

150 Years of Modern Public Relations Practices in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the history and development of modern public relations practices in Nigeria over a hundred and fifty (150) year period, 1859 to 2009. This objective is achieved via a conceptual review of existing academic and professional literatures concerning Nigerian media history, public relations management, business studies and mass communication studies. This study dispels the notion that modern public relations practices began in Nigeria with the creation of a public information unit by the United African Company (then a British multinational) in 1949. The study presents evidence indicating that modern public relations practices actually began with the establishment of the first newspaper in 1859 by the late Henry Townsend (a British missionary). Findings from the study also indicate the dominance of four important periods in the development of modern public relations practices in Nigeria. These include public relations broadcasting era, political propaganda era, public information era and the professionalization era.

Introduction

Modern public relations (PR) practices first became popular in the United States in the early 1920s with the publication of Edward Bernays's influential text (Nessmann, 1995) entitled 'The Crystallization of Public Opinion'. Since then, the practice and management of public relations became a global enterprise (Sriramesh and Verčič, 2002; Culbertson et. al, 1996) that cannot be ignored. Within a short period, public relations gained popularity not only in the United States but also amongst foreign governments (Kunczic, 2003) and multinational firms (Olasky, 1987; Hutton et. al, 2001; Wakefield, 2000; Sriramesh, 1996). Today, public relations are practiced in most countries around the world and more importantly in non-western developing countries (Al-Enad, 1990).

The popularity enjoyed by this discipline throughout the world might have encouraged the introduction of a number of public relations and communication journals devoted to the understanding of this discipline in western countries. An important subject of discourse in these journals is the history of public relations and how this profession developed in the United States (Cutlip, 1999; Pearson, 1990), the United Kingdom (Davis, 2000) and other western countries (Nessmann, 1995, 2000).

A comprehensive review of works published in these journals (i.e. Public Relations Quarterly, Public Relations Review, Journal of Communication Management, Journal of Public Relations Research etc) indicates that conceptual literature on how public relations practices grew and developed in non-western countries is limited. Majority of works on this subject has been dominated by how this discipline developed in

western countries (Hoy et al., 2007; DeLorme and Fedler, 2004; Pearson, 1990; Nessmann, 1995; L'Etang, 1999; 2002; Grunig, 2001; Miller and Dinan, 2000; Brody, 2005; Ihator, 2004). This paper aims to fill this gap. Specifically, this study makes an attempt to trace the history and development use of public relations in Nigeria during and after the post colonial era.

The reason for undertaking a study of this nature is to provide insight into the development of public relations in a cultural context that is foreign to western academics. Also, this study was undertaken by the desire to give insights into one of the least studied history of industry evolution. Insights into the history, growth and development of public relations in Nigeria will provide academics, practitioners and researchers with a fuller and robust picture of issues that influenced the development of public relations in African context. This allows academics and researchers to gain a more balanced view of issues and events that impact the development of public relations globally.

This study is important and valuable for a number of reasons. It provides a true position of how the pursuit of public relations practices started in Nigeria and captures the array of the critical historical events that have been omitted by other works. Importantly, this allows researchers to gain broader insight into the uses, theory, history, development, management and practice of public relations. It serves as an ideal conceptual background for scholars interested in comparative analysis and research material for students writing a thesis or dissertation on the history of public relations.

This study opens with a conceptual analysis of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four influential models of public relations followed by a review of the history of public relations in Nigeria from 1859 to 2008. It delineates the development of the industry into four periods such as public enlightenment, PR broadcasting, political propaganda, public information and professionalization eras. In addition, the authors also examine the future of the public relations profession as well as the current structure of the PR industry in Nigeria. This is followed by a discussion of the contributions made in this study, its limitations and areas for future research direction. Finally, the study makes a summary of the issues discussed and ends with the argument that although Nigeria is a developing country with very little public relations record in western public relations literature, however, it is well ahead of UK and many European and Asian countries especially in the struggle for the government accreditation, recognition and professionalization of public relations practices, which was demonstrated by its 1990 charter.

Public relations practices: a theoretical foundation

For the purpose of this text, we address the notion of public relations practices as the variety of approaches and methods adopted by governments, businesses and non profit led institutions in the course of the pursuit of various activities that aim to establish awareness, good understanding and positive corporate image with specific set of publics. The methods drawn by these institutions in the pursuit of public relations activities include communication with the publics through public information offices, political propaganda, educational and attitudinal change campaigns etc.

A number of models which attempt to capture these practices (see Grunig, 1976; Grunig, 1984; Grunig and Hunt, 1984) have been put forward in theoretical literature. Of these however, it appears that Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations practice composed of: 1-the press agency model; 2-the public information model; 3-the two-way asymmetrical model and 4-the two-way symmetrical model, is the most influential (Pasadeos, et al, 1999). Given its influential nature and prominence within the field of public relations theory, it becomes necessary, imperative and compelling to make a review of this model – explicating how it relates to the subject of discussion in this study. This is the crux of the next paragraph.

Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public relations practice models

Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations practice provide a picture of a set of methods and approaches that are used by practitioners, firms, governments and activists in managing and sustaining good working relationships with specific publics. In the attempt to provide an analysis of these practices, Grunig and Hunt (1984) argued that these models are conceptual historical representations of reality and that while these models provide a good insight into the nature of public relations practices commonly found in public relationship management, it would be naive to think that these models are capable and exhaustive enough to capture the diverse nature of public relations practices used by practitioners, governments, businesses and non governmental organisations all over the world. Nevertheless, Grunig and Hunt (1984) contend that some of the varieties of methods and approaches adopted in the management of this discipline in general is likely to fit into one of the these models. These models are discussed in the paragraphs below:

The press agency model: gives a representation of how propaganda is used by the sender who economises the truth. It is a one-way communication approach, which dwells mainly on the communication of specific messages by the sender regardless of validity or the true value of the messages. Under this approach, there is little or no concern for research.

The public information model: is similar to the press agency model because it is a one-way communication approach, which captures the sending of messages from the sender to the receivers with no regard for response or feedback from the receiver. This model however differs from press agency in that it craves for the dissemination of truth.

