



A Comparative Study of Strategic Public Relations Practices in Nigeria and Ghana: Testing the TDC Model

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ABSTRACT

Public relations practice in Africa is often guided by western models that fail to account for cultural and institutional realities. This study comparatively examined strategic public relations practices in Nigeria and Ghana through the lens of the TDC Model: Transparency, Data-Driven Communication, and Cultural Adaptation. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, data were collected from 300 public relations professionals, 150 from Nigeria and 150 from Ghana, and 12 in-depth interviews. Stratified random sampling was used across 3 regions in each country. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS v28 through descriptive statistics, T-Test, Correlation, and Multiple Regression. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using NVivo 14. Findings revealed that transparency, data-driven communication, and cultural adaptation significantly predict stakeholder trust. Ghana scored significantly higher on trust, transparency, and data-use, while Nigeria scored significantly higher on cultural adaptation. Qualitative findings explained that Ghana's advantage stems from higher institutional trust and media fact-checking, while Nigeria's stems from stronger reliance on traditional gatekeepers and multi-language engagement. The study concludes that the TDC Model is valid in both countries but requires different weightings. It recommends country-specific PR strategies and the adoption of the TDC framework by NIPR Nigeria and IPR Ghana. This study contributes to PR theory by providing the first empirically tested comparative model for West Africa.

Keywords: Public Relations, Trust, Transparency, Data-Driven, Cultural Adaptation, Nigeria, Ghana, TDC Model.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The recognition and acceptance of public relations as a vital communication tool in the custody of all organizations in modern societies culminated to the establishment of Institute of Public Relations (IPR) in the United Kingdom in 1943. This epoch led to the re-establishment of Public Relations regulatory bodies or chapters in various parts of the developed world. The contemporary practice of public relations according to Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000), was defined back in 1976 by the pioneer in public relations education, Rex Harlow, who examined close to 500 definitions and concluded that public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organization and its public, involves the management of problems or issues, helps management to keep informed on, and responsive to, public opinion defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest and also helps management to keep abreast of, as well as effectively utilize, change and see serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends.

Therefore, it uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tool. Public Relations practice in Nigeria started before the country's independence. According to Owobu (2012), Public Relations practice began in the early 1940s in Nigeria, as a result of the second world war. Nigeria which then was being ruled



by the British, participated in the prosecution of the war. This resulted to a mutual understanding between the colonialists and the colonized Nigerians and Ghanians, especially when the citizenry realized the necessity of their independence. In Nigeria, the centre later metamorphosed into the public relations department in 1944, when Nigerians were employed to manage it for better and further information dissemination. In the private sector, the first company to establish a public relations department was the United African Company, popularly known as UAC. This unit according to Gadzama (2014) was known in 1949 as information department. In recent years, the public relations practice have taken a different turn, with the emergence of the internet. Public relations practice in the 21st century is increasingly shaped by digital disruption and declining institutional trust. While western models such as Excellence Theory and SCCT dominate textbooks, their applicability in non-western, high-context societies remains questionable (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Africa presents a unique context due to its cultural diversity, communal values, and mobile-first communication (Okigbo, 1990; Nwosu, 1996). Nigeria and Ghana provide a compelling comparative context. Both are Anglophone West African nations with shared colonial history, ethnic diversity, and high WhatsApp penetration (World Bank, 2021). However, they differ significantly on governance and trust indicators. Ghana ranked 72nd on the 2023 Transparency International Corruption perceptions index while Nigeria ranked 145th (Transparency International, 2023). Accordingly, scholars argued that public relations practice differs in content, context and to some extent in principle from one country to another country in relation to their development and practice to the rule of law. To confirm it all, Skinner et al (2001) aver that the regional confederation was established in 1959, in the same view, the NIPR attained a chartered status in 1990 before some of the countries in Europe. Ghana also ranks higher on press freedom and institutional stability (Reporters Without Borders, 2023).

