics in the field are amplified and together influence practices (Goodrick & Reay, 2011). These interactions explain the elements and strengths of the perspectives of the actors which (1) make up their respective logics, (2) uncovers their relations, (3) influence one another, and (4) explain how change occurs or stability is maintained on specific issues, such as the NIPR’s professional project and legitimacy within a context (Thornton et al., 2012).

Yet, amidst the cooperating constellation of logics are hybrid and bricolage. The hybrid constellation entails the merging of initially competing logics to support one another to uphold strategic practices of organization, especially when organizational goals are unachievable with only one of the logics (see Pache & Santos, 2010). This presents opportunities for traditionally irreconcilable logics to be reconciled for creating effective and efficient organizational forms (e.g. Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Kent & Dacin, 2013; Pache & Santos, 2010, 2011; Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007). Bricolage entails intentional combinations of micro-organizational or individual practices from multiple logics for strategic purposes in
everyday organizational life (e.g. Ansari, Wijen, & Gray, 2013; Christensen & Lounsbury, 2013, Simsek, 2009).

Therefore, logics and actors are two defining features, and a key means of examining Nigeria’s PR environment (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003). As organizing principles, they would help this study to gain an in-depth understanding of the external pressures emanating from the constellation of logics within which the actors are embedded, and the NIPR’s response to them. The constellation for this study includes that of corporate organizations (evaluator) and the NIPR at least. Corporate logics are considered because of the focus on professional legitimacy in the workplace. Besides, top managements’ logics determine appropriate competencies for higher-order managerial role enactment and in-house practitioners’ decision making powers, which contribute to PR’s workplace professional legitimacy (e.g. Moss & Warnaby, 2000).

More so, PR’s profession logics determine elements of the NIPR’s professional project. Within NIT, professions are the normative actors who define and maintain their members’ jurisdiction (Scott, 2005), typify code of conduct for members (Abbott, 1988; Cant & Sharma, 1995; Evetts, 1995), promulgate standards for professional practice, and construct regulatory frameworks and monitor compliance (Scott, 2008ab; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996; Oliver, 1997; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Nevertheless, professions have been found to mostly pursue conformity (Abel, 1989) and/or reproduction of established practices (e.g. Ruef & Scott, 1998; D’Aunno et al., 1991).

However, Holm (1995) argues otherwise for a duality of their activities, which entails preserving established practices at one level while making changes to such practices at another level (e.g. Greenwood, Suddaby & Hinings, 2002; Suddaby and Viale (2011). For the NIPR, a change to an existing professional project that is ineffective for obtaining professional legitimacy is in focus. Therefore, the constellation logics for PR in Nigeria and the NIPR’s strategic response to them (e.g. Oliver, 1991) would be the basis for developing an alternative approach to affirming PR as a legitimate profession in Nigeria.
Table 3.5: Constellation of logics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Scholars</th>
<th>Key contribution</th>
<th>Relevance for study</th>
<th>Research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thornton, Ocasio, Lounsbury</td>
<td>Institutional Logics</td>
<td>Provides a macro perspective into the individual actor’s rationale, guiding principles and socially constructed ways of doing things that may or may not be influenced by institutional pressures, organizations circumstances, industry dynamics, strategic needs, and power play with other logics within their context.</td>
<td>Q 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friedland and Alford (1991)</td>
<td>Interinstitutional systems institutional complexities</td>
<td>Helps to explain how individual actors are influenced by varied and coexisting logics within the Nigerian society/context, while contradictions between the logics bring about institutional complexities that complicate actors’ behavior as adherence to one logic might mean undermining another rational and equally legitimate logic that has consequences for the actor.</td>
<td>Q 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornton (2004), Hoffman</td>
<td>Constellation of logics</td>
<td>Can be applied for identifying the number of logics that are existing within the Nigerian context, interactions between them (competing or cooperating) and relations between them whereby one could dominate and thereby influence the others’ behavior, while all logics could also cooperate and jointly influence one another’s behavior</td>
<td>Q 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenwood et al. (2010),</td>
<td>Societal systems: markets, corporations, professions, states, families, and religions</td>
<td>Applied for highlighting the various logics within the Nigerian society that all have the tendency to influence one aspect or all aspects of institutional members’ actions</td>
<td>Q 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodrick &amp; Reay (2011)</td>
<td>Corporate logic, professional logic educator logic</td>
<td>Helps to understand the logics of corporate organizations or the professional body and the PR educators, as well as the nature of their interactions and it manifests in their relations</td>
<td>Q 1, 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Organization field where institutional actors interact
Organization field is a key element of the institutional theory (e.g. Sandhu, 2009; Scott, 1991). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) initially conceptualized organization fields as the aggregate of interconnected organizations constituting a recognized area of institutional life. Scott (1995) built on these assumptions by maintaining that the field comprises members who share a common meaning system and interacted more frequently and fatefully, while their interactions inform their rational behavior. Such fields comprise constituents that can impose coercive, normative or mimetic influence, which includes government, critical exchange partners, sources of funding, professional and trade associations, special interest groups, and the general public (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 1991; Zucker, 1977; Meyer and Rowan, 1977).
However, the literature on fields over the past decades has evolved (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008). Early conceptions of fields are criticized for presenting a narrow understanding of fields as a stable space with shared meanings, and reciprocity amongst members (e.g. Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977, 1987). Assumptions of this kind ignore heterogeneous field level actions (see Hoffman & Ventresca, 2002; Bansal & Penner 2002) and restrict members to those with recognized typified roles. They equally neglect possible disagreements between disparate members with varying perspectives and logics. Consequently, Bourdieu’s (1977) conception of fields as a highly contested space with incompatible logics as well as power plays in a war-like manner have been reintroduced into organization field’s research (Hoffman, 1999; D’Aunno, Sutton, & Price, 1991; Holm, 1995; Davis, Dieckman, & Tinsley, 1994).

Brint and Karabel (1991, p. 335) introduce the “arena of power relations” element of fields. This represents a space that is characterized by contests and struggles (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Calhoun, 1993) where issues of interest and power relations determine field membership (e.g. Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Hoffman, 1999). Hoffman (1999) in particular is of the view that fields come alive due to issues of interest to members that are shared from different perspectives, and with varying implications at the individual and field levels respectively. Such is the case for PR’s professional project that NIPR carries out based on traits and power approach for the purposes of obtaining legitimacy in the workplace. These approaches are expected to manifest into a managerial role, dominant coalition membership and decision making power respectively for in-house practitioners. However, the literature on managerial role enactment suggests that corporate organizations have a different set of expectations for these outcomes to be manifested in the workplace. The absence of these expectations has since led to the institutionalization of practitioners as technicians or low-order managers, which could be traced to the currently predominant professional projects for PR across country-specific contexts.

Furthermore, recent NIT scholars focus on reflexive12 field members’ strategic responses to external or field level pressures, and not conformity (Oliver, 1991; Fligstein & McAdam,

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12 Suddaby, Viale and Gendron’s (2016) conception of actors’ reflexivity as individuals’ awareness of the constraints and opportunities created by the norms, values, beliefs and expectations of the social structures that surround them (Suddaby, Viale & Gendron 2016, p. 5). Reflexivity in this sense results from actors’ (1) social skills i.e. awareness of context’s structures and resources (Fligstein, 1997, 2013) in combination with their social position that grants access to social capital, networks, status and political power (Battilana, 2006) for strategically rising above institutional constrains.
Consequently, fields are never static but continuously evolving as it is the centre for debates where competing logics and interests of concerned actors negotiate over issue interpretation (Hoffman, 1999: 351-352). According to Seo and Creed (2002), fields form to reconcile contradictory and conflicting institutional arrangements by collectively bringing the various institutional rules in line with members’ interests, which leads to changes within the field. Lampel and Meyer (2008), focused on field-configuring events such as conferences where disparate field members gather to discuss, define, and debate field related issues towards developing shared understandings (Bertels, Hoffman & DeJordy, 2014; Scott, 2001). Moreover, perceived advantages expected to be gained from such interactions is a key factor that encourages field members’ participation (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008:131).

3.4. SC as a theoretical foundation for studying the perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria

Given this study’s interest in understanding the actor's perceptions, the epistemological assumptions guiding this research work is within social constructionism (SC). SC is necessary for accessing the knowledge and objective realities informing each actor’s expectations for obtaining and/or adjudging legitimacy for the PR profession. Consequently, SC serves multiple purposes in this study, which includes (1) the theoretical foundation of NIT and related concepts, (2) philosophy of science, while also (3) guiding the elements of the methodology respectively. The latter and its elements are covered in the next chapter.

Epistemologically, SC works with a philosophical view of knowledge and reality as a compilation of human-made constructions (Raskin, 2002) and a common production of meaning, and not a pre-existing phenomenon that is to be discovered (Castello & Botella, 2006). Besides, SC rejects positivism and critical rationalism whereby culture-free researchers apply statistical analysis of quantitative data for determining objective facts (Holm, 2013). Therefore, this study is naturally drawn to SC because it facilitates an exploration of the actors’ socially constructed yet subjective meanings and consequent perceptions, which have been developed within their respective communities over time (see Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Corporate managers, the professional association (NIPR) and educators are viewed as belonging to different disparate communities/enclaves with their own
social realities, which ultimately influences their perceptions of the legitimacy of PR as a profession in Nigeria.

Moreover, SC fits very well with and complements NIT because Berger and Luckman’s (1991) SC inspired the most significant contributions to the core elements of NIT and its core concepts. The early version of NIT (e.g. Meyer & Rowan, 1977), institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio 1999) and the perceptual view of legitimacy (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Bitektine & Haack, 2015) are all based on socially constructed realities. These shape the actors expected conduct (institutional logics), as well as the relations between and evaluation of one another’s conduct (constellation of logic). Depending on the actor in question, these ultimately function as external pressures for acceptable behavior for obtaining or adjudging legitimacy as the case may be.

Although scientific methods working with qualitative data for understanding the perspectives of social actors exist, they are not the most appropriate for this study. An example is hermeneutics, which applies grammatical and psychological laws for interpreting parts of and whole texts for understanding the articulated meaning. Meaning in this sense is from the perspective of the individual author, interpreter, or social-historical context of communication. In contrast, SC is interested in the socially constructed meaning of a social collective or community (Gulddal & Møller, 1999, cited in Holm, 2013). The focus on an individual is insufficient for community-level understandings and responses of the actors to institutionalized norms in isolation of other actors. More so, hermeneutics lays little to no emphasis on the potential for multiple meanings and realities within a context. These are particularly important due to the tendency for and the need to understand the varied perceptions of legitimacy and their implications on individual actors and the environment they share. Consequently, hermeneutics is discarded for SC because its scope of understanding and the source of meaning are unsuitable for attending to the research questions.

Berger and Luckman (1991) view reality to be socially constructed based on the dual character of society, which transitions from subjective meanings developed in everyday human activities and interactions to taken for granted objective facticities. They emphasize how an adequate understanding of reality is only possible by inquiring into the manner in
which the reality is constructed (p. 30), especially since meanings within such reality have significance for actors’ practices within their communities. The reality, in this case, is specifically about the observable perception of the legitimacy of PR as a profession as it currently exists based on each actor’s perspective. When broken down, interactions involve the expressions, exchange, and internalization of subjective meanings between people, which influence their actions and mediate objective reality for society. Berger and Luckmann (1991) state that everyday life presents itself as a reality that is interpreted by people as subjectively meaningful and coherent in their thoughts and actions, which causes them to maintain them as real (p. 30) and objectifies their meanings. This is facilitated by internalization i.e. induction of the individual into the social institutional structure through secondary socialization, whereby role-specific knowledge is acquired through training and specific rituals. As Berger and Luckmann (1991) state:

The individual... is not born a member of society. He... becomes a member of society (p. 129). By ‘successful socialization’ we mean the establishment of a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality (p. 183). Secondary socialization is the internalization of institutional or institution-based ‘sub-worlds’... any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized (primary socialization from childhood into social norms and values) individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society (p. 150).

Equally important to internalization is linguistic signification i.e. language that offers a ready-made possibility for the ongoing objectification and typification of unfolding experiences. These subsume such experiences under broad categories that render them meaningful to individuals and members of a society, which are then indexed, preserved, and transmitted to other generations. Consequently, the reality of everyday life is taken for granted, self-evident and a compelling facticity, which requires no verification, thereby causing actors to suspend any doubts and routinely engage in the practice in their everyday life (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 50-53).

Typified role and respective categories of knowledge are developed based on routinized practices. These are the outcomes of routinized practices that become habitualized into reciprocal roles that are played by particular actors in relation to one another. This causes them to retain their meaningful character and as such become embedded into the social stock of knowledge, which constitutes the basis for human activity (p.70-71). Typified roles represent types of actors with institutionalized conduct that is peculiar to specific collectives of actors within a context of an objectified stock of knowledge. Roles are means through
which individuals participate in a specific social world because they determine the scope of knowledge, practices they internalize, and the work they perform in society (Berger and Luckman p.91). Roles represent the institutional order or institutional logic, which informs what those performing such roles represent (e.g. CEO/Top management, technician/manager, or Educator/Lecturer), and in relation to other roles because they are conceived as representative of their institutions (e.g. Corporate logic, Professions logic /Professional association, Academic/Educator logic). In essence, typified roles share in the controlling character of institutionalization due to its capacity to divide society into enclaves and/or communities with members who carry out specific tasks within society.

Typifications are indicated in terms of traits, practitioner role typologies, higher order and lower order manager role enactment, activist role, dominant coalition membership, and decision-making power. Habitualized and routinized, thereby taken for granted as a shortcut for appropriate behavior, the same could be said for educators who simply copy NIPR’s curriculum or the PR education design/structure of other universities and insert PR as a subset or in combination with mass communication, advertising, integrated marketing communications etc. Management simply copies other organizations in general or those in similar industries, thereby inserting practitioners as technicians or managers based on the routinized or habitualized behavior of whoever they mimic, with little consideration of their individual organization goal, industry-specific circumstance, or product needs.

Besides, reciprocal typification of habitualized actions and roles constitute predefined patterns of conduct and thereby function as a social control over members’ conduct (p.72). The reciprocal typifications in the form of mutual observations and mutual agreements as “ways of doing things” (p. 71) growing out of capitalizations of these actions, eventually cause them to become institutionalized and thereby taken-for-granted and played out by those in such roles so that actions of other members of society are predictable.

“Habitualization carries with it the important psychological gain that choices are narrowed” (p. 71).

Consequently, the collection of these habitualized actions and typified categories constitute the social stock of knowledge. These entail the accumulation of common interpretations,
institutions, rationalized myths, shared routines, capitalizations, typified roles, hierarchies the division of labor etc. from which appropriate behavior for specific ends are drawn by actors within specific enclaves. Institutionalization affirms objectivity into objectified norms and ideas of social worlds and institutions, which becomes the basis of social expectations that are inherited as something unalterable and self-evident, with little thought of its underlying logic. These are transmitted to other generations as objective facts or facticities because they represent institutionalized practices for that society. Institutionalization places social control on human conduct based on some historical reference and typifications that define acceptable or rational conduct as being perceived as legitimate within or in relation to a particular social collective, even if it emanated from just two individuals (e.g. Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983; Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Furthermore, through the institutionalization processes, the socially constructed meanings and reality become embedded in the institutional fabric of that society (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

...a social world [is] a comprehensive and given reality confronting the individual in a manner analogous to the reality of the natural world... The objective reality of institutions is not diminished if the individual does not understand their purpose or their mode of operation... He must ‘go out’ and learn about them, just as he must learn about nature... (Berger and Luckmann, 1991, p.77-78)

In this study, it is this underlying logic i.e. assumptions, perspectives and expectations of the respective actors, which extends the understanding of the realities, perception and consequent institutional logics and perceptions of the legitimacy of the PR profession in Nigeria that is of utmost interest.

Figure 3.1: Social Constructionism as Institutionalization process (based on Berger & Luckmann, 1991)
Berger and Luckmann (1991) claim the social world is understood as constituting multiple realities with a different consciousness, while one is salient to the role which constitutes the natural attitude and requires no verification as it corresponds to the attitude of similar actors, others are reinforced as self-evident routines and thereby become objectified as a compelling facticity.

The reality of everyday life further presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others. … This intersubjectivity sharply differentiates everyday life from other realities of which I am conscious (p. 37). Compared to the reality of everyday life, other realities appear as finite provinces of meaning, enclaves within the paramount reality marked by circumscribed meanings and modes of experience (p.39)

Nigeria’s PR environment is understood as constituting a sum of constructed realities. (Holm, 2013). Consequently, different perceptions of the legitimacy of PR are believed to co-exist. These are based on each actor’s social realities, objectives, and external pressures i.e. institutionalized practices for achieving specific ends at the community level. These manifest as shared common challenges such as obtaining or retaining professional legitimacy for which they apply similar strategies, while also competing against one another for jurisdiction and/or prestige in certain instances (e.g. Sandhu, 2008; Abbott, 1988). Interactions between these actors are characterized by mutual observation; co-orientation and mimetic activities. Nevertheless, interruptions caused by other realities become problematic.

Additionally, the interpretation and actual implementation of these understandings by individual community members may vary due to individual differences and contingencies. Mahoney (1988) contends that objective reality may be restructured in accordance with social actors’ cognitive structures, subjective meanings, and unique experiences. Meyer and Rowan (1977) talked about decoupling when institutionalized practices developed which are based on formerly constructed objective reality are ceremoniously adopted but not implemented. This is commonplace especially when institutionalized norms are unable to help organizations attend to their contingencies or practical issues, but are required for obtaining legitimacy. Alternatively, Oliver’s (1991) range of strategic responses to institutionalized norms serves the latter purpose as well, but in an explicit manner. Nevertheless, passive adoption, decoupling and strategic responses are not restricted to individuals within communities alone but also to the entire community, such as the case of the professional association (NIPR) in this case.
Individual differences within respective actor’s communities could emanate from (1) top management PR knowledge and/or experience, organization-specific circumstance, industry characteristics, environmental uncertainties, critical resources needs etc., (2) profession’s current prestige, image, ambitions, trends, future plans, and (3) educators’ academic background, university type (private or public) etc. In the case of PR in Nigeria, the counter-productive institutionalized traits and misguided power approach have been insufficient for obtaining legitimacy for PR in the workplace so far. This suggests incongruence between the objective reality of PR in their pursuit of legitimacy when compared to other prestigious professional associations’ that have successfully applied the traits and obtained legitimacy. PR’s unique experience in this regard causes the profession to restructure its so-called objective reality and pursue alternative actions that are more apt for obtaining the desired legitimacy from corporate organizations. In addition, corporate organizations’ reality may also be restructured due to industry, organization, and/or product specific factors, which in turn shapes requirements for PR to be adjudged a legitimate profession. These cause community and individual level realities to be crucial for a sufficient understanding of the actors’ objective reality and underlying perception of legitimacy in its totality, which SC facilitates.

Figure 3.2: Multiple realities and internally fragmented interpretations and implementations

Figure 3.2 depicts the three coexisting yet disparate realities within Nigeria’s PR environment, which try with respective socially constructed perceptions and expected behavior to adjudge or obtain professional legitimacy for PR in Nigeria. The different entities within each community represent actors whose cognitive structures, subjective meanings and unique experiences shape their individual level reality, interpretation of the community level perceptions and implementation to suit their own situation or simply mimic institutionalized norms for legitimacy.
Lastly, SC favors qualitative methods, which are necessary for gathering rich data from the actors for understanding their reality. This entails listening to the actors’ descriptions of their shared meanings through interviews, which are then studied for understanding their respective social world, realities and perceptions (e.g. Daymon & Holloway, 2002). In order to go beyond merely re-describing the actors’ experiences, Weick’s (1979) "strong" constructionist view is applied. By doing so, relevant theory-dependent interpretive schemes and constructs are used to analyze collected data. Therefore, the sociology of professions and NIT constructs within the theoretical framework, which is used for exploring the social reality, perceptions and activities of the actors. As Astley (1985, p. 498) notes, the facts constituting our knowledge are theory-dependent as our perceptions and access to reality is mediated by theoretical preconceptions that we use to understand the world.

3.4.1 Positioning this study on professional projects and the legitimacy of PR
This research is deductive-explorative because it aims to explore the underlying perspectives of top management, the professional association and PR educators based on existing theories and related concepts on professional projects and legitimacy respectively. This means that existing research and theory guides the focus of this study and data collection. The researcher starts with a focus on prevailing assumptions, theories, concepts and approaches that have been developed in the literature on PR’s professional projects and the pursuit of legitimacy. Practitioner role typologies, higher and lower order managerial role enactment theory, practitioner autonomy, dominant coalition, and decision-making power are reviewed in relation to approaches developed within the sociology of professions. In doing so, this concepts sensitizes this study for (1) the capacity of the approaches for attaining the professional legitimacy of PR, (2) types of data, and appropriate respondents that can supply relevant information, which are crucial for (3) determining the themes that would be derived from the data as they are strongly linked to pre-existing theories, and (4) studying the categories of approaches and their viability for the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria’s country-specific context. In essence, the deductive approach and the sensitization it facilitates help this study to evaluate existing approaches and attempt to extend this theoretical foundation based on the findings from collected data.
3.4.2 More recent NIT as a theoretical framework for studying PR legitimacy in Nigeria

NIT is not new to PR research as it offers a theoretical framework for studying how PR has been institutionalized in organizations (Frandsen & Johansen, 2013b; Merkelsen, 2011). Since the subtle approaches are yet to attain legitimacy for PR (Merkelsen, 2011), this study extends NIT-oriented PR research by developing an alternative an institutional approach for studying PR’s professional projects and legitimacy respectively. Besides, legitimacy is central to NIT (Waeraas, 2007; Meyer & Rowan, 1977) while remaining critical for the assessment of PR as an organizational practice and profession (Metzler, 2001, p. 321). Towards applying the legitimacy-as-perception view, NIT permits micro, meso and macro level analyses (Sandhu, 2009), thereby making it an appropriate framework for studying PR professionalism in Nigeria.

More so, there has been an increasing application of NIT for studying the PR profession. These streams of studies emphasize its value for studying the extent of the institutionalization of PR as a socially accepted profession (e.g., Bartlett, Tywoniak, & Hatcher, 2007; Pieczka, 2002; Grandien & Johansson, 2012; Hou, 2016) and organizational function respectively (e.g., Invernizzi & Romenti, 2009; Fredriksson et al., 2013; Sandhu, 2009; Kjeldsen, 2013). While the NIT frame has been used to extend the understanding of PR as a profession and practice, these studies have not been able to address the threats that hinder PR’s professional legitimacy in the workplace (Merkelsen, 2011). These include (1) ongoing stigmatization against PR, (2) difficulty in documenting PR’s contribution to the bottom line, (3) promotion of competing disciplines and (4) workplace inter-professional competitions for jurisdiction, which altogether makes it harder for PR to obtain its legitimacy in the workplace arena (Merkelsen, 2011).

Consequently, this study applies Oliver’s (1991) strategic responses from within the more recent NIT tradition for explaining the local and international external pressures influencing PR’s professional project in Nigeria and the NIPR’s response to them. Local pressures come from prestigious professions whose status as a legitimate profession is a source of the cultural cognitive requirement for professional legitimacy in Nigeria (e.g. Scott, 2008a). International

13 According to Suchman (1995), “legitimacy” as “a generalized perception or assumption that something is desirable, proper, or appropriate within a socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p. 574).
14 “Micro-level analysis is mostly concerned with individual or group actions manifested in concepts like roles, macro-level research tries to explain how societal systems interact and evolve. The meso-level, however, is above the individual unit and below a general systems logic and most commonly associated with organizations” (Sandhu, 2009, p. 82)
pressures may emanate from academic literature on PR’s professional status recognition across country-specific contexts, and international PR associations which stipulate traits that must be established for membership (e.g. Globa-Alliance, 2018). By working with Oliver’s strategic responses, this study understands NIPR’s response options to go beyond the passive adoption of institutionalized norms for professional projects, and rather incorporates a range of strategic responses. This equally unearths NIPR’s perception of legitimacy and activities that are embarked upon for achieving it.

From an analytical standpoint, NIT permits analysis at various levels and combinations, which includes a macro-meso, as well as meso-meso level analysis respectively. The macro-meso level analysis will be carried out to investigate the relations of organizations (NIPR/PR Profession) towards societal actors such as corporate organizations that require specific resources/services to be performed on their behalf by in-house practitioners (Sandhu, 2008). This analysis covers the influence of external pressures coming from the macro-institutional context (see Zucker, 1987, p. 444) which forces the profession to apply strategies like decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) compromise and other strategic responses in its professional project towards obtaining and/or retaining legitimacy for PR in Nigeria. This refers to the constellation of logics, which assesses interactions between coexisting logics and their impact on one another and the legitimacy of PR.

Table 3.6: Two levels of Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of analysis</th>
<th>Scope and source of external pressure</th>
<th>Actors and source of involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro-Meso</td>
<td>Local/Primary external environment</td>
<td>Corporate organizations vs. NIPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maco institutional context in Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso-Meso</td>
<td>Local: Other professional associations in Nigeria</td>
<td>NIPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International PR associations and affiliates</td>
<td>APCON, NUJ, COREN, NUJ, NIMARK etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IPRA, IPR, Global Alliance etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sandhu (2008)

At the meso-meso level, the analysis concentrates on relations between structurally and/or functionally interdependent organizations/actors. This has to do with interpretation and implementation of SC and institutionalized practices by individual community members. These actors’ include NIPR and other professions who face external pressures which are in the form of institutionalized norms, practices of prestigious professions and/or international professional associations that are taken for granted means for legitimacy. They share common challenges such as obtaining or retaining professional legitimacy for which they
apply similar strategies, while also competing against one another for jurisdiction and/or prestige in certain instances (e.g. Sandhu, 2008; Abbott, 1988). According to early NIT literature, interactions between these actors are characterized by mutual observation; co-orientation and mimetic activities, while recent version proposes strategic responses.

3.4.3 Tentative snapshot of Nigeria’s PR organization field and a constellation of logics

In this study, Nigeria’s PR field is understood from the latter conception as a space where purposive actions are carried out by concerned field members (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). NIPR’s pursuit of legitimacy in the workplace and corporate organizations’ need for critical resources in the form of robust PR expertise for attending to environmental uncertainties bring the field alive and encourages these actors to interact with one another. This means that PR’s professional project in Nigeria may not be explained in its entirety through rationalized myths and isomorphic processes embedded within the profession’s logic alone. Instead, interactions and relations between these self-interested actors with diverse logics may explain and extend understanding of an appropriate approach for studying PR’s professional project in Nigeria.

Issues pertaining to the assessment and pronouncement of professional legitimacy on PR from diverse perspectives or logics brought this field to life. The field comprises corporate organizations, the NIPR and PR educators’ logics in Nigeria. These actors use their accumulated resources and power to influence institutionalized elements of PR’s professional project to align with their own logics and expectations. Nevertheless, these actors are embedded within the higher order corporate and profession logics in Nigeria. Profession logic may be understood from the prevalent practices of prestigious professions in Nigeria as well as recommendations for professional projects by international PR associations where the NIPR is a member, which is based on extant research from the PR field.

More specifically, the NIPR in relation to international PR associations (e.g. IPRA, IPR, Global Alliance) focuses on establishing common traits such as a similar code of conduct and enforcement (Udomisor & Osademe, 2013), membership requirements, and curricular content for PR programs etc. (e.g. Globa-Alliance, 2018; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). The literature on role enactment suggests that top management prioritize robust practitioner capabilities that include PR expertise, industry knowledge, financial and business
management education etc. with which practitioners can contribute to their bottom line (e.g. Moss & Warnaby, 2000; Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Abbott, 1988).

Educators become members of this field because of top management’s expectation that the robust skills-set relates to a PR curriculum which is guided by educator logic in relation to the NIPR’s logic. However, it is uncertain if both actors share a similar logic, therefore, collected data would help clarify such details. Nevertheless, Goodrick and Reay’s (2011) constellations of logics would help understand the relations and dynamics between field members, which ultimately influence NIPR’s professional project for workplace legitimacy to be obtained.

3.4.4 Power relations within the constellation of logics
Based on the history of PR in Nigeria and literature on PR professionalization, a tentative snapshot of power relations within the constellation of logics in Nigeria’s PR field is presented. In line with Brint and Karabel’s (1991) arenas of power concept, interactions between field members in Nigeria could be explained by their power relations and their role as evaluator of the object of professional legitimacy. Corporate organizations within Nigeria are found to possess structural power gained through their location in the social structure within the field as well as their exclusive control over critical resources that the NIPR depends upon for the (1) employment of in-house practitioners based on scope of competences, (2) decisions making regarding PR strategy and budget, (3) permission of higher-order managerial role enactment, and ultimately (4) adjudging PR as a legitimate profession based on practitioners’ performance and contribution to the bottom-line.

The NIPR’s pursuit of professional legitimacy in the international arena causes the association to adhere to specific requirements. However, the extent to which this could be considered as a distinct logic is debatable. Similarly, legitimacy in the local arena in relation to fellow and mostly prestigious professions who influence the rationalized myths for professional legitimacy in Nigeria equally suggests a certain level of their influence on PR’s professional project, but not necessarily logic. They instead influence the elements constituting the professions logic within which PR is embedded. However, do not have power over corporate logics regarding professional legitimacy in the workplace.
Governmental bodies equally possess power. This is evident in the power of the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) to accredit the curricula of all educational programs including PR in Nigerian Universities. The NIPR equally regulates PR practices, certifies PR practitioners, improves the standard of practice, and enforce a code of conduct (NIPR, 2014). These provide the bodies’ with the power to influence the availability of well-qualified practitioners and provide guidelines on how PR should be ideally practiced in organizations. PR educators contribute to competence development which may be a sort of power in terms of the quality of available practitioners. However, such powers are irrelevant in this case as the pursued legitimacy is from the corporate perspective. Besides, PR in Nigeria and globally has issues of its own that naturally diminishes its power and legitimacy. Issues pertaining to unethical affiliations and conducts, low entry barrier into practice, voluntary compliance to the code of conduct, lack of robust educational programs, perceived practitioner competence, over-reliance on the traits and illusion of dominance and power in corporate contexts amongst others. All these diminish PR’s credibility and lack of workplace legitimacy.

These issues combine to keep the NIPR and PR educators structurally subordinate to organizations in this field, while also constraining PR’s professional project’s capacity to obtain the desired legitimacy in Nigeria. Based on the constellation of logics of institutional actors constituting the Nigerian PR field, Oliver’s (1991) strategic responses to institutional pressures is proposed. This will, therefore, be discussed towards developing an alternative approach with which a PR’s professional project could be enriched for obtaining legitimacy in the workplace.
Table 3.7: Various conceptions of Organization field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Scholars</th>
<th>Key contribution</th>
<th>Relevance for study</th>
<th>Research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Members connectedness  
Structural equivalence  
Frequent and fateful interactions | Helps to understand the extent to which Nigeria’s PR environment i.e. Organization field is characterized by members with shared beliefs and cordial relations that is based on institutionalized practices | Q 1               |
| Bourdieu’s (1977), Hoffman (1999)    | The field comes alive due to issues of interest and remains characterized by volatility among members pursuing self-interests | Helps identify issues or conflicting interests that have brought Nigeria’s PR organization field into life for concerned actors, and their influence over one another’s practices and PR’s professional project in particular | Q 2               |
| Brint & Karabel (1991)               | Arena of power relations  
Structural power over subordinate(s)  
Power as control over critical resources | Highlights the power relations between the actors by identifying an actor with the structural power to control those with subordinate power within the constellation of logics within the field | Q 2, 3            |
The field is Formed to reconcile individual and field level conflicts/contradictions | Describes the purpose/motivation that brings the actors into the field towards reconciling the contradictions impacting one, some and/or all of them within the PR field | Q 2, 3            |

3.5 Summary

This theoretical framework lays out the selection of theories, concepts, and models constituting the frame for exploring the perspectives of institutional actors who impacts the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria based on their response to external pressures for their professional projects. The core elements of this frame are applied for explaining how and why the actors influence PR’s professional project and capacity to be recognized as a legitimate profession in Nigeria.

Contributions from the early and recent version of NIT extend the understanding of the social realities and complexities that confront NIPR in its response to external pressures regarding PR professionalization and drive for legitimacy in Nigeria. Therefore, Oliver’s (1991) strategic response from the recent version of NIT and related concepts such as institutional logics, constellation of logics and organization field are identified as appropriate for this purpose. The range of responses within the model explains how and why NIPR’s professional project could be pursued with an alternative approach. In doing so, the professional association does not simply conform to the currently institutionalized and isomorphic traits approach which has proven ineffective in facilitating PR’s professional legitimacy in Nigeria’s corporate workplaces.
Professional legitimacy has received immense research attention and remains the key goal of professional projects for PR in various country-specific contexts. Legitimacy in this study is understood from the perceptual view i.e. assumption that PR/NIPR’s actions regarding its professional project manifest into competencies that are desirable, proper, or appropriate for professional practice in corporate contexts (Suchman, 1995). In this sense, corporate organization’s (evaluator) assessment of PR’s profession legitimacy is based on a set of socially constructed rules for social relations and appropriate behavior i.e. institutional logics (e.g. Thornton & Ocasio 1999). In this study, logics for acknowledging PR as a legitimate practice and profession from the corporate perspective become relevant.

However, all institutional actors within an institutional context operate with their individual logics, which are sometimes contradictory to one another. This leads to institutional complexities (e.g. Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004) regarding which logic to conform to for attaining desired ends. Goodrick and Reay’s (2011) constellation of logics assesses interactions between coexisting logics, which could be competing or cooperating (Waldorff & Goodrick, 2013) based on their power relations and/or institutional members strategic goals. While PR is embedded within the profession’s logic which influences PR’s professional projects, the outcome of the project has been insufficient for top management that is embedded within the corporate logics (Thornton 2004).

This outcome suggests that the NIPR may not compete against or outrightly reject corporate logics when developing its professional project due to the former’s dependence on the latter for legitimacy, which means that corporate logics dominate the context in relation to professional legitimacy. Therefore, top managements’ logics influence appropriate competences for higher-order managerial role enactment and in-house practitioners’ decision making powers, which contributes to PR’s workplace professional legitimacy (e.g. Moss & Warnaby, 2000).

The context of this interaction within NIT is regarded as organization field. On one hand, fields have been conceptualized as a space comprising members with shared meanings and cordial relations (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott 1995). On the other hand, fields could also be a space that is brought to life by disparate members with competing logics and interests who come together to engage in power plays and negotiate over issue interpretation (Hoffman, 1999). Incompatibilities between corporate and professions logics regarding
professional legitimacy mirror the latter conception of the organization field for PR professionalization in Nigeria.

Consequently, field members in Nigeria potentially include corporate organizations, NIPR, and PR educators respectively. These three actors use their accumulated resources and power to influence elements of PR’s professional project to align with their own logics. Corporate organizations possess structural power gained through their exclusive control over critical resources that the NIPR depends upon for PR to be pronounced a legitimate profession. Professions logic is informed by the professional project of prestigious professions in Nigeria and that of international PR associations through mimetic processes (Udomisor & Osademe, 2013; Samaila, 2015; Globa-Alliance, 2018; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Educators become members of this field because of top management’s expectation that the robust skill-set relates to the PR curriculum which is guided by educator logic in relation to the NIPR’s logic. The NIPR and PR educators’ dependence on the corporate actors’ assessment for the profession to obtain legitimacy places them in a structurally subordinate position in relation to workplace legitimacy. This ultimately subjects PR’s professional project to influence from corporate organizations.

This theoretical framework and its key elements provide a theoretical foundation for exploring how and why the NIPR could embark on an effective professional project in Nigeria. The framework equally responds to the need for more empirical studies on PR professionalization in country-specific contexts, especially since not enough is known about the actor’s perspectives and logics in Nigeria. Going forward, NIT facilitates an understanding of the current state of PR in Nigeria with an emphasis on the developments, trends, dominant practices and responses to external pressures for PR’s professional project and legitimacy attainment respectively.

Also, the theory highlights relevant subject areas of inquiry that will be included in the interview questions. These will help in gathering relevant data for understanding how PR is organized in the corporate organizations in relation to corporate norms and expectations, and norms guiding the NIPR’s professional project and PR curricula. With these findings in place, this research will be well equipped with sufficient empirical data to explore and discuss the “value” and “logics” that may be infused into PR by the respective actors. These,
in turn, clarify the rationale behind the actors’ perspectives and relations between them, which enable and constrain an alternative yet effective professional project for PR in Nigeria.
Chapter 4 Methodology

Methodology presents the plan of action for answering the research questions (RQs) of this study. This entails the research strategy that outlines the way the researcher goes about undertaking this research project (Howell, 2013, p. ix), which is oriented by Berger and Luckman’s (1991) social constructionism. Although it was presented as part of the theoretical framework chapter, SC informs the elements of this methodology. Considerations about the socially constructed reality of the respective actors’ communities are informed by SC. In addition, the more recent NIT that is applied for studying the perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria have implications for the choice of methodology and accompanying methods in this study. Methodology affects methods because of its considerable influence on the type and/or form of knowledge that is relevant and must be gathered for attaining the stated research purpose (Howell, 2013). Therefore, the methodology is designed to facilitate an understanding of how the respective of the actors’ underlying perspectives impact the legitimacy of the PR profession in Nigeria.

The following sections include a presentation of the applications of Yin’s (2014) case study method, which is the overall research design for this study, in Section 4.1. The section comprises data collection instruments, the sampling method, and analysis the strategy that are applied for this study. The methods underlying the research design have been fulfilled using Kvale’s (1996) “seven stages for interview investigation” as a guide for conducting semi-structured interviews with the participants. Archival studies are also used for collecting secondary data. This is followed by Section 4.2 Analysis method, which presents the thematic analysis that will be carried out for the data, which includes coding the data, identifying case nodes, interrogating the codes, and the strategies that have been put in place to ensure the validity of the case study design.

Figure 4.1 maps out the core components of the methodology chapter, while tables and figures are used for depicting different aspects of the methodology chapter. Additionally, interview guides and other relevant tables are in the appendices. Although findings here answer Research Question 1, they equally provide the basis for attending to Research Question 2 and 3, which seek to understand the extent of the actor’s contradictions and how the actors’ perspectives affect the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria. Identified contradictions and
their implications are expected to contribute to building an institutional approach for explaining PR’s legitimacy.

Figure 4.1: Overview of Methodology

4.1 Applying Yin’s Case Study model
According to Yin (2014), “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16). Consequently, the case study design provides a logical sequence of activities for the researcher to gather relevant data that helps this study to respond to the research questions (Yin, 2014). It enumerates which data is relevant, how it will be collected as well as the appropriate method for analyzing this collected data.

More specifically, the case study is appropriate for studying the perspectives of the actors because there is insufficient knowledge about the professional legitimacy of PR in Nigeria. Moreover, this complex contemporary phenomenon can only be studied and understood in its real-life context in Nigeria (Yin, 2014), especially as the researcher has little to no control
over the PR decisions and activities of the actors that are studied. Accordingly, the case study unpacks and simplifies the complex perspectives of Nigeria’s PR environment’s institutional actors. Additionally, it embraces the SC epistemological orientation in the sense that the design accommodates multiple realities, whereby the perspectives of the different actors, as well as their varied meanings and realities, are depicted. In line with the deductive-explorative positioning, this case study benefits from the existing theoretical proposition’s capacity to guide the selection of subjects/topic areas for gathering relevant data.