The two-way asymmetric model: unlike the press agency and public information model, which promotes a one-way communication system, the asymmetric model recognises that communication is a two-way approach between the sender and receiver. Under this model, power lies within the field of the sender (who do not change his/her attitude) but persuades the receiver to change a behaviour or attitude or in some cases support a cause. Users of this communication approach often undertake research to establish the nature of publics' attitude in order to develop a more effective public relations campaign.

The two-way symmetric model: is another two communication method based on mutual understanding and dialogue between information senders and receivers. This model represents a method under which both senders and receivers are persuaded and their attitudes and behaviours modified in the process of the public relations campaign process.

The development of public relations practices in Nigeria

The development of a theoretical backdrop in the last paragraph provides a useful insight into some of the dominant practices within public relations theory. The lesson generated from this foundation provides a lens through which the developments in the practice of public relations within the Nigerian context can be viewed. Consequently, an attempt is made under this paragraph to develop a period analysis highlighting monumental developments witnessed in public relations practices in Nigeria between 1859 and 2008.

The public enlightenment era, 1859 to the late 1930s: Contrary to Ajala (1993) and many other authors that public relations practice began in Nigeria during World War II, modern public relations practices began in Abeokuta, Nigeria on December 3, 1859, when the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) published the “*Iwe Irohin*” (meaning news journal), Nigeria’s first newspaper (Salawu, 2004a). The trigger for the creation of this news paper is grounded in the desire by church missionaries to inform parishioners of weekly Christian activities within the church.

This newspaper performed the first public relations function by providing up to date information concerning missionary activities as well as socio-economic and political activities affecting Anglican parishioners, Abeokuta indigenes, the settlers (Creoles) and Europeans at large. Our position is in consonance with Bates (2006). While tracing the history of public relations, Bates (2006) asserted that the development of modern PR began with the use of oratory, newspapers, meetings, committees, pamphlets, and correspondence by rebelling American colonies against England to win people to their cause”. The *Iwe Iroyin*, the first PR medium in Nigeria included news about colonial administration, some foreign affairs, advertisements and public announcements (Salawu, 2004b). Furthermore, the *Iwe Iroyin* laid the foundation of modern classified publicity, public advocacy and public announcements on births and deaths (Oduntan, 2005) in Nigeria.

In addition, the *Iwe Iroyin* was the forerunner of modern financial PR in Nigeria. It provided timely business news and trade information to its readers and coastal traders both the Africans and Europeans. According to Oduntan (2005) “The paper effectively monitored trade on the coast. At least once a month an edition carried a table of the rates and values of products traded in Abeokuta and on the trade coasts”. Moreover, Salawu (2004b) corroborated this view when he argued that “*Iwe Iroyin* disseminated economic matters such as the trade reports-cotton statistics and produce prices”. Oduntan (2005) also averred that, “Such news allowed the European and African traders to monitor trade, and to know what was most in demand, what to trade in, and what to produce”. Table 1 gives insight into the rates published in *Iwe Iroyin* on 25 October, 1861.

Table 1: Trade rates as it appears in *Iwe Irohin* in 1861

Products	Prices
Slaves	12 - 14 pound or 30 strings or 20 slave heads
Palm oil	10 slaves heads for 10 gallons
Palmnut oil	6 slave heads for 10 gallons
Cotton	6-7 Strings per bales
Labour wages	12,000 cowries per annum

Table 1: developed by authors based on *Iwe Irohin*

The *Iwe Irohin* became a veritable source of learning and information on crucial social, political, economic and international issues. It succeeded in molding the opinions, world views and orientation of the populace, and had evolved a crop of intellectuals who could make informed opinions on salient socio-political discourse of the time. Its readers became public opinion leaders in their communities leading enlightened socio-political debates, discussions and arguments on prevailing local and international issues, persuading and mobilizing their communities against slave trade and British imperialism. Several newspapers (see table 2 below) offering similar services were established between this period and the late 1930s (Malaolu, 2004).

The review of literature in the paragraphs above indicate that public relations practices during the era under review focused mainly on the use of the press to educate and enlighten the public on parish and religious activities, socio-economic and political activities affecting Anglican parishioners. Importantly this practice of PR confirms Grunig and Hunt (1984) public information model of public relations. Put another way,

Table 2: Newspapers in Nigeria, 1859-1939

Newspapers	1 st date of publication
Iwe Irohin	1859
Anglo African	1863
Lagos Times & Gold Coast Advertiser	1880
Lagos Observer	1882
Lagos Eagle and Critic	1883
Lagos Weekly Record	1890
Nigerian Chronicle	1908
Lagos Standard	1908
Nigerian Pioneer	1914
African Messenger	1921
The Spectator	1923
Nigerian Advocate	1923
Lagos Daily News	1925
Daily Times	1926

Daily Service	1933
Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo	1939
Nigerian Citizen	1939

Table 2: developed by authors based on Malaolu's (2004) work

the period of 1859 to the late 1930s was characterized by enlightenment through information dissemination - a key function of public relations. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) press agency and public information model supports this viewpoint. Consequently, it is possible to argue that modern public relations practices began during this period.

Public relations broadcasting era, late 1930s: The early 1930s witnessed the emergence of what could be termed as "public relations broadcasting". Specifically, in 1932 the British government chartered the Radio Distribution Services in England to relay specific British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) programs to Nigerians (see Blankson and Murphy, 2007) through the Radio Rediffusion System (RDS) to counter growing anti European sentiments, launder the battered image of the British imperialist government and promote the British cause (Alhassan, 2005).

Owing to the Second World War, the RDS was used as a means of counteracting the propaganda campaign in neighboring German controlled French West African countries (Head, 1979) as well as the growing agitation and protests by the Nigerian educated elites who questioned the rationale of British colonialism (Coleman, 1958). These elites made strident demand for total emancipation from colonial rule through the newspapers (Idemili, 1978). In addition, the RDS was employed as a means of stemming the ebbing reputation of the imperialist government as well as educating the populace (Umeh, 1989). It was used to launder the poor image of the imperialist government. The introduction of this brand new form of public communication services marked a new beginning in the image making profession in Nigeria. During this period, the RDS became the avant-garde of government activities. It was the hallmark political propaganda for the British imperialist government.

This new form of public relations practice conforms to Grunig and Hunt's (1984) press agency and two-way asymmetric model. These practices conform to these models because the British imperialist government was economical with the truth in its one way communications. In addition, the British imperialist government aimed to use the new broadcasting technology to change attitudes and gain sympathy of Nigerians.