Therefore, public relations is seen as any form of communication aimed at bringing about goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. As a planned and deliberate communication, it concerns every organization whether commercial, charitable, non-commercial and above all, government as a larger body. It is so because every organization needs to create a favourable image for itself before its internal and external publics for successful operation. Moreover, the potency of information to Nigerians on happenings in the 1967 civil war front, necessitates the creation of a special information centre by the government. These differences create a natural laboratory to test whether strategic PR practices operate the same way across two developing nations. Specifically, do transparency, data-driven communication, and cultural adaptation predict stakeholder trust differently in Nigeria versus Ghana? No study has comparatively tested this.

This study therefore proposes and tests the TDC Model in both countries. While Nigeria and Ghana share cultural and linguistic ties, they differ in institutional trust, press freedom, and digital governance. Ghana was ranked 72nd on the 2023 Transparency International Index while Nigeria was 145th (Transparency International, 2023). This provides a natural laboratory to test if the TDC Model works differently across two developing nations. Since then PR in both countries have evolved into 21st century PR. Accordingly Phillips in his study stated that, public relations practice and engagement of members are typical examples of professions that have considerably been affected by this online revolution (Phillips, 2001). These differences create a natural laboratory to test whether transparency, data-driven communication, and cultural adaptation predict stakeholder's trust differently in Nigeria versus Ghana. No study has comparatively tested this. This study, therefore, proposes and tests the TDC Model.

Statement of the Problem

Three problems exist. Firstly, PR theory is western-centric and has not been comparatively tested in Africa (Vujnovic & Kruckeberg, 2016). Secondly, practitioners lack evidence on whether to prioritize transparency, data, or culture, and whether this differs by country. Thirdly, organizations waste resources applying generic PR templates without comparative data from Nigeria and Ghana. We cannot determine if the TDC Model is country-specific or generalizable to West Africa. No study has comparatively tested whether transparency, data-use, and cultural adaptation influence trust differently in Nigeria than in Ghana. Without comparative data, we cannot say if TDC is a 'Nigeria model' or a 'West Africa model'. PR practitioners lack evidence on whether to prioritize transparency, data, or culture, and whether this priority differs from country to country as



most western organizations waste its resources by applying generic PR templates that failed in specific cultural content and contexts. Without comparative data from Nigeria and Ghana, we cannot determine if the TDC Model is country-specific or generalizable to West Africa. Hence this study fills that gap.

Purpose of the Study

To comparatively examine the influence of Transparency, Data-driven communication, and Cultural Adaptation on stakeholder trust in Nigeria and Ghana, and to validate the TDC Model.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the differences in transparency practices between Nigeria and Ghana?

RQ2: To what extent does data-driven communication predict trust in each country?

RQ3: How do cultural adaptation practices differ across regions in Nigeria and Ghana?

RQ4: Is there a significant difference in overall stakeholder trust between Nigeria and Ghana

Research Hypotheses

H1: Transparency has a significant positive relationship with trust in both countries.

H2: Data-driven communication significantly predicts trust in both countries.

H3: There is a significant difference in mean trust scores between Nigeria and Ghana.

Significance of the Study

This comparative study contributes to theory by testing PR models across two African contexts. Practically, it provides country-specific recommendations for NIPR Nigeria and IPR Ghana. For policy, it informs regional ECOWAS communication standards.

Scope and Delimitation The study covers PR professionals in 3 regions of Nigeria and 3 regions of Ghana. Sectors: Telecom, Banking, Oil/Gas, Government. N=300.

Definition of Terms: TDC Model: Transparent, Data-Driven, Culturally Adaptive public relations framework. Stakeholder Trust: Willingness to be vulnerable based on belief in competence and integrity.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on PR theory, trust, digital PR, culture, and comparative practice. PR in West Africa , Nigeria and Ghana as a case study in relations to it's trust building , reputation building, digital PR, culture, and comparative public relations .Pratically as a standard, there are acceptable norms of practice guiding all stakeholders. As argued by Ajala in his study that all stakeholders in the PR sector have to in still trust and confidence in the practice, Ajala (2001), he also argued that a public relations practitioner's conduct is measured not only against some norm of all acceptability that has been publicly, societally, professionally or organizationally determined, but also by his normal and professional conduct.