Therefore, a single-embedded case study with a critical design is selected for this study (Yin, 2014). Nigeria’s PR field is the single case/context of interest comprising three units of analysis that include (1) corporate organizations, (2) professional association - NIPR, and (3) PR educators. Information about the relevant areas of inquiry of this study will be collected from these actors. The critical design is selected for understanding existing perceptions as well as an alternative set of explanations on the topic that could confirm, challenge or extend existing knowledge (Yin, 2014). Therefore, findings from collected data and the following analysis are expected to provide empirical data for extending an institutional approach to PR’s professional legitimacy in Nigeria’s country-specific context.

Figure 4.2: Single embedded Case Study design
4.1.1 Research method

Methods identify the means or mode of data collection and analysis respectively for research work (Howell, 2013). They influence the way in which the researcher collects data in which specific methods imply particular epistemological orientations, assumptions, and research practices, which could be quantitative and qualitative (Myers, 1997). Qualitative methods are used to gather in-depth information about the nature of a thing, phenomenon, and particular act or how and why things happen in a particular way through inquiries from people through interviews, focus groups, and observations etc. with a small sample of respondents. Data in this regard is usually in words that could be analyzed for unearthing respondents underlying meanings and gaining an in-depth understanding of what is being investigated. On the other hand, the quantitative method is used for collecting data for explaining a phenomenon based on numerical data from a large sample group that is gathered through surveys and analyzed with mathematical and/or statistical methods (Yin, 2014).

Since this study attempts to understand the subjective meanings embedded in the actors’ perspectives based on self-descriptions of their reality and perspectives, qualitative methods are suitable. Therefore, primary data in the form of words is collected through semi-structured interviews, which is guided by Kvale’s seven stages of interviews. This is then corroborated with archival studies that are analyzed together. Although this study works with qualitative data in the form of interviews, this does not suggest that quantitative data is inapplicable for case studies or for this study in particular. However, it is not considered here because it is of little to no relevance or value because the research purpose could be achieved without it. In fact, surveys of a large sample size of educators and/or top managements can be conducted for identifying patterns and key subject areas that can be further investigated through in-depth interviews with a smaller sample. However, the deductive-explorative nature of this research process means that existing theories, concepts, prevailing approaches in professional projects, and conceptions of the legitimacy of PR are used to determine relevant topic areas to be further explored. Therefore, quantitative methods are discarded in this study.

4.1.1.1 Using Kvale’s seven stages for interview investigation

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 3), semi-structured interviews are carried out “with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee in order to
interpret the meaning of the described phenomena”. Interviews seek to obtain qualitative knowledge as it is expressed in the respondents’ words and descriptions (Kvale, 1996). Kvale’s conception of interviews supports the SC orientation in the sense that the focus is on rich descriptions that reveal the meanings that respondents have created to fit their realities based on interactions with one another. More so, the focus is on three actors, which imply the existence of multiple realities that emanate from interactions within the respective interviewees’ communities, which SC equally acknowledges. Consequently, interviews permit this study to gather data about coexisting and potentially contradicting realities, perceptions, expectations, and the decisions of the actors for obtaining or adjudging the professional legitimacy of PR in Nigeria respectively.

For this purpose, Kvale’s (1996, p. 88) seven stages of interview investigation is applied. This includes the pre-interview, interview and post-interview stages, which provide a systematic guide that covers every aspect of the interview process (see Figure 4.3 below). Although these stages are described in this chapter, only stages 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are attended to here while stages 5 and 7 are covered in chapter 5.

Figure 4.3: Seven Stages of Interview Investigation
Stage 1: Thematizing

Interviews in this study are used to obtain the comprehensive accounts and central themes of the actors’ perception of PR’s professional legitimacy which is reflected in their PR related decisions and activities in Nigeria. The interviews have been designed to inquire about the actors’ subjective meanings developed from their everyday interactions and taken for granted objective facticities, i.e. institutional logics which have significance for their practices. In addition, the study seeks to unpack the complex and dynamic nature of their constellation of logics based on the comparison of their respective responses and activities.

Stage 2: Designing

Interviews permit the collection of rich empirical data about people’s social world (Holstein & Gubrium, 2006:140). Through inquiries about their subjective views and experiences (Daymon & Holloway, 2002) these set of interviews gathers the nuanced accounts of the various aspects of experienced meanings of the actors’ everyday world using their own words (see Kvale, 2007). Such accounts reflect their perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria. In line with the social constructionist epistemological orientation, Holstein and Gubrium’s (1995) active interview is employed. In essence, the interviews are treated as social encounters for obtaining meanings residing within respondents through a joint active meaning-making process by both researcher and respondent during interview exchanges (e.g. Silverman, 2001). In doing so, the interviews do not seek consensus with respondents but questions are asked back and forth to clarify the specifics of their reality and perspectives.

Consequently, semi-structured interviews are employed for collecting relevant data from the rich descriptions of the actors’ perceptions, opinions and experiences related to PR. The study also seeks to understand disconnects which lead to contradictions between corporate managers and professional associations. Therefore, major parts of the interview guides comprise similar areas of inquiry for comparing responses towards identifying these tendencies. The topic areas seek to gain insights into the underlying perspectives informing the PR related decisions and activities of top management, PR professional associations and PR educators which impacts or suggests a particular perception of PR’s legitimacy in the workplace. Therefore, interview guides have been designed for each respondent groups of respective actors (see Appendices 1, 2, 3). Although findings here attend to Research
Question (RQ) 1, they equally provide the basis for understanding ways in which the perspectives contradict one another in RQ2, thereby informing theory building for PR’s professional project in RQ3.

Table 4.1: Topic areas, Actors and Theoretical Support (as depicted in the next two page)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Areas and Theoretical sources</th>
<th>Actors concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic information is used to gain insights into the actors’ educational background, current position and tenure as well as their PR experience respectively. Insights from this topic area are discussed in relation to their overall responses for the entire interview.</td>
<td>MGT NIPR EDU</td>
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<tr>
<td>The focus here is on Actor’s with powers to make PR related decisions based on their knowledge and/or experience of PR, or lack of it thereof (e.g. Amujo &amp; Melewar, 2011; Broom &amp; Dozier, 1985; Broom &amp; Dozier, 1990; DeSanto &amp; Moss, 2005)</td>
<td>MGT NIPR EDU</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR understanding, Structure and Practices focuses on the actors’ description of PR, how they compare or differentiate it from other communication functions such as advertising, marketing and journalism, who they consider as a qualified or an ideal PR person, reasons for engaging in PR activities and the overall image of PR in Nigeria. Additionally, management respondents are asked about industry and organization-specific trends in PR practices and how this impacts their PR related decisions. The NIPR and PR educators are asked about PR’s value to organizations as well as their evaluation of Nigerian organizations’ predominant PR activities. These are investigated for understanding their perspectives of the value of PR and how organizations deploy PR from a practice and theoretical evaluative lens respectively.</td>
<td>MGT NIPR EDU</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR practices aim to gain insights into an organization’s typical PR activities as well as decisions that affect the implementation of PR initiatives. Inquiries here include how often organizations engage in PR activities and for what purpose, which is meant to highlight the manifestation of their understanding of PR on their activities.</td>
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<td>PR structure looks into how organizations have structured PR with an emphasis on who coordinates PR activities, where PR and the practitioner are situated which could be a PR department, or within marketing and/or corporate communication department or others structures as the case may be. Practitioner role, hierarchy, tasks composition, decision-making capacity who he/she reports to, as well as importance placed on practitioner specialization and industry knowledge in the workplace, are equally investigated. While organizations are asked about their actual practices, the NIPR and educators are asked a similar question but with a slight modification to obtain their opinion about the ideal PR practices and structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>These lines of questioning focus on workplace reality and the perception of PR based on the actor’s perspective, experience and expectations of PR and the workplace respectively, which can be understood from practitioner role, dominant coalition membership, and participation in decision making which are indicators of the actors perception of the highlighted aspects of PR’s professional legitimacy (e.g. Broom &amp; Dozier, 1985; Grunig &amp; White, 1991; DeSanto &amp; Moss, 2005; Moss, Newman, &amp; DeSanto, 2005; Grunig J. E., 1992a; Grunig &amp; Huang, 2000) (Grunig &amp; Hunt, 1984; Ledingham &amp; Bruning, 2000; Serini, 1993; Berger, 2005; Bowen 2009)</td>
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<td>Professional status seeks to understand the actors’ description of a profession, perceived determinants of who should be considered a professional, and their perception of the professional status/legitimacy of PR in Nigeria.</td>
<td>MGT NIPR EDU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived determinants highlights implemented or the perceived appropriate approach for evaluating professional projects which reflects the actors’ perception of professional legitimacy for PR, which could be any or a combination of the traits, power and institutional approach (e.g Greenwood, 1957; Grunig &amp; Hunt, 1984; Cutlip, Center, &amp; Broom, 1994; Hoffmann &amp; Hamidati, 2016; Freidison, 1970, 2001; Larson, 1977; Abbott, 1988; Suddaby, Viale, &amp; Gendron, 2016; Muzio, Brock, &amp; Suddaby, 2013)</td>
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<td>Relations with in-house PR person focuses on how and why managements grant practitioners a particular level of autonomy in the workplace. The emphasis here is on the extent to which management gives directives to practitioners about their work, the extent to which the practitioner can decide on PR strategies or counsel management without managements’ restrictions, the extent to which the practitioner should or is permitted to contribute to decision making. These are reflected through practitioners’ role, hierarchy, and capacity to act without scrutiny or restriction from superiors.</td>
<td>MGT NIPR EDU</td>
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<tr>
<td>These are covered in the literature on workplace reality: constellation of logics guiding in-house practitioners’ conduct in the workplace, role typology, manager role enactment, dominant coalition membership, participation in decision making. While these together make up the indicators of the practitioners’ workplace reality, they are investigated from the management (actual) and the profession’s and the educators’ (ideal) perspectives respectively. (Abbott, 1988; Goodrick &amp; Reay, 2011; Thornton &amp; Ocasio, 1999; Broom &amp; Dozier, 1985; DeSanto &amp; Moss, 2005; Moss, Newman, &amp; DeSanto, 2005; Oppenheimer, 1972; Wallace, 1995; Leicht &amp; Fennell, 1997; Pfeffer &amp; Salancik, 2003)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR education and certification aim at gaining insights into the NIPR and PR educators’ perspectives on the available PR education programs in Nigeria and certification in Nigeria. For PR educators interview question focus on the PR education they offer, the implication of having PR as a subset of another programme, the educators’ extent of control over the content of their PR program and how their program compares with that of the NIPR or other universities. Their thoughts on practitioner specialization, enrolment into PR program, trends in PR practices that could be incorporated into their PR programs and aspects of the program that they would like to improve as equally investigated. For the NIPR respondents, PR certification aims to gain insights into the body’s goals for developing their certification programs and the specific competences they wish to help members develop through the program. NIPR’s view of the implication of PR education being offered as a subset of other subject areas is also investigated. There are also questions about the regulation of NIPR’s certification program and PR education programs in the Nigerian educational institutions.</td>
<td>NIPR EDU</td>
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</table>

This line of questioning is necessitated by issues pertaining to practitioner incompetence, which has direct implications.
Table 4.2: Topic areas for coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>The NIPR</th>
<th>PR Educators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic - Personal characteristics</td>
<td>Demographic - Personal characteristics</td>
<td>Demographic - Personal characteristics</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Experience with PR</td>
<td>Position at university</td>
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<tr>
<th>PR understanding, structure and practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Description of PR</td>
<td>Description of PR</td>
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<td>Perception of PR’s image</td>
<td>Perception of PR’s image</td>
<td>Perception of PR’s image</td>
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<td>Preferred practitioner qualifications</td>
<td>Ideal practitioner qualifications</td>
<td>Ideal practitioner qualifications</td>
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<td>PR practitioner role</td>
<td>Ideal PR practitioner role</td>
<td>Ideal PR practitioner role</td>
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<td>Practitioner specialization</td>
<td>Practitioner specialization</td>
<td>Practitioner specialization</td>
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<td>Internal structure of PR in organizations</td>
<td>Internal structure of PR in organizations</td>
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<td>Tasks composition</td>
<td>Tasks composition</td>
<td>Tasks composition</td>
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<td>Typical PR practices</td>
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<th>Professional Status assessment</th>
<th>The NIPR’s Professional Project</th>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived professional status</td>
<td>Perceived professional status assessment</td>
<td>PR’s professional status evaluation</td>
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<td>Perceived determinants of professional status</td>
<td>Perceived determinants of professional status</td>
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<td>Constraints for professional legitimacy of PR</td>
<td>Constraints for professional status</td>
<td>Professional autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion on PR programs structures</td>
<td>Structure of available PR education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control over PR curriculum</td>
<td>Opinion on PR programs structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control over PR program curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NIPR membership and code of conduct</th>
<th>NIPR membership and code of conduct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with code of conduct</td>
<td>Compliance with the NIPR code of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement of code of conduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactions with the NIPR</th>
<th>Interactions with the NIPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of the NIPR</td>
<td>Purpose and type of interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with the NIPR</td>
<td>Expectations of NIPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management’s expectations for the NIPR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sampling
The composition of the interview respondents is based on a set of criteria (See Table 4.3). These could be summed up as their relevance to the study, capacity to contribute rich data
and willingness to participate in the interviews. For this purpose, a combination of heterogeneous, snowball and convenience sampling strategies are applied. The heterogeneous or maximum variation sample (Kuzel, 1992; Patton, 1990) of respondents is used because it permits the collection of data about the widely differentiated experiences of the disparate actors concerning their perception of PR’s professional legitimacy. In doing so, data could be collected from a corporate, professional association and educators’ perspectives respectively.

Table 4.3: Criteria for selecting Interview respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top management</th>
<th>Professional Association – the NIPR</th>
<th>PR Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) occupying a senior management position and possessing decision-making powers for determining</td>
<td>(1) holding an executive position</td>
<td>(1) PR lecturer and/or researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) if the organizations require a PR person</td>
<td>(2) knowledgeable about PR’s history, theory, trends and practices in Nigeria</td>
<td>(2) PR university degree or the NIPR professional certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) preferred candidate and assigned role</td>
<td>(3) knowledgeable about and can influence PR education and training, code of conduct, membership, and</td>
<td>(3) holds a senior position within the mass communications department or other department offering PR education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) in-house practitioners’ capacity to participate in decision making, and</td>
<td>(4) knowledgeable about PR’s professional project</td>
<td>(4) knowledgeable about developments in PR education programs and the NIPR, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) ultimately judge whether PR is a legitimate profession.</td>
<td>(5) concerned and responsible for PR’s professional legitimacy.</td>
<td>(5) concerned and responsible for PR’s professional legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To recruit respondents, a formal invitation describing the purpose of the study and request for participation in interviews were sent to potential respondents through emails, LinkedIn messages, letters, and cold calls. While many agreed, the rest were obtained through snowball and convenience sampling respectively. Snowball sampling entails a chain of referrals from one informant to acquire other informants (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). This was employed to get the last educator and some management respondents and a third NIPR respondent. As the number of respondents was deemed insufficient by the researcher after exhausting the snowballed respondents, a convenience sample of accessible, available and willing respondents was embraced (Bryman, 2012). This was necessary as time was running out and preferred management respondents were inaccessible, busy or uninterested in participating in the interviews.

15 Cold calling is common presales technique for customer acquisition by sales agents for convincing and soliciting business and/or product purchase from potential customers who have had no prior contact with the salesperson conducting the call. It was used in this study for contacting qualified potential respondents for informing them about the interviews and soliciting their participation.
Nevertheless, rich data was still collected from interviewed respondents, which allowed a sufficient range of responses to be gathered from corporate executives from different industries, different organization sizes, and with/without PR knowledge or experience. Excerpts of correspondence between the researcher and potential respondents for soliciting participation are in the appendices (See Appendices 4,5,6,7). Although anonymity was not discussed with the respondents, it is maintained for every respondent. The researcher feels responsible for protecting the identity of each respondent against any form of backlash that may arise from their remarks. Therefore, abbreviations and numbers are applied for depicting all participants throughout the report (e.g. NIPR1, MGT2, and EDU1).

Figure 4.4: List of respondents, mode of recruitment and Snowball connections

![Diagram showing the list of respondents, mode of recruitment and Snowball connections]

HU: Host University
CC: Cold Call
PN: Personal Network + Phone calls
EC: Email Correspondence
LW: Letter Writing
LI: LinkedIn
SS: Snowball Sampling
Stage 3: Interviewing
The interviewer led the respondents towards relevant themes that the study seeks to understand. Nevertheless, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed openness and flexibility for interviewees to freely discuss the questions and add new knowledge to the conversations. In the end, a total of 26 interviews were conducted between December 2016 and January 2017 across Nigeria. Participants included: (1) 8 Management members from various business sectors (2) 3 NIPR executives (2 Present, 1 Retired) and (3) 9 PR educators and 1 PR researcher. One educator that initially agreed to be interviewed canceled his participation for personal reasons. Data collection from educators was concluded after data saturation was noticed. In order to access some CEOs and based on their request, four corporate communication managers and a PR consultant were interviewed. However, their responses are not used in this study but may have been used to corroborate management’s responses where necessary. Collected data is analyzed and presented in the next chapter.

**Dataset**

Table 4.4: Primary data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor/Units of Analysis</th>
<th>MGT - Management</th>
<th>NIPR</th>
<th>EDU – PR Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution/Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insurance (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Private Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finance IT (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institute of higher learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Real Estate (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCMG (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banking (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Securities Trading (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>CEO(s) (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Mass Communications Dept. (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Director (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dean School of Communications (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Vice President (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PR Researcher (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head Partner (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PR lecturer (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing Director (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PR Senior lecturer (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Executive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Executive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Former executive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and Average duration of Interviews</td>
<td>8 Interviews 37 minutes</td>
<td>3 Interviews 75 minutes</td>
<td>10 Interviews 65.5 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: A pilot study was conducted with a total of six respondents that comprises PR educators, researchers, and practitioners in early 2015

In addition, secondary data was collected through archive studies from existing reports, publications, and information available on respondents’ websites. Atkinson and Silverman (1997) warn against the uncritical use of interviews that are perceived to offer undiluted insights about informants’ practices that could lead to inaccurate and misleading conclusions.
More so, interviews cannot attend to inconsistencies between what respondents say and their actual practices. This study follows the scholars’ recommendation by validating supplied data with the accounts of other respondents in similar situations as well as comparing such accounts with other data sources that could enhance the authenticity of collected data.

The secondary data provides specific details that can be used to corroborate evidence from other sources. This relates to the history of PR, membership requirements, activities and events for increasing NIPR membership, supporting evidence for their perception of professional legitimacy and their code of conduct. In essence, corroboration was mostly about verifying the NIPR’s accounts of their ongoing activities, events, training and efforts to raise the standard of PR in Nigeria, which other actors were largely unaware of. For instance, accusations of lack of initiatives or inactivity leveled against the NIPR are verified from the list of past, upcoming and ongoing events from their homepage and their Facebook postings. Contradictions discovered in the process opened the study up for other lines of inquiry and discussion about communications between the actors, which further enriches the research.

Table 4.5: Secondary Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data item</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- List of universities running PR Programs in Nigeria</td>
<td>Online Journal Article by Otubanjo, Amujo, &amp; Melewar, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Membership requirements</td>
<td>NIPR homepage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional Certificate in Public Relations</td>
<td>NIPR Facebook page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional Diploma in Public Relations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- NIPR Master Class, NIPR Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (MCPD) programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nigerian Institute of Public Relations Practitioners’ Decree No. 16. 1990 by the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, 26th June 1990,</td>
<td>NIPR HQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- NIPR Code of professional Conduct Bye-Law, No.1 of 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Creation and Administration of NIPR chapters Bye-Law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- PR Nigeria, Publication of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (2016), Volume 1, no. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- NIPR Professional Standards Guide</td>
<td>NIPR’s HQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 30 Years of Public Relations in Nigeria, 30th Anniversary publication</td>
<td>Adekunle Salu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, the researcher recognizes the tendency for bias in the data analysis, which may result into a spurious interpretation of the findings. More specifically, researcher’s role as a PR researcher and educator may cause him to take the side of educators and assign blame to the NIPR, or top management for the lack of PR’s professional legitimacy in Nigeria.
Similarly, the researcher’s closeness to NIPR executives due to their cooperation for data collection, helping to access interview respondents and overall kind gestures could also be a source of bias for the researcher. To avoid the tendency for bias, secondary data in the form of document studies was conducted to help corroborate collected interview data, while the researcher remained professional and as objective as possible when analyzing data. In this way, the researcher is able to ensure the reliability and validity of the qualitative analysis.

Stage 4: Transcribe

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim from oral responses into text, with the exception of one that was partly responded to in writing through LinkedIn messages. The transcription is basic as only the respondents’ words were transcribed while leaving out their voice tones, pauses, filler words, and gestures. The transcripts were then transferred to the computer-assisted data analysis software for qualitative data, i.e. “Nvivo”, for extensive analysis where patterns and themes are noted based on relevant conceptual groupings developed from interviewee responses.

4.2 Analysis method

Data analysis comprises an examination, categorization, or recombining collected data towards producing empirical findings (Yin, 2014). These activities are carried out to reveal the socially constructed perceptions of legitimacy from the respective actors’ perspective. Analysis in this study is carried out based on Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic analysis for systematically deriving themes and enumerating their networks within the collected data. Thematic analysis is consistent with SC as it facilitates the systematic extraction of relevant themes about the actors’ underlying socially constructed realities and abstract principles from their qualitative accounts. These will be summarized for compiling their core perceptions and institutional logics about the legitimacy of PR within Nigeria’s country-specific context.

Stage 5: Analyzing: Thematic Analysis

Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic analysis tool provides a practical and effective procedure for organizing, conducting, and presenting findings from qualitative analysis. Through a six-steps analysis process, the tool ensures the full disclosure of the steps included in this phase of the study (see Figure 4.5). Her step-by-step guide is used to identify relevant themes emerging from the actors’ perspectives. These are then used to present the thematic networks in web-like illustrations depicting the interconnections between three levels of the themes.
Step 1 - Coding collected data with Nvivo

Nvivo is the computer-assisted data analysis software for qualitative data that has been used for coding the collected data in this study. Nvivo increases the rigor of the data as it assists in coding the data for multiple types of analyses, which ensures a deeper understanding of the actors’ perspectives is carried out (e.g. Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, 2011). A code represents all material about a theme, idea or topic while coding helps to see the relationships between nodes that are containers of information from which categories and themes are generated. These could be in the form of parent nodes that are used to address research questions or child nodes which is a subcategory of the parent node. To better understand coding, and the usage of Nvivo in this analysis, this section begins with a brief introduction into using Nvivo, related concepts for the process and the coding strategy for this study.

Figure 4.5: Six Steps for Thematic Analysis

Adapted from Attride-Stirling (2001)

Step 1 | Coding collected data with Nvivo
Step 2 | Extracting themes from the coded text segments and refining them to access ideas within informants’ responses
Step 3 | Arrange texts into similar coherent groupings that would form the thematic networks for which basic themes would be selected and rearranged into organizing themes before the global themes are derived
Step 4 | Thematic networks are described and explored for bringing the various perspectives and the interpretations together for a deeper level of analysis
Step 5 | The principal themes emerging from the descriptions are summarized along with patterns characterizing them
Step 6 | Patterns are interpreted based on summaries of all networks, themes, structures and patterns identified in the data against the research questions and theoretical focus of the study.

which reveal their overt structures and underlying patterns. A thematic network systematizes the extraction of the basic, organizing and global themes respectively that are present within the text. The Basic Theme is the lowest-order theme that can be derived from data which says very little beyond its immediate meaning but must be read in the context of other basic themes, which together represent an organizing theme. The Organizing Theme is a middle-order theme which summarizes the key ideas and/or assumptions found in a group of Basic themes about an issue. They reveal their meaning and significance in relation to other organizing themes in the data as a whole. Global Themes are super-ordinate themes that are constituted by a group of organizing themes that together present an argument about an issue or social reality based on the data as a whole, which could be more than one, but fewer than the basic and organizing themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001).
Using NVIVO

According to Siccama & Penna (2008), Nvivo software can help to add more rigors to the process of analyzing research data while also ensuring that the process is well documented, which adds to its validity. Nevertheless, the analysis in this study is a combination of manual and computer-assisted methods. Nvivo covers the computer-assisted aspect as it provides various strategies for analyzing collected data. One that is employed here is interrogate interpretations, which is a term from the NVIVO literature. This helps the study to employ coding strategies that permits a thorough and systematic inquiry into the data with which categories are developed from the data.

Nodes, case Nodes and attributes

Nodes are simply case files where the interview participants’ data is situated in an organized manner. They contain themes within data sources and their coded references. Case nodes are used to organize the coding of cases, where all the data from one case is kept (Siccama & Penna, 2008: 93). For this study, four case nodes were assigned for each respondent group of actors but only three of them are applied in this analysis (PR Educators (EDU), NIPR, and Management (MGT). In addition, attributes in the form of demographic information of interview participants are assigned to respective case nodes. This data is used to compare and contrast the contents of cases based on the overall responses to demographics inquiries (Siccama & Penna, 2008: 94). Demographic questions, in this case, are mainly about participants’ academic background, current position and tenure, and experience with PR.

In the process of coding the data, nodes containing themes within data sources carry the relevant coding references. Such nodes can be free when they are independent and have no clear logical connection with other nodes. Tree nodes, on the other hand, are in a hierarchical structure that includes a general category i.e. parent node and more specific categories which are child nodes (or sub-themes) (QSR International, 2008). According to Gibbs (2002), the hierarchical structure permits organized coding and analysis, while also displaying the sub-themes and underlying concepts within nodes. A combination of free nodes is employed for each actor group, as well as tree nodes that are used within the nodes. It is important to note here that despite the fact that Nvivo facilitates the analysis process to a certain extent, actual analysis is done by the researcher. Therefore, the researcher probes collected data towards understanding the perceptions, and the contradictions between perceptions and their impacts on the legitimacy of the PR profession in Nigeria.
Interrogation through coding

Miles and Huberman (1994) developed case-oriented and variable oriented strategies respectively for interrogation through coding. While the former involves an in-depth analysis of one case at a time, the latter explores themes across all cases. The case-oriented strategy was applied for answering RQ1 regarding the respective actors’ understanding of their perspectives, expectations, and actual practices. Individual respondent groups’ transcripts were read for identifying relevant information to code (open coding), while participants’ accounts and actions are categorized into broad themes (broad-brush coding) (Siccama & Penna, 2008). The case-oriented strategy ensured a deep understanding of all the respondents’ perspectives and the underlying factors influencing them. Basic themes are identified for all transcripts based on the subject/topic areas contained in the interview guides as well as those found to be relevant while reading the transcripts. In Step 2, themes are extracted from the coded text segments and are refined to access the set of ideas within the informants’ responses (see screen grab from Nvivo in Appendix 8).

The remainder of the steps is covered in the next chapter. They include Step 3) arranging texts into similar coherent groupings that become the thematic networks from which basic themes will be selected and rearranged into organizing themes before the global themes are derived and Step 4) describing and exploring thematic networks which brings the various perspectives and the interpretations together for a deeper level of analysis. In Step 5, the principal themes emerging from the descriptions are summarized along with patterns characterizing them. In Step 6, the patterns will be interpreted based on the summaries of all networks, themes, structures, and patterns identified in the data against the research questions and theoretical focus of the study.

First-timer experience with Nvivo

The strength of Nvivo is in its high compatibility with a wide range of qualitative research designs and data analysis methods, including case studies and thematic analysis (e.g. Somé, Sombie & Meda 2014). In this case, the tool works very well for organizing qualitative data and systematically deriving the underlying themes from the respondents’ socially constructed realities and perspectives. Without Nvivo, the researcher would have had to manually go through the transcripts to develop the codes and analyze the data. However, Nvivo facilitates efficient coding which makes data retrieval possible with less effort since all primary data is stored in one place. More so, the tools allow for an iterative process of going back and forth
for reorganizing, restructuring or renaming identified codes and/or nodes structure as deemed fit during the analysis. The researcher had to rearrange or rename child and parent nodes from time to time when necessary during the analysis. This may be harder or impossible with manual analysis.

Nevertheless, new users may be unable to take full advantage of its rigorous and numerous analysis and data retrieval possibilities respectively. As a first time user, the researcher finds Nvivo to be rather difficult to use without prior knowledge or routine usage. The tool requires mastery of it’s numerous yet varied analysis and data extraction possibilities. Despite the researcher’s advanced computer usage skills and learning how to use the software through the available detailed tutorials, this is a time-consuming exercise and remains insufficient for advanced usage of the tool in such a short time frame. Besides, archival data, in this case, is either online or in print, therefore causing the researcher to move in-between a primary and secondary data set when corroborating evidence for developing the themes. In the end, Nvivo remains a useful tool in this study to the extent that it helps in organizing the data, which enhances the transparency/validity of the analysis process.

Stage 6: Verifying
Case studies have been criticized for over-relying on informants’ perceptions that may differ from what informants actually do. This tends to lead researchers to inaccurate conclusions. Case studies are also criticized for merely confirming researchers preconceived notions or bias. In contrast, Flyvbjerg (2006) contends that a case study allows researchers to closely investigate real-life situations and gather rich data about the practical reality of the phenomena from those involved or affected. The tendency for researcher bias is recognized due to his closeness to the professional body and educators in this study. However, this is mitigated by researcher objectivity through construct validity in which multiple sources of evidence from the primary and secondary data and similar respondents demonstrate a convergent line of inquiry. Additionally, a chain of evidence is established during data collection and presentation for supporting utilized evidence in the analysis (Yin, 2014).

Since this study is based on the country-specific context of Nigeria, findings from this single case may not be generalizable. Again, Flyvbjerg (2006) states that context-dependent knowledge provided by a case study provides valuable knowledge about real-life situations as
universal theories for studying human affairs are lacking. Therefore, this study clearly identifies Nigeria’s PR environment and corporate workplaces as the domain where these study findings can be generalized (see Yin, 2014). This concerns analytical generalization, whereby case study findings are expected to advance knowledge. More specifically, the study makes empirical contributions to research on adopted approaches in PR’s professional projects that are capable of obtaining legitimacy for PR in country-specific contexts.

Issues of reliability in the procedure employed for carrying out the research is also another critique of case studies. However, proper documentation of the research procedure is included using tables that present every aspect of the data collection process. In addition, Kvale’s (2007) seven stages for conducting interviews have been used to stipulate how the interviews have been conducted, allowing another person to repeat the procedure and arrive at the same result. While these limitations are valid, the researcher is convinced that appropriate measures have been taken to resolve them and mitigate their impact on the validity of the study. Moreover, the applied analysis approach sufficiently unpacks the complexities in this study so that a better understanding of legitimacy in Nigeria’s PR environment is achieved. Stage seven is Reporting where the findings from the study are presented. This takes place in the next chapter (Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis).

4.4 Summary
In the quest for this study to understand the institutional actors’ perception of the legitimacy of PR, SC is used for exploring the institutional actors’ socially constructed realities. The choice of SC is necessitated by the study’s focus on unearthing the underlying realities informing the actors’ decisions, activities and overall perceptions of the legitimacy of PR as a profession.

Perceptions that could be understood through the descriptions of respondents about their social world in their own words. Therefore, a single case study with the embedded and critical design has been chosen. Nigeria is the context of the study, while the legitimacy of the PR profession is the phenomenon that is to be understood. Top management, the professional association (NIPR) and PR Educators make-up the three units of analysis.
Legitimacy from these perspectives is necessitated because their perceptions, expectations and actions ultimately determine how legitimacy is pursued and whether it is pronounced within Nigeria. Consequently, primary data is collected through semi-structured interviews with respective actors for gathering rich empirical data about their subjective opinions, experiences, and similar or contradicting perspectives. Secondary data is also collected through archival studies for corroborating the primary data. These allow the study to gain insights into the elements that influence the actor's decisions, activities and overall perception of the legitimacy of PR as a profession in Nigeria.

Collected interview data is transcribed verbatim from oral responses into text, to gain an overview of the responses. A thematic analysis of the data is then carried out using the computer-assisted data analysis software for qualitative data, i.e. “Nvivo”. This tool is used for organizing and deriving themes emerging from the actors’ accounts towards capturing the underlying meanings and perceptions of their realities. Thematic networks have been generated from the derived themes; these are presented for further analysis in the next chapter.
Chapter 5- Findings from the thematic analysis of the underlying perspectives affecting the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria

The three perceptions of PR in Nigeria will be analyzed in terms of both perceptions and legitimacy. Interview data is demonstrated in terms of themes. These themes are then mapped to the research questions. This analysis works towards building an understanding of the legitimacy of PR from the community perspectives of the actors. Their perceptions are important because each institutional actor is understood to belong to a community with a specific socially constructed reality that informs their respective underlying perceptions of the legitimacy of PR. These are treated separately because the section is organized by research sub-questions. Their perceptions of legitimacy are important because these contribute to and guide individual actors' behavior and/or expectations.

To understand the legitimacy of PR as perceived by the actors, a thematic analysis is done to detect salient themes within the full transcripts of the interviews that have been conducted with the actors. The thematic analysis is carried out for arranging and depicting the themes about the main areas of inquiry in the interview guides with which rich data was gathered from the interviewees. Derived basic, organizing, and global themes (see page 13 in the methodology chapter for the definition of the themes) are mapped out to depict their interconnectedness and potential implications for respective actors’ communities and their underlying perspectives on the legitimacy of PR Nigeria. Therefore, this chapter is divided in accordance with the cluster of sub-questions from RQ1 which includes: Section 5.1: How is PR perceived by Nigerian corporate managers, Section 5.2: How is PR perceived by Nigeria's Professional PR organization, NIPR, and finally Section 5.3: How is PR perceived in PR educational programs in Nigeria?: A figure of the thematic network for each actor’s community and tables presenting the derived themes, the interviewees and examples of their accounts of their social reality are included for every theme.

5.1 Prominent themes of Nigerian corporate managers’ perception of PR
Prominent themes of Nigerian corporate management perceptions of PR emerged from interviews, resulting in the thematic network Top management’s perspective found in figure 5.1. This thematic network addresses RQ1a: How is PR perceived by Nigerian corporate managers? A range of basic themes coordinated through five organizing themes constituting
an understanding of top management’s perceptions of the legitimacy of PR has been derived from the transcribed and coded data. Management members’ elaborations, descriptions, and concrete accounts illustrate their personal characteristics and highlight how and why they say they act in a particular manner based on their PR understanding, specific experiences, and expectations. This information fosters an understanding and explanation of their perspectives through stories of PR related decisions. The following interview data is organized based on the following organizing themes and basic themes:

1) **Demographics**: personal characteristics of top management based on their role, educational background, and experience with PR.

2) **PR understanding structure and practices**: description of PR, the perception of PR as a practice and profession, assigned practitioner role, preferred practitioner qualifications, practitioner specialization, internal structures of PR in organizations and their typical PR practices.

3) **PR’s professional status assessment**: perceived professional status of PR and the determinants of PR’s professional status and legitimacy

4) **Relations with in-house PR person**: the expectation of in-house practitioners, perceived practitioners’ contribution to decision making and autonomy

5) **Interactions with NIPR**: perception of the NIPR, interactions with the NIPR, and the purpose of such interactions based on management’s expectations of professional associations.

5.1.1 Organizing theme: Demographics - personal characteristics of top management

The organizing theme *demographics* refer to the personal characteristics of top management. The theme looks into their role in organizations, PR educational background and experience with PR respectively. Insights about their characteristics are discussed in relation to their overall PR understanding and decisions because their understanding informs every aspect of their organizing themes. Therefore, their understandings’ influence on how they structure PR in their organizations, the value they place on PR, why they engage in a particular range of PR activities, relations with in-house practitioners, assessment of PR’s professional status and considerations for interacting with the NIPR are presented respectively. While these sets of themes are covered in subsequent organizing and basic themes respectively, management’s PR understanding from their academic background and experience, or lack of this is covered here.
5.1.1.1 Basic theme: Educational background and experience

Educational background pertains to the academic background of top management interviewees that occupy executive and powerful roles in a decision-making capacity. However, based on their educational background and/or experiences with PR, or lack of it, three categories of management types are identified. These management categories possess varying underlying perceptions of PR and its professional legitimacy. PR education includes formal PR education (e.g. a module under an MBA program, advanced PR course), while PR experience comes from management experience with employing an in-house practitioner to
head PR tasks (higher-order manager role) or enlisting the services of a PR consultants alone or in combination with an in-house practitioner (technician role).

The first category of management includes the Non-PR Educated-Non-Experienced (NPNE) ones. These are management with neither PR education nor PR experience. Secondly, there is the Non-PR Educated-Experienced (NPEE) i.e. management without PR education but works with a PR consultant alone or in combination with an in-house PR practitioner. Thirdly, there is the PR Educated-Experienced (PREE) top management who in addition to their own PR education employ an in-house practitioner or works with a PR consultant, who functions at the higher-order/reflective strategist managerial role capacity respectively. These categories are demonstrated by their position, background and representative quotes in table 5.1 below. The table demonstrates the different categories of interviewees, showing their positions, education lines and examples of ways in which people in each category describe their experience with PR. Notice how the accounts of their experience with PR change in relation to their PR academic background. Those with PR experience and education focus on theory and strategy, while those with experience focus on strategy and contributions to reputation and bottom-line performance. In contrast, those with no experience and no PR academic background focus on either their inherent industry-context limitation which may be unrelated to PR, or their assumption of PR as a sales and marketing management.

Table 5.1 Top Management’s personal characteristics presented as organizing theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positions of interviewees</td>
<td>Managing Director, Co-founder and Director</td>
<td>Senior V.P., CEO, Executive Director</td>
<td>Head Partner, Estate Surveyor, CEO: CEO:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education lines of interviewees</td>
<td>Finance, Pharmacy</td>
<td>Banking and Finance, Management &amp; IT, Physics &amp; MBA</td>
<td>MBA-PR module Insurance, Journalism, MBA-PR Strategic Public Management-Advanced masters in PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees’ experience with PR</td>
<td>NPNE MGT4 … experience with PR is limited… we have some restrictions…our business is regulated, so we can’t go out there and do what other companies do in terms of marketing and PR.</td>
<td>NPEE MGT8 … it was when I started seeing the result that the consultants know more in this area and the value they can bring to us, that I gradually begin to follow… … if they tell me not to do something I won’t do it.</td>
<td>PREE MGT2 … because I understand though theoretically PR as a function I’m able to regard PR as a strategic function that can enhance the value of the organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.2 Organizing theme: PR understanding
The organizing theme “PR understanding” pertains to top managements’ broad understanding of PR which is reflected through basic themes including a description of PR, the perception
of the image of PR, preferred qualifications of the PR practitioner, the internal structure of PR, assigned practitioner role and typical PR practices respectively.