Although the late 1930s was dominated by government public relations activities, it must be stressed with the benefit of hindsight that private sector participation in the development of public relations practices in Nigeria also began during this period. For instance, UAC International, a member of Unilever Group established its first PR department at its headquarters in Lagos in 1949 (Ajala, 1993; Decker, 2005). In order to coordinate its business activities throughout the country, it established PR liaison offices in Ibadan, Benin, Enugu and Kaduna (Ajai, 2007). The Second World War truncated UAC's public relations activities. This is because the war drastically affected the importation and exportation of agricultural products and mineral resources, which was the mainstay of UAC's business (Onimode, 1978).

Political propaganda era, the late 1930s to mid 1940s: This era was dominated by the use of political propaganda to gain the sympathy of the public. The phenomenon surrounding this practice is made evident in Grunig and Hunt's (1984) press agency model, which underscores how the imperialist government economise the truth by dwelling mainly on the communication of specific messages by the sender regardless of whether the communicated messages are true or false.

After the outbreak of World War II, in 1939, Axis powers recognized the struggle for emancipation and political independence in Africa. They attempted to influence and alter the attitudes and opinions of Africans, urging Nigerians to support the German cause to gain political independence in return for their support (Clarke, 1986; Olusanya, 1973; Anonymous, 2006). The British Empire made spirited effort to counter this claim (MacKenzie, 1984; Shuaib, 2006 b; Ibhawoh, 2007). Thus in 1942, the Colonial Office frontally responded to curtail Nazi's propaganda by establishing the first Information Center in Lagos and other cities in Nigeria to handle information between troops at the war fronts and their families back home (Ajai, 2007). It must be noted at this juncture that the use of political propaganda campaign by the British imperialist and the German Nazi governments strengthens the press agency model postulated by Grunig and Hunt (1984).

In order to make sure that this exercise yielded desired result, the colonial government commissioned Mr. Harold Cooper, a public relations expert from the Central Office of Information, London, to set up several Information Centers in selected cities in Nigeria (Ajai, 2007; Morris, 2000). According to Ajai (2007) the late Chief Fadairo was the first Nigerian to head the wartime Information Center in Nigeria. During the war, the Information Centers were saddled with distribution of leaflets, fliers that cited social, economic and political tribulations likely to befall Nigerians should Axis powers win the war (MacKenzie, 1984; Ibhawoh, 2007). Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 are some of the leaflet distributed to Nigerians during this period.

Figure 1: Leaflet demonstrating British propaganda in Nigeria



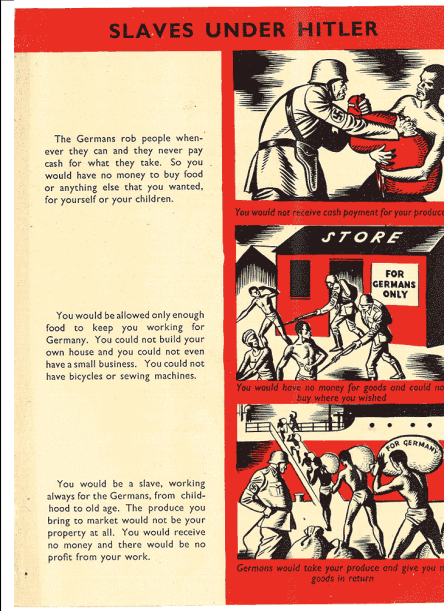
<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/snapshots/snapshot43/snapshot43.htm>

Figure 2: Leaflet demonstrating British propaganda in Nigeria



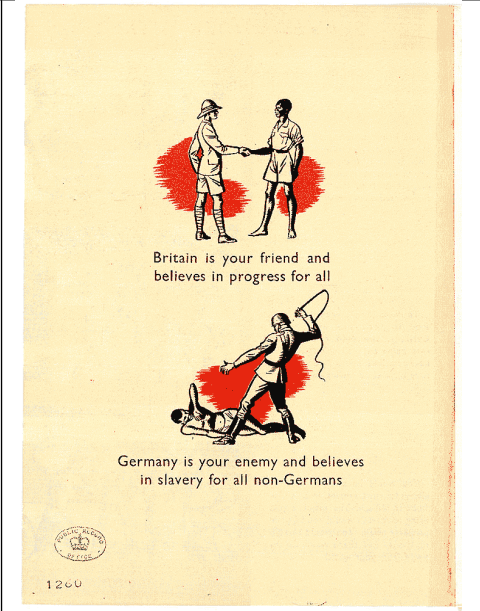
<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/snapshots/snapshot43/snapshot43.htm>

Figure 3: Leaflet demonstrating British propaganda in Nigeria



<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/snapshots/snapshot43/snapshot43.htm>

Figure 4: Leaflet demonstrating British propaganda in Nigeria



<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/snapshots/snapshot43/snapshot43.htm>

In addition to the leaflets and flyers, other powerful tools of propaganda were employed to gain local support for the British colonialist government during the Second World War. For instance, the Lagos Information Office through the Ministry of Information in London and the Colonial Office Film Unit used films and cinemas such as *The Guns of the Desert* to mobilize support for the war (Short, 1983; Chapman, 1998; Ibhawoh, 2007). Other instruments of propaganda that were used to garner support for the imperialist government include newsreels, newspaper adverts and postcards of successful exploits of the British and allied troops in combat, including radio broadcasts produced by the BBC (Nicholas, 1998; Kerslake, 1997). The newsreels were disseminated to Nigerians through mobile cinemas, which toured cities and towns in Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Kano, Port-Harcourt, Calabar and other villages (Ibhawoh, 2007).

Similarly, public loud speakers were effective in bringing the war propaganda to the masses. In addition, the educated elites used local newspapers as platforms for mobilizing support and as instruments for promoting imperial propaganda. The net result of the colonial war propaganda was quite successful in re-shaping, re-positioning and re-conditioning the minds, as well as altering the attitudes and opinions of Nigerians towards the British cause (Morris, 2000). In essence, the British imperialist government deliberately used political propaganda to form, shape, alter and control the attitudes and opinions of Nigerians through various means of political communication (Horten, 2002).