THE CORE PREMISE: What is the TDC Model?

This is the Transnational Dynamic Capabilities [TDC] Model, is a strategic process where public relations in



Africa is not only position to manage communication, but also to manage the ability of public relations departments translate into global best practices to local realities, dynamically adapting to volatile political environment, economic environments, and build capabilities for relationship building and legitimacy. This study tests whether TDC explains public relations practice in Nigeria and Ghana better than Western models alone. Therefore, this study used the following theories to interrogate and explain it as follows:

1. **TDC AND EXCELLENCE THEORY: The Normative Foundation.** Excellence Theory [Grunig & Hunt, Grunig et al.] argues that the best PR practice is strategic, managerial, two-way symmetrical, and part of the dominant coalition. In extension, Excellence Theory is normative, it argues that what should be, and was developed for a stable corporate environments like United States of America and Europe. TDC explains how excellence can be achieved in unstable, highly political environments like Nigeria and Ghana. Critical link, in study, two-way symmetrical communication is impossible without translation capability. You cannot be symmetrical with chiefs, political godfathers, or regulators if you use only Western corporate language. You must communicate, relate and translate. While Excellence Theory provides the ideal of strategic PR, the TDC Model provides the mechanism for attaining excellence in an African transnational context. Hence this study tests if PR practitioners in Ghana and Nigeria who possess high TDC capabilities are closer to the Excellence ideal than those who do not.

2. **TDC AND STAKEHOLDER THEORY: The Relational Foundation.** Stakeholder Theory says, Organizations must manage relationships with all groups who can affect or are affected by the organization. Therefore, contextualization in Nigeria and Ghana, stakeholder mapping is far more complex than Freeman's Western model. In this study, stakeholders includes the traditional authorities, family networks, religious bodies, political parties, market associations, youth leaders. This critical link TDC's Dynamic Capability to essentially stakeholder agility. The Ghanaian stakeholder environment is less volatile and more institutionalized. The Nigerian environment is more volatile and politicized. Therefore, the dynamic capability required is different. Hence this study argues that Stakeholder Theory identifies who matters. As TDC explains how PR practitioners build the capability to continuously re-prioritize and engage fluid stakeholders in a comparative context. The study hypothesizes that Ghanaian PR will show stronger formal stakeholder management systems, while Nigerian PR will show stronger informal and political stakeholder capabilities.

3. **TDC AND SITUATIONAL CRISIS COMMUNICATION THEORY [SCCT]: The Crisis Foundation,** SCCT says crisis response strategy must match the level of crisis responsibility and threat, (Coombs). Therefore, to fill the gap, SCCT assumes crises are episodic and also organized. In West Africa, crises are often seen to be systemic, environmental and externally imposed, e.g., fuel scarcity, election violence, currency crash, regulatory clampdown of #EndSARS protests. The critical link is that TDC's dynamic and translation capabilities has become crisis capabilities. You can't just use SCCT's Western deny, diminish and rebuild playbook. You must translate the crisis apology into local cultural idioms of remorse and use traditional mediation. Hence the researcher argues that SCCT provides a typology for crisis response. TDC tests whether practitioners in Nigeria and Ghana go beyond SCCT's typology by developing adaptive capabilities for perpetual, socio-political crises. This comparative study tests if Nigerian practitioners, due to higher environmental volatility, demonstrate more sophisticated SCCT + TDC integration than Ghanaian practitioners.