5.1.2.1 Basic theme: Description of PR

Description of PR investigates the top managements’ description of PR as an organizational practice and/or profession in Nigeria. The Table 5.2 below highlights the different interviewee categories descriptions of PR, which demonstrates a misconception and limited understanding of PR, as well as an understanding of PR as a strategic management function. Consequently, the examples in their accounts reflect typical PR practices in which PR activities, on one hand, are misconceived as marketing or event sponsorships and crisis communication alone. On the other hand, strategic relationship management with publics and/or stakeholders (e.g. regulators, employees), public information about product-related concerns, press conferences that enhance a corporation’s bottom-line and image. These understandings correlate with the interviewees’ composition of or lack of PR education and/or experience respectively.

More specifically, NPNE management interviewees list brand awareness, product promotions through traditional and new media, sales driven events such as food festivals, product presentations, and distribution of souvenirs as PR activities. The misconception is further extended by their view of PR as more relevant for political communications and FMCG companies respectively. Nevertheless, crisis management represents the only aspect that all top management agree is a core component of PR. Crisis management is often regarded as the synonym of PR as it is mostly called upon when organizations run into trouble (e.g. Berger, 2005, Bowen, 2009, Amujo & Melewar, 2011).

Top management working with PR consultants view PR as a strategic management function that enhances their image and helps manage crises and obtain third-party endorsement, which is believed to contribute to their bottom-line through one and two way PR initiatives respectively. Therefore, PR for them entails key stakeholders’ engagement initiatives, especially with customers, and the media, and the public. These include media relations and public information activities such as conducting press interviews, publishing news stories and carrying out roundtables for discussing product-related public concerns, with no focus on their products but on issues of public or stakeholder interests. Management with PR
education and experience views PR as a means for developing and nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with key internal and external stakeholders (e.g. Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). For them, PR is deployed for managing the relations with relevant stakeholders, which is coordinated by the PR practitioner.

Table 5.2: Top management description of PR as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Educated-No Experience</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated- Experienced</th>
<th>PREE: PR Educated-Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of the accounts of the description of PR</td>
<td>NPNE-MGT4: those marketing activities that are geared towards engaging the public or potential investors but are not exactly sales activities...PR activities are geared more towards FMCGs, the political class as well...their activities are not direct sales activities, you will not notice their activities, except you, are attuned to what their activities are</td>
<td>NPEE MGT3: the things that need to be done to engage the external publics to have positive impressions of our business which we should ultimately be able to leverage back in business returns</td>
<td>PREE MGT2: PR as the name connotes that is managing relationships with the public,..., how to relate to the members of the public, customers, the legal regulators and other associations that have one or two things to do with the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts of typical PR practices</td>
<td>NPNE MGT6: we always do events such as food festivals, we invite vendors who would have their own stands, we would have ours too and sell lemonade</td>
<td>NPEE MGT3: stories in the newspaper about XBank, such as product lunch, courtesy call of the MD;</td>
<td>PREE MGT7: ... interface with either a customer or regulatory authorities or suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NPNE-MGT4: sponsors of events related to our business</td>
<td>NPEE MGT8: ... we pick a theme related to a product, a big problem in the industry, we invited key players into a room so we spoke about it</td>
<td>PREE MGT2: ... Relating to the staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NPEE MGT5: Crisis management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the various descriptions of PR as a practice, opinions are divided about the image of PR as a practice and a profession in Nigeria across the top management categories. Interviewees’ accounts suggest that PR is perceived to lack a consistent image in Nigeria. Their perceptions of PR’s image range from neutral to negative and positive respectively. As demonstrated in Table 5.3, although the level of PR education and experience informs the evaluation of PR’s image to some extent, managements’ perception of elements of PR’s professional project equally informs their evaluation.

The neutral image assessment is based on the lack of PR education and experience respectively, in which interviewee with no knowledge of PR and no experience with either practitioners or engagement in PR activities and therefore had no basis for evaluating the image. Additionally, complimentary outlooks of PR relating to the perceived lack of professionalism and misrepresentation of PR (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011) such as CEO image management as PR, the perceived low entry barrier for journalists to enter into PR practice, and the notion of PR as propaganda peddling in Nigeria all contribute to the
negative perception of PR’s image. The positive outlook for PR’s image is held by management with PR education and experience based on their belief that PR and competent practitioners could contribute to the organizational well-being and bottom line of respectively. These make the PR function and the practitioners highly valued by such management.

Table 5.3 Top Management’s perception of the image of PR in Nigeria as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Educated-No Experience</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated- Experienced</th>
<th>PREE: PR Educated-Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPNE MGT 4</td>
<td>PR activities are geared more towards FMCGs......the political class as well....their activities are not direct sales activities, you will not notice their activities, except you, are attuned to what their activities are......my view of them is neutral. They are never bad neither would I say that they are good.</td>
<td>NPEE MGT5 Image has been bad, PR as propaganda, bribery, crisis management, but the organization (NIPR) had been working hard to revitalize the practice since the time of Yomi Ogunbadejo Okunsanya till date......In some organizations, the PR department promotes the MD maybe as a proxy for promoting the organization... PR also tend to be done only when there is a crisis</td>
<td>PREE MGT7......well image and reputation of PR....A lot of people don’t even understand what PR means even in the work cycle people just believe “media people” just give them the name. It’s so terrible that when people give out handouts, brown envelopes they call it PR......it’s synonymous with corruption. Because that is the first impression the whole world of PR is people who are not comfortable giving bribe so they call it PR......PR means give them some money and get things done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPNE MGT 6</td>
<td>some people are doing a very good job, can back up what they do, can get the message across, do the damage control. I think they are consultants with their agency.</td>
<td>NPEE MGT3 PR in Nigeria, it depends, there are some organizations that leverage it very well, there are some that subsume it with brand, corporate communication, external stakeholder management, but I think the challenge is that the practice can be much more professional.....but as the practice gets more professional......we equate PR with the news in the public......if there is a problem, organizations look for journalists who are in the business news who can help us, that is the way we think so we assume that whoever has been a journalist can help us to manage public communication.</td>
<td>PREE MGT2......the image is quite okay in the country and most organizations that know what they are doing maybe at having relationship with government you know you have PR specialist in oil companies that are usually referred to as maybe director of external relations is the same role that the PR specialist play that you find these people playing so the image of PR as a function, as a career is quite positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREE MGT1</td>
<td>I think they are doing very well in Nigeria and I know that there are no organizations no matter how small that will not have anything to do with PR because nobody operates on his own...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

137
5.1.2.1 Preferred practitioner qualifications, role, and internal structure of PR as Basic theme

Preferred practitioner qualifications and role pertain to the top managements’ accounts of the formal education, practical training and certifications along with personal capabilities and qualities that qualify practitioners for PR positions and a role in Nigeria. Table 5.4. demonstrates the different categories of interviewees and gives examples of appropriate qualifications for their preferred practitioners, which include: (1) theoretical and practical knowledge of organizations’ primary business area, (2) industry sector and/or product category knowledge, (3) formal PR education, (4) journalism experience, (5) NIPR certification, (6) coordinating skills, (7) product category /or industry specializations, and (8) ethical conduct.

Table 5.4: Top management’s preferred practitioner qualifications as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Educated-No Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees’ preferred practitioner qualifications</td>
<td>NPNE MGT4 Because of the nature of our business, …we are more attuned to those with mathematics and finance who understands financial issues much better and even when we take people from social sciences or arts, we take them through training process so that they can become financial advisers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated- Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of interviewees’ preferred practitioner qualifications</td>
<td>NPEE MGT3 stakeholder management, they must be taken through a training/certification program to be a professional PR practitioner. … had a PR role, journalism would kindly stand out, transiting to being a PR practitioner maybe in a consultancy firm…relationship with key community leaders….network, contacts, anything that helps the organization to do business well…….give us a solid public reputation that you can leverage and transform into business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>PREE: PR Educated-Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of interviewees’ preferred practitioner qualifications</td>
<td>PREE MGT1 … understands what PR means and how to deal with all our internal and external customers… be able to anchor the public relations of the organization with little supervision … must be contented, know his facts, honest, transparent, integrity, consciousness must be his watchword.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More specifically, NPNE management interviewees are more interested in people with education in their primary business area, who could be further trained to perform their jobs better. There is little interest in PR related qualifications or the PR function as they are not considered as relevant to their organization. The focus is instead on employees that can deliver their primary service with optimum quality and improve revenue. Consequently, there
is no provision for an internal structure for the PR function or a PR practitioner in such organizations. NPEE and PREE management interviewees who understand PR’s contributions to their organizations emphasize the importance of qualifications that include formal PR education, NIPR certification, ability to counsel/advise top management, manage internal and external stakeholder relations, as well as develop and implement PR initiatives that deliver value to the bottom-line with little or no supervision.

In addition, Table 5.5 highlights the category of management interviewees who prioritizes practitioners’ specialization in one or few aspects of PR, specific industry or product line respectively. Interviewees in the niche product category such as financial services software products often prefer practitioners with specific qualifications or specializations. These cause them to prefer working with PR consultants specializing in their areas of needs. Others without such requirements are found to prefer in-house practitioners that are generalists and can, therefore, develop and execute a wide range of PR tasks with little to no supervision. Although both companies may not necessarily have a PR department, the practitioners they employ or work with mostly operate in the higher-order/reflective-strategist manager capacity (Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000; Steyn, 2009). Educated and experienced management interviewees of small companies may also assume the role.

Table 5.5: Practitioner specialization, role, and internal structure of PR as basic themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Educated-No</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated- Experienced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' preference for specialization as basic theme</td>
<td>Technician role ... he will be very close to the manager</td>
<td>PR Consultant ... we trust them, respect their judgment, if they tell me not to do something I won’t do it.</td>
<td>Higher-order manager role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' practitioner role as a basic theme</td>
<td>Technician+ PR Consultant</td>
<td>NPEE MGT3 The head of PR is not in the executive committee, but he reports to the group head of Corporate communications (background in advertising) under which there is advertising, PR, digital marketing</td>
<td>PREE MGT7: PR consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' internal structure of PR as basic theme</td>
<td>NPNE: None</td>
<td>NPEE MGT5 Specialization is important within PR, especially for our industry where a specific type of skills is relevant ... Industry knowledge is equally important for you to function in our industry</td>
<td>PREE MGT2 PR for an organization like an insurance company, I think it’s a generalist orientation that happens there unlike the international oil company ..., they would have external relations directors that relate with governments, some who relates with communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' preference for specialization as basic theme</td>
<td>NPEE MGT8 I believe in specialization as being very good in that field, like niche and that is what we do in this company too</td>
<td>PREE MGT2 we very much appreciate the role of PR that was what made us engage the general manager to head that function</td>
<td></td>
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Table 5.5: Practitioner specialization, role, and internal structure of PR as basic themes

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<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' internal structure of PR as basic theme</td>
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<td>PREE MGT2 PR for an organization like an insurance company, I think it’s a generalist orientation that happens there unlike the international oil company ..., they would have external relations directors that relate with governments, some who relates with communities</td>
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Table 5.5: Practitioner specialization, role, and internal structure of PR as basic themes

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<td>NPEE MGT3 The head of PR is not in the executive committee, but he reports to the group head of Corporate communications (background in advertising) under which there is advertising, PR, digital marketing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' internal structure of PR as basic theme</td>
<td>NPNE: None</td>
<td>NPEE MGT5 Specialization is important within PR, especially for our industry where a specific type of skills is relevant ... Industry knowledge is equally important for you to function in our industry</td>
<td>PREE MGT2 PR for an organization like an insurance company, I think it’s a generalist orientation that happens there unlike the international oil company ..., they would have external relations directors that relate with governments, some who relates with communities</td>
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<td>PREE MGT2 we very much appreciate the role of PR that was what made us engage the general manager to head that function</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internal PR structure looks into how PR is structured within organizations. Emphasis is on who coordinates PR activities, and where PR and the practitioner are situated, which could be a distinct PR department, within other communication functional areas. Table 5.5. equally, highlights how management interviewees may not have a PR department but instead enlist the services of a PR consultant and insert PR as part of corporate communication (CC). The organizations’ specialization needs causes them to prefer specialized consultants that counsel top management as well as develop and implement PR initiatives on their behalf. Interviewee accounts suggest that top management may still assign practitioners to the technician role or lower-order manager role where they implement management decisions without their input or counsel (Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000). Another common structure entails employing an in-house practitioner to handle technician tasks, while implementation is outsourced to PR consultants. Bowen (2009) talks about managements’ tendency to mostly value practitioners for their technician skills and often assign tasks to them in that capacity.

Management with PR education and experience are found to be more likely to insert PR as a task under CC, and therefore employ CC manager whose academic background includes PR courses or programs. These structure contrast excellence PR theorists arguments in favor of a distinct PR department that is headed by a PR person (e.g. Grunig, 1992). Therefore, the prevalent structure is more in line with the CC field that views PR as one of their tasks, while CC practitioners are believed to be able to perform across a broad range of functional areas (Cornelissen, 2014; Goodman, 2006). They are preferred over those having only a PR education who are often perceived to have a narrow scope of skills (Amujo & Melewar, 2011). Consequently, they are often assigned to a senior management position i.e. higher-order managerial role, which reflects managements’ perception of and the value placed on PR and perceived competent PR practitioners.

5.1.3 Organizing theme: Professional status assessment
The organizing theme “Professional status assessment” pertains to the management interviewees’ evaluation of PR’s professional status in Nigeria. Table 5.6 presents the two basic themes embedded in the theme, which are the professional status assessment of PR in Nigeria and the determinants of professional status attainment. The table demonstrates how interviewees account in the former correlates largely with their accounts of the image of PR. It also highlights elements that management interviewees believe must be in place for PR to
be considered as a profession in Nigeria in the latter. These elements equally unearth PR’s approach in its professional project.

Table 5.6: Top management’s PR professional status assessment presented as organizing theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Educated-No Experience</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated-Experienced</th>
<th>PREE: PR Educated-Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of Accounts of Interviewees’ perception of the Professional status of PR in Nigeria as basic theme</td>
<td>Profession NPNE MGT 6 It’s very good actually, some people are doing a very good job, can back up what they do, can get the message across, do the damage control. I think they are consultants with their agency.</td>
<td>Profession NPEE MGT 8 the ones that I have worked with have been professional…Because of my own experience, I respect them…</td>
<td>Profession PREE MGT1 Any professional body that is recognized by law in Nigeria is legitimate and you cannot question or fault any of their products (i.e. graduates), before you become an associate of the chartered institute of accountancy, you know you have to undergo so many training…The same with NIPR, they have associate PR and they have the fellow which is in the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (Law), they are ranked and also recognized by law, and if they are recognized by law you cannot question that. … we have NIPR which is the professional body…they have qualification procedure before anyone can be called a PR professional, just like in my own profession that you have to go through before you can call yourself an estate surveyor and valuator you must be well trained and I believe that NIPR has this kind of training too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionable professional status NPEE MGT3 Anybody can just come in and say I am a PR practitioner let’s certify, so we know who is a quack….. Many times organizations don’t even remember that there is a certification program. A lot of journalists just come into the profession, even organizations, when we say that we are looking for PR manager, they will just go and look for a journalist who may not have learned the overall method of PR …it must be more professionalized …and must see itself as part of the overall communication mix … beyond telling journalists to write articles in the newspaper…</td>
<td>NPEE MGT 3 we have seen real professionalism because the NIPR is one of the oldest professional bodies in Nigeria, they are very organized, they have active members, and their members used to be journalists.</td>
<td>Questionable professional status PREE MGT2 Anything that people make a career out of is a profession and I think there is a body, NIPR. So it’s a profession. I would see it as a profession,…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees’ perceived/expected determinants of professional status as basic theme</td>
<td>NPNE MGT4&amp;6: No idea</td>
<td>NPEE MGT3 certification program;…NIPR is one of the oldest professional bodies in Nigeria.… They have active members, and their members used to be journalists.</td>
<td>Professional body that is recognized by law in Nigeria…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NPEE MGT 5 people who have gone through university education and the certification...</td>
<td>PREE MGT2 most professional work have associations, institutes, they have a body that conducts examination that you pass through and qualify and you are recognized as a professional in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PREE MGT2 have a code of conduct for its members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management’s assessment of PR’s professional status within transcribed data can be linked to their personal experience, observation of and the establishment of the traditional traits. Management’ observations of ethical and professional conduct with which they contributed measurable returns on investments into PR are examples of the basis for the interviewees to accord PR a professional status. Traditional traits such as (1) legal recognition through a chartered status, (2) the establishment of the professional association (i.e. NIPR) with active
members, (3) the existence of PR education programs and certification, and lastly (4) career path must be in place professional status to be attained.

These traits represent the attributes of prestigious and non-prestigious professions. However, the traits may also be possessed, albeit to a lesser degree, by occupations that are yet to become a profession (Greenwood, 1957). It is on this basis that management questions the lack of awareness of NIPR’s certification, the existence of quacks in practice, lack of high entry barriers into the profession, thereby leading to unrestricted access into PR practice, especially by journalists. These reinforce the “all comers affair” assumption of PR in Nigeria as well as the misconception of PR that is limited to media relations and/or press agentry, whereby journalists are often preferred for PR positions (See also, Amujo & Melewar, 2011).

5.1.4 Organizing theme: Management Relations with in-house PR practitioners
The organizing theme “Management Relations with in-house PR practitioners” is based on two basic themes i.e. the extent to which practitioners can “contribute to decision making” and the “degree of autonomy” that is permitted by top management. The former refers to the extent to which practitioners are able to participate in management meetings, counsel management and influence managements’ decision (e.g. Berger, 2005, Bowen, 2009). The latter inquires about practitioners’ capacity to initiate and implement PR initiatives with little or no supervision or control from management (e.g. Serini, 1993).

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>PREE: PR Educated-Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' perception of the practitioners’ capacity to contribute to decision making</td>
<td>NPEE: MGT8... they should absolutely contribute to decision making because we want to see ourselves in utmost sincerity and they (PR consultants) help us do that…</td>
<td>PREE: MGT2... I recognize the role of PR as strategic and whatever is strategic must be involved in decision making at management level so I would expect the PR manager to be allowed to contribute to decision making by the company it’s always better if you have such a system operating than to have a PR person that somebody in management would go and brief about what they have said …. I made the person to report to me directly…because I understand the role and the value that such function can bring on</td>
<td>PREE: MGT7 Well I allow them to advice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Autonomy and decision-making are core elements of the traditional traits and the professions’ normative expectations in the workplace respectively. Management interviewees’ accounts of their perceived practitioner autonomy in Table 5.7 shows how management with PR education and experience are knowledgeable about practitioners’ capacity to contribute to their bottom-line and are therefore more likely to grant (1) practitioners’ direct access to the CEO, (2) opportunity to counsel management, and (3) participation in decision making. Consequently, these practitioners are more likely to work at the higher-order manager/reflective strategist level, where they can directly influence organizational and PR policies. Bowen (2009) found that credibility which is gained over time through correct analysis to be one of the PR practitioner routes to dominant coalition membership with which they would be part of management meetings and influence decisions.

The examples of management interviewees’ accounts in Table 5.8 suggests that management’s totally controlled autonomy of the practitioners can be tied to their perception that practitioners’ are incapable of contributing to strategic decisions. Secondly, industry dynamics or product type may not necessarily influence management decision according to interviewees’ personal characteristic (e.g. FMCG: lemonade soft drink; retail banking: financial services, and IT: software solutions). Besides, while none of them has a PR education, some of them have PR experience. This category of managements’ assumptions regarding the PR function and its expected contributions to their bottom-line reflects a view of PR as supporting the sales and marketing activities and not necessarily for nurturing relationships with key stakeholders or publics. These reflect on their practitioner role and typical PR activities that are often tied to (1) specific sales targets, (2) product launches, (3) sales promotional activities, (4) product presentation, (5) souvenir distribution, (6) celebrity endorsement, (7) social media likes, and (8) sponsorship of events specifically for improving brand awareness etc. In-house practitioners are often technicians, while PR consultants implement managements’ decisions.

This highlight the tendency for management with little or no PR education and or those with PR experience alone to misunderstand or apply a limited understanding of PR, which harbors unfounded expectations of PR. These support arguments that lack understanding of PR’s value and the practitioners’ capacity to justify their pay may cause management’s skepticism
or apprehension towards PR activities (Bowen, 2009). In contrast, uncontrolled autonomy is more likely with top management with a combination of PR education and experience, while those with experience alone may also grant it. Evidence from transcribed data suggests a direct correlation between the CEO’s PR knowledge and/or experience, assigning practitioners to higher-order managerial role including PR consultants’ freedom to counsel management, direct access to the CEO, contribution to decision making and implementing PR initiatives for organizations without scrutiny. PR consultants and professionals record of accomplishment for delivering measurable value to their clients are identified as grounds for uncontrolled autonomy.

Table 5.8: Top management’s perception of autonomy as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Educated-No Experience</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated- Experienced</th>
<th>PREE: PR Educated-Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' perceived practitioner autonomy</td>
<td>Controlled (NPNE MGT6 we give PR consultants our ideas and they don't want to implement them)</td>
<td>Controlled (NPEE MGT3 he cannot on his own… he reports to the group head of CC NPEE MGT5 The head of marketing works with the group head of strategy and marketing who presents the ideas to management where everything is discussed.)</td>
<td>Totally uncontrolled (MGT8 I don’t micromanage anybody. I give them their targets about my expectations, and I expect them to be ingenious, I work as a leader… I am clear about what I want to achieve, but the way and manner they do it I am not going to get involved)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>uncontrolled (PREE MGT2 He’s a professional, he knows his job! He’s the one that would give me advice, he’s always in our management meeting and whatever decision we are making he will bring the image from his own side to add.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.5 Organizing theme: Management’ Interactions with NIPR

The organizing theme “interactions with NIPR” pertains to the basic themes management’s perception of NIPR, the type, and purpose of the interactions between them and their expectations of NIPR as the professional association for PR in Nigeria. Table 5.9 presents examples of the management interviewees’ accounts of their perception of the NIPR. The table shows how the different categories of management interviewees’ are generally aware of the NIPR and what the NIPR represents, although a minority are critical of the effectiveness of its headquarters and conduct of its staff respectively.
### Table 5.9: Top management’s perception NIPR as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Educated-No Experience</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated- Experienced</th>
<th>PREE: PR Educated- Experined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' perception of NIPR</td>
<td>NPNE MGT4 Nigerian Institute of PR, I hear about them but I don’t think I know too much about them, I believe that is the Institute for PR professionals</td>
<td>NPEE MGT5: A professional body for PR in Nigeria</td>
<td>PREE MGT1 …we have NIPR which is the professional body…they have qualification procedure before anyone can be called a PR professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NPEE MGT 3 we have seen real professionalism because the NIPR is one of the oldest professional bodies in Nigeria, they are very organized, they have active members, and their members used to be journalists.</td>
<td></td>
<td>PREE MGT2 Anything that people make a career out of is a profession and I think there is a body, NIPR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PREE MGT7 Yes I do, I know them, I know they are ineffective in all ways. They don’t have a functional secretariat…it’s not functional. You call the numbers, they are not going, you send an email for several weeks it’s not replied.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.1.5.1 Interaction with NIPR as basic theme

While management interviewees recognize the NIPR and the profession it represents, Table 5.10 shows the type and purpose of interactions between categories of management and the NIPR. The table also shows how the awareness of the events was based on personal contacts, while interactions took place in the past and may have been discontinued. Interviewees’ accounts and secondary data highlight conferences, master classes, PR training and workshops for practitioners and management and heads of public sector agencies (see NIPR, 2017) as events where management interacts with NIPR. However, most management is found to be unaware of these events. Personal or social relations and professional relations are found to be the only means for management that are aware and have attended events in the past.

### Table 5.10: Top management’s interactions with NIPR as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Educated-No Experience</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated- Experienced</th>
<th>PREE: PR Educated-Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' interactions with NIPR</td>
<td></td>
<td>NPEE: MGT8 I used to attend Nile chi’s PR roundtable in 2015. She is an old friend</td>
<td>PREE MGT2 … the president of NIPR at a point in time was my lecturer when I did my MBA and what he taught us were advertising and PR… they want to organize retreats for members, the body and they ask for sponsorship from organizations, I used to get my company to sponsor and when they have events they invite us so I think my interaction is by virtue of my corporates communications guy…I think maybe NIPR also organize refresher courses and I ensure that people in that department, not the head alone even the support staff in that department hey attend some of these courses organized by NIPR to ensure continuous development of their members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.10 shows how management with no PR education and experience have no interactions with the NIPR, while those with experience alone attended only because they personally knew the organizer of the event. Management with a PR education and experiences, that are NIPR members themselves or who employ a NIPR member are more likely to be aware of and attend these activities. These suggest that although NIPR targets both members and management, communication about these events may be restricted to those with close ties to the association, thereby excluding other relevant stakeholders such as management that are potential employers of NIPR members.

5.1.5.2 Top managements’ expectations of NIPR as basic theme

The basic theme “top managements’ expectations of NIPR” pertains to managements’ expectations of the professional associations’ responsibilities towards the profession they represent. Therefore, Table 5.11 demonstrates what the different categories of management interviewees expect from NIPR for the PR profession. Examples of expectations according to management interviewees are in the areas of communications with key stakeholders, corporate and public sensitization about PR, PR knowledge acquisition, discipline within PR practice, and PR’s image management in Nigeria.

One area where management believes that the NIPR is not meeting their expectations is in their external stakeholder relations initiatives. This relates to perceived insufficient communication with key stakeholders such as management of corporate organizations and the general public about its activities, certification, and opportunities for practical PR skills and knowledge acquisition for sensitizing management about PR and its value for organizations. Although, secondary data gathered from NIPR’s Facebook page and official homepage reveal that these activities are planned and communicated. However, the extent to which they reach the target audiences and key stakeholders with no personal or professional relations with NIPR members or executives is debatable.

Management equally expects the NIPR to maintain discipline for the profession. This is specifically about the enforcement of (1) a high entry barrier into the PR practice and (2) a code of conduct coupled with reprimands to guide against quacks in practice. These are expected to enhance the image of the profession. Besides, management also expects the NIPR to restore PR’s image in Nigeria by publicizing (1) positive stories and achievements of PR
and the professional association, and (2) PR’s value to organizations and society. These are believed to be countermeasures in contradiction of the prevalent negative associations and stigmas against the profession. In the end, these set of expectations make up another crucial element that altogether constitutes the perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria.

Table 5.11: Top management’s expectations of the NIPR as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
<th>NPNE: Non-PR Experience</th>
<th>NPEE: NonPR Educated- Experienced</th>
<th>PREE: PR Educated- Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of accounts of interviewees' expectations of NIPR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image management</td>
<td>NPEEMGT8 NIPR should do more advertisement to boost their public awareness, so people get to know them, and also to differentiate them from the Institute of marketing or advertising.</td>
<td>Image management</td>
<td>PREEMGT2 I would expect the NIPR to get the government to recognize their (practitioners’) qualifications within organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>NPEEMGT5 Have a master class for CEOs, Business managers</td>
<td>Training/knowledge acquisition</td>
<td>PREEMGT2 I would like to see a situation where NIPR subjects its members to what we have in insurance, the accounting profession equally has it we call it mandatory professional development, …you are continually updating your knowledge of the practice of PR, there are ways it is measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>NPEEMGT5 … one of the things to confirm is, what is the root of PR? Is it because I was a journalist now I am a PR person, so not just that I was a reporter for Guardian (newspaper) I just became a PR practitioner after</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialization</td>
<td>NPEEMGT8 They may need to also branch out and specialize, specialists PR practitioners in medicine, video, its important, if you want to do a good job of PR there must be some empathy on the part of the practitioner, that is one of the biggest things that go between us and our PR consultants, I know they understand what we are doing so I am comfortable with them and rely on their advice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>NPEEMGT3 I am not sure whether they do certification, so anyone coming into the practice should go through a certification process. To become a proper professional, not just third sense to do the job</td>
<td>PREECertification/PR education</td>
<td>MGT2 For universities they should just ensure that they update their curricular as it relates to PR so that modern ways of practicing the profession is integrated into courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management sensitization</td>
<td>PREEMGT2 I would expect NIPR to do the same thing even with organizations and I would like organizations to appreciate what role PR experts play in the organization, sensitize organizations. So they can do that and that will assist their members to be properly recognized and remunerated adequately for their work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>MGT7 I’d say go out there and let people hear you, let people know you. I only knew about NIPR because I seek them, you understand…They could be more effective.. let people know you and how important you are and streamline this profession...</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5.1.6 Summary of top managements’ perspectives of PR in Nigeria

This section analyzes top managements’ perspectives of PR (RQ1a) based on the evidence from the transcribed and coded data from interviews with management in Nigeria. Collected data revealed that three categories of management exist based on their understanding of PR, which is either through their PR academic background and/or experience. Firstly, there are Non-PR Educated-Non-Experienced (NPNE) management interviewees with neither PR education nor PR experience. Secondly, there are the Non-PR Educated-Experienced (NPEE) management interviewees with no PR education but works with a PR consultant alone or in combination with an in-house PR practitioner. Thirdly, there are the PR Educated-Experienced (PREE) management interviewees with PR education and experience, while also employing an in-house practitioner or working with a PR consultant, who functions at the higher-order/reflective strategist managerial role capacity respectively. After going through all identified organizing themes, education and/or experience are identified as the global theme due to their immense influence on managements’ PR perspective, understanding, expectations, and related decisions respectively in the corporate contexts.

Management’s level of understanding causes them to view PR differently. Firstly, PR is understood as an extension of marketing, sales promotion, and brand awareness, whereby PR activities include sales, branding, promotional activities and event sponsorships. Secondly, PR as a strategic management function that contributes to the corporate bottom-line, whereby stakeholder engagement, crisis management, public information of product-related public concerns and product launches are typical practices that are implemented by PR consultants that specialize on industry and/or a product category. Thirdly, PR as a relationship management function with corporate internal and external stakeholders is characterized by a practitioner with a PR educational background and NIPR certification for attending to every aspect of PR (generalist) occupying a higher-order managerial role within the corporate communications department. Community relations activities such as sponsorships i.e. renovating a public playing ground, issues management, interfacing with staff, public information through the media are examples of typical PR practices.

Opinions are generally divided about the image of PR in Nigeria across management. While those with no knowledge or experience mostly have a neutral perception of PR’s image, other opinions from management show that it is both positive and negative. The former emanates from the practitioner's positive reputations in highly volatile industries, PR consultants’
delivery of measurable contributions to the bottom line, and the prevalence of the practice. The negative image results from the perceived low entry barriers into practice, unethical practitioners’ conduct, and the negative connotations of PR and unawareness of NIPR’s activities for enhancing the standard of the profession.

Most management view PR as a legitimate profession in Nigeria based on the NIPR’s establishment of the traditional traits and professional conduct of practitioners and PR consultants. However, the professional status is equally questioned due to the perceived low entry barriers into the PR practice due to unawareness of the NIPR’s certification, and the inability for PR to be differentiated from journalism emanating from the prevalence of one-way PR practices. Consequently, the lack of awareness causes management to question whether the NIPR is meeting their expectations with regards to enhancing PR’s image, maintaining cordial relations with its key stakeholders and improving the standard of PR practice and entry barriers into the profession.

Concerning the underlying management perspectives of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria, this is fragmented and therefore depends on PR education and/or experience with which they possess a pseudo or an ideal perspective of PR. These perceptions of the legitimacy of PR are based on the assessment of their perception of (1) PR as an academic discipline, (2) practitioners’ critical resources that includes generalist and/or specialist PR competence, with which they contribute to corporate bottom-line and improve corporate image, and (3) the capacity of professional associations to meet managements’ expectations of the profession through professional traits, maintaining the standard of the profession, high entry barriers, external stakeholder communications, discipline of practitioners and ethical conduct. When taken together, the underlying perception of PR is not unified but fragmented.

Based on the three categories of top managements’ assessment of PR as a discipline, PR practitioners as professionals and expectations of a professional association, a pseudo and an ideal perception of PR are argued to be held by management in Nigeria. On the one hand, the pseudo perception of PR arises from managements’ lack of theoretical and experiential knowledge of PR respectively. This perception is characterized by misconceptions and misguided assumptions of PR as a sales and brand management function. Although PR may indirectly contribute to these functions and may be in a combined functional area, there are remarkable differences between them. This management category is more concerned about
those with an academic background in their primary business area, whereby PR practitioners implement their ideas with no little to no contribution to decision making except during crises, thereby function as damage control agents.

On the one hand, the ideal perception of PR is held by management with PR education and/or experience. This management category view PR as both strategic management and a relationship management function that contributes to corporate bottom-line, relations with key internal and external stakeholders and organizations’ image respectively. Consequently, PR managers or consultants’ counsel and their capacity to coordinate and implement PR initiatives on behalf of organizations are highly valued. Practitioners working for such management category are highly likely to function in a higher-order manager role capacity, based on their generalist PR competencies or industry/product specializations, which depends on the organizations specific PR needs. These perceived competent practitioners are most likely granted uncontrolled autonomy to develop and execute a range of one and two-way PR initiatives with little supervision or scrutiny from management.

Additionally, they are granted access to the CEO and the top management, where they are able to participate in decision-making. While they mostly believe that PR is a profession based on the traits, they are equally critical of the NIPR’s capacity to maintain the standard of practice, which forms the basis of their expectations of the professional association. Their expectation suggests some of the factors that must also be in place for the legitimacy of PR to be achieved, which relates to communication, sensitization of key stakeholders, image management, high entry barriers, and ethical conduct.
5.2 Prominent themes of Nigeria's Professional PR association's perception of PR in Nigeria.

Prominent themes of Nigerian professional PR association’s perceptions of PR emerged from interviews, resulting in the thematic network *NIPR’s perspective* found in figure 5.2. This thematic network addresses RQ1b: *How is PR perceived by Nigeria's Professional association for PR - NIPR?* A range of basic themes coordinated through six organizing themes constituting an understanding of NIPR’s perceptions of the legitimacy of PR has been derived from the transcribed and coded data. NIPR interviewees’ accounts illustrate their assumptions and chosen approach for PR’s professional project as well as the ideal knowledge and competencies for professional practice and expectations for practitioners in the workplace. This information fosters an understanding and explanation of their perspectives through their accounts of PR related decisions, approaches and activities. The following interview data is organized based on the following organizing themes and inherent basic themes:

1) **Demographic information**: personal characteristics of NIPR Interviewees i.e. educational background, their position at NIPR, and experience with PR.

2) **PR understanding**: description of PR and its image, ideal practitioner role, tasks composition and qualifications

3) **NIPR’s professional project for PR in Nigeria**: perceived determinants of the professional status of PR, assessment of PR’s professional status in Nigeria by the NIPR, the perception of professional autonomy and constraints towards professionalizing PR

4) **PR education programs**: professional associations’ opinion about the structure of PR programs in Nigerian universities, their extent of control over the curriculum in relation to practitioners’ scope of skills and competencies development for professional practice

5) **NIPR membership and code of conduct**: compliance and enforcement of NIPR membership as a license to practice PR in Nigeria and code of conduct

6) **Interactions with management**: purpose, types, and outcomes of professional association’s interactions with management
5.2.1 Organizing theme: Demographics: personal characteristics of NIPR Interviewees

The organizing theme *demographics* refer to the personal characteristics of the NIPR’s interviewees. The theme highlights their position, educational background, and experience with PR. Insights about their characteristics contribute to empirical knowledge for understanding their view of PR as a profession along with the chosen approach for PR’s professional project. Besides, their knowledge and specific experiences have been applied when developing a set of ideal qualifications, PR certification, task composition, and code of conduct for professional PR practice. These, in turn, impact the quality of practitioners that could be employed for PR positions and the standard of PR practice in corporate
organizations, which impacts PR’s legitimacy. These are all part of the professional project, which reflects their perception of PR, and are therefore covered in subsequent organizing and basic themes below respectively.

Table 5.12 shows the interviewees’ position, education line and examples of their experiences with PR. More specifically, the examples of interviewee accounts demonstrate how mass communication remains a common academic background, while experiences are both corporate and academic. Therefore, these interviewee’s accounts are not theoretical but also reflects a first-hand workplace experience with PR. The Interviewees are senior executives from the NIPR who at the minimum possess mass communication and PR academic backgrounds with decades of corporate PR experience as PR advisers, information officers, and consultant, where they have worked in the higher-order/reflective strategist managerial roles at for local and/or international corporate organizations in Nigeria. Interviewee accounts show that examples of their responsibilities at the NIPR are in the areas of membership, certification programs including PR training and examination at the NIPR School, and the accreditation of PR curricula for Nigerian universities. Interviewees sometimes work as external lectures or visiting PR scholars in Nigerian universities, and conduct PR training for companies and/or government agency staff.

Table 5.12 NIPR interviewees personal characteristics presented as an organizing theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee’s personal characteristics</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Education Line and level</th>
<th>Interviewees’ experience with PR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of interviewees’ characteristics</td>
<td>NIPR executive</td>
<td>MA Mass communication, MA Corporate governance, MBA in Management, PhD Business Administration</td>
<td>PR consultant to international organizations, PR adviser to local and international corporate organizations, CEO of a multinational printing organization, External PR Lecturer at various universities in Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NIPR executive</td>
<td>Fellow at NIPR, HND Mass Communication</td>
<td>Former information officer at Nigerian Airforce HQ, NIPR training and membership committee member, Coordinator NIPR education and examinations, Lecturer at NIPR school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Former NIPR executive</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA Mass Communication, PhD PR</td>
<td>Former information officer, Nigerian Broadcasting Organization, Former PR manager, multinational corporation, PR researcher, Nigerian PR textbook author, Corporate PR training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2 Organizing theme: PR Understanding
The organizing theme “PR understanding pertains to the understanding of PR that NIPR works with, which is reflected through basic themes that include: description of PR,
perception PR’s image in Nigeria, qualifications for practitioners, the internal structure of PR, practitioner role and typical PR practices respectively.

5.2.2.1 Basic theme: Description of PR

Description of PR focuses on the NIPR interviewees’ understanding of PR as an organizational practice in Nigeria. According to Table 5.13, examples of interviewees’ descriptions of PR suggest a view of PR as a combination of conceptions of PR from the excellence theory (e.g., Grunig, 1992a) and relationship management (e.g., Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). These manifest through their descriptions of PR as a strategic management function for nurturing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their stakeholders. In addition, interviewees believe PR activities should be coordinated by a practitioner in an executive role with decision making powers. The executive role suggests that practitioners should ideally occupy the higher order managerial role (Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000) or a reflective-strategist role (Steyn, 2009), with access to top management, dominant coalition membership and decision-making powers. These are believed to be the conditions for practitioners to be able to manage organizations’ relationship with their salient stakeholders. More specifically, NIPR interviewees are of the view that PR’s value contributions lie in its capacity to facilitate organizations’ boundary spanning for feedback collection, which is then used for corporate planning and implementation of effective PR activities, thereby functioning as a reflective-strategist practitioner (e.g., Steyn, 2009).