The use of political propaganda by the British and Nazi governments to economise the truth violates today's code of ethics of public relations practices not just in Nigeria (see NIPR professional code of conduct contained in NIPR, 2008) but in the UK and Germany as well.

Public information era, the 1945 to the early 1960s: this era was dominated by a rise in the use of PR in the public and private sectors. During this period, Public Relations was used predominantly to disseminate information to the public. The use of public relations was not just to convey information as it was the case during the public information, public relations broadcasting and political propaganda eras, rather it was meant to change public attitudes. The use of public relations during this period gives a good representation of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetric model, which allows senders and receivers of specific information to be persuaded to modify attitudes and behaviours.

It is argued that the World War II promoted the growth of PR (Orraca-Tetteh, 1986; NIPR, 1988; Adebola, 1992; Ajala, 1993) and aided the mushrooming of PR industry in US, UK, Europe (Bates, 2006; Morris, 2000) including Australia and New Zealand.

The public sector, 1945 to the early 1960s

The adoption of the Richards Constitution of 1944, which is a constitutional provision setting out how Nigeria was to be governed prior to independence under Sir Arthur Richards, triggered a rise in the use of public relations in the public and private sectors.

In the public sector, the Special Information Center, Lagos headed by D.C. Fletcher (Abodunrin, 1995) was redesigned and renamed the PR Department (Abodunrin, 1995; Shuaib, 2006).

The department was repositioned to “to present a picture of Nigeria to the outside world as well as to assist the government in all activities requiring propaganda – for a better term – in one form or another” (Abodunrin, 1995, p. 9). In addition, the newly repositioned public relations department was to disseminate information on the war and handle citizenship orientation services (Adebola, 1992). Within a short period of adopting the Richards constitution, several public relations offices were established in some cities in the country. For instance, a public relations office was established in Ibadan in 1947 and a year after, another public relations office was opened in Enugu (Abodunrin, 1995).

By 1954, the function of the PR Department was expanded to include the interpretation of social, political and economic trends to Nigerians and non-Nigerians. Some of the techniques adopted by operators of this department such as Ben Enwonwu (Abodunrin, 1995) included press releases, press conferences, posters, films, radio programs and publications such as “Children’s own Paper” and “The Nigerian Review”. These tools were not just used to educate, inform and enlighten the mass media and Nigerians at large on burning social economic and political matters. They also acted at channels through which the pulse of the nation is presented to the nation’s political leaders.

Public relations in the public sector post independent period: The early 1950s and 1960s witnessed the creation of PR units in government ministries and corporations (NIPR, 1988). The office of the Premier of Western Nigeria, the Nigeria Railway Corporation, the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation and other government institutions, recognized the role of PR and established PR departments. For instance, an Information Service Department was established by the government of the Western Region of Nigeria in mid 1950s, and was charged with responsibility of creating awareness and publicity for government’s programs. Also, the Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC) contributed towards the development of PR practices in Nigeria by setting up a PR department in 1946 in Lagos (Shuaib, 2006), which was enlarged to include information offices in Enugu and Kaduna, used for disseminating information to its numerous customers. Between 1946 and 1959, NRC sent a number of its PR officers to the UK for PR training and professional development, and Dr. Sam Epelle, the first President of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), was one of NRC’s public relations managers that were trained in the United Kingdom during this period (Shuaib, 2006; Ajai, 2007). Moreover, the National Electric Power Authority first established public relations bureau, which later metamorphosed to full public relations department in 1959.

Many of the information officers who worked in the government departments became the first generation of home grown public relations practitioners and consultants in Nigeria. For example, the organizations and designations of some of the earliest public relations professionals in Nigeria are presented in the table below. The recognition given

to the role of PR practice during this period might have provoked the creation of a public relations professional association in 1963, the Public Relations Association of Nigeria (PRAN).

Table 3: Some of the first generation of home grown PR practitioners in Nigeria

Practitioner	Organisation	Designation
Dr. Sam Epelle	Nigerian Railway Corporation	Manager
Otunba Kunle Ojora	UAC Nigeria	PR Manager
Dr. Clarkson Majomi	Ibru Organisation	Consultant
Chief Alex Akinyele	Nigerian Customs & Excise	Director
Mazi Mike Okereke	UAC Nigeria	PR Manager
Chief Jibade Oyekan	Odua Investment Company Ltd	General Manager
Dr Adekunle Salu	UAC Nigeria	PR Manager
Alh Ikhlas Yakubu	UAC Nigeria	PR Manager

Source: developed by authors

The private sector, 1945 to the early 1960s

After the Second World War, the operators of the Nigerian private sector contributed immensely to the development of public relations. The United African Company (UAC) established an information dissemination department in 1949 (Ajala, 1993; Abodunrin, 1995). This department was initially headed by Charles E. Newham, the Chief Information Officer. It employed more public relations officers from London to manage its Liaison Offices in Benin, Enugu, Kaduna, Jos, Calabar, Ibadan and Kano. Also, Shell-BP now Shell Petroleum Development Company established its public relations unit in 1940s.

Public relations in the private sector in post independent period: By the end of 1950, UAC of Nigeria had developed a full-fledged public relations department. By 1961, Otunba Ojora was appointed the first Nigerian public relations Adviser at UAC (Anonymous, 1998). He laid a good foundation for the development of professional public relations practices in the company by making sure that the public relations profession gained the respect of senior management (Ajai, 2007). Because of its pioneering position in the private sector, UAC's public relations department served as a spring board and a training ground for some of Nigeria's pioneering public relations practitioners. Importantly, two of NIPR's past presidents, Alhaji Ikhlas Yakubu, Mazi Mike Okereke and the first Registrar of NIPR, Dr. Adekunle Salu, were former public relations advisers of UAC.

The Nigerian banking industry sustained this momentum. In 1956 the British Bank of West Africa Limited (now First Bank of Nigeria Plc), established a public relations department. Few years later Barclays Bank Limited (now Union Bank of Nigeria Plc), set up a public relations department too. In the same period, the United Bank for Africa Limited (now United Bank for Africa Plc) engaged a London based publicity agency to handle its public relations activities. By 1981 however, UBA established a PR department. This department was managed by Nigerians that were trained locally.