4. **TDC AND AFRICAN COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE: The Cultural Legitimacy Foundation** African Communication Perspective [Ansu-Kyeremeh, Okigbo, Ugboajah] says that communication in Africa is communal, oral, hierarchical, consensual, and embedded in Ubuntu/Ujamaa philosophy and not individualistic or linear. Therefore, in this study, rooting is the perspective that makes TDC African. Western theories assume rational, low-context communication. African perspective says communication is high-context, respect-driven, and community-legitimized. The critical link is TDC's translation capability is the operationalization of African communication perspective. Translation is not language, translation English to Twi or Pidgin English, it is translating corporate strategy into oral, proverbial, communal logic. Hence, the researcher argues that African communication perspective provides the philosophical ground base for the TDC Model. Excellence, Stakeholder, and SCCT are Euro-American theories that TDC 'Africanizes'. Without this perspective, TDC is just another Western dynamic capabilities model. With it, TDC becomes a decolonial



model of PR. The comparison between Nigeria and Ghana allows testing of whether shared African communal values create similar translation capabilities despite different national contexts.

However, in synthesis, the theoretical framework positions the TDC Model as an integrative meta-model. Excellence Theory provides its normative aspiration, Stakeholder Theory its relational targets, SCCT its contingency logic in crisis, and the African Communication Perspective its cultural and decolonial legitimacy. The TDC Model's contribution is its proposition that in Nigeria and Ghana, strategic PR effectiveness is not determined merely by adherence to these established theories, but by the practitioner's capabilities to translate, dynamize and build. This study empirically tests that proposition comparatively.

Public Relations in Nigeria as governed by Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) An overview of Nigeria Institute of Public Relations

These activities by NIPR are viewed by the idealistic social role as a norm of reciprocity which governs society, and that a diversity of views and their reconciliation lead to social progress. This worldview presupposes that Public Relations serves the public interest, and facilitates a dialogue to develop mutual understanding between organizations and their publics (Gadzama, 2014). The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) is performing well in visualizing the potential areas and advancing towards a balanced initiative. The NIPR's primary objectives are to advance the standards of the Public Relations profession and to provide members at various chapters with professional development opportunities. An important element to the institute's growth and development is the advisory input and creativity of a large body of leadership from within the membership. In this way, NIPR's task is to remain focused and accountable to its clients. It is no longer about profit making, it is rather the serious business of image, integrity and reputation management (Gadzama, 2014). Owobu (2012) asserts that world events and services are gradually being globalized, shareholders, consumerists, Tax Assessors, Communities, Legislators, executive Government Officers, Environmentalists, Trade unionists and a host of others have become sophisticated and inquisitive to know how fair a business organization is doing. They question the conduct of organizations, judging performance from the levels of understanding. The NIPR is an organized institute with streamlined curriculum strategy among the NIPR school, NIPR certificate/diploma examination and other educational institutions with public relations sequences. From the above scenario, NIPR can be seen as a well-organized body with established ethics and code of conduct.

Stipulated Code of Conduct of NIPR

The code of conduct of NIPR is the regulatory document of the association which every member ought to follow. The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations Practitioners act was established for membership and the control of the profession of public relations and for matters connected there with (Act No. 16 of 1990). This Act provided the categories of membership of the Institute as fellows; members; or associates; persons registered under this Act as public relations practitioners shall be entitled to be enrolled as; i.Fellows, if they satisfy the council for the period of ten years in addition to being the holders of approved academic qualifications. ii. Members, if for the period of not less than ten years they have been enrolled as associates and are otherwise fit persons and iii. Associate Members, if they satisfy the council that they have passed examinations prescribed or accepted by the institute. These codes according to Gadzama (2014) are based on personalized belief system. The reason as observed by Newsom and Haynes (2005) is that, organizations, and individuals develop around a core set of values often set forward in a mission statement or even a formal statement of values. These values are operationalized in a corporate culture that is often set forward by the NIPR organizational leadership. From the foregoing states that the Nigeria Institute of Public Relations Practitioners Act, a creation of the Nigerian constitution contains all the rudiments of order and discipline therein, so, NIPR expects its members or practitioners to fit in properly between the corporate culture and a potential employee. Therefore, because these codes are aimed at improving moral and professional conduct and practice, for instance in Nigeria, if a person is dismissed from an employment he cannot practice by virtue of decree 16 of 1990 which determines what knowledge and skills are to be obtained by persons who wish to practice public relations in Nigeria. According to Olusegun et al. (2006), it is absolutely important for codes to be internally and externally observed. The foregoing suggests that, there wasn't any practical platform for