Table 5.13: NIPR’s description of PR as basic theme

| Example of accounts of Interviewees’ Description of PR | NIPR 3: PR is a management function that is a line of profession that wants to keep an organization and different classes of people in tandem, that is, a kind of relationship, whereby the organization must be acceptable to the various kinds of people….the relationship must be cordial, mutually beneficial. So it’s a management function because it manages not just the organizations that are set up for a particular purpose but also people that it has to relate to in the course of its relationship. …(PR) as an executive function that contributes to decision making because it has to survey the environment, see what is good and acceptable and beneficial to the organization and then manage the dealings with these groups, because these groups have their own aims and objectives, their likes and dislikes, in order for PR to function as a management function, all those groups of people have to be known and understood,

NIPR 2…you know what society wants and you put that into consideration, you have smooth governance. If you bring that to the corporate level, you know what your workers want and you take it into policy formulation

NIPR 1: before now, being a television or radio person or journalist qualifies you for PR position, …media relations was seen as PR instead of seeing it as a branch of what PR is but the times are changing …Corporate planning can only be done by permeated education among stakeholders, selling the policies of organizations to stakeholders, bringing in feedback for re-planning, assessing the performance of the organization vis-à-vis the stakeholders is key. … inter-departmental and divisional functions and communication … |
5.2.2.2 Perceived image of PR by NIPR

The basic theme “perceived image of PR by NIPR” concerns the set of associations, beliefs, ideas, feelings or impression that the NIPR believes are held about PR by the publics and organizations in Nigeria. Table 5.14 demonstrates how the image is believed to be formerly negative but now positive. The examples of interviewees’ accounts reveal how PR’s image in Nigeria depends on the time of inquiry and the PR knowledge of the person who is asked about the image. While PR’s image is argued to have been negative in the past, it is currently believed to be positive.

The negative image is linked to the misconception and misrepresentation of PR, which interviewees link to persons or management with no PR knowledge who categorizes or limit PR to unethical practices such as bribery, propaganda, misinformation etc. The positive image is linked to the NIPR’s professional project which entails the establishment of the traits, activities to sanitize the profession, sensitization of salient stakeholders about PR as an organizational practice and a PR profession. Concrete examples of the traits and activities that are listed by the interviewees include (1) PR’s perceived value contributions to organizations, (2) NIPR’s (re)certification exercise, (3) availability of PR education, (4) increased enrolment for PR certification, (5) recognition of PR as a distinct management and communication function, (6) educating the public about the PR profession through conferences, workshops and training programs.

| Example of accounts of interviewees' perceived image of PR in Nigeria | NIPR1 PR as a body of knowledge and management function is getting known and more used than before; there is recognition of its tertiary education, government functionaries, the students themselves and other stakeholders. Unlike before where people cannot distinguish the difference between PR and other communication elements… professionalism is taking shape, people now volunteer and say they want to be a PR practitioner deliberately having known what it is and how it works unlike …the “protocol office” which was the initial understanding and recognition given to PR but at a strategic level of planning, board functionaries and executive strategic steps, PR is not known and recognized.

   it depends who, where and what, we cannot take a blanket answer if you look at where critical issues, conflict, and challenges have been attended to appropriately by PR, such people would be able to tell you in concrete terms, what PR has been able to do, the benefits derived and of course the intention to allocate more money and personnel to PR. But when you take it to a place where it is taken for granted because the system lacks the knowledge, if ignorant envelops the system and then, of course, ordinary things like lobbying and propaganda or bribery could be taken for PR so it depends on the level of understanding or ignorance so that determines how PR is addressed.

   NIPR2 Some would see it from a positive light while others would see it from a point of misperception. Before now anybody who dresses well, speaks well was taken to be a PR practitioner but with the establishment of NIPR and the PR’s chartered status which empowered the body to regulate PR in Nigeria, the institute has been able to reach out through various programs to educate the public on what the PR profession is really about… NIPR organizes workshops and invites executives to participate and learn. …the image was not as good as it is now, its shining brighter now…

   NIPR3 …in the past it was seen as a function of errand people, but it has evolved to become a management function…It (image) has gone sour over the years because we have heard the political president’s not professional presidents. |

Table 5.14: NIPR’s Perceived image of PR in Nigeria as a basic theme
5.2.2.3 Basic themes: Ideal practitioner role, tasks composition, and qualifications

The basic theme “Ideal PR practitioner role” pertains to the hierarchy and position that the NIPR expects in-house practitioners to occupy and the clear set of “tasks” which they are supposed to carry out for corporate organizations. The “ideal qualifications” pertain to academic requirements, capabilities and personal traits for practitioners to be able to occupy their expected role and competently carry out the set of tasks for organizations.

Practitioner roles were initially theorized to only include the technician and managerial role typology (e.g. Dozier & Broom, 1995). However, the manager role has been subdivided to include higher and lower order manager roles respectively (e.g. Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000), reflective-strategist (Steyn, 2009) as well as the activist managerial role (Berger, 2005, Holtzhausen, 2002). With regards to the ideal practitioner role in Nigeria, examples of interviewee accounts in Table 5.15 reveal that NIPR believes that practitioners should be assigned to a reflective-strategist and/or higher-order managerial role. This is in line with the NIPR’s description of PR as an executive management function with decision making powers.

Besides, interviewee accounts in Table 5.15 equally highlight examples of the ideal tasks composition for practitioners. These accounts suggest the boundary spanning role for powerful practitioners with which they would implement one and/or two-way PR activities (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) for addressing potentially turbulent and complex organizational environment and publics respectively. In this sense, interviewees are of the view that practitioners are supposed to have access to the CEO and/or top management and undertake a list of tasks that include (1) counselling management (2) managing relations with organizations key stakeholders, such as the media, employees, government, public(s) etc., (3) conducting environmental scanning and providing insightful feedback that guides organizations’ policies (4) contributing to corporate planning, (5) managing organization’s reputation, (6) helping organizations to act ethically and (7) managing crises.
With regards to the basic theme “ideal practitioner qualifications”, NIPR interviewees emphasize the importance of a broad-based knowledge. This entails diversified education as shown through the example of qualifications in interviewees’ accounts in Table 5.16. Examples of qualifications include academic and professional qualifications, international exposure with which a broad scope of abstract knowledge and capabilities are developed. Interviewees believe these are the prerequisites for handling a broad range of PR tasks and for becoming a PR generalist that can occupy a managerial role. More specifically, the examples of academic qualifications that are listed by the interviewees include a PR or any other degree in combination with professional certification and NIPR membership. In addition, capabilities should include the organization’s industry and/or product knowledge, environmental scanning skills which includes competitor monitoring and analysis, stakeholder analysis, boundary spanning, campaign/performance evaluation, internal communications and relations, interdepartmental work, market and stakeholder research and feedback gathering, conflict resolution, crises management, and a proactive approach to PR.

In addition, NIPR interviewees recognize the importance of practitioner specialization in one or more aspect of PR and/or a specific industry sector. However, interviewee accounts on “specialization” in table 5.16 imply that is not prioritized by the association as the core focus is instead on developing PR generalists that are more likely to be employed for their broad scope of PR skills. Interviewees suggest that specialization should be a personal pursuit of individuals either through learning on the job or attending elective subjects during university education.
Table 5.16: Ideal practitioner qualifications

| Example of accounts of interviewees' perceived ideal practitioner qualifications | NIPR1 You must have broad-based knowledge, which I normally refer to as diagonal education cos vertical education would be tall and deep but not wide, so tallest and narrowest building is what vertical education builds, but if it is horizontal, you have a very wide scope but narrow content…it is important to have diversified education and exposure, it is not enough to have basic qualification, but also professional qualification, industrial exposure, and international exposure, until those four are covered, you may not be well qualified… Corporate planning can only be done by permeated education among stakeholders, selling the policies of organizations to stakeholders, bringing in feedback for re-planning, assessing the performance of the organization vis-à-vis the stakeholders is key … Inter-departmental and divisional functions and communication …
| NIPR2 … there is no way you can function if you don’t understand your organization… that person that is trained and certified to practice the profession and only in so doing he may have legal backing.
| NIPR3 There will always be challenges, so crisis management, in the course of studying I have come to understand that you can actually anticipate them, prevent them, so what you do is make a study of your environment both internally and externally, identify issues of interest. PR practitioner role
| NIPR1 the training of PR in Nigeria has been about preparing generalists, so everybody getting the same thing but now we are starting to look into professionalism in the area of, for example, event management has become a career perspective. That aspect as shown that this can be a career path. Then you look at financial PR, health care…the specialization we are talking about is against a diversified background, and when you are taken to be a specialist in the area of your core competence, it does not close your knowledge and your eyes to the education and knowledge of other sides, if you know more about what your competitors do, you out best them, if you know more about what your stakeholders and clients do, your understanding between the two of you will be higher, you will be able to talk in the language of the customer (like continuous learning) YES…and it is a big advantage.

5.2.3 NIPR's professional project for PR
The organizing theme “NIPR’s professional project for PR” pertains to the core elements of NIPR’s professional project for PR in Nigeria. The basic themes underneath this organizing theme are the “determinants of professional status”, “professional status assessments” and “attending to workplace realities”. The basic themes highlight the chosen approach from the NIPR interviewees’ accounts of their perceived determinants for professional status, which they evaluate for assessing the professional status of PR in Nigeria along with constraints encountered by NIPR in its professional project.

Professional projects could be understood from the traits, power and institutional approaches developed within the sociology of professions (e.g. Larson, 1977, Abbott, 1988, Muzio, Brock, & Suddaby, 2013), some of which have been adopted for PR’s professional projects (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, Noordegraaf, 2011, Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016). While the traits approach suggests a prioritization of internal control measures and external relations mechanism, the power approach implies a pursuit of occupational dominance or professional power in the workplace based unique expertise. The institutional approach works with a view that professions must understand the workplace realities and cultivate capabilities for attending to organization’s needs and thereby become a valuable resource to the organization. Therefore, the determinants of professional status found in the NIPR interviewees’ accounts highlight the association's assumptions about the elements required for PR to be perceived as a legitimate profession in Nigeria.
According to the NIPR interviewees’ accounts, as laid out in Table 5.17, the elements of both the traditional traits (e.g. Grunig & Hunt, 1984) and Abbott’s (1988) version of the power approach determines PR’s professional status. Interviewees listed 1) body of knowledge through literature and case studies, 2) formal PR program and certification, 3) professional body, 4) code of conduct, 5) professional association, 6) autonomy through government/chartered status (legal), public (societal) and management recognition (workplace) respectively (Abbott, 1988). The latter in particular is believed to ensure that practitioners could be assigned to the managerial role based on their understanding of as a management function.

Consequently, NIPR interviewees’ accounts suggest that the establishment of the above-listed determinants by NIPR makes PR a profession in Nigeria. Additionally, examples of milestones pertaining to the increasing number of practitioners in the high-order/reflective-strategist managerial role in corporate organizations are believed to be an indicator of the perceived professional status.

Table 5.17: Determinants of professional recognition as basic theme

| Example of the accounts of Interviewees’ perceived determinants of professional status | NIPR1 | PR as a body of knowledge and management function is getting known and more used than before; there is recognition of its tertiary education... Unlike before where people cannot distinguish the difference between PR and other communication elements... professionalism is taking shape... In the banking industry, they (in-house technicians) were reporting to either GM corporate affairs who is not a PR person or GM admin, or GM human resources, it was in the year 2000 that we broke the ceiling and by having GM corporate affairs in the banks...Some of them were even chartered, bankers. That era is gone and we have broken the ceiling, we are having Directors (PR persons). |
| NIPR2 | NIPR is charged with the responsibility of regulating the practice of PR... Before now anybody who dresses well, speaks well was taken to be a PR practitioner but with the establishment of NIPR and the PR’s chartered status which empowered the body to regulate PR in Nigeria, the institute has been able to reach out through various programs to educate the public on what the PR profession is really about... |
| NIPR3 | in the past it was seen as a function of errand people, but it has evolved to become a management function… To be a professional you need literature…for me, literature is very important for PR, and one man can’t know and/or do everything |

Nevertheless, interviewees’ accounts in Table 5.18 demonstrate the associations believe that the professional status attainment is challenged by workplace realities that are influenced by management and a lack of a robust PR syllabus for preparing practitioners for corporate demands. Abbott (1988) maintains that the workplace arena is characterized by managements’ capacity to overthrow the profession’s norms and expectations in the workplace and instead act in accordance to their own objectives, commercial interests, and bottom-line targets.
Examples of workplace concerns in interviewees’ accounts pertain specifically to the role(s) that practitioners are assigned to and their capacity to work with uncontrolled autonomy (e.g. Serini, 1993), counsel management, contribute to decision making and implement PR initiatives with little to no supervision respectively (e.g. Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000). Interviewees recognize that these expectations are beyond the profession’s control. Instead, management’s assessment and perception of practitioners’ competencies or capacity to help them achieve their corporate objectives and contribute to bottom-line increases the probability of actualizing these expectations (see Pfeffer and Salancik 1978; Ramirez (2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of accounts of interviewees’ workplace reality</th>
<th>Table 5.18: NIPR’s perception of workplace reality as basic theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIPR2 it is the business that proceeds wherever complement arms ……… organization determine the position you will call me that will assist the attainment of their overall objective of the organization so it is the organization that determines the role they want you to play …it has to be within the overall business objective, the organization does not exist so that PR would thrive, it’s because they discover that along the line they will need you to improve their performance that was why they brought you in</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NIPR3 They have enlightenment, they see the value as complementary to their executive management level, and if they see it at that level then they treat at that level and when they treat it at that level it means the professional is treated as an equal at that level. That’s what the professional can communicate and demonstrate right from the job interview by being knowledgeable about the organization, industry and showing the value you can bring to the organization. You have to be professional. You can work up to the CEO and advise him and clarify why…</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.19: Response to workplace realities and perceived skills deficiencies as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of accounts of interviewees’ response to workplace realities and practitioners’ perceived skills deficiencies</th>
<th>We are working on a new syllabus which would be able to compare with global standards, the current 15 subjects has become 21 subjects and we have areas of new knowledge that would make a PR person to be able to grow beyond the scope of just communication management, i.e. balanced executive education, which include financial management, numeric subjects such as statistics, good use of computer and its accessory and its other platforms of social media and of course corporate governance. We started the master class for those who have been practicing without membership, or not schooled properly to have a second chance, so if we must prevent quackery you don’t start with policing and litigation, jailing people, fighting a war, going to close their offices…that would be the last (step). The first thing to do is to give them knowledge, take them out of ignorance, counsel them, and tell them what they are supposed to gain if they be knowledgeable about the organization, industry and showing the value you can bring to the organization. You have to be professional. You can work up to the CEO and advise him and clarify why…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIPR2…Our profile is rising, last year the institute had cause to separate the chaffs from the wheat through recertification exercise because we know that many of those who used to be NIPR members may no longer be members due to the scrutiny of qualifications and membership as a license to practice, so the deadwood has weeded away. So if you are a member of NIPR now you know you are for service because you have your license number, it’s no longer an all-comers affair…NIPR Diploma is skill focused. We are concerned about how to help people develop skills for them to be functional in the workplace…. but the broad principles that you need to apply are things we concentrate on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviewees’ accounts in table 5.19 highlight examples of initiatives for broader theoretical knowledge acquisition and practical training for mitigating the workplace concerns. These entail initiatives to improve practitioners’ abstract PR knowledge and competencies towards improving the standard of PR practice. Firstly, the syllabus of NIPR’s certification is to be expanded along with rigorous testing of new members. Secondly, master classes for reorienting practitioners, in addition to a recertification of old and non-active members who
would attend mandatory PR courses and are retested. Those practicing without the required qualifications are also invited to attend classes and be certified.

Furthermore, interviewee accounts in Table 5.20 highlight the NIPR’s lack of capacity to compel or enforce its law that prevents non-NIPR members from practicing PR in Nigeria as partially constraining their professional status. Interviewees note how such practices are predominant but not limited to public sector organizations that can freely employ non-NIPR members and often unqualified people for PR positions. Misconduct and incompetent performances of such people are believed to reinforce the perceived practitioner incompetence image and low entry barrier assumptions of the profession. However, the association has recently reached an agreement with government agencies, whereby NIPR members alone would be employed for the PR position. More so, a unique identification system comprising a seal and individual number would be given to every qualified practitioner. Nevertheless, issues pertaining to insufficient facilities for training practitioners, as well as the ease of creating and sharing information online by individuals claiming to be a PR person are also cited as other constraints reinforcing unfavorable outlook on the desired professional status of PR in Nigeria.

Table 5.20: Constraints to the professional status attainment as basic theme

| Example of accounts of interviewees’ perceived constraints to professional status attainment and planned remedies | NIPR 1 challenge of finance as membership dues will not be enough for achieving our plans as well as facilities for training current and potential members; … We also have the challenge of the government agencies to fully comply with engaging only qualified practitioners… but the government is now working hard with us especially in this era of the fight against corruption, … whereby no government agency should employ a non-professional member of the institute as a PR person, that has gone a long way in concretizing our recertification exercise, people are coming in to obtain their forms…Then the challenges of ICT particularly social media has made reputation a front burner subject, which makes communication more challenging because of the porous nature of garbage going in and out, everybody is a photographer, everybody tells you they are a journalist or PR person but when it comes to sorting them out, people know the difference, that is why I can tell you that it is an ongoing thing but it could be better on a daily basis. NIPR 2 … we organize seminars, we advocate for the establishment of a professionally staffed PR department because it is one thing to establish a PR department, it’s another thing for it to be professionally staffed because politicians have the tendency to fill up positions with their cronies without the capacity to perform… …after our re-certification exercise, we are going to the media with an authentic register of PR practitioners with their license numbers, if you are not on that list and you practice PR under whichever nomenclature, we will prosecute that person. So whether you say you are a brand manager, so long as your job content impinges on the PR arena, you are supposed to come to the fold … because you won’t need to tell me your name when I ask you about your identity, because your number gives me everything, so if you are pitching an idea you will quote your membership number otherwise you are a fake. Apart from going to the media, we publish the list and distribute to organizations and I am aware they will not like to deal with quacks so that is how we intend to block that loophole. |

161
5.2.4 Organizing theme: PR education
The organizing theme “PR education” pertains to the basic themes on NIPR interviewees’ “opinion about the structure of formal PR programs” that are offered by Nigerian universities and the “extent of NIPR’s control over the curriculum of PR programs”. Formal PR programs represent a core source of practitioners’ abstract PR knowledge acquisition. The structure of the program partially impacts the scope of competencies that practitioners are able to develop in combination with those developed after attending NIPR’s certification. PR programs in Nigeria are structured as the subset of mass communication or in combination with advertising (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Otubanjo, Amujo, & Melewar, 2013).

NIPR interviewees’ accounts in Table 5.21 reveal that the professional association is concerned that these programs may concentrate or prioritize the area of specialization of the educator that is in charge of the programs. Amujo and Melewar (2011) observe that practitioners with a journalism background are likely to approach PR mostly from a media relations perspective, which may cause graduates to view media relations as the most important aspect of PR. A similar example was given by the NIPR interviewees, which they argue may cause graduates to be oriented towards one or more aspect of PR while lacking in other aspects. Moreover, insufficient practitioner knowledge and competencies may hinder practitioners’ ability to meet expected performance standards in the workplace (e.g. Badarocco & Webb, 1995), thereby leading to the perceived practitioner incompetence.

According to NIPR interviewees’ accounts in Table 5.21, the curricula of all university programs in Nigeria, including PR, are accredited by the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2016). Therefore, universities in Nigeria cannot allow students to graduate from programs that have not been accredited by the NUC. Interviewees confirm that NIPR is part of NUC’s accreditation team and may accredit the curricula of PR programs as well. Nevertheless, interviewees believe that specific mechanisms are in place during accreditation to guide against such tendencies. More so, interviewees are certain that NIPR possesses that the full control over the curriculum of its certification program, which is believed to be sufficient for helping members obtain the required knowledge for competent practice.
Table 5.21: NIPR’s opinion on PR programs’ structure in Nigeria as basic theme

| Example of accounts of interviewees' opinion of PR programs’ structure | NIPR1 if the lecturers are journalism graduates, they may not be able to give a good dose of PR and unless the individuals redevelop themselves, or add more value themselves, they may just be having the glorified certificates without having the knowledge and that is why regulation in Nigeria’s tertiary education is a plus…. There is a censorship level where that error can be corrected. The council is the highest decision making part of the institute, once that is done and the council approves the new syllabus, it can take it to AGM for ratification so it becomes, like the new one, the council has approved, and when it is out it will be sent to the AGM for certification and it becomes operational. They (NUC) have to be carried along, it is a professional thing, NUC can only buy into it by ensuring that their own syllabus, their schools (universities) also comply…we are a part of NUC accreditation team, we also want to start our provisional visitation accreditation that our members go to accredit the curriculum of universities and polytechnics offering the education, which is an additional support, | NIPR3 If his background is advertising, you will find out that most of the things they do there are heavily influenced by advertising. The background of who is heading the place has a great impact on what he teaches students. The individual practice will be low in some areas and high in other areas… |

5.2.5 Organizing theme: NIPR membership and Code of conduct

The organizing theme “code of conduct” pertains to basic theme “compliance to NIPR laws”. This focuses on the discipline regarding requirements for entering into PR practice and practicing PR according to NIPR’s code of professional practice. Issues of low entry barriers, unethical conduct as well as quacks and non-NIPR members in PR practice have been identified as part of the challenges for PR’s professional status in Nigeria (Amujo & Melewar, 2011), thereby prompting this line of inquiry. According to interviewee accounts in Table 5.22, it is illegal to practice PR in Nigeria without NIPR certification and membership, while practicing with disregard to the stipulated code of conduct constitutes a misconduct that is punishable under Nigerian laws.

Moreover, without attempting to begin a discussion here, it is important to set the scene for the inquiry about compliance with NIPR laws. Compliance with the code of conduct of PR associations could be voluntary or mandatory. However, while the literature on the enforcement of NIPR regulations suggests that compliance to NIPR laws in Nigeria are voluntary because non-members, so-called quacks, are still in practice without repercussions (e.g. Oko, 2003, Amujo & Melewar, 2011, Udomisor & Osademe, 2013, Samaila, 2015). In contrast, NIPR interviewees’ accounts in this area in table 5.22 indicate that compliance with the code is mandatory. In addition, the Table shows how the association applies a soft approach combined with internal disciplinary measures in response to the highlighted disciplinary issues linked to Nigeria’s PR practice. The soft approach entails an invitation of the violators of both sets of rules for (re)training, (re)certification, while all certified practitioners are added to a verifiable master list so they are allowed to practice PR in Nigeria. Internal disciplinary measures are however proposed for violators who defy or disregard the invitations.
Table 5.22: Compliance with NIPR’s code of conduct as basic theme

| Example of accounts of interviewees’ stance on compliance with NIPR’s code of conduct | NIPR1 Compliance is obligatory; you must, that is what the law says because if you don’t then you are a quack…nobody should practice without being a registered member of the institute. It (the PSG) talks about practicing with ethics, integrity, and transparency and of course, professionalism, must not deceive or tell lies, steal other peoples’ account. If we must prevent quackery you don’t start with policing and litigation, jailing people, fighting a war, going to close their offices…that would be the last (step). The first thing to do is to give them knowledge, take them out of ignorance, counsel them, tell them what they are supposed to gain if they belong to the professional field. And after doing that, prepare values, let them see and feel it.

NIPR2 Soon you will see what the institute plans, because we have a collaboration with ICPC, CPC, EFCC and even the attorney general of the federation, after our re-certification exercise, we are going to the media with an authentic register of PR practitioners with their license numbers, if you are not on that list and you practice PR under whichever nomenclature, we will prosecute that person. So whether you say you are a brand manager, so long as your job content impinges on the PR arena, you are supposed to come to the fold. I think we have been able to attract quality membership. There was one area of concern, we engaged in a 3 point approach to advocacy, compliance, and enforcement, our advocacy policy has yielded fruits because many people are complying now. Now did something we called, “window of opportunity” so if you have been practicing for some years illegally and you want to belong to the fold, we organize a one week program which we call master class, it’s an executive session… we give them a one-week training after they get certified and through that window, we have been able to bring in so many quality members. |

5.2.6 Organizing theme: Interactions with management

The organizing theme “Interactions with management” pertains to the basic themes “purpose of interaction” and “type of interactions”. These themes provide specifics about NIPR’s initiatives towards sensitizing top management, and understanding and addressing workplace realities that could be integrated into their activities for the purpose of enhancing the standard of PR practice and the probability of sustaining their professional status.

Examples of the types and purpose of interactions that are provided in NIPR interviewees’ accounts in Table, 5.23 demonstrate that NIPR’s interactions with organizations are for mutual learning between the association, its members and management. These activities include annual and biannual conferences, corporate visits, training events, monthly meetings etc., which are all targeted towards NIPR members and management of public and private sector organizations respectively. Interviewee accounts indicate that the purpose of these interactions is firstly for learning about the challenges and practical issues faced by practitioners’ and the profession’s ambitions to resolve workplace concerns or challenges. Secondly, interviewees believe that the association sensitizes and educates managements about PR’s value to organizations, and trains them in specific aspects of PR, such that they may be receptive to PR and its potential value contributions into organizations.
Table 5.23: NIPR’s types and purpose of interactions with management

| Example of accounts of interviewees’ the type and purpose of interactions with organizations | NIPR1... we do corporate visits, events, annual conference of directors of PR practitioners, we did one recently, then we have 2017 program schedule contains training, events, we also have monthly meetings where PR people from different companies, from government parastatals and non-government organizations, meet through the federation they meet once in a month and attendance has been very encouraging. In Lagos, at times we have between 80 and 150 participants. The purpose is to listen to challenges and resolve it gently, then continuous professional education, we also get a person to talk to us on practical issues, they answer questions, issue communique, plan for the future, debate challenges and review the mandate and also compare ourselves with other professional bodies. |

5.2.7 Summary of NIPR’s perspective

In order to attend to RQ1b i.e., how is PR perceived by Nigeria's professional association for PR - NIPR?, a range of basic themes coordinated through six organizing themes which constituted an understanding of the NIPR’s perceptions of the legitimacy of PR have been derived from the transcribed and coded data. The NIPR interviewees’ accounts illustrate their assumptions and chosen approach for PR’s professional project as well as the ideal knowledge and competencies for professional practice and expectations for practitioners in the workplace. These are all part of the professional project, which reflects their perception of PR, and are therefore covered with a range of organizing and basic themes respectively.

Interviewees at the minimum had mass communication first degrees along with Masters and PhDs in PR and related fields. These interviewees view PR from an excellence theory and a relationship management perspective. Consequently, PR is viewed as a strategic management function, whereby practitioners are expected to occupy and enact the higher-order/reflective-strategist manager role and be part of the dominant coalition. In this way, practitioners are believed to (1) facilitate boundary-spanning work for helping organizations to understand their environment, and (2) counsel and influence management’s strategic decisions for proactively managing relations with critical publics and stakeholders. Interviewee accounts imply that the ideal qualifications for such practitioners include a combination of academic qualifications (PR or any degree and NIPR certification), capabilities (employers’ industry or product knowledge, environmental scanning interdepartmental work etc.), and personal traits (ethical conduct). Although interviewees recognize the importance of specialization in one or more aspect of PR, the association is instead focused on developing PR generalists that can handle a wide range of PR tasks for organizations.
With regards to the image of PR in Nigeria, the association is of the view that the formerly negative image of PR is now positive. Interviewees believe that the establishment of the traits along with initiatives such as (re)certification of old and non-members in PR practice, coupled with increasing membership enrolment and the perceived recognition of PR as a management and communication function are believed to be indicators of a positive image for PR in Nigeria. Nevertheless, those with little to no PR education or knowledge are believed to be likely to ascribe a negative image to PR based on their limited understanding, misconception and ongoing misrepresentation of PR as unethical communication practice.

Interviewee accounts of PR’s professional project in Nigeria reveal that the five traditional traits along with increasing numbers of practitioners in senior management roles are believed to be the indicators of the professional status of PR in Nigeria. Consequently, the NIPR’s professional projects are characterized by the traits in addition to workplace claims that are shaped by a management perspective. Interviewees view the latter in particular as a key constraint for practitioners to occupy the expected managerial role due to perceived practitioner incompetence and limited PR understanding respectively. In a drive to limit this concern, examples of initiatives that are listed by interviewees include an expanded syllabus, retraining and rigorous testing for PR certification programs. The goal of these initiatives is to prepare practitioners for their desired managerial role enactment. Another dimension to the workplace concerns pertains to management’s tendency to employ non-NIPR members or incompetent individuals for PR positions, especially in the public sector. Unethical conduct or misconduct of such individuals is believed to hinder a consistent professional status and positive image of PR.

In order to mitigate these concerns events and activities for mutual learning between NIPR, practitioners, and organizations are organized by the NIPR. These include conferences, corporate visits, training events, monthly meetings etc. which are believed to enhance the standard of PR practice and the probability of sustaining the professional status. Through these activities, interviewees believe that the top management would be (1) sensitized to PR’s value to organizations, (2) trained in specific aspects of PR such that they may be more receptive to PR. The NIPR is equally able to learn about the challenges and issues faced by practitioners’ and the profession’s ambitions due to workplace realities. Besides, the NIPR is concerned that the structure of PR programs may cause them to lean more towards the specialization of the person in charge of the program, which hinders their goal of producing
PR generalists. However, the association believes that its certification, along with accreditation of PR programs’ curricula by NUC would guide against such a tendency.

Concerning the lack of clarity about compliance with the NIPR’s Code of Professional Conduct and NIPR membership as a license to practice PR in Nigeria, interviewee accounts confirm that compliance is mandatory. Besides, violators are invited to be (re)trained and (re)certified, while internal disciplinary measures are exercised for violators that disregard the first two measures.

5.3 Prominent themes of the PR educators’ perception of PR
The prominent themes of PR educators’ perceptions of PR emerged from interviews, resulting in the thematic network PR educators’ perspective found in figure 5.3. This thematic network addresses RQ1c: How is PR perceived by PR educators in Nigeria? A range of basic themes coordinated through five organizing themes constituting an understanding of the educators’ perceptions of the legitimacy of PR has been derived from the transcribed and coded data. PR educator interviewees’ accounts illustrate their assumptions and expectations for PR curriculum and education, as well as NIPR’s efforts to enhance the standard of PR practice in Nigeria. This information fosters an understanding and explanation of their perspectives through their accounts of PR and why they have specific expectations from NIPR. The following interview data is organized based on the following organizing themes and inherent basic themes:

1) **Demographic information**: personal characteristics of PR educators based on their educational background, the position at their educational institutions, as well as their experiences from teaching, researching and/or coordinating PR education programs.

2) **PR understanding**: description of PR and its image, ideal practitioner role, tasks composition and qualifications

3) **Perceived professional status of PR in Nigeria**: perceived determinants of the professional status, assessment of PR’s professional status in Nigeria based on the evaluations of NIPR’s professional project, the perception of professional autonomy and constraints towards professionalizing PR

4) **PR education programs**: educators’ opinion about the structure of PR programs in Nigerian universities, and extent of their control over the PR program’s curriculum in relation to practitioners’ scope of skills and competencies development for professional practice
5) Interactions with NIPR: Educators’ perception of NIPR, interactions with NIPR, the perception of NIPR’s Code of conduct and advice for NIPR.

A figure of the thematic network structure comprising the derived global, organizing and basic themes have been developed to map out the core components of the section.

Figure 5.3: The structure of the thematic network of how PR is perceived by PR educators in Nigeria

5.3.1 Demographics
The organizing theme demographics refer to the personal characteristics of the interviewed educators. Table 5.24 highlights the three basic themes embedded in the organizing theme which includes: position, educational line and level, and experience with PR. Insights about their characteristics contribute to empirical knowledge for understanding their view of PR, PR programs curricula content, and the ideal qualifications for professional PR practice.
Interviewee accounts reveal how the majority of PR educators’ are NIPR members with a mass communication academic background and are current or immediate past heads of mass communication departments. Interviewees experience with PR could be seen from the examples listed in their accounts about their (1) role as the one responsible for PR programs, and (2) numerous years of teaching, researching and publishing literature on PR in Nigeria.

Table 5.24: PR educator’s Personal characteristics as organizing theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee’s personal characteristics</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Education line and level</th>
<th>Interviewees’ experience with PR</th>
<th>Interviewee NIPR membership status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of interviewees’ characteristics</td>
<td>HOD, Mass Comm. Dean School of Comm. PR Researcher (1) PR lecturer PR Senior lecturer</td>
<td>PhD: Public Relations PhD: Corporate comm. PhD: PR and Advertising PhD: Mass Comm. Professor of PR Associate Professor: Comm. Studies BSc, M.Sc. in Mass Comm, MA Philosophy</td>
<td>PR researcher PR lecturers Integrated PR Publisher</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of interviewees’ accounts of their characteristics

**EDU 3** I am an Associate Professor, Communication and Media XX University...I came to XX university and was appointed as Associate professor of Mass Communication. I have worked at XX University, 2008-2012, and I crossed over to XX University and worked for 2 years, and last year I came to XXX University. I have two books on PR in Nigeria, all on google scholar, the most recent is Principles and practices of PR, and the handbook of PR for Nigerian Students. I joined NIPR in 1984

**EDU 2** My name is X, I am the HOD of mass communication at XX University, I did my masters and PhD in PR, and I am a NIPR member, I have been in the field of PR and teaching PR for about 12-13 years,

**EDU 1** Well I am X, an associate professor of communication studies; I specialize in man management, advertising, and public relations, which are what I’ve been teaching for about 15 years. I have two Masters; my first masters were in the area of International Diplomacy then my second masters was in mass communications and then my PHD mass Communications all specializing in Advertising and public relations

**EDU 4** My name is Dr. XX, am a senior lecturer in the department of Mass Comm. The University of XX. I hold a Masters of Science in PR and I also have a PhD from the University of XX in mass communication and I specialize in crisis management … I have been teaching in the university since 2004. In 2010 I rose to the post of a senior lecturer from 2014, was made d HOD, for 2years, I just handed over to my successor last August.

**EDU 6** My name is Dr., I am an academic and I teach at X Business School, I teach marketing management but I refer to it as strategic marketing because of the nature of what I deliver in the class. I hold a PhD with an emphasis on corporate identity management from the University of Hull, I also studied at Brunel University in London also at the Doctorate capacity. I have a master’s degree in marketing, first degree in accounting and some professional qualifications such as NIPR.

**EDU 8** I am Professor X, I started teaching here in 2001. I specialize in Advertising and PR. My educational background, I studied Business Administration at XX university and went on to study at the school of communication at Boston University and studied Marketing and then Advertising, then I had one year to study for a second master degree in PR at the University of Sterling in the UK and then came back for PhD in Nigeria and I had that in UI. I have been a NIPR member since early 1970s, I served as HOD mass comm and now I have handed over to the current HOD

5.3.2 Organizing theme: PR understanding

The organizing theme “PR understanding” pertains to PR educators’ view of PR as a profession and practice which reflects through basic themes that include: their description of PR, perception PR’s image in Nigeria, appropriate practitioner role, qualifications for competently executing PR activities respectively.
5.3.2.1 Basic theme: Description of PR
The basic theme “Description of PR” concerns the PR educator interviewees’ opinion of PR. Examples of interviewees account about the descriptions in Table 5.25 data reveals how the educator’s descriptions of PR are similar and focus on the image and lean mostly towards organization-public relationship management perspective (e.g. Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Interviewees specifically view PR as the deliberate organizational effort for nurturing the mutually beneficial relationship between organizations and their key publics and stakeholders. Interviewees are of the view that through environmental scanning, organizations are able to acquire knowledge for understanding the external environment, relevant publics and stakeholders respectively. Such knowledge is then applied for enlightening and counseling management on who, how and why to interact with certain stakeholders, such that PR activities are proactive and enhances the organization’s image and relations with their publics and stakeholders.

Table 5.25: Educator’s Description of PR as basic theme

| Example of accounts of interviewees' Description of PR | EDU1 …public relations as an effort to try as much as possible to position any particular entity in a positive light and in trying to position possibly maybe we are talking again about trying to work on the attitude of the environment. definitely you must associate something with me so basically when we are talking about attitude or when we are talking about image we are talking about association |
| EDU3 …as the deliberate plan and sustained effort to create an understanding between an organization and its publics… PR survives on public opinion, to perfect the image of an organization or individual | EDU2 It’s an art and also a social science of analyzing trends, and predicting consequence and advising organizational leaders on how to build relationships between them and their publics |
| EDU4 it’s a discipline or a program or a profession that is all about creating and developing goodwill, understanding, and support between that organization and it’s public whether it is internal or external public. It is a good thing because it always smoothens the relationship; it makes a relationship easy and creates goodwill and good ground for organizations to practice whatever they are doing… | EDU 10 PR is the art and science of predicting consequences, counseling organization leaders with the intention of creating mutual understanding between an org and its publics. |
| EDU 9 One key issue about relationships is understanding. Without mutual understanding between individuals, organizations and all of that there can be no harmonious relationship, there can be no working together and if that is excluded there can be no progress, there can be no development and so the key task of a PR professional is to secure, maintain mutual lines of understanding and communication between an organization and its clients for the purpose of the achievement of a corporate objectives and the interest of all the stakeholders in the system, in the spectrum |

5.3.2.2 Basic theme: the perceived image of PR by PR educators
The basic theme “perceived image of PR by PR educators” concerns the set of associations, beliefs, ideas, feelings or impression that PR educator believe are held about PR by the publics and organizations in Nigeria. Examples of interviewees’ stories about PR’s image in Table 5.26 indicates that PR is perceived to lack a consistent image as it is believed to possess both negative and positive outlook. Interviewees link the negative outlook to the practices of the professional association, organizations and PR professionals respectively.
Firstly, the perceived lack of enforcement of NIPR’s code of conduct and NIPR membership as a license to practice PR in Nigeria is believed to negatively impact the profession’s image. More specifically, the perceived low entry barriers into practice or teaching PR, coupled with quacks and/or non-qualified persons practicing PR are believed to be partly responsible for the negative image. Interviewees believe that this causes PR to be viewed as an inferior profession when compared to other communication professions such as advertising, which PR programs are often paired with. Besides, interviewees are certain that non-members of APCON cannot teach or practice advertising in Nigeria, while non-members of NIPR are able to teach PR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example accounts of interviewees’ Perceived image of PR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDU1</strong> In one word it is bad. I’m saying it is bad … Public relations enjoy a second class image compared to what advertising does and maybe will have to again bring me to the reason why today I’m a member of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria and why I don’t belong to NIPR aside the fact that APCON is not only a chartered institute, it is actually again recognized by law and one of its injunction is that you cannot practice advertising in Nigeria with being a real staff member of APCON. So if I were to be teaching advertising in Nigeria today without being registered with APCON definitely I will be breaking the law and it is the law that would actually again deal with me under APCON. APCON is just basically an association. …my primary reason for not seeing NIPR as a respectable organization. … PR has actually been assumed a negative connotation. In Nigeria when you want to do fraud or give bribe, a positive spin, you say PR. So because the profession is not as strictly regulated as that of advertising you have pretenders, interlopers, people who have no business in PR at all parading themselves as PR practitioners…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDU7</strong> … some of the techniques we use is withholding information…spreading half-truth, spin to alter the impression, PR people are liars,…spin doctors,…propagandists, manipulators who manipulate peoples’ thoughts to suit their own specific objectives or goal …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDU9</strong> … research has shown that out there the perception is that we are always defending the interest of our clients rather than the interest of the public. … the perception of the organization leaders is that you must just defend me, that is why I employed you, …and if you are not daring because of the need to keep your job you will keep quiet and tell the management side of the story….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDU6</strong> A lot of the times, PR departments of national companies are hijacked by the CEO, so all they do is manage the image of the CEO and not that of the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDU8</strong> We have some mediocre who just want to claim they are in PR. … do not know the philosophy of PR, they just hear that they can speak well, dress well, sweet tongue and so on. There are also the charlatans, all they want is to be called PR consultants, we love titles and names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDU3</strong> …PR became a chartered organization in June 1990 by the decree by the government and that was a turning point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDU8</strong> The image is coming up… There is a tremendous appreciation of what PR is and what you can use your knowledge in PR to achieve. The image is on a positive side now; people are getting to understand what PR is. The more we get educated, the more we turn out good students; most of our graduates here are first class students in IMC. … Efforts on our part (PR textbooks) …The image has changed tremendously, graduates are coming out,…People readily know PR, and people now know the charlatans and the mediocre away from the real practitioners. People now measure PR practitioners with the quality of their output, so the image has soared and its already enjoying an enviable assessment from people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, interviewees believe that organizations often misrepresent PR by engaging in propaganda and other unethical practices such as manipulation, giving bribes, spin, half-truth and the likes of PR activities. Interviewee accounts also show that some practitioners are overly concerned about defending their employer’s image, which sometimes involves lying
that may be against the publics’ interest (see also Olatunji, 2014). In contrast, the positive
association to the image by interviewees are linked to NIPR’s establishment of the traits, the
perceived public awareness of PR and its value to organizations, as well as the increasing
number of qualified PR graduates from Nigerian universities.