In addition, the French companies played significant role in advancing the frontiers of public relations practice in Nigeria during this era. For example, SCOA appointed its first set of professional public relations officers in 1962, while CFAO appointed its first set of public relations officers in 1965. This paid off significantly for the two companies. Prior to this time, the two companies encountered language problem because the Nigerian consumers could not understand the French language on their products. As a result these firms sent their PR officers to France to learn French language in order to interpret these messages in English language to Nigerians. Consequently, this enabled SCOA and CFAO to challenge the British monopoly of the Nigerian market. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, several conglomerates and multinational corporations followed suit (Ajai, 2007).

For instance, Cadbury, John Holt and many other large business organizations established public relations offices. Similarly, Shell-BP now Shell Petroleum Development Company repositioned its PR unit and made it a full-fledged Corporate Affairs Department in 1969 (Yusuf, 2000), while Gulf Oil Company (Chevron) established a PR unit in 1975 and a full PR Department in 1981 (Olumideko, 1997). By 1988, Nestle Nigeria Plc created its own PR department. It must be emphasized at this juncture that the public relations initiatives in Nigeria during this period was not championed by foreign multinational corporations alone. Local corporations too played a very active role. For example, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the supervisory agency for petroleum production in Nigeria, established a public affairs department in 1968. This department was established to manage all corporate communications, community relations and external relations with all its stakeholders. Essentially, the role of public relations in these firms (during this period) was to influence the perceptions held of corporations among stakeholders, and to create good corporate image. In spite of the rise in the number of public relations departments in public and private sectors, public relations remained reactive function throughout the 1950s and until the late 1970s. It was hardly ever conceived or deployed as a proactive function (Osagie, 2005). During this period, public relations activities were pursued in-house by PR executives and it mostly involved press releases, press conferences and sponsorship. Once again, the dissemination of information by governments and business organizations to the publics throughout the 1945 to the early 1960s concurs with Grunig and Hunt (1984) public information model.

The professionalization era, the early 1960s to the early 2000s: The Nigerian Civil War fought between 1966 and 1970, though a sad event in Nigerian history, indirectly unleashed a new upsurge in public relations practice in Nigeria. In 1963 when the Directorate of Army Public Relations was established and headed by Major A. Giwa, it was saddled with information dissemination. When the civil war broke out in 1967, the Biafran Army seized the initiative to launch international war propaganda against Nigeria at home and abroad. Biafra accused the Nigerian Army of genocide and abuses against children and women. The Biafran leader, Lt. Col. Odumegwu Emeka Ojukwu, who earned a Master degree in History from the University of Oxford before enlisting in

Nigerian Army, understood the role PR, propaganda and communication in civil wars (Forsyth, 1983).

The Biafrans produced documentary films on the war with photographs of scenes of carnage, arson and blockage of medication (Madiebo, 1980; Uwechue, 1971; Achuzia, 1986; Ademoyega, 1981). These were presented to the international community to gain international sympathy. The Federal Government was in a quandary. In order to checkmate Biafran propaganda machine locally and more importantly in the international arena, the Nigerian Army reorganized its Directorate of Public Relations in 1968 and was headed by Brigadier General Sotomi. Having appreciated the enormity of public relations practice in a war time, the Nigerian Army enlisted civilians into its public relations corps. These were mostly broadcasters and journalists. These new corps of public relations practitioners were engaged to enhance the efficacy of their international communication. In order to infuse professionalism into Nigerian Army's public relations practice, Brigadier General Sotomi went on training in public relations at the British Institute of Public Relations in 1969. This initiative paid off handsomely for the Nigerian Army as it began to roll back the initial ground gained by the Biafran government in international arena. It countered the Biafran war propaganda with professional dexterity, even using some of "Biafran citizens" who were offered jobs and other opportunities in Nigeria as testimonials. The directorate began to sponsor men and officers to higher institutions in Nigeria to study public relations and mass communication. The Nigerian Army now has a full-fledged public relations directorate; many of its officers are members of NIPR (Ajai, 2007).

The postwar challenges and obloquy became enormous for the Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Air Force to bear. The "gentlemen" image and reputation of these forces nosedived remarkably. Their pre-war respect, integrity and credibility suffered severe reversal among the populace after the civil war because their officers and men were accused of vandalization of public properties, rape, arson, bombardment of civilian camps and denial of access to Red Cross officials to treat wounded civilians (Uwechue, 1971; Achuzia, 1986). In order to swiftly curtail its ebbing reputation and credibility, the Nigerian Navy established the Directorate of Naval Information in 1973 with the appointment of Commodore O.A. Oladimeji (retired) as the first head of the directorate. Also, in 1973, the Nigerian Air Force set up its first Information Department. These directorates were responsible for repairing the negative image which the Navy and the Air Force earned gratuitously during the war. However, despite these laudable landmarks by the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Navy and Air Force are yet to appreciate the gamut of PR practice in the political and economic dynamics of Nigeria (Ajai, 2007).

The Nigerian Police equally suffered battered image during the civil war. In order to polish its soiled image in the post-war era, it began to enlist PR officers into Police PR Department in 1971. The first set of 10 officers was appointed on Assistant Police Superintendent Grade. Mr. Bara Heart was the first head of Police Public Relations Department. He rose very quickly to the position of Commissioner of Police in 1975 (Ajai, 2007). In spite of the remarkable contributions of Nigerian Police to the growth of public relations profession, its image and reputation remain unenviable among Nigerians

(Elemika, 1993). It must be pointed out that the PR practice of the Nigeria Army was dictated by prevailing war exigencies, therefore it was a reactive PR tainted with propaganda and brainwashing.

Given the rising demand for quality public relations services in the late 1960s, the Public Relations Association of Nigeria (PRAN) was renamed Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) in 1969, and it was repositioned to offer high quality professional services and training programs. The 1970s Nigeria saw unprecedented boom in the economy. Hence, there was urgent need for professional public relations counselling in business and commerce. Several PR consulting firms were established between the 1970s and 1980s to meet this demand. Specifically, Rod Publicity (which managed the image of a handful of musicians such as King Sunny Ade and the late Fela Anikulapokuti), Clarkson Corporation, Bloomel PR Practitioners were some of the PR firms that emerged during this period. Others public relations firms such as Progan Promotions, Good Contact PR Services, Mike Okereke Consulting, Johnson and Associates, etc (Shuaib, 2006) also emerged between the late 1960s and early 1980s to shore-up this shortfall. Majority of these firms provided media relations services.