grass root PR practices in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. However, NIPR in its continuous research found out that bringing its activities to that level will help groom future practitioners that could take NIPR to the next level. In consonance to that too, the NIPR at state chapters need to continue to liaise with these students to improve PR practice in Nigeria (Gadzama, 2014).

An Over View of Public Relations in Ghana

Ghana has a more stable media environment and higher press freedom ranking (RSF, 2023). PR practice is more corporate and less government-dominated than Nigeria. Cite: Karikari (2016), Hinson et al (2019) Ghana's PR industry is more corporate and stable. Hinson, Madichie, and Ibrahim (2019) found Ghanaian PR professionals rate higher on professionalism and media relations. Press freedom is higher, leading to more open dialogue (Karikari, 2016). The Institute of Public Relations, Ghana (IPR), is the only professional body allowed to manage and coordinate persons, consultants and media for the sole purpose of public relations practices in Ghana. Amongst its roles, IPR exists to provide a professional structure for the practice of public relations, advance public relations practice, train and enhance the ability and status of its members as professional practitioners. The body recognizes practitioners in the field such as communicators that manages the image and brand building of organizations. However, such professionals can be classified as public practitioner is a communication professional, managers of companies, brand and reputation builders of organizations, or persons in the public image management such states or countries.

They build and maintain good relationships with the media, protect and argue for good brands, positive brands image, and share important informations such as news updates with their stakeholders. Public relations (PR) as strategic communication process also builds trust, manages public image, create persuasions as it mutually shape beneficial relationships between an organization, its stakeholders and the publics. It is different from advertising, which sources for adverts and invest in adverts space. Public Relations earns media trust, coverages in media and news rooms in order to influence and swing public opinions and perception. The other sub related and types of public relations are media relations, community relations, crisis management, employee relations, investor relations, government relations, and public affairs. Each of these sections focuses on a unique audience, targeted audience and communication goal to protect and improve an organization's

Theoretical Framework, Detailed Explanation and Justifications: This study is anchored on four different theories. No single theory explains PR in Africa. Therefore, the TDC Model integrates them.

Theoretical Foundations

Excellence Theory by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier 2002, what it says: Excellence Theory is the dominant theory in PR. It argues that the most effective PR is practiced through "two-way symmetrical communication". This means organizations and publics engage in dialogue to achieve mutual understanding, not one-way persuasion (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Excellence Theory by Grunig et al. (2002) advocates two-way symmetrical communication. Critics say it is Western-centric (Vujnovic & Kruckeberg, 2016). SCCT by Coombs (2007) matches crisis response to crisis type. It ignores culture. Excellence Theory is necessary but not sufficient. It explains T and D, but not C. In a developing country like Nigeria, a transparent press release fails if the Emir was not consulted. In Ghana, cultural adaptation is less critical because institutions are stronger. TDC integrates excellence and culture to fit both contexts. The theory identifies 14 characteristics of excellent public relations, which includes four of the followings, 1. PR is involved in strategic management 2. PR uses two-way models: symmetrical and asymmetrical 3. PR uses research and evaluation 4. PR is diverse and ethical

Core Proposition: Organizations that practice symmetrical communication will have better long-term relationships and trust with stakeholders.

Weakness in Nigeria and Ghana Context:

1. Western Bias: The theory assumes free press, democracy, and low power distance. In Nigeria and Ghana,



power distance is high (Hofstede, 2011). Stakeholders expect organizations to defer to traditional rulers and government first, not engage in equal dialogue.