5.3.2.3 Basic themes: practitioner role, tasks composition, and qualifications
The basic themes “practitioner role” pertains to the hierarchy and position that PR educators
believe and/or expect in-house practitioners to occupy in organizations, the clear set of
“tasks” they are supposed to perform. The “qualifications” concern the academic
requirements, capabilities and personal traits for practitioners to occupy their expected role
and competently carry out the set of tasks.

The interviewees’ accounts about their expected practitioner role in Table 5.27 show a
general consensus for the higher-order/reflective-strategist manager role. Interviewees
contend that practitioners should occupy the management role in which they are members of
the dominant coalition that have direct access to the CEO and thereby participate in decision
making (see Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000). In addition, the expected task composition
extends the practitioner role to also include that of the reflective-strategist manager. This is
seen from the range of examples of tasks that are listed by the interviewees, which includes
(1) counseling management, (2) contributing to various organizational units by developing
overall communications strategy, (3) being knowledgeable about the organization’s aims,
objectives, and external environment; (4) acting as organization spokesperson, (5) managing
organization’s image/reputation, (6) coordinating CSR initiatives for generating goodwill for
organizations, (7) managing issues and crises, (8) engaging in boundary-spanning work and
nurturing mutually beneficial relations with organizations’ critical publics and stakeholders,
and (9) making convincing arguments and accurate projections which demonstrates PR’s
value to organizations.
Table 5.27: Perceived practitioner role and task composition as basic themes

| Example accounts of interviewees' perception of the practitioner role | EDU3 PR is a management profession. If PR is a not in a management position the practitioner in any organization will not be able to follow decisions taken on crucial issues in the organization. EDU1 what we teach them is that PR is actually doing a management function that as a PR practitioner you should have in management one way or the other because you represent the public. You are the eyes, you are the sensory receptor nerves of the public so definitely if management is actually again going to take decisions that would affect either for good or for bad the interest of the public definitely you as their representative must actually again be there EDU6 PR people should report directly to the CEO EDU7 PR must have an executive position; it must be for top-level management. The officer that has access even to the point of the board level, because everything that an organization does or doesn’t is a PR event. EDU10 see PR as an aspect of management. EDU9 PR professionals are not technicians they are core top management professionals and their professionalism is not when there is image crisis or communication crisis. It begins with planning corporate organizational goal and objectives. Tying goals and objectives to communications, to PR programming EDU4 PR, practitioner is a well-qualified public relation professional he should be one of the directors of any organization he should be at the management level he should be one of the directors of any corporate organizations |
| Example accounts of interviewees' perceived Tasks composition | EDU10 The PR person should be part of the various affairs of the various sectors of every organization, there must be the input of PR in finance, marketing, production, personnel, advertising, at the gate, in all spheres of the organization. EDU3 must be able to develop a communications strategy to improve subject matters, … find a way to get your message to be heard, know your organization, their aims and objectives, to be able to speak on behalf of your organization to the members of the public, particularly the press, image management; relating with agitated/aggrieved organization publics, attending to the agitation of publics, , crisis management, meet the needs of the public, assess public opinion… EDU4 Basically if you know the functions of public relations such as proper counseling of management and engaging community discussions, engaging in other duties like corporate social responsibilities EDU7 They should be proactive in the activities and not wait for a crisis to happen deal with issues by communicating appropriately, PR is not limited to media relations, CSR nor community relations, they are all variants of PR, knowing the needs of the people ahead of time … building sustainable mutual benefiting relationships with all the stakeholders in that environment, … EDU6, ..the well-established multinationals the PR person would be involved greatly, in terms of policy formulation and implementation for CSR, marketing. One that does not understand the dynamics of organization can’t really do much, and universities don’t teach organization politics, you have to learn it. You have to be someone who has the capacity and capability to reach out no matter how difficult the terrain, speak convincingly, make a convincing argument. If they can do these they will be able to contribute to decision making, because you will only be able to contribute to decision making if they can see that you are adding value. A PR person should be able to convince and persuade management so that management would create the perception in their mind that the PR role is valuable. …. the PR managers must find means of using the limited amount of resources allocated to him in such a way that gives the company the greatest value and when it gives such value, let the company know it is because of the PR. The PR manager must be able to reach out and not just sit in his cocoon, …one who can go all out, …reach out, build bridges because in organizations you have the winning |

In order to fulfil the expected tasks, the examples of qualifications listed by educator interviewees’ in Table 5.28 as necessary for professional PR practice and the managerial role includes (1) formal PR education and training, (2) NIPR certification and membership, (3) ethical conduct in accordance with NIPR’s code of professional practice, and (4) industry/business sector knowledge. Nevertheless, interviewees’ express concerns about the perceived inadequacy of the scope and/or content of formal PR programs and certification’s capacities respectively to prepare practitioners for the expected role and associated tasks. Amujo and Melewar’s 2011 study questions the robustness of available PR programs and certification in Nigeria, while Berger (2005) questions whether practitioners are
knowledgeable enough to effectively counsel management and earn the CEO’s trust. Abbott (1988) stresses that organizations may not be interested in formal credentials, but rather prefer professionals that are believed to be capable of carrying out tasks needed for achieving corporate objectives or attending to environmental uncertainties (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). This implies that practitioners may be unable to occupy the managerial role based on current PR programs.

Table 5.28: Perceived practitioner qualifications as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example accounts of interviewees' perception of the practitioner qualifications</th>
<th>EDU6</th>
<th>EDU8</th>
<th>EDU6</th>
<th>EDU4</th>
<th>EDU3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... he/she has professional training, passed the professional/certification exam in PR and have qualified and have also gone through local and international training and belong to the body of PR practitioners (NIPR).</td>
<td>The PR person is that person who takes care of the reputation of himself and that of the organization he works for, which entails both personal and corporate reputation management. ...establish and nurture relationships.</td>
<td>PR people should report directly to the CEO, but that hardly happens...he should be part of senior management... There are cases where PR manager reports directly to the MD but he is not part of the management board. I think the reason why that is the case is that how many PR people can leave their department and work in other departments? Maybe PR people don’t educate themselves well enough. Maybe poor education is what is accounting for it.</td>
<td>PR person should report directly to the CEO, but that hardly happens...he should be part of senior management... There are cases where PR manager reports directly to the MD but he is not part of the management board. I think the reason why that is the case is that how many PR people can leave their department and work in other departments? Maybe PR people don’t educate themselves well enough. Maybe poor education is what is accounting for it.</td>
<td>PR person should be somebody that is trained in the profession,... must have acquired the training both academically from tertiary institutions either polytechnic or universities and in the job. Universities offer PR at the undergraduate level and at the masters level and even at PhD level.</td>
<td>A prescribed type of formal education to train people in that profession. A standard formal education as a minimum for practitioners of PR in Nigeria is a Professional Ordinary Diploma organized by NIPR. This is equivalent to an ordinary diploma in Mass Communication in any Nigerian Polytechnic. Then there is the Advanced Diploma which is equivalent to HND Mass Communication as well. And you know the HND and First Degree in Mass Communication are equal in terms of requisite qualifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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5.3.3 Organizing theme: NIPR's professional project by PR educators

The organizing theme “NIPR’s professional project by PR educators” pertains to the educator interviewees’ evaluation of NIPR’s professional project. The evaluation is based on the perceived determinants for attaining professional status, the outcome of PR’s professional project such as practitioners’ autonomy in the workplace. Therefore the organizing theme is based on three basic themes, which include “professional status evaluation”, “determinants of professional status” and “professional autonomy”.

Tables 5.29 and 5.30 demonstrate examples of interviewees’ accounts about the professional status of PR and the perceived determinants for professional status respectively. The tables show a divided opinion about the professional status of PR amongst interviewees who view PR as a profession in the former table, while the status is questioned in the latter table. Nevertheless, similar determinants are listed by interviewees as determinants for the professional status. Interviewees’ suggesting that PR has attained the professional status list
elements of the traits approach (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016) and that of the system of professions version from the power approach (Abbott, 1988). These include the establishment (1) formal PR programs and certification, (2) body of knowledge/scientific discipline, (3) code of conduct, (4) professional association, (5) recognition of PR as a professional practice for managing relations between organizations and its publics i.e. a societal and workplace arena claims, and (6) chartered status through the Nigerian government decree of 1990 i.e. the legal arena claim.

Table 5.29: Perceived determinants for professional status of PR as basic theme

| Example accounts of interviewees’ perception of the determinants of professional status | EDU10 Looking at the general status of PR in Nigeria is that it is a profession according to the act of parliament that makes it an acceptable and recognized body in Nigeria based on the acceptability by the government |
| EDU4 I can describe PR as a profession which actually creates understanding between an organization and its public, it’s a discipline or a program or a profession that is all about creating and developing goodwill, understanding, and support between that organization and it’s public whether it is internal or external public. |
| EDU2 The first thing is the government recognition, which they have, 2, relevance, how relevant are they to the scheme of things, all other professions I mentioned have become formidable forces that one can trace their impacts to the economy, even government recognize them as a formidable force….The existence of a professional body’s with a high pedigree, coupled with rigorous certification, a vibrant image, perceived competences due to chartered status, consistent delivery of expected services |
| EDU3 We can start from the government. decree – chartered status, functions in government, PR books are published, there is a professional body where practitioners are members, seminars are held, members of IPR, publication in international textbook, I coauthored one with Jahnasoozi, the practice has become more professional than in the past and people are more aware of PR is and what it is not. A prescribed type of formal education to train people in that profession. A standard formal education for minimum practitioners of PR in Nigeria…The profession must be recognized by the Federal Government, the recognition has been there for a long time … NIPR was chartered by the Federal Government under Gen. Babangida on 6th June 1990 when the instrument was signed into law by a decree, now an act of the Federal Republic of Nigeria…PR specialists in private and public practice… |
| EDU6 PR is a profession because we have PR agencies in Nigeria … practitioners who act professionally within the dictates of the practice so it is a profession that has its challenges. … the fact that you do the professional exam and become professionalized; there is a decree 16 of 1990 that says that if you do not register as a member of NIPR, you cannot practice the profession …. I believe it’s a profession because for you to do PR, you need to understand certain practices, and you need to pursue those practices for you to be able to excel in it… |

In contrast, examples of interviewee accounts in Table 5.30 questions PR’s professional status. Interviewee stories in the table show that the doubts are linked to the perceived lack of enforcement of the NIPR’s code of conduct. Interviewees often compare PR with prestigious professions such as accounting and engineering. These professions have established the traits and have consistently maintained their professional status recognition in their societal, legal and workplace arenas respectively (see Abbott, 1988). However, Greenwood (1957) notes that occupations that have not attained the professional status may also possess the traits, but only to a lesser degree. A code of conduct and clearly stipulated membership criteria for professional PR practice has been established in Nigeria. However, Interviewees believe that the influx of quacks and non-NIPR members with superficial qualifications are still practicing PR in Nigeria. In addition, interviewees perceive the absence of repercussions for such
misconduct reinforces the “all comers affair” assumption of PR in Nigeria. When this perception is shared by the Nigerian public, PR’s professional status claim in the societal arena may erode, which may extend to the workplace arena as organizations practices are scrutinized by society whom they depend upon (e.g. Abbott, 1988).

Furthermore, interviewees’ accounts in Table 5.30 reveal that the members of prestigious communication professional associations, such as journalism and advertising, are able to practice and teach PR in Nigeria. Consequently, journalists are believed to be often employed for PR positions, while the reverse is not possible for PR practitioners. This is believed to undermine the NIPR’s law (i.e. NIPR membership as the license to practice PR in Nigeria). Besides, journalists in PR positions are believed to carry out PR activities with a limited understanding of the subject and thereby misrepresent PR as one-way communications for defending the CEO/leader's image or for attacking organizations’ critiques. Amujo and Melewar (2011) emphasize the tendency for journalists’ over-reliance on one-way PR such as press releases as the most important PR function, especially during crises. More so, PR’s history with journalism along with a limited management assumption of PR as media relations causes them to prefer journalistic resources, i.e. media access and attention respectively for reaching key publics.

Table 5.30: Questionable professional status of PR in Nigeria by PR educators

| Example accounts of interviewees' perceived doubts of the professional status of PR in Nigeria |
| EDU1 because the profession is not as strictly regulated as that of advertising you have pretenders, interlopers, people who have no business in PR at all parading themselves as PR practitioners, …definitely they are going to take so much away from the profession... |
| EDU7 There is no professional status of PR in Nigeria, anybody can wake up and say they are a PR person…the spokesperson should not be a journalist, journalists by nature are meant to attack so rather than defend they attack. |
| EDU2 The status is not that strong…The question is what special recognition comes with PR? A lot comes with the mentality, the image that is given to something, when you talk about advertising, a lot is thought about …If I am to speak in an educational environment where my colleagues have COREN (engineering professional association), ICAN (accounting professional association) and all of that, when all are talking about and I mention PR, they say what is that? Some management just wants publicity, and even accuse practitioners of not doing their job… |
| There are no defined PR rules, when u think of PR you think of publicity in the media, who can do it better than NJI people (journalists), he is trained as a journalist, and he can get us publicized so who can do it better. Same for APCON (advertising) if PR is viewed more on the advertising spectrum, which is the problem and these professionals can easily fit in because its less defined our job is considered to be part of all these… a journalist is able to cover a story and publicize it, but when there is crisis would you publicize it, you have to manage it…historically, the first set of people that practiced PR were all journalists. Organizations will pick the one (journalists) they believe could easily get them the media attention. It is considered that a PR person has a difficulty in breaking into the media and a journalist is already a member. |
| … for professions like engineering, you can’t practice without their professional body’s membership (COREN), we can’t even graduate engineers without COREN or be addressed as an engineer without it, the enforcement is there, so in a case where I don’t have to be a PR person before I can occupy a PR related position, it simply means that I can exclude myself and it means that the law may not affect me, which means that if there are new developments or regulations I am left out of it |
With regard to professional autonomy, interviewee accounts in Table 5.31 show an expectation for uncontrolled autonomy but equally a realization that this is only made possible by management. Educators expect practitioners to ideally work with uncontrolled autonomy based on practitioner professional qualifications and PR expertise. These reflect earlier interviewees’ accounts about the expected managerial role and task composition whereby practitioners are expected to counsel management, develop a communication strategy and participate in decision making, which suggests little or no supervision or control (e.g. Larson, 1977, Grunig, 1992).

However, interviewee’s accounts equally reflect an understanding that the management often determines the type of autonomy that practitioners’ are able to exercise (see workplace arena claims, Abbott, 1988). Moreover, organizations are understood to be unconcerned about professions’ expectations in the workplace but rather managements’ objectives and appreciation of professions that are capable of helping organizations to achieve them (e.g. Abbott, 1988; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The decision for uncontrolled autonomy is believed to be conditioned by management’s perceived value contribution of practitioners’ ideas and its capacity to help achieve organizational goals, while some management applies bureaucratic control without considerations for autonomy (e.g. Oppenheimer, 1972).

Table 5.31: PR educator perceived professional autonomy as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example accounts of interviewees’ perception of professional autonomy for practitioners</th>
<th>EDU10 As a PR person that is trained you are free to do your work because you are guided by a code of ethics which gives you limitations, boundaries. Nobody prevents you from doing your work, it’s being professional at doing your responsibilities, so you know your boundary…. the key thing is that once you know your work you have control of your work.</th>
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<tr>
<td>EDU9 Well if you know your onions you would fare better, if you don’t you would be led by the nose. ….it’s the ability of the individual to assert himself.. if you know your onions you are a hardcore professional there would still be other jobs for you apart from that one so people should be principled, they should be ethical about their practice.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDU1 what we teach them is that PR is actually doing a management function that as a PR practitioner you should have in management one way or the other because you represent the public. You are the eyes, you are the sensory receptor nerves of the public so definitely if management is actually again going to take decisions that would affect either for good or for bad the interest of the public definitely you as their representative must actually again be there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU8 what it takes is for your idea to be well researched, very sound and in agreement with corporate objectives and vision and profitable to the organization, If your ideas have to be practiced, the management must put resources behind you and if they don’t accept your ideas you get the answer and you drop it except you want to lose your job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU6 There is nothing called professional autonomy in Nigeria if you act like that you are out of job and it is not peculiar to PR’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU1 I actually again agreed to this earlier on that in most organizations definitely you don’t find PR being represented at the top and that could be quite unfortunate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDU2 I interact with some of them, for some, they are not at the management level, so a problem has to happen before they are called upon to come and do something. ….Some the management just want them to do publicity and just tell them to go and do this, and even accuse practitioners of not doing their job, let's just say that they do not have the free hand and recognition that one would expect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU4 They (organizations) have problems because they don’t normally use qualified PR practitioners if they employ a quack, such a quack will not have autonomy the quack will be looked upon as an executive messenger …Because the management does not really recognize the value of public relations, they just look at him as executive messenger or receptionist…assuming the person is a member of the management board, the person would have his autonomy by default.</td>
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</table>
### 5.3.4 Organizing theme: PR education programs

The organizing theme “PR education program” pertains to basic themes “structure of PR programs”, PR educators’ “opinion on PR programs’ structure and specialization” and the “extent of control over PR curriculum” respectively. Formal PR programs represent a core source of practitioners’ abstract PR knowledge acquisition for professional practice (e.g. Abbott, 1988). The structure of the program partially impacts the scope of competencies that graduates are able to develop in combination with those developed from NIPR’s certification.

The examples of the types of PR programs offered by the interviewees’ schools depict some of the common structures of PR programs in Nigeria. Table 5.32 shows PR as (1) a subset or module under mass communication, (2) PR in combination with advertising as a major under mass communication or journalism education, (3) core course and area of specialization under IMC program, (4) PR in combination with advertising as a major under journalism. The interviewee accounts reveal that PR programs in Nigeria are mostly combined with advertising and designed as a module or area of specialization under the mass communication, journalism (Amujo & Melewar, 2011, Otubanjo, Amujo, & Melewar, 2013) or as part of integrated marketing communication program respectively.

#### Table 5.32: The structure of PR programs as basic theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example accounts of interviewees’ structure of PR programs</th>
<th>EDU1</th>
<th>EDU7</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what we award is just BSc Mass Communications…for now students major in broadcasting or PR and advertising…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR is situated under BSc Mass communication. We don’t offer PR education as a specific PR course; so it is a course under that…</td>
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<td>we handle PR at the undergraduate level, at the masters level and even at PhD level now some people specialize in public relation and advertising both at masters and PhD level, but at the undergraduate level, it is a general course we teach them the principles of public relation</td>
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<td>In the mass communication department, we offer PR and Advertising…. there are introductory courses in the early semesters, in 300 level they start to do the core courses and then you are having the likes of media analysis for PR…we also look at PR planning and strategy, that is a managerial aspect…The difference between business organization policies and PR policies, …and then we have PR campaign management, we have financial PR, Community Relations, PR for commercial and non-profit making organizations, PR agency, setting up a PR firm, so we have quite a number of courses like that.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our school is a monotechnic, we award national diploma and PgD program with courses in creative journalism, broadcast journalism, PR and advertising.</td>
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<td>Actually it (PR) is not a subset here; it is one of the core areas of our specialization… Students choose their option and its either advertising and PR, which is IMC or broadcast and print applied…the option that attracts most students is IMC.</td>
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With regards to educators’ opinion on the structure of the PR programs, the interviewees’ accounts in Table 5.33 show that the majority of interviewees may be unconcerned with the current structures. However, a minority contend that PR is often depicted as an add-on or subordinate to other communication disciplines. They are also of the opinion that graduates...
that have attended the variously structured PR programs may end up with varied PR orientations and therefore prioritize one or more type or aspect(s) of PR to be the most important component for the profession. Based on the predominant structures of PR programs, possible orientations of PR graduates may include that of IMC, journalistic, mass communication perspectives or as part of advertising respectively. Interviewees believe that these would reflect the scope of practitioners’ competences and prioritized tasks when practicing PR in the workplace. Aspects where practitioners lack the knowledge of meeting organizations’ PR expectations, may lead to perceived practitioner incompetence, which may be extended to the entire PR profession. Consequently, interviewee expects a unified structure and curricula for PR programs.

Table 5.33 PR educators’ opinion on the structure of PR programs as basic theme

| Example accounts of interviewees' opinion on the structure of PR programs |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| **EDU1** … I think situating PR in communication is actually again the most appropriate model that I can see. In terms of implication or possible repercussion, I don’t see any repercussion to that as long as we are able to actually again harmonize the curriculum under the regulation of a particular government agency so I want to believe that whether PR is actually again taught in mass communication or in marketing or corporate communication, it is a question of delivery, it is a question of quality service. The NUC is there… NIPR is there to actually ensure that whatever is actually taught reflect what PR is actually all about. |
| **EDU1** I don’t think that there is anything, it’s you that would decide where to go. You have a conglomerate of experience. For you to have a degree in mass communication it means you must have studied PR, public film production, public journalism, and radio/TV production. |
| **EDU3** There are five legs of mass comm., broadcast (tv and radio) and print (newspaper and magazines), PR, advertising, Internet. Even though PR is placed under advertising, I still think they are different sides of the same coin. |
| **EDU9** PR is not a subset of advertising however when departments offer advertising and PR what it means is that they have given opportunities for students to learn these different professional skills and so it’s not a module, there are different courses in these lines…. |
| **EDU 5** we offer PR … principles of PR, we also teach PR strategies under mass communication because when it comes to mass communication we have areas that make up the communication according to NUC programme and I think PR goes hand in hand with advertising. Then at the masters level, people specialize in PR/Advertising. |
| **EDU 7** … we award national diploma and PgD program with courses in creative journalism, broadcast journalism, PR and advertising. At the undergraduate level, we run mass comm, and PR and Advertising are both components of that,. journalism (print, broadcast, digital, social), essentially at the PgD level, we run the PR program we have an integrated approach like the IMC approach in the sense that the student with speciality in PR takes courses in advertising, marketing, generic areas in communications, i.e. development communication. |
| **EDU 2** One of the greatest problems is that PR is not recognized as an individual entity … when I discuss with my marketing colleagues, PR in their textbooks as well as in advertising textbooks, PR is a chapter, . for me PR is a discipline on its own, so when they look at it and see PR as an add-on, I look at PR as a profession, the problem with all of them you have PR practitioners trained by different schools come together and they don’t have the same view, in some they think you are an assistant to this to enhance the work of this, in another you have a different job profile where others assist you. …so the question is what exactly is the goal… there needs to be a unified training for PR in which we ensure that we treat students the same. For instance when I taught at a journalism school, they think that media relations are the most important thing, when its from marketing, you think the bottom-line is the most important and the reason is because …all of these perceptions are skewed and not the entire picture, they are bits of the entire, so anyone that now goes to an organization would now be functioning within the limitations the information/knowledge they have which would not deliver entirely the expectations of the organization, and that can make them think generally that is the profession and not knowing that there are variations in the training and education. |

While the examples of interviewees accounts in Table 5.34 about PR specialization is positive, interviewees believe it limits their employment opportunities. Interviewees are of
the view that specialization in a few aspects of PR or a specific industry may help the practitioner develop unique expertise. However, they also acknowledge that these restrict their scope of functionality and consequently limit value contribution into organizations, which may hinder their employability. Instead, interviewees’ accounts suggest a general focus on developing PR generalists with a broad range of PR competencies for professional practice.

Table 5.34: PR educators’ perception of practitioner specialization

| Example accounts of interviewees’ perception of practitioner specialization | EDU10 | I cherish it, it’s very good, like I told you it’s a big discipline and large environment so having specialization is very important meaning that we should have people in community relations, in media relations, in financial relations and employee relations, government relations and it’s a welcome development because when you have that you try and create the room for expertise. …our program here is PR because we only work with the content in the PR syllabus and that is it. |
| EDU8 | We teach them all because we don’t know where the students will find themselves. For instance, if they end up in the oil industry and they give them community relations, they must be able to do it. So they must be able to do all, government relations, etc. |
| EDU3 | Financial PR, community PR, media relations, the specializations are there. In other words, personally I have a different background before getting into PR but I discovered that it was better for me to specialize in media relations so I attended many courses in Europe and America, in Florida, Orlando, Connell. Your specialization depends on the focus of the organization you are working for. The oil companies in Nigeria, because they are working with people in the rural areas to be able to support them where they are prospecting for crude oil, they have to practice community relations. We train them (students) in all areas, we don’t know where they would get a job when they leave this place, and it is all around, financial PR, government relations employee relations, media relations, community relations. |
| EDU2 | I don’t think it is advisable, a lot of people feel PR is already narrow, people already question why allow student do PR and advertising, Broadcasting(as a major), why don’t you just let them do mass communication so that when they go out there they can do any of these because it gives them more chance out there so if you now say that someone should specialize in a particular area that further narrows their chances of functionality out there. …the kind of job you do can encourage you to go for further training in that specific area… you can learn what is required for that industry… rather than to learn one thing that simply limits you and you don’t have the opportunity of moving to another place. |
| EDU1 | No. what we do is just the PR. In short the plan has already been sent to management and by the grace of God we are looking at 2019-2020 when the department can actually again Trans modify into a school of communication and we have PR as a department, advertising as a department broadcasting as department and things like that so with that definitely we can develop narrow specialized areas within PR. |
| EDU7 | Your specialization depends on the focus of the organization you are working for. The oil companies in Nigeria, because they are working with people in the rural areas to be able to support them where they are prospecting for crude oil, they have to practice community relations. In Chevron, there is the whole department for media relations then, of course, another department within the PR unit deals only with the communities where they are getting oil in the Niger Delta... We train them (our students) in all areas, we don’t know where they would get a job when they leave this place... …as you are growing in the industry and practice, you must have the knowledge of every aspect that is what makes you a generalist or consultant. …one must strive for a "rainbow practitioner" that has a coalition of knowledge of what PR is all about. |

Regarding the extent of control over PR curriculum, interviewees’ accounts in Table 5.35 demonstrate that NUC sets the minimum benchmark and leaves a little room for educators to add a few courses to make up the stipulated amount of course units for PR programs. Interviewees’ accounts also reveal that educators are of the view that NUC imposes a curriculum that is only is revised and accredited every five years on the educators. While interviewees’ accounts show that educators often copy one another’s PR curriculum, they are of the view that universities are autonomous entities that should have control over the curricular content of the education they are teaching. This is believed to be the means through
which the education could be updated for it to be relevant for society and meet organizations’. More specifically, the examples of the changes that interviewees accounts show includes (1) benchmarking individual curricula against global standards, (2) inclusion of courses on new media in the PR landscape, and (3) a management-oriented PR program instead of the communication-oriented version that is currently in place. Interviewees believed these changes would better prepare graduates for practice in organizational contexts as they would be more knowledgeable about business management and workplace dynamics.

Table 5.35: PR educators’ extent of control over PR curriculum

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<th>Example accounts of interviewees’ extent of control over PR curriculum</th>
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<td><strong>EDU1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>EDU9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>EDU10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>EDU3</strong></td>
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5.3.5 Organizing theme: PR educators’ interactions with NIPR

The organizing theme “PR educators’ interactions with NIPR” pertains to the basic themes the “type and purpose of interactions with NIPR”, perception of compliance to NIPR laws” and “educators’ expectations of NIPR”. Examples of the types of interactions between the NIPR and PR educators in interviewee accounts demonstrate that they are mostly about PR education, NIPR membership for undergraduate PR students and membership due collection. Although the professional association’s relevance is acknowledged by interviewees, the collection of interviewee accounts from Tables 5.36 to 5.38 suggests a tense relationship between the NIPR and the educators.

According to the interviewees, one of the purposes of interacting with the NIPR is for the accreditation of PR programs. Interviewee accounts reveal that in addition to NUC’s accreditation of PR programs, NIPR equally accredits PR programs of educational institutions in Nigeria. The latter creates a pathway for NIPR membership for PR undergraduates. However, the NIPR’s accreditation is not compulsory; therefore, interviewees have ignored it because of their perceived over-bearing demands for accreditation by NIPR along with a lack of perceived benefit of the accreditation on the PR programs.

Table 5.36: PR educators’ interaction with NIPR: accreditation of PR programs

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<th>Example accounts of interviewees’ perception of the accreditation of PR programs (NIPR)</th>
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<td>EDU1 For example in the area of advertising …our program has been accredited by APCON…Immediately you graduate all you need to do is to just pick up their form and fill it, turn it in and then when they are convinced that you are actually again a bonafide graduate and your membership becomes automatic. We would have actually exploited that same pattern of relationship with NIPR, in short, we did start but that was truncated by some overbearing demands from NIPR and again vis a vis our assessment of NIPR asking for this, I think we can do without NIPR because what they were asking for was I think equally the amount that APCON was asking for but I think again APCON has more credibility than NIPR so we decided to go with them. Even though we don’t have any formal relationship with NIPR but our students graduate and some of them want to become members, we won’t constitute the clock so we draw input from NIPR believing that maybe a day will come when they would be willing to partner with us.</td>
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<td>EDU2 NIPR’s efficiency as a body has greatly reduced, in the past few years. I remember that when I was in X university, I tried to get them to come to the school and accredit their program, I was almost begging them to come and when they finally answered the call, they were asking for a bill too high to have the course accredited and I told the Dean of our faculty in the Babcock that this is what NIPR is asking for and he asked what for. That some other associations are begging us to come and accredit our programs, why is NIPR like that? There was nothing else I did not do, I reported to xx and some others; they did not come to x university until I left. Here I have been trying, towards the end of last year that we could get student membership. The leadership has stopped spreading their wings, I am not even sure the national body is visiting anywhere like they used to do, it’s the state chapters.</td>
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<td>EDU 3 NIPR does. For all I know, PR at XX has been here for 13 years, and NIPR has not come here for an official accreditation. For instance, APCON comes to check what we are teaching (advertising students) to be sure they get the right education and when the students graduate this is the kind of membership they can get because they have met the requirements for practice, which means we can graduate advertising students and they can graduate and be recognized by APCON as professionals. NIPR has not been here to say what are you teaching, how does it align with the industry, what is the kind of membership that the students are entitled to when they finish, what else has not been covered, we have had interactions with NIPR in the past but it’s just a lecturer coordinating the students we have in NIPR.</td>
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<td>EDU 4 NIPR and NUC should only engage in accreditation of programs and monitoring and regulating their members in the practice…yeah! they move around for accreditation, they move around to accredit all these courses too.</td>
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Another purpose for interacting with the NIPR according to the interviewees’ accounts is for attending NIPR’s events and to be active members. Moreover, examples of interviewees’ stories indicate that they have been disillusioned by a lack of awareness of NIPR’s activities and lack of perceived benefits of NIPR membership, which causes them to become inactive members. There is also the view that the NIPR’s activities are not appealing to the younger practitioners in Nigeria.

Table 5.37: Awareness of NIPR’s activities

| Example accounts of interviewees’ Perception of the legal right to teach PR in Nigeria | EDU6 | They (NIPR) are a relevant Irrelevant, they are there, we know that they are the body representing and regulating PR and we have some important people among them but irrelevant in the sense that how many young people this day will actually go to do the professional exam, how many young people, probably 21-year-olds would want to attend NIPR’s meeting, how many 30 something-year-olds would want to abide by the dictates of the body even if they are members. |
| EDU2 | ...I am a member and I do not see what I am benefiting from it...We relate with NUC and get approval from NUC...We have not worked with NIPR...I am a member of NIPR but currently not very active, I think the certification is weak in that other professional bodies gives an added advantage to you which you can leverage for your career but NIPR does not and really does not make much difference... |
| EDU 3 | I have not been attending their membership meeting in the xxx state not because I am not an active member at a point the institute became a laissez faire affair where they became a part Nigeria’s typical political affair and at some point, I was disillusioned and so I just have to keep my cool |
| EDU 2 | I am a member of NIPR, I do not see what I am benefiting from it |

With regards to the perceived compliance with NIPR laws, interviewees doubt if PR practitioners take the professional association seriously in terms of their willingness to abide by the NIPR’s code of conduct. Interviewees highlight the lack of and/or unawareness of effective enforcement of NIPR’s regulation for deterring quacks or unqualified persons from practicing PR in Nigeria, as well as no publicly known case of punishment for any violators of the codes. Academic literature on the NIPR’s code of conduct suggests that compliance with the laws is voluntary while enforcement is non-existent (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Samaila, 2015). Interviewees expect the association to create a law enforcement task force to weed out those violating the laws.

Besides, interviewees are of the view that non-NIPR members are believed to be able to teach and practice PR if they are a member of other communications’ professional associations. Interviewees’ accounts show that there are no stipulations preventing or criminalizing such practices within NIPR’s code of conduct. Interviewees find this to be problematic because it reinforces and extends the low entry barrier into corporate PR practice and training, whereby almost anyone could teach PR. Interviewees who are members of APCON confirm that this is
not possible for advertising, which is believed to undermine NIPR’s capacity to regulate entry into PR.

Table 5.38: Perceived compliance and enforcement of NIPR’s code of conduct

| Example accounts of interviewees’ Perception of the compliance and enforcement of NIPR code of conduct |
| EDU1 … the profession is not as strictly regulated as that of advertising, you have pretenders, interlopers, people who have no business in PR at all parading themselves as PR practitioners… |
| EDU10 It is clear, the way and manner for members to conduct themselves according to the dictates. It’s lack of implementation. The institute and the president could set up a task force to ensure that people are complying |
| EDU2 …the enforcement is yet to be seen, there are no publically known cases of repercussion/punishment of violators and I observed that most organizations around that have PR practitioners, there is no enforcement of that rule, I have interacted with a lot of PR people in other organizations too, I think they maybe pay a lot of attention to big organizations and practicing PR is not limited to PR firms |
| EDU4 Implementation is low…. They should do their duties responsibly; anybody that is not doing something correct should be sanctioned |
| EDU7 Yes, the challenge is the enforcement. Like I said, who disciplines who, you can’t practice medicine if you are not a certified doctor |

In the end, the core expectations of educators from NIPR according to interviewee accounts pertain to (1) enforcement of NIPR laws through a task force, (2) support for PR programs with business cases and offer bearable financial demands for PR program’s accreditation, (3) restore PR’s image, (4) work on gaining professional recognition in the public and workplace arenas, (5) communicating the benefits of NIPR membership to young and old current and potential members, organizing events that attract young in collaboration with well-respected and seasoned practitioners, (6) openness to alternative ideas that can improve the standard of PR in Nigeria, and finally (7) collaborative work between educators and the professional association.

Table 5.39: PR educators’ expectations of NIPR as basic theme

| Example accounts of interviewees’ expectations of NIPR |
| EDU10 ensure that the implementation of the act …the task force should be put in place to implement |
| EDU2 I want an advantage as a member of NIPR to be able to get information that I can use to prepare them for their career, I want a case where students can walk to an organization and say that I need data, this is my recommendation from NIPR |
| EDU 4 Nigeria Institute of public relation primary functions should be to give accreditations to universities for higher institutions that are teaching these courses and also monitor what their members do ….not engaging in teaching and giving certificate course… |
| EDU6 They need to reach out to the youths. They can create a junior NIPR, or just call it another name to sort of let the youth do their thing the way they understand it. Different age cohorts speak different languages. …NIPR needs to look at itself again, they need to ask themselves, what would make the movers, the decision makers … senior and well respected PR people come in for their meetings, that caliber of people can attract and pull the younger ones in… |
| EDU7 I want the body to properly integrate with the academic institution; create a consciousness among the students to drive the student membership of the association. |
5.3.6 Summary of PR Educators’ perspective
Towards answering RQ1c: How is PR perceived by PR educators in Nigeria? A range of basic themes coordinated through five organizing themes constituting an understanding of the educators’ perceptions of the legitimacy of PR has been derived from the transcribed and coded data from PR educator interviewees. The interviewees’ accounts illustrate their opinions, assumptions, and expectations for PR curriculum and education, as well as NIPR’s professional project and its outcome on the PR profession and training respectively in Nigeria. This information fosters an understanding and explanation of the educators’ perspectives of PR.

Interviewee accounts reveal that PR educators in Nigeria are mostly PhD holders within mass communication, corporate communication or PR and Advertising. They all possess numerous years of experience as PR lecturers, publishers and in some cases the head of the mass communication department with influence over PR programs. PR for them represents proactive and deliberate organizational activities for understanding their environment and nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with their key stakeholders based on environmental scanning and adapting to stakeholders’/environment’s interests. PR is believed to have attained a professional status and has a positive image. Interviewees ascribe these to the NIPR’s establishment of the traits approach, PR’s chartered status and the perceived public and organizations’ recognition of PR as an organizational practice. However, the professional status is equally questioned due to issues pertaining to low-to-no entry barriers into teaching and practicing PR, the misrepresentation of PR, and the perceived lack of enforcement of NIPR laws against violators of the laws, which in turn causes a perceived negative image of PR in Nigeria.

Interviewees share a consensus that in-house PR practitioners should occupy a higher-order managerial role. However, their expected practitioner tasks composition suggests that they should ultimately work as reflective-strategist managers who help the organization to adapt its strategies to its environment. Examples of these tasks according to interviewees include building and nurturing mutually beneficial relations between organizations and their stakeholders and/or publics through boundary spanning, counseling management and influencing overall organizational strategies etc. Interviewees believe that Formal PR education, NIPR certification, employers industry and/or business sector knowledge and ethical conduct are the necessary qualifications for the practitioner to occupy the expected
role and perform the expected tasks. Although these practitioners are expected to work with uncontrolled autonomy from their managerial role, management’s objectives, appreciation for PR, and practitioners capabilities for achieving such objectives are identified as the determinants of practitioners’ level of autonomy in the workplace, which are determined by management.

PR educations in Nigeria are often combined with advertising or structured as modules under journalism or mass communication, or as part of integrated marketing communications. The majority of educators do not see any issues with these structures on PR graduates skills set. However, a minority argues for a tendency for the graduates to be variously oriented by taking modules depending on the core subject area of their organization. This is believed to lead to a situation whereby various PR graduates have varied skills set and may be viewed as incompetent in the workplace when they are unable to perform specific PR tasks that the structure of their education ignores.