The provision of image services was not limited to public relations consultants. In fact, it could be argued that a substantial percentage of public relations briefs were executed during this period by advertising agencies, many of which had PR service units. Between the late 1960s and until the mid 1980s, agencies like Lintas, Grant Advertising, Admark, West Africa Publicity, Ogilvy, Benson and Marther, Promoserve, Rosabel and Insight Communications offered public relations support services to major multinational corporations. A new professional twist was witnessed in the public relations industry in 1984 with the inauguration of the Public Relations Consultancy Association of Nigeria (PRCAN) (Shuaib, 2006). The association was established to bring together all image making firms, standardize public relations counselling services and encourage the provision of value adding services to corporate organisations. They promoted these lofty goals through workshops, seminars and conferences. Since then, membership of the association has grown and it is becoming increasingly difficult for public relations firms to operate in Nigeria without PRCAN membership.

The economic liberalization period of 1986 led to the privatization and commercialization of state owned corporations and the creation of an open market economy. Within a short period, highly innovative business organizations emerged to challenge existing corporations in all sectors of the economy. Consequently, the use of fiercely competitive marketing strategies ensued among market leaders and newly emerging firms, which caused a sudden upsurge in the demand for highly skilled (full service) PR consulting firms. The demand triggered the emergence of Quadrant Company, JSP Corporate Communications and CMC Connect Lagos, etc. These firms offer professional services in all aspects of PR processes including corporate advocacy, events management, community relations, employee relations, financial relations and marketing public relations. Table 4 gives a list of some of the PR consulting firms currently operating in Nigeria and the type of PR services being offered by these firms.

Table 4: Some of Nigeria's PR consulting firms, websites and type of PR service offered

Firms	Websites	Type of service
CMC Connect Lagos	http://www.cmcconnect.com/	Corporate communications, Brand PR
The Quadrant Company	http://quadrantcompany.com/	Corporate communications, event, media relations
Sesema Public Relations	http://www.sesema.com/	Corporate communications, event, design & prints
JSP Corporate Communications	http://www.jspcorporate.com/	Corporate communications, Media relations
Corporate and Financial	http://www.corporateandfinancial.com/	Financial PR and media relations
Soul Communications	http://www.soulcomms.com/main.html	Corporate Communications, crisis & event mgt
Edison Ross	http://www.rosabelleoburnett.com/group03.htm	Marketing PR, customer relations, brand PR
Alder Consulting	http://www.alder-consulting.com/home.asp	Corporate communications, brand PR
Purple PR	http://www.purplepronline.com/	Media relations, strategic campaign, crisis & events mgt
Mike Okereke Consulting	http://www.mikeokerekeconsulting.com/	Corporate communications, PR training
DMB & Company	http://www.dmbpronline.com/	Corporate communications, Marketing PR, Media relations
Media Craft Associates	http://www.mediacraftassociates.com/	media relations, behaviour change campaigns
Image consultants	http://www.imageconsultantsnigeria.com/	organizational communications, reputation management
Synergy Consulting	http://www.synergypurconsulting.com/	Media & consumer relations, crisis & events management
Timex Communications	http://www.timexng.com/	Media relations, corporate communications
Nigerian Press Release	http://www.nigeriapressrelease.com/	Press releases, media relations
Taijowonukabe	http://www.taijowonukabe.com/	Media relations, events management

Source: developed by authors

This situation provoked a further rise in the demand for PR practitioners and suddenly there was a massive influx of non-qualified practitioners. The then Federal Military Government brought sanity to the industry by promulgating decree 16 of 1990 (Molleda and Alhassan, 2006; NIPR, 2008), empowering the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) to control and regulate public relations practices in Nigeria. Referring to NIPR Decree 16 Black (1991) said, "June 1, 1990 was a memorable day for PR profession in Nigeria". The decree makes it absolutely illegal for non NIPR registered individuals to pursue public relations practices in Nigeria. However, the extent to which this has been archived remains mere conjecture.

Coming at the heel of this charter, NIPR established a national secretariat in Lagos. This was headed by a Registrar, Dr Adekunle Salu, a seasoned public relations practitioner of the UAC pedigree, who was succeeded by J.T Ayo, a well-rounded PR professional from the public sector. The Secretariat was designed to promote and drive "professionalism and excellence", in the industry. It was responsible for policy implementation and supervision of PR industry nationwide. It was also charged with the responsibility of ensuring that about 8,000 practitioners spread across 37 Chapters nationwide comply with the provisions of the charter. One of the critical challenges confronting NIPR especially in the early 1990s was the lack of holistic and structured public relations body of knowledge and professional training programs for prospective students and practitioners. This in the view of several authors (Paluszek, 1988; Lauzen, 1992; Hainsworth, 1993; Wylie, 1994; McElreath and Blamphin, 1994; Saunders and Perrigo, 1998) was critical criteria for recognition of PR as a profession.

The national secretariat of NIPR addressed this problem by designing professional PR Certificate and Diploma programs for students and quality training programs for practitioners. These seemingly revolutionary efforts provided the needed tonic for promoting public relations education in Nigeria. Many marketing and mass

communications faculties of universities in the country responded to the demand and clamour for skilful public relations executives by offering full and part-time public

Table 5: Some of the higher institutions of learning running PR programs in Nigeria