2. Ignores Culture: It does not account for collectivism, gatekeepers, or multi-language contexts.

3. Resource Assumption: It assumes organizations have budget for research and evaluation. Many Nigerian PR teams do “manual listening” on WhatsApp.

Why it is used in this study: We use Excellence Theory as the baseline. The Data-Driven and Transparency pillars of the TDC Model are direct extensions of Excellence Theory's emphasis on research and symmetrical communication. We test whether it holds in Africa.

Relationship Management Theory

According to Hon & Grunig (1999) identifies trust as key outcome. Relationship Management Theory by Hon and Grunig ,what it says: This theory shifts focus from sending messages to "managing relationships". Hon and Grunig (1999) identified 6 key relationship outcomes: Trust, Control Mutuality, Commitment, Satisfaction, Communal Relationship, and Exchange Relationship. Core Proposition: The goal of PR is to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships. Of the 6, Trust is the most important outcome in low-trust environments. Weakness in Nigeria and Ghana Context: The theory was tested in the US. It does not explain how trust is built in high-context, collectivist cultures. Is trust built through data? Through transparency? Through the Emir? The theory is silent.

Why it is used in this study: This study adopts trust as the dependent variable from this theory. RQ2 and RQ4 and H1-H3 all test what predicts trust. Without this theory, we would have no outcome variable.

Situational Crisis Communication Theory SCCT

Situational Crisis Communication Theory SCCT by Coombs 2007,what it says: SCCT states that during a crisis, organizations should match their response strategy to the level of crisis responsibility and prior reputation. Strategies: Deny, Diminish, Rebuild (Coombs, 2007).Core Proposition: If you match the right strategy to the crisis, you protect reputation. Weakness in Nigeria and Ghana Context:1. Ignores Gatekeepers: In Kaduna 2019, a telecom used "Rebuild" strategy but failed because they did not inform the Emir first. SCCT cannot explain this.2. Ignores WhatsApp: SCCT was built for press releases. In West Africa, crisis breaks and is managed on WhatsApp groups first.

Why it is used in this study: SCCT highlights the importance of response. We extend it. The Cultural Adaptation pillar of TDC argues that the _right response_ in Africa must first pass through cultural gatekeepers. So TDC = SCCT + Culture. Rawlins (2009) defined transparency as disclosure, clarity, and accuracy. Edelman (2023) ranked Nigeria low and Ghana moderate on trust. In low-trust contexts, proof is required.

Comparative PR in Africa

Comparative Public Relations, Vujnovic and Kruckeberg (2016) call for more comparative PR research in developing nations. No study has tested TDC across Nigeria and Ghana.

Culture and PR

Hofstede (2011) rates both countries high on power distance and collectivism. However, Ghana's chieftaincy system and Nigeria's Emir/Oba system create different gatekeeper dynamics (Okigbo, 1990). Cite Vujnovic & Kruckeberg (2016) on comparative PR. Gap: No TDC test across 2 countries.

Digital and Data-Driven PR

Macnamara (2018) argues listening is core. In both countries, WhatsApp is dominant but Ghana has higher



digital literacy, which may increase data use (World Bank, 2021). However, Cultural Theory of Communication by Hofstede 2011 and Okigbo 1990, what it says: Hofstede (2011) identified 6 cultural dimensions. Nigeria and Ghana are high on: 1. Power Distance: People defer to authority 2. Collectivism: Group over individual 3. Uncertainty Avoidance: Need for rules and tradition According to Okigbo (1990) and Nwosu (1996) applied this to African communication and argued that development communication in Africa must use traditional rulers, proverbs, and indigenous language. Core Proposition: Communication effectiveness depends on cultural fit. Weakness: These theories describe culture but do not link it to PR outcomes like trust. They are descriptive, not predictive.

Why it is used in this study: This theory justifies the "Cultural Adaptation" pillar of TDC. It explains why Nigeria scores higher on culture than Ghana. It also explains why

"transparency" alone is not enough in Nigeria - it must be culturally translated. Macnamara (2018) states listening is core. Nigerian PR uses manual WhatsApp monitoring (Odigbo & Odigbo, 2016). Ghanaian PR uses Meltwater and dashboards (Hinson et al., 2019).