Although interviewees believe that specialization in one or a few aspects of PR or industry would help practitioners develop unique expertise; they equally fear that this may narrow their skill set. Instead, specialization is discarded while the emphasis is placed on developing PR generalists who can undertake a wide range of PR tasks for organizations. Besides, the curriculum of PR programs is regulated and therefore determined by the NUC in Nigeria. In contrast, PR educators would prefer to exercise a certain level of autonomy over the curriculum of their PR programs for adding courses that they believe would better prepare PR graduates for professional practice and organizational demands.

With regards to interactions between PR educators and the NIPR, interviewee accounts suggest tense relations between the actors. This pertains to perceived over-bearing demands for accreditation by NIPR and a lack of perceived benefit of PR programs accreditation, and NIPR membership for educators respectively. More so, interviewees believe that compliance with NIPR laws is either voluntary or enforcement of the law against violators is non-existent. This is believed to manifests into a perceived lack of entry barriers for non-NIPR members to legally practice and/or teach PR and is another source of tension between the actors. Furthermore, educators’ that were formerly active have become inactive due to their feelings of disillusionment or being neglected by the professional association due to lack of communications from NIPR. Examples of interviewees’ specific expectations from the NIPR
include addressing issues leading to the negative image of PR, the questionable professional status in Nigeria respectively. Additionally, they expect ongoing communications from the NIPR specifically about its events and initiatives. With respect to PR education, practitioners’ competences development and recognition of PR in particular, educator interviewees expect more collaborative work with NIPR.

5.4 Summary of findings
In addressing RQ1 and the clusters of questions underneath it, the findings of the three actor’s community’s perspectives have been presented above. The three perspectives can be referred to as the management, professions, and educators. These are useful for understanding their respective underlying perceptions of the legitimacy of PR which contribute to and guide their individual actors’ behavior and/or expectations for professional legitimacy to be obtained or adjudged.

Key points about them are:
- Management perspectives are internally fragmented based on their PR theoretical knowledge and/or experience, or the lack of it.
- Coexisting parallel perceptions of the legitimacy of PR, with common aspects as well as stark differences between different categories of management
- Lack of consensus about the image and professional status of PR in Nigeria, within and between the respective actor’s communities
- Insufficient communications between actors leading to lack of awareness of one another’s interests and activities in terms of efforts to sanitize the PR profession and enhance the standard of practice
- Management and educators’ demands and/or expectations respectively are perceived to be unmet by the professional association
- The tense relationship between the professional association and educators regarding accreditation of PR education, research collaborations, and perceived membership benefits persists
- The traits and power approaches that the professional association claims to implement may be insufficient for a consistent image and professional status of PR
This set of perspectives, unmet expectations and sources of tension represents clashing perspectives and demonstrate how the existing professional project may need to be evolved. Besides, since legitimacy is based on a perception in this study, the professional association’s perception of being able to meet this suggests that legitimacy may not be pronounced, which may be why there are inconsistencies regarding the professional status of PR, irrespective of the category of management of educator in question. The categories of management and educators that are mostly unaware of PR and its activities contribute to a communication-related issue on the part of the professional association, which has a compelling effect on the actors’ perception of PR. These emphasize the connections between actions and communication of such actions as two mutually reinforcing processes that influence the perception of PR. This highlights some of the considerations for evolving PR’s professional project that is influenced by attempts to meet expectations and communication processes.

In chapter 6: we will see the three perspectives from the neoinstitutional theory tradition, where they will be interpreted as institutional logics. Nigeria’s PR environment comprises multiple logics with underlying varied perspectives on the legitimacy of PR. This contextual dynamic necessitates a better understanding of interactions and relations between these logics, which will be discussed. Also, the institutional actors’ community’s expectations which must be met, and communications to be enacted for legitimacy to be pronounced will be discussed based on the constellation of logics within Nigeria’s PR environment. The resulting constellation and key findings of the actors’ expectations, which interests the actors, reveals the theoretical dimension so that PR will be perceived and pronounced as a legitimate profession.
Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion

This analysis chapter applies the institutional logics concept and a neoinstitutional theory (NIT) lens for bringing together the key findings of the actors’ underlying perspectives. This is carried out for discussing how the logics within Nigeria’s PR institutional context contribute to the perception of the legitimacy of PR and how NIPR could respond to the perception(s) towards gaining legitimacy in Nigeria’s workplaces. Consequently, the findings from the three actor’s communities’ interviewee accounts are used for forming their respective institutional logics and their constellation that orders and predict the actors’ actions within Nigeria’s PR field. While the institutional logics highlights the core elements of the individual logics, the latter constellation of logics discusses their power relations, which reveals whether they are cooperating or competing. By studying contradictions between the actors’ perceptions, which are reflected in their behavior and expectations, this study explores the perspective(s) influences on PR’s legitimacy and the professional project in Nigeria respectively.

This chapter starts out by developing the actors’ perspectives into their coexisting institutional logics within Nigeria’s PR institutional context in Section 6.1. This entails using the key findings from the respective actors’ communities’ interviewee accounts for developing three corporate logics based on the managements’ categories, the professions, and the educator logics respectively. In section 6.2, specific contradictions emerging from the differing logics for PR are highlighted and discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the effects of the discovered constellation of logics on the perception of the legitimacy of PR, and PR’s institutional context in Nigeria in section 6.3. This section is guided by Greenwood et al.’s (2011) multilevel analytical framework for understanding the institutional complexity of PR in Nigeria based on the contradictions emerging from the coexisting logics.

Section 6.4 proposes a strategic response to the institutional complexities within Nigeria’s PR institutional context and their impact on specific elements of PR’s professional project. The section then takes the response a step further by proposing an institutional approach for PR’s professional project in Nigeria. The chapter ends in section 6.5 with a summary that comprises the final thoughts about PR’s pursuit of legitimacy in the complex institutional context in Nigeria.
6.1. Developing the actors’ perspectives into institutional logics
This study works with a view of legitimacy as perception (see Suchman, 1995, Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017). Based on this view, the actors’ communities socially constructed perspectives are argued to inform their appropriate behavior, and their expectation of other actors in order for legitimacy to be gained or pronounced. This represents the basis for their respective institutional logics (see Thornton & Ocasio, 1999), which are their taken-for-granted practices that are carried out as if it was controlled by their own or one legitimating logic alone. Based on the key findings of the management, the professional association, and the PR educators’ perspectives respectively, the composition of logics within Nigeria’s PR institutional context is understood to include the corporate, professions and educator logics respectively. More so, legitimacy is presented here at the individual/practitioner level and at the professions level, as both sources of legitimacy reinforce one another.

6. 1.1 Corporate logics
The managements’ social reality informs the corporate logic, which comprises their considerations for individual practitioner legitimacy i.e. the credentials and qualifications of their preferred PR person. These are decided by management who also plan and decide on the routines, division of labor, internal PR strategies that need to be implemented, practitioners’ degree of autonomy and ‘performance evaluation. These are all beyond the employed practitioners’ and professional association’s control. Legitimacy at the level of the profession pertains to the establishment of perceived determinants of professional status in combination with other elements of their response that make up their logics. These cause them to have a specific set of expectations for PR to be perceived as a legitimate profession in Nigeria.

Due to the varied PR knowledge and/or PR experience highlighted by the management interviewees’ accounts, there is no unified perception of the legitimacy of PR amongst management in Nigeria. Therefore, the three categories of management are understood as corporate logics 1, 2, and 3, which coexist in a parallel order based on their varied perspectives, which are described below.
Corporate logic 1 (CL1)

Corporate logic one is held by management without a PR academic background or experience (i.e. NPNE). They view PR as an organizational function that is more germane to political communication or organizations in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry. Therefore, PR is inserted and practiced as part of or an extension of the sales, marketing, and brand management function. Legitimacy at the practitioner level for the management working with this logic is based on the expectation that in-house practitioners possess an academic background in their primary business area combined with competences for undertaking PR technician tasks. These include implementing product promotion, sales forecasting and management, and brand awareness related activities while working with controlled autonomy. Besides, practitioners are not expected to participate in decision making, which is also why their required qualifications do not include a management background or related competences for functioning in a managerial capacity. Although they know the NIPR abbreviation and the profession it represents, they have neither expectations of the professional association nor interactions with it. Consequently, their perception of the legitimacy of PR may be characterized by (1) a view of PR as a support profession, (2) practitioners’ capacity to play a support role with (3) competences for receiving and implementing marketing and brand management initiatives as directed by management, which is evaluated based on (4) contributions to the sales performance.

Corporate logic 2 (CL2)

Corporate logic two is held by management without a PR academic background but with PR experience from working with PR consultants (i.e. NPEE). Their institutional logic and consequent underlying perception of the legitimacy of PR is found to be remarkably different from that of NPNE management. NPEE managements’ experience of PR’s capacity to contribute to organizations’ goodwill, positive image and enhanced bottom-line performance cause them to describe PR as a strategic management function for managing relations between organizations and their key stakeholders.

Consequently, they expect practitioners to work in the higher-order/reflective-strategist role, where they can counsel management, contribute to decision making, implement one and two way PR activities such as public information, stakeholder engagement, crisis and issues management, goodwill generating initiatives, reputation management etc. For this purpose,
capabilities in the form of strong PR, industry, and product category knowledge respectively are expected from their preferred in-house practitioner for them to be able to develop and execute PR activities with uncontrolled autonomy. However, some NPEEs may also employ an in-house PR technician in combination with a PR consultant who interfaces with external stakeholders and implements PR initiatives strategies without counseling management and thereby works with controlled autonomy. Nevertheless, the probability for enacting the higher-order/reflective strategist managerial role is higher for NPEE managements when compared to that of NPNEs.

At the practitioner level, legitimacy is evaluated based on practitioners’ academic qualifications (formal PR education, journalism education, and NIPR certification) capabilities and/or critical organizational resources (consultancy experience, industry knowledge, technician capabilities, key stakeholder contacts, industry/product specialization) respectively. At the level of the profession, legitimacy is evaluated based on the specific traits, (i.e. professional association with active members, formal education program and/or certification) and professional conduct. Although NPEEs know NIPR and have attended the professional association’s events, they expect NIPR to organize and be in continuous liaison/communication with them, such that they are able to attend and mutually learn and share knowledge with the professional association.

Furthermore, more specific expectations for legitimacy at the professions level according to corporate logics 2 pertain to the enhancement of PR’s societal and workplace arena claims respectively. In the former, public sensitization about PR, concerning awareness that is more public and differentiates PR from other professions and guides against misconceptions of PR are expected. In the latter, initiatives that can enhance PR understanding and appreciation in the workplace, such as PR training for management and organizational, members are expected. In addition, much more clarity regarding the academic background and professional certification that qualifies one to be a practitioner in Nigeria is expected. More so, NPEEs’ industry and/or product category needs cause them to prioritize and expect practitioners to possess journalism knowledge and/or experience and specialization.
Corporate logic 3 (CL2)

Corporate logic 3 is held by management with a PR academic background and experience (i.e. PREE) respectively. They possess both theoretical and practical PR knowledge. Although the logics share similarities with corporate logic 2 in certain aspects, they also differ on specific expectations for legitimacy. PR for them is understood as an organizational function for nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders that are critical to organizational survival. Consequently, in-house practitioners are highly valued and are expected to occupy and enact the higher-order/reflective-strategist managerial role. The evaluation of legitimacy at the practitioner level is based on academic qualifications (formal PR education, NIPR certification), ethical conduct (honesty, transparency, integrity), and PR generalists capabilities. The combination of these qualifications is expected to be applied for performing boundary spanning tasks for interfacing with internal and external publics and stakeholders, counseling management, participating in decision making, and developing and implementing a wide range of PR activities for organizations while working with uncontrolled autonomy. More so, the overall purpose of PR is managing the organization’s image and nurturing mutually beneficial relations with organizations’ key publics and stakeholders.

At the professions level, legitimacy is evaluated based on the establishment of the internal control measures through the traditional traits as well as the legal and workplace arena claims. The traditional traits (1) include autonomy, (2) professional association, (3) high entry barriers into the profession i.e. formal PR education, (4) professional training/certification combined with mandatory professional development for updating practitioners’ knowledge, and (5) discipline and control over members’ conduct through the establishment and enforcement of a code of conduct. In addition, the well-publicized punishment of violators of the codes for eradicating unqualified people who misrepresent the profession is expected as well.

The legal arena claim pertains to government recognition i.e. a chartered status. The workplace arena claims pertain to the professional association’s initiatives for creating awareness about PR as a practice and a profession for ensuring that PR is perceived as intended by the corporate context. More specifically, the profession is expected to engage in activities that are perceived to enhance the standard of practice and its image. These include
proactive communications such as management sensitization about PR and practitioners’ contribution to value creation to organizations and social responsibility to society. Additionally, the profession is expected to update the curricula of formal PR programs offered by various educational institutions to match evolving workplace demands. Table 6.1 depicts the parallel corporate logics which highlights the variations and similarities in their expectations for legitimacy to be prominent for PR.

Table 6.1: Parallel Corporate logics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Corporate logic 1 (CL1)</th>
<th>Corporate logic 2 (CL2)</th>
<th>Corporate logic 3 (CL2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>NPNE</td>
<td>NPPE</td>
<td>FREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of PR</td>
<td>Part of marketing/branding Relevant for Politicians and FMCGs</td>
<td>Strategic management function Relationship management function</td>
<td>Management function for nurturing and managing mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner role</td>
<td>Technician role Controlled autonomy</td>
<td>Higher-order/reflective-strategist manager role Uncontrolled autonomy Dominant coalition member or Technician + higher order manager Uncontrolled autonomy</td>
<td>Higher-order/reflective-strategist manager role Uncontrolled autonomy Dominant coalition member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks composition</td>
<td>Implements product promotion, sales management and brand awareness related activities</td>
<td>Counsel management, contribute to decision making, implement one and two way PR, stakeholder relations, crisis/issues management</td>
<td>Boundary spanning work, interfacing with internal and external publics and stakeholders, counseling management, participating in decision making, developing and implementing a wide range of PR activities for organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional status determinants</td>
<td>Traits approach Professional association</td>
<td>Traits approach Professional association, formal education/certification and professional conduct</td>
<td>Traits approach Professional association, formal education/certification, code of conduct, uncontrolled autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Workplace recognition of PR (workplace arena) Chartered status (legal arena)</td>
<td>Workplace recognition of PR (workplace arena) Chartered status (legal arena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with NIPR</td>
<td>None Unnecessary</td>
<td>Necessary Mutual learning</td>
<td>Necessary Events sponsorship, training activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expectations</td>
<td>- Clarify entry barriers into professions - Clarity on certification and appropriate qualifications for professional practice - PR training for management: masterclass - Developing PR specialists</td>
<td>- Management sensitization about PR - Public sensitization about PR - Positive image for the profession - Updating PR program’s curricula - Mandatory professional development - High entry barriers into the profession - Enforcement of the code of conduct - Punishment of violators of the code - Punishment of unethical conduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.2. Professions logic (PL)
The Professions logic has been developed based on the accounts of the NIPR interviewee accounts as these represent the legal requirement for existing as a profession in Nigeria. Additionally, membership to the Association of Professional Bodies of Nigeria (APBN) provides some endorsement, as all the prestigious professions in Nigeria belong to this association. However, it is unclear whether membership is a legal requirement. Nevertheless, professions logic entails considerations regarding the appropriate approach for a professional project for attaining professional legitimacy for the profession and its individual members. While the former pertains to institutionalized determinants for professional legitimacy, the latter pertains to requirements that qualify individuals to be viewed as legitimate practitioners in the legal, societal and workplace arenas respectively. These are the responsibilities of a professional association, which also leads them to have certain expectations which need to be upheld in the workplace by managements regarding practitioner role, tasks composition and decision making powers in the workplace professional and individual practitioner level requirements for legitimacy have been fulfilled.

At the individual/practitioner level, legitimacy is based on academic qualifications requirements (PR degree or any degree combined with NIPR certification, and compulsory NIPR membership), generalist PR competences (proactive approach to PR, environmental scanning, understanding of key stakeholders and publics, sensitizing and counselling management about ethical behavior, contributing to corporate planning and implementation, using PR activities to sustain relations with organizational publics and stakeholders), capabilities (industry and/or product knowledge, interdepartmental work), and finally ethical conduct (compliance with NIPR code of conduct). PR specialist capabilities are viewed as an individual pursuit and are therefore not prioritized.

Furthermore, since the NIPR understands PR as a strategic management function for nurturing and maintaining mutually beneficial relations with internal and external stakeholders, the prescribed qualifications are expected to be sufficient for the legitimate practitioners to occupy an executive role (higher-order/reflective strategist role) with uncontrolled autonomy, dominant coalition membership and participation in decision making respectively. Furthermore, mimetic processes equally reflect through efforts to enhance the standard of PR practice through continuous professional development. Mimetic processes at
the individual level pertain to activities for updating practitioners knowledge and instituting high entry barriers into PR practice through a revision of the syllabus of certification programs’, (re)training, (re)certification, and the creation of a national register. These are peculiar to the law, advertising, and surveying professions respectively in Nigeria. As in the case of the prestigious professions, the NIPR expects organizations to only employ those that have fulfilled its prescribed set of qualifications for PR positions.

According to the professions associations’ perspective, the appropriate approach for the professional project is mostly based on mimetic processes for isomorphism at the profession’s level (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This entails copying the core elements i.e. perceived determinants for the professional legitimacy of the professional projects of prestigious professions and expecting legitimacy in return. For NIPR’s professions logic, these comprise a combination of the traits (body of knowledge, formal PR program, and certification, professional association, code of conduct, professional association, autonomy), and a system of profession elements (legal arena claim: government recognition: chartered status; societal and workplace arena claims, which include public and management recognition for PR respectively).

Concerning the workplace arena claims, events and activities that foster mutual learning between the professional association, and management about PR and organizations’ expectations are considered as legitimate enhancing activities. However, the mimetic process does not extend to NIPR disciplinary measures as it adopts an internal disciplinary approach. These disciplinary measures concern punishment against the violators of NIPR laws and unethical practitioners, while enforcement of the laws is carried out in a discrete manner to avoid negative publicity around the profession.

6.1.3. Educator logics (EL)
The PR educators’ social reality as laid out by the interviewee accounts informs the educator logic. Their theoretical understanding of PR along with the institutionalized norms for professional status and the professional association’s capacity to fulfill its responsibilities constitutes their logics for PR to be viewed as a legitimate profession in Nigeria. This entails considerations regarding the perceived appropriate elements that should constitute PR’s
professional project and theoretical knowledge for PR graduates. The former pertains to the institutionalized determinants and the professional association’s responsibility for the legitimacy at the profession’s level. The latter pertains to knowledge requirements that partly prepare practitioners for legitimacy in the legal, societal and workplace arenas respectively. Moreover, the educator logic is similar to that of the NIPR to the extent that they teach and help PR students acquire theoretical and practical PR knowledge using NUC and NIPR accredited curriculum. Together, these cause educators to have specific expectations of the professional association regarding the legitimacy of PR. Their PR knowledge is used for evaluating the extent to which the professional association fulfills its responsibilities towards the profession and PR education programs in particular.

At the professions level, at the minimum, legitimacy is expected to result from the implementation of the traits as well as societal, legal and workplace arena claims respectively. The former include formal PR programs, certification, the body of knowledge discipline, code of conduct, and professional association. The latter includes activities that enhance PR’s recognition as a professional practice for managing relations between organizations and its publics, and a chartered status. Beyond implementing the traits, the professional association’s capacity to carry out its day-to-day responsibilities in the following areas are equally considered crucial for legitimacy to be attained and are therefore expected.

Firstly, educators expect the professional association to maintain a high entry barrier for restricting unqualified persons from practicing and/or teaching PR in Nigeria. Secondly, irrespective of the structure of PR programs across educational institutions, the curriculum is expected to be benchmarked against global standards such that it is robust enough to equip PR graduates for corporate practice. Thirdly, educators expect some level of autonomy over their individual PR curriculum, such that they can adjust them to incorporate courses that help graduates develop competences for meeting changing corporate demands.

Fourthly, compliance with the code of conduct must be made compulsory, combined with a law enforcement task force that publicly punishes unethical practitioners and unqualified people. This includes people who practice and/or teaches PR, which is believed to reinforce workplace and societal arena claims. Fifthly, professional association membership should be
encouraged at the student level to grant future practitioners access into the profession association from the undergraduate level. Sixthly, perceived benefits of the professional association’s membership must be clear so that it encourages young and old practitioners as well as new members to join or remain active in the association respectively. Lastly, initiatives to enhance the professional recognition must be pursued while collaboration with educators, through joint research and case studies that could enhance PR graduates’ knowledge is expected.

Table 6.2 depicts professions logic and educator logics based on their respective perspectives of PR and perceived appropriate approach for obtaining professional legitimacy. Due to the remarkable similarities between them, the educator logic may be subsumed under the profession’s logic. However, they play different roles for PR professionalization and have different responsibilities, which shape their considerations for appropriate behavior and expectations of one another for legitimacy to be attained in the workplace. Therefore, they are kept separate.

PR educators understand PR as a relationship management function for nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with key publics and stakeholders. Therefore, educators’ logic for individual-level legitimacy is based on academic qualifications that include 1) PR degree, (2) NIPR certification and membership, and (3) ethical conduct in accordance with the NIPR’s code of conduct, and (4) industry/business sector knowledge. These are believed to be sufficient for becoming PR generalists that can enact the higher-order/reflective-strategist manager role with a dominant coalition membership and direct access to the CEO. Such practitioners are believed to be capable of (1) convincing and counseling management, (2) developing communications strategy based on organizations’ objectives and stakeholder knowledge, (3) coordinating CSR initiatives, (4) managing organizations’ issues, crises, image and reputation respectively and (5) coordinating CSR initiatives for generating goodwill for organizations and managing relations with organizations’ publics and stakeholders.
Table 6.2: Profession and Educator logic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of PR</th>
<th>Profession logic (PL)</th>
<th>Educator logic (EL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actor</strong></td>
<td>Professional association NIPR</td>
<td>PR Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of PR</strong></td>
<td>Strategic management function</td>
<td>Relationship management function for nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with key publics and stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practitioner role</strong></td>
<td>Higher-order/reflective-strategist manager role</td>
<td>Higher-order/reflective-strategist manager role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncontrolled autonomy</td>
<td>Uncontrolled autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dominant coalition member</td>
<td>Dominant coalition member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in decision making</td>
<td>Participation in decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Qualifications | Academic: PR degree or any degree in combination with NIPR certification and membership respectively | Academic: formal PR education and training, NIPR certification, |
| | Capabilities: industry and/or product knowledge, interdepartmental work, proactive approach to PR activities | Capabilities: Industry/business sector knowledge, Ethical conduct, PR generalists, |

| Task composition | Environmental scanning, sensitizing and counseling management about ethical behavior, contributing to corporate planning and implementation, managing relations with publics and stakeholders | Environmental scanning, convince and counsel management, develop a communications strategy, coordinate CSR initiatives, manage organization’s issues, crises, image, and reputation respectively; coordinate CSR initiatives, generating goodwill for organizations, and manage relations with organizations’ publics and stakeholders |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional status determinants</th>
<th>Traits approach</th>
<th>Traits approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body of knowledge, professional association, formal education and certification, code of conduct, and autonomy</td>
<td>Professional association, formal education/certification, body of knowledge code of conduct, uncontrolled autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Power approach:</strong> System of professions</td>
<td><strong>Power approach:</strong> System of professions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public recognition for PR (societal arena)</td>
<td>Public recognition for PR (societal arena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management recognition for PR (workplace arena)</td>
<td>Management recognition for PR (workplace arena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chartered status (legal arena)</td>
<td>Chartered status (legal arena)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Interactions with organizations purpose | Events, training, conferences for mutual learning and enhancing the standard of PR practices and management PR understanding | Necessary Conferences, workshops seminars (in the past) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other assumptions</th>
<th>Autonomy over PR curricular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Compulsory compliance with NIPR laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Common structure and curricula for PR programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- High entry barriers i.e. restriction of non-NIPR members from practicing and/or teaching PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Benchmarking curricula with global standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Compulsory compliance with NIPR laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Establishment of a law enforcement task force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Publicly punishing unethical practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Publicly punishing non-NIPR members practicing PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Encouraging NIPR membership for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Enumerating perceived benefits of NIPR membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Initiatives that enhance professional recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Collaboration with PR educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- NIPR and NUC accredited PR programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2. Contradictions emerging between the coexisting logics for PR in Nigeria

Contradictions emerge between the differing perspectives, expectations and consequent logics for social relations and appropriate behavior for PR’s legitimacy in Nigeria. These are found between pairs of actors’ logics but not always across all the three logics. These cause actors to have certain expectations of one another, and when such expectations are not met, legitimacy may not be pronounced. By highlighting these contradictions, the professional association’s awareness about the expectations of coexisting logics increases and may be problematized and addressed in its professional project. Identified contradictions are presented below, while their effects on the perception of the legitimacy of PR are discussed in the next section.

Contradiction 1: Misconception of PR as including sales and marketing management

The misconception of PR as sales and marketing management represents a contradiction between corporate logics 1 and professions logics. The contradiction emanates from management without PR education or experience whose lack of PR knowledge and an unrelated industry-specific constraint leads to a misconception within the element of their logic. The industry-specific constrain pertains to a Nigerian government law that restricts certain business sectors (e.g. securities trading) from engaging in advertising. The absence of PR knowledge and restriction causes management to conclude that all other communicative activities about their product besides advertising must be under a marketing and sales management function, including PR. Consequently, activities such as sponsorships for brand awareness, product presentations, product testing, and fairs all connect PR initiatives to sales targets. In addition, the preferred practitioner qualifications under corporate logic 1 are primarily focused on academic backgrounds in the organizations primary business area and capabilities to guarantee clearly defined sales targets to PR activities, practitioners are also typically assigned to the technician role.

Consequently, management working with corporate logics 1 would expect practitioners to be competent in carrying out sales and marketing management related tasks. This would also be part of such managements’ evaluation of practitioners’ competences and legitimacy at the practitioner level. The inability to meet these expectations may result in the perceived practitioner incompetence. In contrast, the professions and educator logics respectively view PR from a relational perspective for nurturing relations with internal and external
stakeholders and publics. Besides, PR activities support the marketing function, while NIPR certification and PR curriculums include marketing and brand management modules (e.g. NIPR, 2018; Covenant University, 2017). The marketing and brand management modules within PR programs and certification are included for expanding practitioners’ scope of competences for attending to corporate needs that are believed to improve their employment opportunities. This means that practitioners would be able to carry out marketing and branding tasks, but not sales. The view of PR as sales management suggests a misconception of PR which causes such management to prioritize and/or over-rely on the sales and marketing related activities for attending to organizations environmental uncertainties, contingencies, and industry-level restrictions, where PR initiatives may be more appropriate.

Although corporate logics 1 may act based on their lack of PR knowledge, this contradiction is compounded by the professions logics’ lack of clarity about PR’s jurisdiction. This causes PR to be linked to unethical conduct such as bribery, propaganda, CEO image laundry etc., which reinforces negative associations and the stigmas against the PR profession (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Olatunji, 2014). These imply a lack of clarity about the parameters for assessing practitioners’ competences for managers working with corporate logic 1. More so, this misconception portrays a confusing outlook of PR and its image in the societal and workplace arenas respectively, which may lead to scepticisms towards PR by those without PR knowledge.

Table 6.3: Misconception leading to the misrepresentation of PR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contradicting elements</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CL1: PR as sales, branding and marketing management function | CL1 vs. NIPR | -Perception of PR as limited to sales, branding and marketing management  
-Practitioner as receptionist and/or messenger i.e. errand boy  
-Unethical communication conduct bribery, propaganda etc. equated as PR  
-Employing non-NIPR members, quacks, well-dressed people as the ideal PR person  
-Perception that the PR person must be a journalist  
- Perception of the legitimacy of PR as emanating from the marketing capabilities  
- Lack of clarity about PR practitioners jurisdiction |
| PL: PR as internal and external and internal publics/stakeholder relationship management function |

Contradiction 2: Organizational resource needs instead of formal credentials

Organizational resources instead of formal credentials pertain to contradictions between managements (CL1 & CL2) preferred practitioner qualifications and that of the professions (PL). This concerns managements’ critical resource needs for attending to their specific needs which are cultivated by employing professions that can contribute such resources into
organizations. The preference for practitioners with an academic background in their primary business area along with sales and marketing competences (CL1) and product category communications needs necessitating industry specialists, a journalism background and contacts in the media (CL2) causes them to prioritize certain qualifications that are unique to their organizations and industry reality. These represent critical resources that are crucial for managing environmental uncertainties, regulations, and communications for ensuring organizational survival. Abbott (1988), Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) maintain that organizations prefer professions that can help them attend to their environmental uncertainties as well as commercial interests.

In contrast, neither NIPR certification nor PR programs include journalism. Although PR modules are offered under certain journalism programs, this is only available from relatively few educational institutions. The majority of programs are offered by the universities as part of mass communications. While PL and EL acknowledge the relevance of specialization, they are concerned that it may restrict the scope of practitioners’ competences and employability. Therefore, the focus is on producing PR generalists. Besides, people with any degree could attend NIPR certifications and acquire PR competencies and thereby meet CL1 and CL2’s resource needs, however, the extent to which NIPR promotes this possibility is unknown. Furthermore, contacts in the media represent dynamic capabilities that are acquired over time from lifelong professional experience and cannot be acquired through formal education or certification.

Nevertheless, Amujo and Melewar (2011) found many practitioners to be unable to function in specialized industries due to the limited scope of existing PR programs and NIPR’s certification in Nigeria. Consequently, certified NIPR members may be unable to meet these qualifications, while employed practitioners may be perceived to be incompetent and face encroachment due to their inability to manage organizations’ challenges. Encroachment occurs when someone other than a PR practitioner heads the PR unit or coordinates PR activities of an organization, which could be due to the formerly appointed PR practitioner’s inability to enact the role (Lauzen, 1992; Lauzen & Dozier, 1992; Lee, 2005). These cause managements with CL2, in particular, to prefer working with PR consultants instead of in-house practitioners. The need for the specialization may not be a widespread issue as it is tied to niche product categories or particular industries such as oil and gas (e.g. Idemudia, 2007).
Nevertheless, it remains a contradicting corporate logic that is within the scope of PR competencies and may influence the perception of legitimacy of PR in Nigeria.

Table 6.4: Resourceful practitioners vs. certified practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contradicting elements</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Implications for the PR profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Management’ preferred qualifications vs. NIPR’s prescribed qualifications</td>
<td>CL1 &amp; CL2 vs. PL</td>
<td>- Lack of practitioner specialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Prioritization of specialists vs generalists</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Encroachment caused by perceived practitioner incompetence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Preference for journalism background vs PR</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Losing employment opportunities to PR consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Dynamic capabilities vs PR capabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Specific academic background vs. PR background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contradiction 3: Compliance and enforcement of the NIPR’s laws

Contradiction about the compliance and enforcement of the NIPR’s laws concerns the perception that compliance to the NIPR’s laws is voluntary as enforcement of the NIPR laws against violators is believed to be non-existent by CL3 and EL respectively. The NIPR laws criminalize the practice of PR without NIPR membership on the front page of its official website, and they also have a code of professional practice for controlling its members’ conduct. However, a perceived lack of well-publicized enforcement and punishment of non-NIPR members, and unethical practitioners who engage in PR practice causes managements (CL3), and educators (EL) to question the level of enforcement. PR researchers in previous studies even conclude that compliance with NIPR’s laws may be voluntary (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011, Udomisor & Osademe, 2013) ineffective and lack legal backing in Nigeria (Samaila, 2015; Oko, 2003).

According to PL, compliance with NIPR laws are compulsory, and internal disciplinary measures and discrete enforcement and punishment are in place. This is out of public view and may not deter violators or communicate the professions efforts to rid quacks and unethical practitioners from PR practice. In contrast, CL3 and EL respectively expect well-publicized enforcement. The PR educators accounts suggest an expectation of a law enforcement task force, clarification, and the enforcement of NIPR laws regarding entry barriers into teaching PR. The latter is specifically because non-NIPR members are believed to be able to teach PR without violating NIPR laws, which is believed to undermine NIPR’s laws and relegates PR as inferior to other communication professions and disciplines such as advertising.
Table 6.5 Compliance and enforcement of NIPR laws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contradicting elements</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Implications for the PR profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- voluntary compliance vs. compulsory compliance</td>
<td>PL vs. CL3 &amp; EL</td>
<td>- perceived non-existent enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- discrete enforcement vs. well-publicized enforcement</td>
<td></td>
<td>- perceived voluntary compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- internal disciplinary measures vs enforcement task force</td>
<td></td>
<td>- PR as all comers affair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- lack of clarity on entry barriers into teaching PR</td>
<td></td>
<td>- perceived quacks and unethical practitioners in practice with punishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- relegation of PR in comparison to other professions that can teach PR.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contradiction 4: Overbearing accreditation demands caused by a lack of perceived benefits**

Contradiction arising from overbearing accreditation demands is between PL and EL and concerns a lack of perceived benefits of NIPR’s accreditation and NIPR membership respectively. PR programs need to be accredited by the NUC and NIPR. Having both accreditations is arguably an ideal for PR programs in Nigeria. PR modules are often paired with advertising. Accreditations from NUC and APCON\(^\text{16}\) are compulsory for advertising, and non-APCON members cannot teach or practice advertising. PR educators expect the NIPR to implement a similar practice for PR. However, it is the NUC’s accreditation that is compulsory for PR. While NIPR’s accreditation provides eligibility for PR graduates to sit for the NIPR’s certification examinations, EL considers the fees and logistical demands of the NIPR to outweigh the benefits and therefore ignore it without consequences. Consequently, several universities have PR students graduate without a NIPR accredited education for nearly a decade. This is not possible for advertising which is often combined with PR programs.

The educators are more comfortable with paying APCON from whom they believe they enjoy numerous benefits such as rigorous certification which ensures that only highly qualified graduates are granted the license to practice in Nigeria. APCON is also believed to uphold professional discipline through proper execution of their traits and demonstrates zero tolerance to misconduct through well-publicized punishment of violators of its ethics and code of conduct. Advertising students cannot graduate without passing their professional association’s certification exams as they are part of their final requirements for graduation. Only those that excel can graduate and automatically become full APCON members, who are

\(^{16}\) APCON Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria that monitors PR practice and training in Nigeria
already admitted as student members during their studies. APCON’s approach is viewed as a more effective because it ensures that student members become full members after graduation and upholds the quality of graduates. The educators are of the view that these efforts on the part of APCON have helped the advertising profession to maintain its prestige and integrity in workplaces and society as well as its appeal to Nigerian students respectively.

EL expects a similar practice from NIPR whereby PR students need to be certified NIPR members by the time they graduate. However, educator interviewees’ accounts suggest a perception that the NIPR neither prioritize student membership nor reckon with educators. They equally believe that the NIPR has neither ensured discipline within PR practices nor restricted an influx of quacks that misrepresent PR. These are believed to dwarf PR’s prestige and relegate the profession to a lower level in comparison to advertising (see also Amujo & Melewar, 2011). This contradiction is compounded by educator interviewee accounts that the NIPR ignores PR educators. An implication of this has been the tendency for PR educations to lean more to the background of the person in charge of PR programs until the NUC’s accreditation takes place, which is every five years. In addition, the educators’ are uncertain whether the NIPR is upholding its responsibility of developing the standard of PR practice and education in Nigeria. Therefore, the perceived lack of benefits from NIPR accreditation persists, while the possibility for PR educators to educate PR students without inputs from NIPR gradually undermines the body’s relevance to PR educators.

Consequently, certain educators may be ignoring NIPR while those that were formerly active members are dissociating with the association. Examples of interviewees’ accounts indicate disillusionment, lack of communications and general unawareness of the NIPR’s events and activities which causes formerly active members to become inactive. Besides, educators are forming their own associations, developing stand-alone PR programs with a broader scope and seeking approval from NUC. An example of this is the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN). The NIPR works with ACSPN and remains the custodian and gate-keeper for PR in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the PR educators decision to collaborate closely with one another may be the early signs of a PR educators revolt and further dissociation from NIPR, with whom they believe they do not enjoy much membership benefits.
Table 6.6: Overbearing accreditation demands caused by lack of perceived benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contradicting elements</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Implications for the PR profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- overbearing fees and logistics for accreditation</td>
<td>PL vs. EL</td>
<td>- Non-NIPR accredited PR programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- lack of perceived benefits of accreditation of PR programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>- The inability for NIPR to capture student members after graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- perceived neglect of PR program by NIPR</td>
<td></td>
<td>- The unchecked tendency for PR programs to lean to the HOD or course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- discrete enforcement vs. well-publicized enforcement</td>
<td></td>
<td>responsible’s specialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- overbearing fees and logistics for accreditation</td>
<td>PL vs. EL</td>
<td>- Eroding relevance of NIPR to PR programs and educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- lack of perceived benefits of accreditation of PR programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Collaborations between educators and not with the NIPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- perceived neglect of PR program by NIPR</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Gradual dissociation of educators with NIPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- discrete enforcement vs. well-publicized enforcement</td>
<td></td>
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Contradiction 5: Lack of awareness of NIPR’s initiatives

Contradiction about the lack of awareness of NIPR’s initiatives concerns general unawareness of NIPR’s efforts to enhance the standard of PR practice and education in Nigeria. This contradiction exists between PL on one side and CL2, CL3 and EL on the other side. Specific areas where the concerned corporate and educator logics expect the NIPR to carry out and communicate its efforts include (1) sensitization of management and the public concerning PR (2) clarification about the minimum qualifications for practitioners and entry barriers into PR practice, (3) image management activities for PR, (4) emphasis on the compulsory compliance with NIPR laws, (5) publicized punishment of the violators of NIPR’s laws, (6) collaboration with PR educators for developing PR programs and (7) master classes for management.

Contrary to the concerned actors’ conclusion, the NIPR is engaging in some initiatives and communicating them on its official website and Facebook page respectively. These include (1) annual conferences, master classes for top management, and workshops for its members, (2) expansion of the NIPR certification’s curriculum and more rigorous testing, and (3) a three-step approach for ensuring discipline within PR practices through (i) inviting old and inactive members, and non-members that are practicing PR to (ii) attend master classes, (re)training, (re)certification, and pay membership dues and (iii) prosecution of violators caught after the completion of the first two steps. While these initiatives may attend to some of the expectations, the lack of communication from the NIPR about such initiatives causes the persistent assumption that NIPR may not be doing enough to develop the PR profession and education in Nigeria by the CL2, CL3, and ELs respectively.
Moreover, the lack of awareness of these activities suggests that PR educators are probably not aware of and follow NIPR’s Facebook page, and do not frequently visit its official website where they could have learned about the initiatives. Additionally, the question remains about who the NIPR targets with these initiatives and their communication processes, which could be push or pull. While the former sends information directly to its target audience and/or relevant stakeholders and invites them to take action, the latter makes the information available on its communication medium or platform (noticeboard, official homepage, Facebook page) and expects interested people to seek the information and take action. The lack of awareness of existing and ongoing activities suggests that NIPR may be using a pull media, which appears to be counterproductive to its efforts.