Institution	Diploma/Degree/Modules
Nigerian Institute of Public Relations	Professional Certificate and Diploma in PR
Nigerian Institute of Marketing	Professional Diploma in Marketing (PR modules)
Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Lagos	OND/HND/PgD Public Relations
University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos	BSc/PgD/MSc/PhD Mass Communications (PR modules)
Bisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye	Dip/BA/PgD Public Relations
University of Ibadan, Ibadan	BA/MA/MCA/MPhil/PhD Communication & Lang. Arts (PR modules)
University of Nigeria, Nnsuka	BA/PgD/MA/PhD Mass Communication (PR modules)/MSc PR
University of Port Harcourt	BA/PgD/MA/PhD Mass Communications (PR modules)
University of Maiduguri	BA/PgD/MA/PhD Mass Communications (PR modules)
Lagos State University, Lagos	BA/PgD/MA Communication (PR modules)
Imo State University, Owerri	MBA Public Relations
Abia State University	M.Sc. Corporate Communications (PR modules)
Enugu State University of Technology	MBA Public Relations
Ambrose Alli University	Masters in Communication Art (PR modules)
Nnamdi Azikiwe University	BSc, MSc, PhD Mass Comm(PR Modules); MBA Advertising and PR
Bayero University, Kano	M.Sc Mass Communication (Public Relations)
Benue State University, Makurdi	M.A. Public Relations and Advertising
University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom	MA/PhD Mass Communication (Public Relations)
Federal University of Technology, Owerri	M.Tech (Public Relations and Advertising)
Federal University of Technology, Akure	Postgraduate Diploma in Public Relations
Covenant University, Otta	BSc Public Relations & Advertising
Lead City University, Ibadan	Diploma in Public Relations
University of Jos	BA, MA Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Business Education Examination Council (BEEC)	Diploma in Public Relations
Lagos State University	BA, MA (Public Relations & Advertising)
Igbinedion University, Benin	BA, MA (Public Relations & Advertising)
Delta State University	BA, MA Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Ebonyi State University	BA, MA Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Edo State University, Edo	BA, MA Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akure	BA, MA Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Nasarawa State University	BA, MA Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Ajayi Crowther University	BA, MA Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Cross River University of Technology	BSc, MSc, PhD Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Bingham University, Nasarawa	BA, MA, PhD Mass Communication (PR Modules)
University of Benin	BA, MA, PhD Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Ibrahim Babangida University, Lapai	BA, MA, PhD Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Western Delta University, Oghara	BSc, MSc, PhD Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Critas University, Enugu	BSc, MSc, PhD Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	BSc, MSc, PhD Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Anambra State University of Science & Technology	BSc, MSc, PhD Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Benson Idahosa University	BSc, MSc, Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Kaduna State University	BSc, MSc, Mass Communication (PR Modules)
Times Journalism Institute, Lagos	Diploma in Public Relations
Federal Polytechnic, Oko	OND, HND Mass Communication (Public Relations Modules)
Ogun State Polytechnic	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Ibadan Polytechnic	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin	Postgraduate Diploma in Public Relations
Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Federal Polytechnic, Bida	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Osun State Polytechnic, Iree	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Federal Polytechnic, Offa	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Wolex Polytechnic, Lagos	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Lagos State Polytechnic, Lagos	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Nasarawa	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Universal College of Technology, Ile Ife	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)
Our Saviour Institute of Science & Technology, Enugu	OND/HND Mass Communication (PR modules)

Table 4: adapted by authors from Joint Admissions Matriculation Board (2007) brochure

relations degrees and modules in their undergraduate and postgraduate programs, while some polytechnics offered PR diploma and modules in the National Diploma and Higher National Diploma programs. Table 4 gives a breakdown of some of the higher institutions of learning that provide undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs in PR.

Current structure of the Nigerian public relations industry

Public relations practice in Nigeria is developing at a fast speed and it will soon reach maturity stage. As with other parts of the world, there are three main types of public relations practice in Nigeria. These are in-house public relations services, public relations consulting and freelancing (see figure 5 below).

In-house public relations departments provide reputation and image management services to corporations by promoting the organizations in which they are housed. Their activities range from planning, developing and managing overall corporate public relations plans to managing internal and external communication efforts. Consultancies, however, work with numerous corporations by competing for clients with other consulting firms. A new trend in public relations consulting in Nigeria is specialization. A few public relations firms (i.e. Corporate and Financial) now offer specialized image-making services (i.e. media relations, financial PR, marketing PR) for various industry sectors. Nevertheless, while specialisation is the practice in advanced economies, the public relations industry is still being dominated by general PR practices.

Figure 5: structure of the Nigerian public relations industry

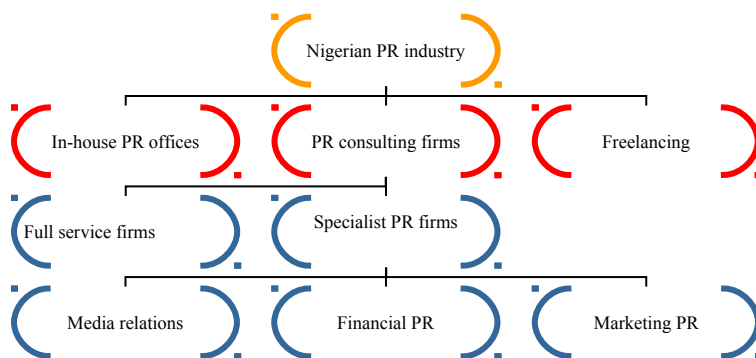


Figure 5: developed by authors

Another trend emerging in public relations practices (especially among PR consulting firms) is corporate affiliation. Today, a number of public relations firms are affiliated to top multinational PR agencies. For instance, JSP corporate communications is affiliated to Hill and Knowlton (UK). Similarly Sesema PR is affiliated to Edelman PR, a world class PR agency. The drive towards affiliations is anchored on the need for training and manpower development, professionalism, access to a global network

companies and development of insights into new approaches to PR management (Ufot, 2004).

Freelancing in public relations can be dated to the early stages of press journalism in Nigeria. Historically, the activities of freelance public relations practitioners, many of whom are journalists and self-employed, are limited to press relations. This situation remains the same today. Public relations freelancers (many of whom are retired pressmen) are self-employed and mostly carry out press projects. They operate as contractors on well defined projects for specific purposes. Although this aspect of public relations practice allows freelancers to reconcile home and work interests, it is however fraught with income irregularity arising from the difficulty of getting freelance jobs. The conditions of service of public relations executives working for public relations firms were poor before and now getting better, although there is still room for improvement.

5. The future of the public relations profession in Nigeria

There are a number of developments currently being witnessed in the Nigerian public relations industry. First, there is a growing sentiment that public relations consultancies charge exorbitant service fees and that these services fall below agreed performance targets. Such sentiments will soon be a thing of the past as highly skilled practitioners offering competitive and value adding services emerge in the industry.

Second, opportunity for growth in public relations services is on the rise. For as long as the government is committed to free market competition, the demand for public relations services will continue to grow. Many public utilities (like electricity, telecommunications etc.) currently operating with blatant disregard for their image, will actively seek public relations services once they become fully commercialized. This situation provides a unique opportunity for image consultants to build their client base by offering public relations services to these monopolies and emerging competition.