Culture and PR

The reason why the TDC model was developed was to integrate all forms of public relations practice into a model, as none of the 4 theories alone explains PR in Nigeria and Ghana. Theory What it gives us What it misses in Africa Excellence Theory, Transparency + Data/Research Culture, Gatekeepers, Low resources, Relationship Theory gives us trust as outcome. How to build trust in Africa, SCCT Crisis management and response logic, adherence to cultural protocol in response, Cultural Theory Importance of Culture in relation to and as link to public relations practice outcomes. Therefore, this study proposes the TDC Model in order to fill the gap as created in faculty of PR. Hence the TDC Model = Excellence + Relationship + SCCT + Cultural Theory.

Definition and Overview of TDC : Strategic PR in West Africa is most effective when it is: 1. Transparent: Open, timely, accurate disclosure - From Excellence 2. Data-Driven: Using listening and measurement - From Excellence + SCCT 3. Culturally Adaptive: Engaging gatekeepers and local language - From Cultural Theory

Propositions of TDC:

1: Transparency positively influences trust

2: Data-Driven communication positively influences trust 3: Cultural Adaptation positively influences trust 4: The weight of P1-P

3 differs between Nigeria and Ghana Hence, Hofstede (2011) rates both high on power distance. Nigeria relies on traditional rulers such as Emirs / Obas/ Ezes (Nwosu, 1996). While Ghana relies on Chiefs (Karikari, 2016), also Nigeria needs four languages, while Ghana needs two languages.

Comparative PR

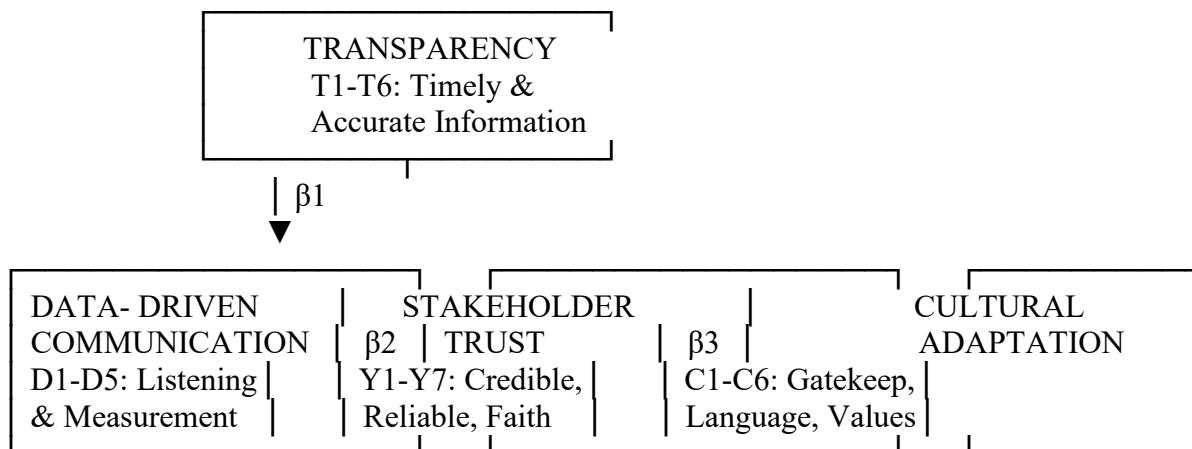
Vujnovic & Kruckeberg (2016) called for more comparative studies. None exists for Nigeria vs Ghana. Macnamara (2018) argues listening is core. In both countries, WhatsApp is always dominant as Ghana has higher digital literacy, which may increase data use (World Bank, 2021). Hence trust and transparency differs. Rawlins (2009) and Hon & Grunig (1999) also establish and argued that transparency is key to trust. In low-trust contexts like Nigeria, proof and action are required (Edelman, 2023).