Table 6.7: Lack of awareness NIPR’s initiatives for enhancing the standard of PR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contradicting elements</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-existent communications from NIPR towards management and educators</td>
<td>CL2,CL3 &amp; EL vs. PL</td>
<td>- Continued perceived lack of effort by the NIPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived lack of enough effort by NIPR to (i) improve the standard of PR practices, (ii) ensure discipline within PR practice (iii) improve public and management’s awareness of the PR profession and (iv) enhance PR education</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Low management and public understanding of PR</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Perceived lack of efforts for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(i) updating PR programs curricula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) communicating and enforcing NIPR laws and punishing violators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the end, the contradictions caused by the differences between the disparate actors’ logics and perspectives are evidently suggesting that Nigeria’s PR organization field is a highly contested space (e.g. Bourdieu 1977, Hoffman, 1999, Wooten & Hoffman, 2008). The space is characterized by power plays between the heterogeneously motivated institutional actors with differences in specific elements of their logics. Their source of motivation represents issues that bring the field to life. The three corporate logics could be summed up as being motivated by critical resource needs in the form of relationship management with key publics and stakeholders, image management, brand awareness, and improved sales that together contribute to the corporate bottom-line. PR practitioners are expected to bring these resources into the organization, while their inability to do so questions their legitimacy. The professional association is motivated by a drive for legitimacy in the workplace, which also represents a critical resource for the PR profession to be recognized, respected, and be viewed as a legitimate profession. The PR educators are motivated by a drive for improvements in PR education, PR legitimacy and the standard of PR practice. According to Wooten and
Hoffman (2008), the perceived advantages that could be gained from interacting with one another encourage participation of the actors in the organization field.

Nevertheless, the identified contradictions between the actors’ logics demonstrate a lack of consensus between the actors regarding the perception of legitimacy in Nigeria. The respective actors’ are not isolated but are embedded within their individual communities’ institutional logics that enable and constrain their actions. These inform their perception of legitimacy of PR and appropriate behavior, which causes actors to act in accordance with their logics for obtaining legitimacy within their community. The logic is also used to evaluate the legitimacy of other institutional actors based on their behavior and capacity to meet certain expectations. When such expectations are not met, legitimacy will not be pronounced on such actors.

Based on the above premise, there are three legitimating logics that inform the perceptions of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria, this is further complicated by contradictions between the logics. The above contradictions lead to a lack of consensus and disagreement regarding the perception of the legitimacy of PR that should guide the appropriate professional project enabling PR to achieve legitimacy. Although, the contradictions highlight differences between the actor's perceptions, they are only important for increasing the actors’ awareness of problematic aspects of their logics, and expectations from one another. Besides, the effect of the contradictions on the legitimacy of PR remains unclear without understanding the influence of the actors’ logics on one another. Therefore, the next section discusses the relations between the contradicting logics using the constellation of logics (Goodrick & Reay, 2011) for understanding their influence on the perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria.

6.3 Applying a constellation of logics for understanding their effects on the perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria

The constellation of logics takes this discussion a step further as it facilitates an understanding of the effect of the contradicting logics on the perception of the legitimacy of PR. The constellation of logics explains why coexisting logics interact and relate with one another in a particular manner (Goodrick & Reay, 2011), which could be cooperating or competing. When logics cooperate, coexisting logics jointly influence the perception of legitimacy and appropriate behavior within the context (Greenwood, et al. 2011). However,
when logics compete, the most powerful logic dominates and determines appropriate practices, that behavior for entire the context aligns with the dominant logic (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011). The power with which domination is obtained is understood based on the resource dependences of the actors. Consequently, the actor(s) with control over critical resources, which the coexisting logics depend upon determines the legitimating logic, and therefore the perception of legitimacy that would be followed by all the logics within this environment.

Based on the identified contradictions between the logics of the actors, Nigeria’s PR field is understood as a space where purposive actions are carried out by self-motivated field members whose differing logics compete for dominance. Consequently, a competing constellation of the logics exists in Nigeria, which is firstly dominated by the corporate logics in the workplace arena. Nevertheless, the PR profession’s logic for being perceived as a profession, i.e. the traits with which PR has been legally recognized as a profession is the second dominating logic in Nigeria in the legal arena. The dominating logics status is based on their structural power gained through their location in the social structure with which they accumulate critical resources (e.g. Brint & Karabel 1991). These entail exclusive control over social and economic resources that the PR profession depends upon in the form of legitimacy. Consequently, the NIPR’s dependence on these actors’ endorsement/legitimacy resources causes their behavior to align with corporate and professions logics respectively.

The resources under the control of the government that manifest as the professions logic pertains specifically to the establishment of the traits combined with the chartered status. Therefore, the Nigerian government expectations that are contained in professions logic must be respected for PR to be perceived as a legitimate profession in Nigeria. In addition, the government’s resources extend to the accreditation of PR programs, which is a critical resource for educational institutions to offer and be able to produce graduates from PR programs in Nigeria. This has been delegated to the NUC and NIPR who determines the curricula content and perform the accreditation of PR programs (NIPR, 2014) respectively. These provide the association and the NUC with the power to monitor PR education, which is subsumed under the professions logic. This constellation places the educators’ logic in a structurally subordinate position to that of professions.
The resources under the control of the corporate actor include (1) hiring of in-house practitioners, (2) decision-making regarding a PR budget, (3) practitioner role and enactment, and ultimately (4) adjudging PR as a legitimate profession based on practitioners’ performance and contribution to the bottom-line. Besides, corporate logics have the capacity to overthrow professions and educators’ norms and expectations in the workplace (Abbott, 1988). These manifest through practitioner role and enactment, preferred qualifications, tasks composition, and the degree of autonomy etc. (see also Ramirez, 2013) that are granted in the workplace, which may contrast professions logic. More so, organizational bureaucracies, commercial and efficiency goals and environmental uncertainties are some of the self-interested reasons that also influence corporate expectations. These are exercised over the PR profession because the NIPR is structurally subordinate to corporate logics with regards to the workplace arena. These expectations compel the NIPR to align elements of its professional project to the corporate logic.

6.3.1 The effect of the dominating corporate logics on the perception of the legitimacy of PR and PR professional project

The dominating logics within the Nigerian PR institutional context highlight how institutionalized norms alone may not explain appropriate behavior for obtaining legitimacy. For PR, the professional projects with which PR can achieve legitimacy may not be explained through the rationalized myths and isomorphic processes embedded within the profession’s logic alone. Instead, the accumulation of influences of the corporate and professions logics offers a more plausible explanation about the expectations that PR must meet for gaining legitimacy. However, contradictions between the logics that PR’s professional project must align with cause institutional complexities. By undermining one at the expense of the other, PR may not be perceived to be legitimate either in the workplace or the legal arena, while legitimacy from both logics is of equal importance for the profession.

Aligning with one dominant logic is challenged by institutional complexities arising from being confronted with multiple dominating and legitimating logics. This is the case for PR’s professional project in Nigeria due to the contradicting elements of the professions and corporate logics that are both important for PR’s legitimacy in the legal and corporate arenas respectively. This complicates decisions regarding the appropriate behavior for legitimacy to be gained by the PR profession within its institutional context in Nigeria. Research on institutional complexities arising from multiple logics and response strategies has received
immense interest (e.g. Oliver, 1991, Goodrick & Reay, 2011, Waldorff, Reay, & Goodrick, 2013, Kraatz & Block, 2008). However applying institutional logics in an analytically useful manner remains a difficult task without a clear process (Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012).

However, Greenwood et al.’s (2011) multilevel analytical framework provides a guide for understanding how institutional complexity arises, and how organizations cope with multiple logics expectations and respond to them. The key aspects of the framework include Institutional pluralism, field structure, and organizational attributes that together inform the appropriate response to the contradicting logics. This is applied here for understanding the effects of the dominating logics and the NIPR’s responses to the contradicting logics, which would eventually reflect in an evolved professional project for PR in Nigeria.

6.3.1.1 Institutional pluralism and degree of incompatibility between dominating logics for PR in Nigeria
Institutional pluralism concerns institutional complexities that arise from incompatible yet legitimating multiple logics and their degree to which their specific expectations or elements of the logics are incompatible or contradict one another (Greenwood et al. (2011). Scholars identify incompatibility between the goals that are considered legitimate; the means i.e. expected actions or behavior for the goal to be achieved (Pache & Santos, 2010) while specificity pertains to the degree of ambiguity and clarity of goals and means (Goodrick & Salancik, 1996). High specificity obliges behavior to align in the exact manners as stated in the logics, while ambiguity permits discretion when responding.

Although the corporate and professions goals are informed by their expectations of the PR profession, it is the means through which they achieve those goals that are of utmost importance in this case. For instance, while a corporate goal of managing a crisis informs corporate expectations of PR, it is the means through which the crisis can be managed through appropriate PR competences of the practitioner that are expected through their preferred practitioner qualifications. This includes the prioritized specialization, which is the means for addressing product category dynamics. Similarly, while the goal of professions logic is that the NIPR fulfills the requirement for gaining legitimacy, it is the means, i.e. the extent to which PR adheres to the traits and other requirements for attaining the chartered status that is of utmost interest. For both logics, incompatibilities exist in certain aspects of
the means. This tie directly to the expected actions which are reflected in the elements of the professional project that is evaluated in order to ascertain whether NIPR’s means are in line with the professions and corporates demands respectively. Identified incompatibilities and/or contradictions are precise and specific and therefore well understood, such that the NIPR must address them as expected with no room for discretion.

Since all categories of management are from industries in need of PR expertise and are all targeted by practitioners for employment, elements of the three corporate logics are combined and understood as the sum total of the corporate logics in Nigeria. Based on the combined corporate logic, and the professions logics, aspects, where incompatibilities exist, include the following:

1) Description of PR: professions logics describe PR as a relationship management function for managing the relationship with internal and external publics and stakeholders, and strategic corporate image and reputation. Although corporate logics share a similar view of PR, the contradicting expectation includes sales, which is not included in PR curricula or certifications respectively.

2) Practitioner role: assumptions about the practitioner role are incompatible as professions expect practitioners to be assigned to and enact the higher order/reflective-strategist managerial role. In contrast, the technician role has been institutionalized for practitioners, except by corporates with PR experience alone and/or those with a PR education.

3) Preferred practitioner qualifications: the profession logics are mostly concerned about a PR degree, certification and a PR generalist, while corporate expectations include sales management, journalism, and PR specialization.

4) Approach for the enforcement of the code of conduct: the professions logic expects a code of conduct but does not specify how it should be enforced. The low specificity of the enforcement approach causes the NIPR to apply discretion based on its discrete enforcement and punishment approach. In contrast, corporate logics expect well-publicized enforcement and punishment as this indicates a well-sanitized profession that does not tolerate quacks and unethical practitioners.
6.3.1.2 Field structure

The Structure of the field where PR is located determines the number, nature, and extent of institutional complexity and demands that the NIPR is likely to face respectively. It is at this level that the socially constructed meanings and norms of institutional actors are encoded into their logics and thereby manifest as appropriate and anticipated behavior (e.g. Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010). These are understood based on the differences in the level of maturity of the field, the degree of fragmentation, formal structuring, and centralization of the demands within the field respectively.

Mature and emergent field

The mature field is more stable and because they have evolved over the years have developed stable priorities that have been established between the logics (Hoffman, 1999). In addition, complexities at the institutional member level would also have been clarified and worked out between competing logics at the institutional context level. In this sense, coexisting logics and expectations are well known, predictable, regularized and reproduced, often based on a dominant logic (e.g. Reay and Hinings, 2009). These make it easier for organizations to respond by developing appropriate structures as demanded by the dominating logic. Emergent fields are the opposite because they are characterized by uncertain institutional arrangements, ambiguous definition of legitimacy, unclear membership criteria and boundaries respectively (e.g., Fligstein & McAdam, 2011). This raises the tendency for a fluctuating degree of institutional complexities because logics from other fields are not restricted and could intensify the level of complexity within the institutional context.

The NIPR is argued to exist in both a matured and emergent field. The NIPR exists in a mature field in relation to the professions logic whereby expectations have been made into regulations in the form of traits and accompanying requirements that are reproduced by various professions for attaining a chartered status which signifies their legitimacy in Nigeria. The emergent field is in relation to the corporate logics. Although corporate logics are recognized as a dominant logic, their expectations are neither bounded nor regulated, although their definition of legitimacy may be based on their knowledge and experience. Their logics may also be influenced by environmental uncertainties, product category needs, industry dynamics, or technological developments. Nevertheless, certain aspects of their logics are matured such as expecting the PR person to be a certified NIPR member who can...
manage a crisis. It is the emergent aspects that are of concern to NIPR because they could lead to a highly intense complexity that could erode or hinder PR’s legitimacy if they are not aligned.

**Fragmentation-Formal structuring-centralization**

Fragmentation refers to the number of uncoordinated constituents upon which an institutional actor/member is dependent for legitimacy or material resources thereby leading to competing demands from different institutional logics (Meyer, Scott, & Strang, 1987; Pache & Santos, 2010). *Formal structuring* refers to the extent to which the demands are formally organized so that the expectations are well specified and complied with. Demands may also be less formally organized whereby discretion may be applied when responding to expectations as they are less specified (Meyer, Scott, & Strang, 1987) but nevertheless expected and prioritized. The extent of centralization pertains to the hierarchical structure of power of the institutional actors (Meyer, Scott, & Strang, 1987) thereby standardizing organizational forms and reducing complexities because the environment becomes more centralized while rules are clear and highly rigid.

The professions logics are understood as fragmented, formally organized and possessing centralized demands. The fragmentation is because they are not combined with corporate logics. The demands of the professional logics are formally specified through the traits to attain a chartered status. In addition, the Association of Professional Bodies of Nigeria (APBN) has specific membership requirements (APBN, 2018) for supplying endorsement to the NIPR thereby giving no room for discretion but strict adherence if legitimacy is to be gained, while monitoring is also made easy. The centralized role is equally clear as they are understood as a dominant logic. Corporate logics and expectations are fragmented as well but less formally organized and centralized. The fragmentation is similar to that of professions, however, the varied expectations of the three categories of management and their initially developed respective logics indicate that they are not organized. The less organized structures of their expectation permit the NIPR to apply discretion when dealing or communicating with the respective categories. This would reflect in the chosen response strategy and professional project respectively.
6.3.1.3 Organization filters/attributes of the professional association - NIPR
The organization attributes pertain to institutional actors’ attributes that cause them to experience pressures from institutional complexities differently and respond in a particular manner(s). This is based on their position in the field, the structure of the organization’s ownership and governance, and its identity.

Field position
Field position concerns where the institutional actor is located in the field in relation to other institutional actors. This affects the extent to which they are influenced by institutional complexities. At the center are actors with high status, resource visibility and media attention who dominate others in the periphery or interstices (see Abbott, 1988). In contrast, periphery located actors experience less intensity of institutional complexity because they may be less aware of institutional expectations as they have minimal connections to the dominating or centrally located actors. This also means that their practices are less monitored (e.g. Kraatz, 1998; Westphal & Zajac, 2001; Leblebici et al. 1991). At the interstices are highly reflexive actors who are well aware of the competing logics and demands coming from their institutional complexities as well as the repercussion of nonconformity (Seo & Creed, 2002; Dunn & Jones, 2010). The NIPR is argued to exist in the interstices, which is described below along with other elements.

Structure, ownership and identity
Structure pertains to the degree to which internal representatives of the organization are receptive, committed to and actively advocate compliance with a dominating logic based on their priorities and desired outcomes. The structure also reflects the extent to which the organization is vulnerable to the field level influence of the other logics, and their capacity to insulate organizational members from the expectations of such logics (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011). Ownership and governance pertain to an understanding of the appreciation, recognition and prioritization of a particular external institutional logic. This is argued to reflect on the interests and influence of organization members with intra-organizational decision making powers for resolving institutional complexities based on the composition of the organization’s ownership (Pache & Santos 2010) and dependence on the institutional actors (e.g. Goodrick & Salancik, 1996).
At the institutional level, identity pertains to claims to membership of an institutionally standardized social category or a collective identity (e.g. Kennedy, 2008). This is the basis for the institutional actors’ membership to an institutional environment, which compels them to conform to established practices of the institutional category to gain legitimacy (e.g. Czarniawska & Wolff, 1998). Consequently, the identity shapes the organization’s perception and response when confronted with institutional complexity. Identity at the organization level pertains to differentiating attributes from other institutional members, which reflects the expectations that are to be met and the response to institutional pressures (e.g., Fox-Wolfram et al.). Additionally, the positive or negative perception of the identity (e.g. Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2009) by other institutional members is used for interpreting institutional complexities. This manifests either as a prompt resistance to external pressures for preserving a positive identity or adherence for repairing a negative identity based on the extent to which the identity is deeply shared (e.g. Gioia & Thomas, 1996).

In this case, the NIPR is located in the interstices whereby contradicting aspects of the corporate and professions logics intensifies the institutional complexities that NIPR faces. More so, the repercussion from non-conformity to the logics results in perceived practitioner incompetence and lack of legitimacy. This highlight the NIPR’s vulnerability to the dominant logics. Nevertheless, the NIPR is highly reflexive (Suddaby, Viale & Gendron 2016) in the sense its leadership is well aware of the constraints regarding legitimacy as well as opportunities created by expectations of the dominating logics. This is because meeting the corporate expectations may advance PR’s prestige and legitimacy in the legal and workplace arenas respectively. In addition, the leadership position of the executives and the planned initiatives (expansion of the PR syllabus, retraining, recertification, national register, unique membership numbers) reflect the priorities and interest the leadership. These equally reflect the executive's access to intraorganizational decision-making powers with which they can effect changes to their professional project in response to the complexities.

Furthermore, NIPR’s identity as a professional association means that it must comply with the established traits and requirements that expectations must be to obtain professional legitimacy from the government and from APBN in Nigeria respectively.
In addition, the NIPR’s capacity to have a legal hold over a clear jurisdiction would equally enhance its identity and differentiate it from other professions and their professional associations. This is an area where PR currently struggles, which is partially responsible for its negative image. Other issues pertaining to a low entry barrier into PR practice, misrepresentation, and misconception of PR and lack of consensus regarding its perceived professional status are just some of the factors contributing to the negative image. The accumulation of these issues causes PR to be deeply perceived as having a negative identity among other institutional members, notably management and PR educators. Consequently, the NIPR is compelled to comply with the corporate demands, which often overlap that of the educators in certain aspects towards repairing the perceived negative identity.

6.3.1.4 Organizational response and response structure to institutional complexity
Response strategies to institutional complexities may be explained based on the representation of multiple logics within the organization as they are prioritized (Pache & Santos, 2010). The emphasis here is on the presence and intraorganization decision-making powers of advocates respectively who want to comply with the demands of the external logics based on their self-interests, motivations, and the understanding of their resource dependencies on the competing logics (Oliver, 1991). Research on response strategies to external pressures from the early and recent NIT suggest that responses could be passive (e.g. Meyer & Rowan, 1977, DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), ceremonial (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) strategic, (e.g. Powell, 1991; Oliver, 1991) translation (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996; Kraatz & Block 2008) etc. Nevertheless, Tilcsik (2010) adds that the response strategy may not be permanent but may be subject to alteration or variation across time due to changing institutional conditions, expectations and the nature of complexities respectively. Irrespective of the chosen response, the internal structure may also be acted upon (see Simsek, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2011; Kraatz & Block, 2008), however, this is not looked into in this study.
Table 6.7 presents an example of a combined corporate and professions logics for responding to the multiple logics based on an analysis of Nigeria’s PR institutional complexity. Aspects that are evolved are in red. These indicate the direction of PR professional projects from a combined profession and corporate-driven perspective by highlighting aspects in which professions logic aligns with corporate logics.

Table 6.8 Example of an aligned contradicting multiple logics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>NIPR (Professions logics and + Corporate logics aligned)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Social realities/critical resources cultivation/openness to evolving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of PR</strong></td>
<td>An integrated approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic management function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship management function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales and marketing management function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practitioner role</strong></td>
<td>Emphasis on various Role types enactments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technician role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manager role: Lower order higher-order/reflective-strategist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management influence on and contingent nature of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Un)Controlled autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dominant coalition membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision-making powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Academic: PR generalist with PR or any degree, NIPR certification, Industry, knowledge Ethical conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraging and offering specialists training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraging people with diverse backgrounds to obtain PR certification, expanded curriculum, rigorous certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The inclusion of journalism modules into PR curricula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasks composition</strong></td>
<td>Media relations, writing tasks environmental scanning, convince and counsel management, develop communications strategy, coordinate CSR initiatives, manage organization’s issues, crises, image and reputation respectively; coordinate CSR initiatives, generating goodwill for organizations, and manage relations with organizations’ publics and stakeholders, marketing, sales, and product promotion, branding management, implementing management decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactions with NIPR</strong></td>
<td>Events: workshops, training, conferences, master classes targeting CEO and employees of corporate organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Push communication strategy targeted at the publics and critical stakeholders informing them about</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- management and public sensitization about PR</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- practitioners critical resources for organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PR’s NIPR’s activities, events, achievements, developments, master list, and unique numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- image management for PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- updates about expanded curricula and specialist training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ongoing professional development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- availability of masterclasses for top management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- high entry barriers into the profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- enforcement of the code of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- publicized punishment of violators of the NIPR laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional status determinants</strong></td>
<td>Traits approach: formal education/certification, code of conduct, professional association, body of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power approach- System of professions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legal arena claim: Chartered status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Societal arena claim: public sensitization, publicized punishment of violators, image management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workplace arena claims: cultivating critical organizational resources, internal stakeholder relations management, institutional approach to professional projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the understanding of the institutional complexity in Nigeria’s PR institutional context, a passive response to the professions logic alone will be deficient. Therefore, Oliver’s (1991) strategic response from the recent NIT tradition is proposed for PR’s professional project. This permits the professional project to be oriented by the professions and corporate logics respectively for gaining legitimacy from both dominant institutional actors. For the corporate logics, in particular, a focus on the cultivation of critical resources is warranted. In doing so, the NIPR aligns with the corporate logics and its accompanying perception of the legitimacy in the workplace arena (Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017). In addition, the specific strategic response is the basis for developing an alternative approach for PR’s professional project that is enriched for obtaining legitimacy across the institutional context. The strategic response and new approach are presented in the next section.

6.4 A strategic response to the institutional complexities within Nigeria’s PR context

A strategic response is proposed as the appropriate response to the institutional complexities that PR currently faces in Nigeria. This is because this study problematizes the NIPR’s sole reliance on the institutionalized traits and unfounded assumptions about the power approach for PR’s professional project in Nigeria. Although these approaches have been successfully applied by prestigious professions and achieved their desired outcome, they have been unable to help PR to gain its desired legitimacy in Nigeria. More specifically, they hinder PR’s openness to evolving in accordance with the external expectations of the legitimating logics that are crucial for gaining legitimacy within Nigeria’s PR institutional context. Therefore, a strategic response is proposed for attending to the contradictions between the legitimating logics.

As the custodian of PR in Nigeria, the NIPR is the reflexive institutional actor (Suddaby, Viale, & Gendron, 2016) has the social position (Battilana, 2006) and social skills (Fligstein, 1997) to strategically respond to external demands for PR and gain legitimacy in Nigeria. Based on the empirical evidence from the findings, the professional association demonstrates a high level of awareness of some of the challenges to its legitimacy and is already taking steps, albeit from the power driven approach. For instance, the NIPR acknowledges the lack of a robust curriculum, or the influx of quacks in PR practice, which are believed to partially hinder PR’s legitimacy in Nigeria. The NIPR’s plans to expand the PR syllabus as well as
retraining and recertification exercises combined with internal disciplinary measures for addressing these issues imply that the professional association may be more likely to pursue an alternative approach due to the perceived benefits of doing so (see Wooten & Hoffman, 2008).

Nevertheless, these may not resolve the institutional complexities within the context. More so, these plans represent a reactive approach as well as passive response to the institutionalized norms for legitimacy. These norms are oriented by the expected traits approach and the unfounded assumptions of the power approach, which reflects an inside-out perspective that contradicts the corporate logics. Instead, the NIPR’s response to its institutional complexities and PR’s professional project could be better addressed with a strategic response to the norms. In doing so, the professional association would be able to accommodate both logics and benefit from the legitimacies they provide. Therefore, the following sections present the proposed strategic response to the institutional complexities within Nigeria’s PR environment and an institutional approach to PR’s professional project.

6.4.1 Applying a compromise strategic response to the institutional complexities for PR in Nigeria

The compromise entails a strategic response that is contingent on NIPR’s goals that enhance its social validity, efficiency and overall wellbeing instead of solely complying for isomorphism (Oliver, 1991). Compromise is most applicable when confronted with institutional complexities where avoidance, manipulation or defiance is impossible due to the contradicting logics legitimacy resources. More so, compliance with one of the logics while defying the other may be counterproductive to NIPR’s legitimacy in the defied arena. Therefore, compromise demonstrates alignments with the contradicting expectations regarding the perceptions of legitimacy through a three-step process that includes balancing, pacifying, and bargaining.

Table 6.9 NIPR Strategic response to institutionalized norms for professional legitimacy in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current approach</th>
<th>New approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>Passive compliance</td>
<td>Strategic response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired Outcome</td>
<td>PR professionalism</td>
<td>Professional legitimacy for PR in corporate workplaces in Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Traits/Power approach</td>
<td>Institutional approach + RDT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Strategy</td>
<td>Institutional isomorphism</td>
<td>Compromise: Balancing-Pacifying-Bargaining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Balancing and Pacifying

Balancing is a tactical response in which multiple, contradicting yet legitimating institutional logics are accommodated when responding to institutional complexities and contradicting expectations towards ensuring an acceptable compromise. In practice, this entails reproducing and proper implementation of the institutionalized traits. Empirical findings about professions logic highlights the importance of the traits as indicators of a well-organized profession with internal control measures that are coordinated by a professional association that designs appropriate certification/education for developing the competencies of its members, stipulates and enforces high entry barriers into the profession, ensures the ethical conduct of its members, and liaises with external stakeholders (Abbott, 1988). This is in line with the expectations of the corporate and professions logics respectively.

Balancing leads directly into pacifying as it concerns partial conformity with the expectations of two dominant logics within Nigeria’s PR institutional context. For PR, this entails proper implementation and reproduction of the traits that are expected by the dominant corporate and professions logic respectively. This is carried out to appease and demonstrate PR’s conformity to the expected standard for professional legitimacy to be granted in accordance with the corporate expectations, the legal authorities and fellow professions respectively. In practice, these are manifested as the evolution to the current elements of the professional project, which concerns expansion in the scope of PR’s description, curricula, qualifications, jurisdiction, and changes to the code of conduct enforcement. In addition, frequent push communication activities for increasing public and managements’ awareness about PR and activities to improve the standard of practice, discipline, and learning opportunities for meeting external demands for legitimacy are also proposed. The proposed changes for meeting institutional expectation are presented as follows as this impact on specific current practices.

Impact on the description of PR

Based on the compilation of the descriptions of PR in the three corporate logics, which are to be integrated into the description of logics more emphasis is needed on sales, marketing, and branding. In doing so, PR’s description would go beyond the traditional strategic relationship
management function for image and reputation management and include sales, brand and marketing management that together enhance the corporate bottom-line.

Impact on assumptions about practitioner role
According to the professions’ logic, practitioners are expected to occupy senior management role, which is perceived to grant access to dominant coalition membership and participation in decision making in the workplace (Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005; Steyn, 2009; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) and uncontrolled autonomy (Serini, 1993). However, corporate logics reveal that only management with PR education and experience are likely to assign practitioners to this management level, while the others would mostly assign practitioners to the technician role. The technician role has been found to be institutionalized as or perceived to be the appropriate practitioner role in organizations (Zerfass, et al., 2011), while practitioners with the manager title may still be working at a slightly advanced technician role, i.e. the lower-order managerial role (Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000).

Consequently, less emphasis will need to be placed on the managerial role but emphasize instead on the importance of the technician role. Critical resources in the form of expertise, dynamic capabilities, and access to needed resources etc. and credibility built over time for managing organizational uncertainties and specific needs will thus increase the probability for dominant coalition membership (Bowen 2009, Berger, 2005). In addition, an understanding of the temporary nature of autonomy would be integrated into professions logic.

Impact on practitioner role
In order to possess the critical resources for being valued by management and progressing through the roles, the practitioner's qualifications would need to be expanded. The professions logics focus on formal PR education or other degrees, NIPR certification, and organizations industry knowledge for developing PR generalist competencies. Although this set of qualifications may be sufficient for some organizations, they are insufficient for all
organizations. In particular, organizations in niche industries require practitioners specializing in their product category or a few aspects of PR that are peculiar to their business. In addition, corporate logics reveal that some other organizations require an academic background in their primary business area. These means that the professions logic will need to prioritize and encourage specialization in its training, and promote and make NIPR certification programs appealing to people with a diverse academic background.

Impact on practitioners’ tasks composition
Management is known to reconfigure professions’ jurisdiction in the workplace (Abbott, 1988, Ramirez, 2013). The task composition between the logics is similar and appears preoccupied with the traditional managerial role-related tasks. However, Moss, Warnaby, and Newman (2000) found both technicians as well as higher and lower order managers respectively to still perform technician tasks. Management mostly values and expects practitioners to perform the technician tasks irrespective of their role (Bowen, 2009). Moreover, practitioners are mostly assigned to the technician role (Zerfass, et al., 2011). Therefore, more emphasis is to be placed on technician skills and the managerial roles alone. Marketing and branding modules are included in PR programs’ and certification curricula respectively. Since some organizations expect practitioners to be able to perform tasks in these areas, these competencies need to be emphasized as well.

Impact on interactions and communications with management
The professional association organizes events and activities in order to sanitize the PR profession, sensitize management about PR and enhance practitioner competencies. These are part of the expectations that make up the professions logic. However, the general lack of awareness of these initiatives causes management and educators to believe that the professional association may not be upholding its responsibilities PR. The availability of information about the events on the communication platforms suggests that the pull communication strategy may be in place, or the communication does not reach the concerned actors. In order to align with corporate logics and ensure that management is informed and are invited to participate in some of the activities, a push strategy would be required.
Impact on the enforcement of the code of conduct

The code of conduct and enforcement are key traits of the prestigious profession and are expected by organizations. Moreover, compliance with NIPR’s entry requirements into PR practice and their code of conduct has been criticized for being voluntary (e.g. Amujo & Melewar, 2011). The code of conduct, in particular, is argued to be ineffective in the Nigerian context (Samaila, 2015) or lacking proper enforcement by the NIPR (Oko, Nnolim, & Nwaizugbo, 2014). In contrast, the professions logic indicates that compliance is compulsory, while a discrete enforcement of punishment approach against violators is planned. The scholars’ conclusions are partly based on their lack of awareness of the obligatory compliance to the laws, which is reinforced through the discrete enforcement approach. The discrete approach is out of the public view and therefore perceived to be non-existent. Consequently, the discrete approach needs to be made public to communicate the high entry barrier into the profession, prosecution of violators of the entry barrier and stipulated ethical conduct for practitioners which is reminiscent of well-respected professions.

Impact on the professional status determinants

A traits and power approach driven professional project may be inappropriate for PR’s legitimacy. The professions and corporate logics share similarities in their preference for the traits (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016) and systems of profession version of the power approach (Abbott, 1988) in their perceived determinants for professional status. However, the underlying goal of dominating the workplace power approach (Larson, 1977; Freidson, 2001) may be unachievable for PR based on the misrepresentation, misconception and unfavorable reputation of PR, combined with a lack of a clear jurisdiction and competition from prestigious communication professions. Besides, workplace realities that are characterized by managements’ varied PR knowledge and/or experience causing them to expect and appreciate practitioners for their technician skills mean that practitioners may find it harder to dominate the workplace when compared to well-respected professions such as lawyers or accountants (Wallace, 1995; Oppenheimer, 1972).

Additionally, PR exists in a complex institutional context comprising multiple legitimating logics, where it must align to the corporate logics. In doing so, adherence to corporate logics and resulting expectations that characterize a preference for critical resources for attending to organizations environmental uncertainties, commercial objects, enhanced bottom-line performance and positive image are found. These inform their perception of the legitimacy of
PR and thereby call for a reorientation regarding the chosen approach for PR’s professional project.

**Bargaining**

Bargaining is the third and most active part of the compromise strategic response (Oliver, 1991). The active component entails proactive efforts involving negotiating with other institutional actors towards reaching a mutually beneficial agreement. An obvious example here is a promise to adopt the contradicting elements from the corporate logic into the NIPR’s professional project. Empirical findings of the contradictions between the corporate and professions logics pinpoint critical elements that are to be aligned for PR’s pursuit of legitimacy in the workplace.

The examples of elements in needs of adaptation for PR include: (1) the implementation of the planned expanded syllabus and rigorous certification, (2) integrating a management perspective and journalism modules into PR education and training in collaboration with PR educators, (3) working with top management to better understand organizations’ critical resource needs that could be included in PR educations and training, (4) well publicized and a strictly enforced code of professional practice to deter violators, as well as the seal and unique number that every practitioner, would have and attach to their work, (5) promote and encourage specialization amongst NIPR members and (6) communicate PR and the practitioner’s value to organizations and society, which must include initiatives to improve PR’s image enhance organizations PR knowledge. These demonstrate the professional association’s seriousness about meeting organizations expectations and enhancing the integrity, discipline, prestige, and legitimacy respectively for of the PR profession in the workplace.

In return, the professional association could request a commitment on the part of management to attend an agreed upon number of NIPR training sessions, workshops, or master classes annually. The sponsorship of and/or participation in NIPR’s conferences, roundtable events could also be negotiated. Additionally, NIPR services could be obtained, whereby the association tailored PR training to specific organizational needs based on their industry product category environmental uncertainties and dynamics. More so, it is not uncommon for corporate organizations to enter partnership agreements as a form of CSR initiatives by
offering internships to PR students, and research collaboration to contribute to PR’s body of knowledge and enhance the practice in Nigeria. Furthermore, the negotiations could also be extended to PR educators where collaborative work can be agreed upon for jointly (1) improving PR education, (2) adjusting accreditation requirements and procedures, (3) academic research work for enhancing the body of knowledge for PR, (4) and allowing educators to participate in and contribute PR research works to NIPR conferences.

The combination of balance, pacify and bargain are employed towards conforming to the expected traits, but also involves taking active steps towards understanding and attending to specific workplace expectations working in accordance with the perception of legitimacy of the dominating corporate logic.

**6.4.2 An institutional approach to PR’s professional project in Nigeria**

Beyond compromising, there is a greater cause for a reorientation and evolution in the approach for PR’s professional project. While the traditional traits remain a minimum requirement for professional legitimacy, the PR field cannot continue to rely on the unfounded assumptions of the power approach (e.g. Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009). Moreover, while the corporate logics dominate and may be strategically responded to, the PR field will benefit from professional projects that are positioned to evolve in accordance with the ever-changing demands of dominant institutional logics. Moreover, Tilcsik (2010) adds that organizations response strategy to institutional complexity caused by pressing or prevailing complexity is not permanent but may be subject to alteration or variation across time. Additionally, changing institutional conditions, expectations respectively and nature of complexities may also inform strategies that would be appropriate at different times. Therefore, the PR field could benefit from studying its constellation of logics, the resulting dominant logics and accompanying complexities towards being prepared to evolve in accordance with the expectations of dominant and legitimating logics of their institutional context.

Based on an understanding that PR is likely to be confronted by institutional complexities, the institutional approach (Muzio, Brock, & Suddaby, 2013) which incorporates the RDT (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) is proposed for PR’s professional projects of the future. This approach integrates elements of the system of professions but not for the purpose of
dominating organizations. Instead, the emphasis is on understanding and adapting to their institutional context realities caused by dominant logics and cultivating critical resources for gaining and retaining legitimacy.

In doing so, the expected societal, legal and workplace arena claims respectively would be prioritized as expected by the workplace. Beyond attending to the system of professions elements, the PR’s professional project would be primarily oriented towards meeting corporate expectations by cultivating critical resources for resolving organizations’ environmental uncertainties and contingencies. Consequently, less emphasis is placed on attaining the managerial role as means to the dominant coalition, uncontrolled autonomy, and decision making powers respectively. Instead, the emphasis would be on building a track record and credibility that is based on a deep understanding of the internal workings of organizational context, managing internal stakeholder relations, and resolving critical organizational challenges (e.g. Muzio, Brock, & Suddaby, 2013; Bowen, 2009).

Emphasis on developing “resource-rich” practitioners
The resource dependence theory perspective is integrated into this approach for the professional project to be oriented towards developing “resource-rich” practitioners (Boyd, 1990). This concerns professions in possession of critical organizational resources with which the ability to obtain intraorganizational power is within organizational contexts irrespective of their formal role (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Professions with critical resources are highly valued and as such indispensable to organizations, while their resources become their source of intraorganizational power (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

Support for this argument is to be found when PR people are highly valued and invited into the dominant coalition during crises, simply because of their resources, i.e. crisis management expertise (Lauzen & Dozier, 1992; Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009). Such expertise turns PR into a “resource-rich” profession in such instances (e.g. Boyd, 1990) but becomes “resource-poor” (Peng 2004; Boyd, 1990) when crises are over and their perceived value diminishes. While PR is not restricted to crisis management, practitioners have other PR competencies that are valuable to organizations. More so, aligning with corporate logics means that practitioners would also be able to offer sales and marketing management as well as specialist and journalism capabilities to organizations. The practitioners’ capacity to
deploy broader resources for organizations diminishes the perceived incompetence plaguing practitioners; turning them into “resource-rich” with intraorganizational power, as seen in Nigeria’s oil industry (Idemudia, 2007).

Intraorganizational power is held by a unit or department within the organization and can be exercised over other units (Pfeffer, 1987). Such power gives professions the ability to influence and contribute to the organization’s strategic actions (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978; Georgiou, 1973). This is essentially RDT’s contribution to the institutional approach based professional project, in which the professional association prioritizes the cultivation of critical resources in the form of unique competencies and capabilities with which PR’s jurisdiction could be developed. By aligning with the corporate logics and implementing the institutional approach, practitioners would concentrate on building a track record of offering unique PR, marketing, sales, and branding services to corporate organizations as PR generalists and/or specialists. Over time, the credibility that is built up from working with this orientation would eventually get the attention and respect of top management and most especially the CEOs (e.g. Bowen, 2009). Besides, intraorganizational power may not reside in formal roles. The critical contingencies affecting organizations’ bottom-line and survival have been found to compel organizations to cede intraorganizational power or parts of it to organizational members with desperately needed resources for resolving immediate contingencies (e.g. Child, 1972; Mechanic, 1962; Bowen, 2009, Berger, 2005).