Third, a degree in public relations which until recently was disregarded as a prerequisite for getting a job or building a career in public relations is gradually becoming relevant. Many corporations, particularly newly emerging consulting firms are beginning to value public relations graduates more than ever before. Consequently, there has been a rise in the number of students pursuing public relations modules and degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in many Nigerian universities. There is even a rise in the number of Nigerian graduates pursuing public relations, reputation and identity research at doctoral level in Nigeria and abroad. Importantly, this upsurge has been matched with a corresponding rise in the number of universities, polytechnics and professional institutions offering public relations programs.

Fourth, as corporate scandals become more widespread, many organizations that might otherwise have been silent responsible operators will seek more effective methods for conveying messages about their corporate social responsibility activities. This condition will provoke a rise in demand for public relations services and in effect buffer client base.

Fifth, in spite of the rise in the number of Nigerians completing public relations degrees, there is still an acute shortage of highly skilled public relations practitioners. Many junior executives quickly get poached by clients either due to poor conditions of service, quests for higher and more challenging image making responsibilities in other better rewarding industries or a combination of both.

Sixth, it is gradually becoming difficult for non-registered public relations practitioners to occupy public relations positions or service public relations accounts. Membership of the two public relations regulatory associations (NIPR and PRCAN) is bulging and they are becoming highly influential. They will play a greater role in the regulation and control of public relations practices in Nigeria. It is expected (in the near future) that majority of industry turnover in public relations consulting services will be controlled by PRCAN members. A few public relations firms have already established strategic partnerships with top and high ranking public relations firms in Europe and America. The advantages of such alignments are currently manifesting. This trend will continue. More firms will seek global alignments with internationally reputed image making consulting firms to take advantage of such partnership.

6. Discussion

The review of literature in the paragraphs above reveals the emergence of four important contributions to the literature of public relations. The first contribution that emerged from this study provides insight into the dominant eras in public relations. These eras include the public enlightenment era; the PR broadcasting era; political propaganda era, and the public information era. Insights provided about these eras contribute significantly to western literature because journals such as *Public Relations Quarterly*, *Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Communication Management* and *Journal of Public Relations Research*, etc. are void of how modern PR practices in Africa and more importantly Nigeria developed over time. Similarly, other authors (Bates, 2006; Sriramesh and Verčič, 2002; Culbertson et. al, 1996; Sriramesh, 2006) that examined the history and development of public relations at the global level ignored the contributions made by Africa, especially Nigeria, the most populous black race. Importantly, the contributions emerging from this study will fill the gap created by the works of these authors.

The second contribution that emerged from this study provides western academics an insight into the current structure of the Nigerian PR industry. Until date, there is no theoretical literature that provides detailed information on this issue. The insights given about the current structure of this industry also fill this gap. The third contribution in this study gives a picture of the future of public relations profession in Nigeria. The review of literature indicates there is no theoretical literature addressing the future of public relations in Africa and more importantly, Nigeria. This study also fills this gap.

Pearson (1992) states that there is no single interpretation of the history of public relations, rather there are many perspectives on the subject. Based on this statement, this study debunked earlier opinions that modern PR practices in Nigeria began with establishment of Information Office by UAC in 1949. This study traced the evolution of modern public relations practices to Abeokuta on December 3, 1859, when the Christian

Missionary Society (CMS) published the “*Iwe Irohin*”, Nigeria’s first newspaper (Salawu, 2004b). Contrary to earlier held opinions (Ajala, 1993; Fassy Yusuf, 2000) this study provided evidence to argue that the *Iwe Irohin* (a news journal) performed the first PR functions by publishing public announcements, enlightening and educating Nigerians, Creoles and Europeans on prevailing socio-economic and political activities (Salawu, 2004b; Oduntan, 2005). This argument constitutes the fourth contribution in this study.

The study reveals a number of limitations that offer opportunities for future research. For instance this study failed to provide an analysis of the developmental use of public relations tools such as press relations, marketing PR, financial relations etc. It would be interesting to see how the use of these tools developed in the last 150 years of modern PR practices in Nigeria. Also this study failed to explore the use of public relations amongst non-governmental organizations in Nigeria. An insight into the development use of PR in this sector will also enhance a scholarly understanding of the industry.

7. Conclusion

This study aimed to trace the development and history of modern PR practices in Nigeria. The authors addressed this objective by delineating the development of public relations practices into four main eras termed the public enlightenment era; the PR broadcasting era; political propaganda era; the public information era. This study gave useful insights into current PR practices in Nigeria. The authors also gave a forecast of the likely events that are likely to dominate the Nigerian PR industry in the coming future.

Based on the findings emerging from this study, it would appear that Nigeria is miles ahead of a number of advanced industrialized countries when it comes to the professionalisation of public relations. Our conviction is predicated on two arguments. First, unlike the Chartered Institute of Public Relations London, which got its professional charter in 2004, public relations practices had since 1990 been recognized by the successive governments in Nigeria as a professional discipline. The Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) got the professional charter, which recognized PR practices as a professional discipline in 1990 (see Molleda and Alhassan, 2005). The charter limited the practice of public relations in Nigeria exclusively to persons registered by NIPR. Besides, it was established far ahead of many European and North American public relations institutes. This was corroborated by Schroeder (1993) when he stated, “NIPR was founded in 1963 ... it is five years older than the Swiss Public Relations Institute. On the occasion of the remarkable 30th anniversary, I would like to congratulate you for your ‘early vision’ in our profession”.

Second, the popularity enjoyed by the professionalisation of PR practices in Nigeria has encouraged many Nigerian universities and polytechnics to develop and run academic and professional degrees in this discipline (especially at postgraduate level). Conservatively, there are at least 20 higher institutions of learning in Nigeria offering specialist degree programs in public relations (see table 4 above). In the UK however, there are less than 10 universities offering similar degrees. Unlike Nigerian universities, most of the elite and traditional British universities are yet to embrace this discipline as

an academic field of inquiry, whereas the Nigerian elite universities like the University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, University of Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello University, etc. are championing PR education. Finally, given rapid development witnessed recently in the professionalisation of PR in Nigeria, we contend that this discipline will continue to develop and grow into a noble and respectable discipline, profession and field of inquiry.

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