Nevertheless, professional associations’ awareness of specific organizational needs becomes paramount for retaining “resource-rich” professional status. This concern the professional association’s capacity to proactively understand the needs and expectations that are paramount for continued relevance to organizations with varied PR knowledge and across different industries and product categories. These suggest professional associations’ ongoing interactions with organizations for mutual learning purposes whereby the constellation of logics is monitored for evolving elements of professional projects. Part of the empirical findings of corporate and professions logic is the necessity for interaction. This offers an opportunity for mutual learning and further bargaining between the institutional actors.
Table 6.10: The compromise strategic response to institutional complexities in Nigeria’s PR institutional context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compromise element</th>
<th>Expectant institutional actor</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balancing and pacifying</td>
<td>Professions logics Corporate logics</td>
<td>Appeasing dominant logics Fulfilling the minimum requirements Properly executing the expected traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargaining</td>
<td>Corporate logics</td>
<td>Well-publicized enforcement of NIPR laws Well-publicized punishment of violators of NIPR laws’ Including journalism and sales management modules into PR curricula Developing resource-rich practitioners Encouraging and offering PR specialization training Actively promoting PR certification to people without a PR degree. Push communications of NIPR’s activities, events, and initiatives In exchange for corporate organizations commitment to e.g. Attend master classes Participate in and/or sponsor NIPR events and activities Collaborate with the NIPR for research projects Internship slots for PR undergraduate students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5. Final thoughts on the analysis of the perception of the legitimacy of PR, institutional complexities and PR’s professional project

Institutional complexities are an important element for explaining the influence of multiple logics on organizations behavior. The demands of multiple logics within Nigeria’s PR context bring about complexities for the professional association’s pursuit of legitimacy. These logics are described in this chapter as the professions and corporate logics. The professions understand that formally prescribed traits and the production of PR generalists combined with discretion when implementing disciplinary measures as sufficient for legitimacy. The corporate logic is characterized by fragmented expectations that are summed up as wider scope of PR, critical resources needs and visible disciplinary measures. These contradictions intensify institutional complexities regarding the appropriate response from the NIPR through its professional project. However, a passive response to one of these expectations manifests as a neglect of the other, which results in loss of legitimacy with one of the logics, while legitimacy from both logics is crucial.

This complexity demonstrates that norms alone may not explain organizational behavior when responding to external pressures from dominating logics. More specifically, the institutional complexities caused by dominating logics shift the understanding of appropriate behavior away from institutionalized norms and isomorphism. As this analysis demonstrate, a deep understanding that informs appropriate response could be obtained through: (1) the institutional logics theory which explain coexisting perceptions of legitimacy and consequent expectations of macro institutional actors while (2) the constellation of logics highlight the
expectations that must to be met for gaining legitimacy and (3) a systematic analysis of institutional complexities caused by multiple legitimating logics with which an appropriate response can be selected. By analysing these building blocks, an organization’s response which is reflected in their behavior may include but are not limited to:

- the extent to which the elements of multiple legitimating logics contradict one another
- level of formality of contradicting expectations, which permits discretion or strict compliance
- reflexivity i.e. deep awareness degree of vulnerability to the dominant logics, constraints caused by the lack of legitimacy as well as the opportunities created by the external demands for gaining legitimacy through compliance
- organization’s leadership’s appreciation, recognition, and prioritization of the dominant logics and the decision-making capacity for pursuing compliance
- the identity that organizations must comply with for gaining legitimacy as well as the pursuit of a positive identity, which contribute to its legitimacy.

Consequently, the NIPR’s response to the external demands for legitimacy may not be based on the traits alone but a combination of strict and discretionary responses. This reflects an understanding of the expectations of macro institutional actors, resource dependencies between them and the intensity of institutional complexities which offers a more plausible explanation for appropriate behavior. Therefore, a compromise strategy has been proposed for the NIPR’s professional project which entails strict compliance with the professional traits and an integration of the corporate expectations into PR curricula, communication practices, and disciplinary measures.

The identified building blocks contribute to an understanding of the connections between perceptions/expectations, institutional complexities and appropriate behavior within institutional contexts. As expectations are subject to change due to environmental uncertainties, the compromise may not be appropriate and the process may have to be repeated. Therefore an institutional approach to PR’s professional project is proposed such that the building block is continuously analyzed for deciding on the appropriate response, while incremental changes are more for evolving in line with institutional complexities.
Changing institutional conditions across time cause alterations or variations to the elements and intensity of institutional complexities. This means that today’s strategy may be inappropriate at another point in time. Therefore, the PR field could benefit from studying its institutional complexities and be prepared to evolve in accordance with external expectations at different points in time. For this purpose, the institutional approach is proposed for PR’s professional projects that are oriented towards responding to its institutional context based on a systematic analysis of its institutional complexities. The elements of the current complexity inform the institutional approach as it emphasizes the importance of cultivating critical resources to address the informal and fragmented corporate logics. This means that incremental adjustments would be made in line with external expectations of the time to PR’s professional projects. This also means that the profession would be open to evolving and would be more likely to maintain its legitimacy across time in its institutional context. In chapter 7: Conclusion, the key findings that demonstrate varied and distinct perceptions of PR in Nigeria, and the reflections on theoretical and practical contributions to research on PR’s professional project (i.e. the institutional approach process model) are presented.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

PR’s professional project has not led to the legitimacy that it was designed to achieve. In examining why, in a Nigerian context, a profession that requires certification still has issues with legitimacy, this thesis addressed legitimacy. The view of legitimacy in this study pertains to the perceptions of macro-institutional actors that can influence this professional project. Therefore, the overall purpose of this study was to explore how and why the PR field could better explain and theorize its professional projects to gain legitimacy in the workplace arena. For this purpose, this study used an institutional approach to examine PR’s professional project and legitimacy based on a case study of Nigeria, a country context that requires a certification for practicing PR.

Clusters of research questions have been examined for 1) understanding macro-institutional actors’ perceptions of PR, and 2) understanding contradictions between perceptions from these macro-institutional actors. The findings from these have been used as a basis for developing an institutional approach to understanding PR’s profession project in a Nigerian context. This conclusion presents these research questions together with key findings that demonstrate varied and distinct perceptions of PR in Nigeria, followed by reflections on theoretical and practical contributions to research on PR’s professional project. The chapter ends with the limitation of the study and suggestions for further research.

7.1. RQ1 Which underlying perspectives affect the legitimacy of PR?

As a starting point, RQ1 examined the perspectives of macro institutional actors. These actors are understood to belong to different communities, while their social realities, perceptions, and expectations influence the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria. They include managements who hire practitioners; the professional association for PR in Nigeria – the NIPR that certifies practitioners) and PR educators (educate PR graduates) in Nigeria. The thematic analysis in the findings chapter highlights the elements of their perceptions of PR based on the prominent themes that include: personal characteristics, description of PR, PR understanding, professional status assessment/ the NIPR’s professional projects, relations with NIPR/organizations, relations with in-house practitioners, PR education programs, NIPR membership and code of conduct. Two global themes were derived from these themes - PR education and PR experience. These reflect the interviewees’ level of PR knowledge. The key
findings from the interviewee stories, descriptions, and illustrations that make up their accounts are presented in the following subsections.

7.1.1. RQ1a. How is PR perceived by Nigerian top managemens?
Nigerian top managers were divided into three categories based on their education and experience related to PR - 1) NPNE: Non-PR Educated-Non-Experienced, 2) NPEE: Non-PR Educated-Experienced and 3) PREE: PR Educated-Experienced. Firstly, management interviewees without PR education and experience (NPNEs) perceive PR as a communication function that is germane to politicians and corporate organizations in the FMCG industry. Therefore, examples of the descriptions of PR and related activities by this management’s category interviewees include branding, sales management, and marketing. Consequently, academic background in their primary business area and competencies for implementing management decisions in the areas of product promotion, product presentations, food fairs, souvenir distribution and sponsorship for brand awareness etc., are believed to be typical PR activities. This interviewees’ category has had minimal interaction with PR theory or practice and is therefore unaware whether PR is yet a profession in Nigeria.

Secondly, there are the managements with PR experience alone (NPEEs). Their perspective is shaped by their experience with PR consultants whose counsel and implemented PR strategies have generated goodwill for and contributed to their organizations’ bottom-line performance respectively. Therefore, examples of the interviewee accounts include a view of PR as a strategic relationship management function with the capacity to contribute to an organizations business performance. NPEE interviewee accounts reveal that they value practitioners counsel and are more likely to assign practitioners to the higher-order/reflexive-strategist manager role. In enacting the role, practitioners are expected to counsel management, develop, and implement various PR initiatives with uncontrolled autonomy.

With regards to preferred practitioner qualifications, NPEE interviewees expect PR specialist skills, a journalism background, and contacts. Interviewees’ preference for the PR specialist emanates from their unique industry/product-specific needs, which are understood as critical resources that go beyond PR generalists skills. Therefore, interviewees prefer PR consultants with such critical resources. Interviewees are of the view that PR is an established profession,
based on the establishment of the traits by the NIPR as well as the system of professions elements that include the perceived public and workplace recognition of PR as well as the chartered status. Nevertheless, interviewee accounts suggest skepticism regarding PR’s professional status. Examples of issues such as a lack of clarity, or unawareness about entry barriers into PR practice and sufficient PR training for managements by NIPR were mentioned.

The last group includes management’s interviewees with both PR education and experience (PREE) which reflects their deep knowledge of PR. These interviewees view PR as a management function for nurturing and managing mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders and publics. Interviewees’ accounts imply an expectation of their in-house PR person to be a PR generalist with a PR degree and NIPR certification. Examples of typical PR tasks that they expect from their preferred in-house practitioner include coordinating one and two way PR activities, interfacing with internal and external stakeholders, counseling management, and participating in decision making etc. This category of interviewees shares a consensus in their expectation of practitioners to occupy and enact the higher-order/reflexive-strategist manager role and work with uncontrolled autonomy. The interviewees listed the establishment of the traditional traits, as well as the system of professions elements as their basis for viewing PR as a profession in Nigeria. The latter included the chartered status, workplace, and public recognition of PR as an organizational practice. However, they expect the NIPR to sensitize the public and management about PR, because of the public perception of PR as unethical communication with corrupt practices such as propaganda and bribery respectively. Interviewees also listed mandatory professional development for practitioners, updating PR programs’ curricula, high entry barriers into PR practice, the punishment of the unethical practitioners and quacks as other elements that reinforce the professional status in Nigeria.

Based on the key findings from the three categories of managements, their level of PR knowledge represents a key determiner of their perception of the legitimacy of PR. This obviously causes different categories of perspective and expectations of PR. The key variations between these managements’ perspective of PR are in the areas of the description of PR (sales and brand management function/strategic, and senior management function),
preferred qualifications (generalist/specialists/sales & branding), task composition (PR/sales management), practitioner role (technician/manager), and degree of autonomy (controlled/uncontrolled). Variations of this nature imply that PR has a fragmented perspective and consequently a varied set of expectations for the legitimacy of PR. Consequently, management’s category becomes an element that is worth investigating for professional projects towards gaining legitimacy in the workplace with various types of managements.

7.1.2 RQ1b: How is PR perceived by Nigeria’s Professional association for PR - NIPR?

The professional association’s perspective is developed based on the NIPR executives’ interviewees’ accounts. The account reflects an understanding of PR as a strategic and relationship management function respectively. Interviewees are of the view that PR activities must be headed by a PR generalist who occupies and enacts the higher-order/reflective strategist manager role. From such a senior management role, the practitioners are believed to be able to contribute to decision making and work with uncontrolled autonomy. Such practitioners are expected to possess academic qualifications (PR or any degree and NIPR certification), industry knowledge, a PR background, and ethical conduct. Nevertheless, interviewees’ accounts support findings from the literature review in the role typologies and autonomy sections that managements often determine whether practitioners are able to occupy senior management role. The interviewees believe that PR generalists must be able to carry out environmental scanning, counsel management, coordinate CSR activity initiatives, and manage an organizations’ image and reputation. Although NIPR interviewees’ accounts show recognition of the importance of developing PR specialists, they are also of the view that specialization may hinder their members’ scope of competences. Therefore, the association prioritizes developing PR generalists.

With regards to the perceived determinants for a professional status, the traditional traits (professional association, the body of knowledge, formal education, certification, code of conduct and autonomy), as well as the systems of profession elements are listed (chartered status, along with workplace and public recognition for PR). Additionally, interviewee accounts suggest that the leadership of the professional association is aware of some of the challenges for the PR profession’s image and competences development in Nigeria.
Examples of the professional association’s efforts to attend to these challenges include an expanded syllabus for PR education, retraining, recertification and discrete punishment of unqualified or non-NIPR members who practice PR in Nigeria.

Furthermore, interviewees listed the following as important elements for reinforcing and retaining their professional status, which includes: (1) compulsory compliance with the code of conduct of the professional association, (2) clearly defined high entry barriers into PR practice, (3) internal disciplinary measures, (4) a focus on developing generalists that can attend to a broad range of PR tasks, and (5) discrete punishment to avoid negative publicity around the profession. Moreover, events, training activities that involve management participation and fosters mutual learning between practitioners, managements and the professional association are considered to be necessary for enhancing the standard of the profession in Nigeria.

7.1.3 RQ1c: How is PR perceived by PR educators in Nigeria?
The PR educators’ interviewees’ accounts share similarities with that of the professional association based on their PR academic background. Nevertheless, they differ on certain elements. The Educators’ account of their description of PR demonstrates a view of PR as a relationship management function for nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with organizations’ key publics and stakeholders. Interviewee accounts show a general consensus that practitioners should be PR generalists that occupy and enact the higher-order/reflexive-strategist manager role. Examples of the list of tasks that the generalists are expected to carry out include counseling management, contributing to various organizational units by developing an overall communications strategy, acting as organization spokesperson, managing organization’s image/reputation, as well as issues and crises respectively. In addition, generalists are believed to be capable of engaging in boundary-spanning work and nurturing mutually beneficial relations with organizations’ critical publics and stakeholders. In order to occupy the role, interviewees list academic qualifications (PR degree and NIPR certification), capabilities (industry/business sector knowledge) and personal traits (ethical conduct) as the appropriate set of qualifications.
Although the educator interviewees expect practitioners to work with uncontrolled autonomy, they recognize that workplace realities and practitioners’ capacity to prove their value to managements over time are more likely to earn them a senior management role (see Bowen’s practitioners routes to the dominant coalition in the dominant coalition section of the literature review). More so, interviewees’ accounts show a recognition of the importance of developing PR specialists, however, the educators express concerns that PR is already narrow, while specialization is believed to further narrow practitioners’ skills. Therefore, interviewees do not encourage the idea of developing PR specialists. With regards to the assessment of PR’s professional status, educators are divided in their opinion. On one hand, the educators recognize PR as a profession based on NIPR’s establishment of the five traits along with elements of the system of professions. On the other, the educators often compare PR with prestigious professions and describe PR as an inferior profession.

The list of the specific issues that are perceived to relegate PR’s professional status include (1) influx of quacks and non-NIPR members in PR practice and the absence of repercussions, (2) the lack of legal restrictions preventing members from other professional associations from practicing or teaching PR, and (3) lack of well-publicized punishment of the violators of NIPR’s laws respectively. Furthermore, educator interviewees also believe that these issues undermine NIPR’s laws and the professional status. With regards to educators’ control over the curricula of PR programs, a minority of interviewees would like to exercise autonomy over the curricula of their PR programs. Others interviewee accounts indicate minimal concerns over NUC’s accreditation of the program. Nevertheless, these interviewees express a general dissatisfaction about the perceived overbearing demands from the NIPR for accrediting PR programs as well as a perceived lack of benefits from NIPR membership. Consequently, interviewee accounts show that the educators have ignored the accreditation, while formerly active members are now inactive. In general, interviewee accounts demonstrate a tense relationship between the professional association and the educators in Nigeria.

7.2. RQ 2 How do perceptions of the legitimacy of PR differ from one another and affect the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria?
In order to develop a deeper understanding of the perception of the legitimacy of PR in Nigeria, the constellation of logics theory combined with an NIT lens is applied for a further
analysis. Therefore, the key findings of the actors’ perspectives are redefined as the corporates, professions, and educators logics respectively. The constellation of their logics was examined towards understanding the relations between them, and how they influence one another and PR’s legitimacy within their institutional context. According to Thornton and Ocasio (2008), institutional logics represents socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space and provide meaning to their reality. Consequently, the institutional logics of an institutional actor must be complied with to gain legitimacy. Moreover, this study works with a view of legitimacy as perception, so that the perception of legitimacy from the actor who wants legitimacy determines the expectations that must be fulfilled for this legitimacy to be gained (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Suchman, 1995).

In accordance with the three categories of management, the three fragmented corporate logics were initially defined but were later combined to form the sum total of corporate logics within Nigeria’s PR institutional context. The professions logics are based on NIPR accounts and form the legal requirements for being recognized as a profession in Nigeria. Therefore, they are not understood as NIPR’s logics, but rather the professions logic that every professional association in Nigeria, including the NIPR must conform to in their professional project for being recognized as a legitimate profession in Nigeria. Lastly, the educators’ logics comprise the legal requirements and educators perception of the ideal elements needed for PR to gain legitimacy.

7.3 RQ 3: How can we develop an institutional approach to the legitimacy in PR based on empirical evidence from a country-specific context? In order to develop the institutional approach, this section begins by presenting the extent to which the identified contradictions form the basis and building blocks for developing the institutional approach for Nigeria’s PR context.
7.3.1 RQ3a. To what extent do these contradictions reflect theoretical approaches to professional legitimacy in the field of PR?

Based on an analysis of the interactions between the coexisting institutional logics, the dominating logics are identified as the professions and corporate logics. The basis of their domination of Nigeria’s PR institutional context relates to their structural position and the critical resources that the NIPR depends upon for legitimacy in the legal and corporate arenas respectively. However, the coexistence of multiple dominating logics brings about institutional complexities while the contradictions found between the logics intensify the complexities (Greenwood, et al. 2011).

Out of the identified contradictions between the logics, the contradictions between the professions and corporate logics that are problematic for NIPR emanate from:

1: the misconception of sales as part of PR tasks, while the subject is excluded from PR’s curriculum by NIPR. Therefore, practitioners are not trained for undertaking sales tasks. Consequently, the NIPR’s inability to meet this expectation through practitioners may hinder its legitimacy with such corporate workplace.

2: Corporate organizations’ critical resources need such as PR specialization, contacts in the media, and journalism experience is not part of nor prioritized by the professions logic and

3: The expectation of well-publicized punishment of the violators of NIPR’s laws, while NIPR applies a discrete approach. The professions logic grants professional associations the autonomy to decide on how to enforce their laws.

Consequently, aligning to one logic in NIPR’s professional project means neglecting another, while legitimacy from both logics is crucial for PR. Nevertheless, Greenwood et al.’s (2011) multilevel analytical framework were applied for a deeper analysis of the institutional complexities. Based on the analysis of the elements of the dominant logics and NIPR’s position within the institutional context, Oliver’s (1991) compromise strategic response to external pressures from within the recent NIT tradition is proposed. The compromise strategy is applicable because the NIPR represents a reflexive institutional actor (Suddaby, Viale, & Gendron, 2016) with the social position (Battilana, 2006) and social skills (Fligstein, 1997) to strategically respond to external demands for PR and gain legitimacy in Nigeria. The compromise strategy consists of balancing, pacifying and bargaining. Balancing entails reproducing or properly implementing the traits which represent the minimum requirement for professions’ legitimacy in the legal and corporate arenas.
Balancing leads directly into pacifying whereby the NIPR integrates the corporate logics expectation into the elements of its professional project. In practice, these are manifested as the evolution to the current elements of the PR’s professional project, which concerns expansion in the scope of PR’s description, curricula, qualifications, jurisdiction, and changes to the code of conduct enforcement. In addition, frequent push communication activities for increasing public and managements’ awareness about PR and activities to improve the standard of practice, discipline, and learning opportunities for meeting external demands for legitimacy are also proposed. Lastly, bargaining entails proactive efforts involving negotiating with dominant institutional actors towards reaching a mutually beneficial agreement in exchange for meeting their expectations.

7.3.2 RQ3b. Which contradictions between the actors’ perspectives on PR could be used to rethink theoretical approaches to professional legitimacy in the field of PR?

Other than compromising, the PR field cannot continue to rely on the unfounded assumptions of the power approach (e.g. Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009). While the proposed strategic response would help PR evolve its professional project, changing institutional conditions and expectations means that a one-off approach may be insufficient in the long-term (Tilcsik, 2010). Therefore, the PR field could benefit from a reorientation in its professional project by studying its constellation of logics and the resulting complexities towards evolving in accordance with the expectations of dominant and legitimating logics.

The institutional approach (Muzio, Brock, & Suddaby, 2013) that is proposed incorporates the RDT (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) for PR’s professional projects of the future with which PR could gain or retain its legitimacy in the legal, societal and workplace arena respectively. This calls for PR’s professional projects to be oriented towards cultivating the critical resources for resolving organizations’ environmental uncertainties and contingencies (e.g. Muzio, Brock, & Suddaby, 2013; Bowen, 2009). These are meant to turn practitioners into “resource-rich” practitioners (e.g. Peng 2004) that organizations value and depend upon for survival. Such dependence is the means for practitioners to obtain intraorganizational power, irrespective of their formal role (e.g. Childs, 1972; Mechanic, 1962; Pfeffer, 1987; Berger, 2005; Bowen, 2009). Based on the findings of this study, the resource cultivation orientation would reflect in the inclusion of the sales management and journalism modules in the NIPR’s planned expansion to its curriculum, and the specialist would need to be prioritized and
promoted. In addition to aligning with the regularized traits, the cultivation of expected resources demonstrates the PR profession’s alignment with the dominant logics, which increases its probability of gaining legitimacy in Nigeria.

This institutional approach relies on a framework that consists of institutional logics theory (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008) and being able to understand the intensity of institutional complexities confronting PR (Greenwood, et al., 2011) as it is practiced across country-specific contexts. The framework enables users to build awareness from the outside-in, in contrast with a typical inside out, PR oriented perspective (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; L’Etang, 1999; Broom, 2009; Noordnegraaf, 2011; Abdullah, 2012; Hoffmann & Hamidati, 2016) for their professional project. Building blocks for this institutional approach include the composition of institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008), a constellation of logics (Goodrick & Reay, 2011), external expectations, and influences of legitimating institutional actors within PR’s context (Greenwood, et al., 2011). Once this information has been gathered, it enables professional associations to apply strategic responses (Oliver, 1991) with a deeper understanding of the institutional context. This deeper understanding can lead to a more thorough understanding of dominating logics in institutional contexts which enable or constrain the appropriateness of the strategy for a particular national context.

7.4. Contribution
The implication of this study is that it proposes an institutional approach process model for PR’s professional projects. In doing so, the profession’s readiness to evolve in accordance with institutional complexities at different times to meet the expectations of legitimating actors within its institutional context could be demonstrated. Besides, professional projects would be oriented towards cultivating critical resources when evolving so that PR practitioners are equipped to become resource-rich organizational members. Consequently, PR practitioners would be capable of resolving organizational uncertainties and contingencies and may become valuable organizational members. In doing so, the emphasis is on intraorganizational power instead of the unfounded and unrealistic pursuit of organizational dominance that the power approach was expected to deliver (I refer you back to the power approach section in the literature review). There, this approach has both practical and theoretical implications for the field of PR and professional associations respectively.
At a theoretical level, the institutional logics demonstrate how institutionalized norms for attaining legitimacy within an institutional context may only partially explain appropriate organizational behavior. Organizations are exposed to institutional complexities when confronted by multiple dominating logics with expectations that may be specified or unknown. Nevertheless, they are expected and must be met for legitimacy to be gained from such institutional actors. Besides, the institutional complexities may be further intensified when such logics contradict one another, or logics from other fields enter the context (Greenwood, et al., 2011). Consequently, organizations in such circumstances are unaware of the appropriate behavior since passively responding to the norms of one of the logics contradicts the other and hinders the organizations capacity to gain legitimacy within their context.

Therefore, this study proposes the institutional approach as a process model that combines existing theories that includes institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008), constellation of logics (e.g. Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2010), institutional complexity and organizational responses (Greenwood, et al., 2011), and a strategic response (Oliver, 1991) for obtaining legitimacy (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Suchman, 1995). The institutional approach process model guides organizations toward an appropriate response to institutional complexities, which also offers a more plausible explanation of organizational behavior and the pursuit of legitimacy within their institutional contexts.

Figure 7.1 (below) depicts the proposed legitimacy process model by examining the number of coexisting institutional logics within organizations institutional context. This helps organizations to understand the coexisting perceptions of legitimacy within their environment. This is followed by an analysis of the constellation of logics for understanding whether the logics are competing (Greenwood, et al, 2011), cooperating or exist in a hybrid or bricolage. It is the competing logics whereby multiple logics dominate and determine appropriate behavior that leads to institutional complexities. This calls for an

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17 When coexisting logics cooperate, all logics influence appropriate behavior (Goodrick & Reay, 2011)
18 Hybrid logics entails merging of initially competing logics to support one another to uphold strategic practices of organization, especially when organizational goals are unachievable with only one of the logics (see Pache & Santos, 2013)
19 Bricolage entails intentional combinations of micro-organizational or individual practices from multiple logics for strategic purposes in everyday organizational life (e.g. Ansari, Wijen, & Gray, 2013)
analysis of the elements of the institutional complexities (institutional pluralism, field structure, organizational attributes) which altogether helps organizations to decide on the appropriate strategic response (Greenwood, et al, 2011).

The strategic process can be seen as informed by the recent NIT traditions. Scholars within the tradition contend that the response to institutionalized norms for legitimacy should not be confined to a passive response, as they do not always cater to organizational goals (e.g. Oliver, 1991). Instead, they maintain that responses should be strategic, purposeful, self-interested and ensure organizations validity (e.g. Oliver, 1991, Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996). In this institutional approach process model, Oliver’s (1991) range of strategic responses are proposed whereby organizations could avoid, compromise, manipulate, acquiesce, or defy the dominating logics based on the analysis of the institutional context. In addition, the strategic response is oriented towards openness to cultivating critical resources that may be expected and which expand PR’s jurisdiction and value contributions for organizations (see Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003 resource dependence theory section in the literature review). Based on this process model, organizational awareness of their institutional context realities, complexities and an applicable response to the dominating logics may be understood. More so, organizations’ behavior at a specific point in time may also be explained with more clarity.

Figure 7.1 The Institutional approach to legitimacy process model (Original)
At a practical level, this institutional approach process model provides organizations and professions with an applicable model that is rooted in theory and has practical implications for their capacity to gain or retain legitimacy in their institutional context. By going through the process, the professional association would be aware of both specified and unspecified expectations of their legitimating logics and the intensity of their institutional complexities in relation to their priorities and appropriate response. The institutional approach process model offers professions an opportunity to reflect on how to evolve at different points in accordance with the ever-changing external demands for legitimacy.

7.5 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research
While these findings and the proposed model are designed to be beneficial for theoretically and practically advancing PR’s professional projects, limitations exist. This study is based on a single-case study of Nigeria’s top managements', professional association and PR educators’ perspectives and practices. Therefore, the findings are specific to the types of macro-institutional actors present in the context of Nigeria, and as such may not be representative of the totality of corporate organizations and PR professional associations from other countries with different institutional configurations. Consequently, the findings from these interviewees cannot be generalized to other national contexts. However, they offer a point of departure for investigating macro-institutional actors' perspectives that influence PR’s legitimacy by providing categories for analyzing an outside-in perspective in other country contexts. More specifically, critical resources, dominating logics and institutional complexities may differ across institutional contexts, which means that identified elements in Nigeria may not be present across country-specific contexts. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the findings could be used as a basis for identifying relevant institutional perspective building blocks in other country-specific contexts where professional legitimacy is yet to be attained. The development of an institutional approach towards building a global understanding and global reach for PR’s professional project can be seen as a first step that could gain traction if used across country contexts in larger studies.

An additional limitation is the scope of the study. While this case study approach provided valuable insights for understanding the three actors, it left gaps in understanding other
institutional actors. Therefore, an example of a future research could explore the publics’ logics. The public perception of PR in the societal arena contributes to PR’s legitimacy. The publics’ scepticism caused by lack of trust in PR as an organizational practice (e.g. Gabrielsen, 2004; Olasky, 1987; L’Etang, 1996; Olatunji, 2014; Sallot, 2002; Callison, 2004) affects practitioners’ capacity to help organizations achieve their PR objectives thereby hindering practitioners’ workplace legitimacy (Merkelsen, 2011). However, the extent to which this is valid across contexts is unknown. Nevertheless, legitimacy in the public arena is one of the puzzles towards building a robust legitimacy for PR. Therefore, further research that explores the publics’ logics would provide a deeper understanding of the intensity of institutional complexities confronting PR in its quest for legitimacy in the societal, legal and workplace arenas.

From a practice perspective, the institutional approach has only been proposed without guidelines for how it could be implemented in practice along with the challenges of implementing a new approach. More so, the specific critical resources that could be cultivated for affecting dominant institutional logics have not been investigated. This work could be a logical next step in further developing an institutional approach to PR’s professionalization project. Therefore, a longitudinal study that focuses on the application of the process model and an assessment of its impact on the legitimacy of PR before and after the implementation are suggested. Findings of this nature would extend the PR field’s understanding of the validity, challenges, and implications of applying the institutional approach and their implications on PR’s legitimacy.

On the last note, the developed institutional approach process model offers a theoretically oriented approach that has practical implications for PR’s professional project. The model aims to facilitate the PR profession’s legitimacy goal and capacity to evolve at different times. The emphasis on critical resource cultivation is proposed such that PR is not confined to inside-out traditional practices but evolves in line with external demands of its institutional context. In doing so, PR practitioners may possess critical resources that could be deployed for helping organizations to attend to their environmental uncertainties, contingencies and technological developments as the case may be. Hopefully, PR could one day be held in the same regard as the advertising profession whose legitimacy is recognized across all arenas in Nigeria.


Ramirez, C. (2013). We are being pilloried for something we did not even know we had done wrong Quality control and orders of worth in the British audit profession. *Journal of Management Studies, 50*(5), 845-869.


### Appendix 1: Interview guide for Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Demographics | • What is your academic background?  
• What is your current position and how long have you been in your position?  
• What is your experience with using PR? | The aim of demographical questions is to understand the academic profile, status, and experience that the respondent has had with PR as this may impact their PR understanding and practices respectively. |
| PR understanding, structure, and practices | **PR understanding**  
• How would you describe PR?  
• How would you describe PR in comparison to advertising, marketing, and journalism  
• How would you describe the image of PR in Nigeria?  
• Who is a PR person?  
• Why do you do PR?  
• Which PR related trends have you observed within your industry?  
**PR Practices and Structure**  
• What is a typical PR activity that your organization undertake and why?  
• How often does your organization engage in PR activities?  
• How would you compare your PR activities to that of other organizations in your industry?  
• How does your industry trend impact your PR practices?  
• How have you structured PR in your organization?  
• Who is responsible for coordinating your PR activities?  
• Which qualifications are most desirable for your in-house PR person and why?  
• What do you expect from your in-house PR person?  
• What are the tasks of your PR person?  
• What do you think about specialization within PR?  
• How could specialization impact your PR activities? | The purpose of inquiring about the overall PR understanding of management respondents is to assess their knowledge of the PR concept and how that influences how they have structured PR in their organizations, as well as their desired practitioner qualifications and tasks, managements’ expectations, typical PR activities, who practitioners report to as well as how management rates PR as a profession. |
| Professional status | • How would you describe the professional status of PR in Nigeria?  
• What do you think about the professionalism of your in-house PR person? |  |
| Relations with in-house PR person | • To what extent do you give directives to your PR person?  
• To what extent could your PR person decide on strategies to pursue?  
• To what extent does your in-house PR person contribute to decision making?  
• To what extent should in-house PR people contribute to decision making? | The aim of this subject area is to assess how much decision-making powers the practitioner has within the organization and the extent to which they are able to contribute to organizational strategy. |
| Interactions with the NIPR | • How would you describe the NIPR?  
• How often do you have interactions with the NIPR and for what purpose?  
• How would you describe your relationship with the NIPR?  
• If you could advise the NIPR on anything in general, what would you say to them?  
• If you could advise universities and the NIPR specifically about PR programs, what would you say to them? | The aim of this section is to assess the relations between the professional body and organizations, if they collaborate on any aspect towards enhancing organization PR knowledge and activities. |
Appendix 2: Interview guide for NIPR

(as depicted on the next page)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Demographics | • What is your academic background?  
• What is your current position at NIPR?  
• What are your functions at NIPR? | The aim of demographical questions is to understand the characteristics of the respondents that could be linked to their perspectives and understanding of PR. |
| PR understanding, ideal structure and practices | **PR understanding**  
• How would you describe PR?  
• How would you describe PR in comparison to advertising, marketing, and journalism?  
• How would you describe the image of PR in Nigeria?  
• How would you evaluate the predominant PR activities of Nigerian organizations?  
• What can PR contribute to organizational business performance?  
**PR person and structure**  
• Who is a PR person?  
• Which qualifications are key for professional PR practice?  
• What should make up the tasks of the PR person?  
• How should PR be structured in organizations?  
• Which role and hierarchy should a PR person occupy in the organization?  
• Who should be responsible for coordinating PR activities and why?  
• To what extent should PR people contribute to organizational strategies?  
• To what extent should in-house PR people contribute to decision making? | The purpose of these subject areas is to gain an understanding of the NIPR’s perspectives on PR, its contribution to organizations, the credentials of the appropriate PR person, their task composition, role and hierarchy in the workplace, and the extent to which they should be able to contribute to organizational strategy and decision making. The importance of practitioner specialization is also looked into as practitioners could specialize in one key area of PR or a specific industry, while their capacity to function at this level may influence the training they receive and competences they develop in the process. Lastly, professional status is investigated to ascertain whether PR could be regarded as a profession and the factors determining if it is in Nigeria. |
| Professional status | • How would you describe the professional status of PR in Nigeria?  
• Why should PR be regarded as a (non)profession in Nigeria?  
• Which constraints are the NIPR facing regarding professionalizing PR in Nigeria?  
• What are you aware of about PR professionals’ autonomy in the workplace?  
• How does your understanding of PR’s professional autonomy in Nigeria impact your PR training and certification programs? | |
| PR certification program | • What are your goals for developing your certification program?  
• Which skills and competences are your certification program helping future practitioners to develop?  
• What are the implications of having PR education as a subset of other subject areas in Nigeria?  
• To what extent does the NUC influence the content of your certification program?  
• What is your opinion the NUC as an accreditor of PR programs in Nigerian Universities?  
• What is the role of the NIPR in the development of universities’ PR programs?  
• How would you compare your PR education program to that of Nigerian universities?  
• If you could advise PR educators on any improvements on PR education in Nigeria, what would you say to them? | The aim of this subject area is to inquire about the goals behind the NIPR’s certification, skills and competences; it is expected to help graduates develop, the implication of having PR as a subset of mass communication for the profession and who influences the content of their certification program. |
| Membership and code of conduct | • How would you describe your membership uptake in the last couple of years?  
• Which constraints do you face in attracting and/or retaining members?  
• How would you describe compliance to the NIPR’s membership as a license to practice PR in Nigeria?  
• How would you describe compliance to the NIPR’s code of professional practice?  
• Which constraints do you face enforcing compliance with your code of conduct?  
• To what extent do you feel you are empowered to enforce your code of conduct? | This subject area assesses how the professional status and image of PR is affecting NIPR’s membership uptake and the nature of compliance to and enforcement of the body’s code of conduct in relation to practitioners’ conduct in the workplace and entry barriers into PR practice in Nigeria. |
| Interactions with Organizations | • To what extent do you interact with organizations and for what purpose?  
• What has been the outcome of your interactions with organizations? | This subject area is included to understand whether the NIPR works/collaborates with organizations and the purpose of such interactions and the outcome of that for both organizations and the NIPR to see if that impacts on the practitioners’ reality in the workplace, managements’ PR understanding and PR’s professional recognition. |
Appendix 3 Interview guide for PR Educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Demographics**                                 | • What is your academic background?  
  • How long have you been teaching PR?  
  • What is your current position at your university?  
  • What is your NIPR membership status?                                                                                                         | The aim of demographical questions is to understand the characteristics of the respondents that could be linked to their perspectives and understanding of PR.                                           |
| **PR understanding, ideal structure, and practices** | **PR understanding**  
  • How would you describe PR?  
  • How would you describe PR in comparison to advertising, marketing, and journalism?  
  • How would you describe the image of PR in Nigeria?  
  • How would you evaluate the predominant PR activities of Nigerian organizations?  
  • What do you think that Nigerian organizations expect from PR professionals?  
  • What are some of the growing trends in the public relations industry in Nigeria?  
  • What can PR contribute to organizational business performance?                                                                                   | The purpose of these subject areas is to gain an understanding of the NIPR’s perspectives on PR, its contribution to organizations, the credentials of the appropriate PR person, their task composition, role and hierarchy in the workplace, and the extent to which they should be able to contribute to organizational strategy and decision making. The importance of practitioner specialization is also looked into as practitioners could specialize in one key area of PR or a specific industry, while their capacity to function at that level may influence the training they receive and competencies they develop in the process. Lastly, professional status is investigated to ascertain if PR could be regarded as a profession and the factors determining whether it is in Nigeria. |
| **Professional status**                          | • Who is a PR person?  
  • Which qualifications are key to professional PR practice?  
  • What should the tasks of the PR person entail?  
  • How should PR be structured in organizations?  
  • Which role and hierarchy should a PR person occupy in the organization?  
  • Who should be responsible for coordinating PR activities in organizations and why?  
  • To what extent should PR people contribute to organizational strategies?  
  • To what extent should in-house PR people contribute to decision making?                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| **PR Education program**                        | • Which PR program do you offer, and why is it a subset of another subject area?  
  • What could be the implication of having PR as a module under mass communication, as part of the advertising or corporate communication in Nigerian universities?  
  • Aside from class work, what other activities are incorporated into your PR program and why?  
  • To what extent do you have control over the design of the curriculum content of your PR program?  
  • How would you compare your PR program to that of the NIPR and/or other universities?  
  • What are your thoughts about PR specialization?  
  • Which one or more specialization(s) is your study program helping your students develops?  
  • How would you describe the student enrolment for a PR program in your school in the last 5 years and what is responsible for it?  
  • Which criticisms of PR education in Nigeria are you aware of?  
  • Which growing trends in PR practices have you observed and how do they reflect in your PR program?  
  • What are the things you would like to improve or add to your PR program if you can?  
  • What should organizations expect from your PR graduates?                                                                                           | The aim of this subject area is to inquire about the goal behind NIPR’s certification, skills, and competencies it is expected to help graduates develop, the implication of having PR as a subset of mass communication on the profession and who influences the content of their certification program. This subject area is included to understand if NIPR works/collaborate with the organization and the purpose of such interactions and the outcome of that of both organizations and NIPR to see if that impacts on practitioners’ reality in the workplace, managements’ PR understanding and PR’s professional recognition. |
### Interactions with NIPR
- How would you describe the NIPR?
- Who regulates the curricula content of your PR program?
- What is the role of the NIPR in the development of your PR program?
- How would you compare your PR program to that of NIPR?
- Which advice would you give to the NIPR on their certification program?

The aim of this subject area is to assess how the professional status and image of PR affects NIPR membership uptake and the nature of compliance to and enforcement of the body’s code of conduct in relation to practitioners’ conduct in the workplace as well as entry barriers into PR practice in Nigeria.

### NIPR code of conduct
- How would you describe your relationship with the NIPR?
- How would you describe NIPR’s code of conduct?
- How would you describe compliance to NIPR’s membership as a license to practice PR in Nigeria?

### Interactions with organizations
- How often do you interact with organizations and for what purpose?
- How does your interaction with organizations impact your PR curricular content?