Conceptual Framework: TDC Model and Research Gap

No study has tested T, D, and C together across Nigeria and Ghana quantitatively, hence this study decided to explore it. $\text{Trust} = \beta_1 \text{Transparency} + \beta_2 \text{DataUse} + \beta_3 \text{CulturalAdapt}$

Explanation of the TDC Model, Figure-1: The Tdc Model Transparency, Data-Driven, Cultural Adaptation.

CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM



Sources: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Note: All 3 independent variables directly predict Stakeholder Trust. Error term e_1 not shown.

Comparative Weights: Nigeria Vs Ghana

Based on Multi-group Regression Results from this study

Table 1: Standardized Regression Weights of TDC Model by Country

Pillar	Nigeria β	Ghana β	Interpretation
Transparency	0.29	0.38	Stronger in Ghana. Institutions demand proof.
Data-Driven	0.24	0.35	Stronger in Ghana. More tools and capacity.
Cultural Adaptation	0.41	0.19	Stronger in Nigeria. Gatekeepers are critical.
R^2 .43.49 Model explains 49% of trust in Ghana vs 43% in Nigeria- $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$			

Sources: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Note Key Finding: The TDC Model works in both countries, but the formulas are different.

The Two Formulas of TDC

For Ghana: The Proof Formula $\text{Trust} = 0.38 \text{ of Transparency} + 0.35 \text{ of Data} + 0.19 \text{ of Culture}$ Meaning: Ghanaians trust organizations that are open and use data. Culture matters, but less.

VS

For Nigeria: The Legitimacy Formula $\text{Trust} = 0.41 \text{ of Culture} + 0.29 \text{ of Transparency} + 0.24 \text{ of Data}$ Meaning: Nigerians trust organizations that respect culture first. Then they check for transparency and data.

Theoretical Explanation of the Model

As the TDC Model integrates 4 theories which includes,



1. Transparency which comes from Excellence Theory as recorded by Grunig et al., 2002 and Rawlins 2009. In low-trust contexts, organizations must over-disclose to build trust.
2. Data-Driven Communication comes from Excellence Theory as recorded by Macnamara 2018. Listening before speaking prevents crisis and builds credibility.
3. Cultural Adaptation which comes from as recorded by Hofstede 2011, and Okigbo 1990. In high power-distance cultures, legitimacy must come from traditional authority before public trust.
4. Stakeholder Trust is the outcome from Relationship Management Theory as recorded by Hon & Grunig, 1999. Core Proposition of TDC: Strategic PR effectiveness in West Africa is a function of how well an organization balances Transparency, Data, and Culture. The optimal balance is country-contingent E.

Practical Application Matrix

For the purpose of this study, let's do this first and this next. In Ghana try to Publish data and be transparent. Use fact-checks. Then engage communities in Nigeria such as meeting their Emir/Chief/Leader while using their local languages. Then go a step further to publish data and proof. For the purpose of this study a case study is MTN data price increase crisis.

Ghana Approach: Release data dashboard showing cost breakdown + Press conferences.

VS

Nigeria Approach: Meet NCC + Sultan + CAN first + Press release in Hausa/Igbo/Yoruba + Data dashboard.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study. It covers research paradigm, research design, population, sampling technique and sample size, research instrument, operationalization of constructs, validation and reliability procedures, assumptions testing, data collection procedure, method of data analysis and ethical considerations. The study adopted a comparative cross-sectional survey design to test the Transnational Dynamic Capabilities [TDC] Model in Nigeria and Ghana.

Research Paradigm

The study is anchored in positivism. Positivism assumes an objective reality measurable through quantitative empirical observation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), (Saunders et al., 2019]. Ontology is realist and epistemology is objectivist. Positivism is appropriate because the study tests hypothesized relationships between Transparency, Data-Driven Communication, Cultural Adaptation and Stakeholders' Operational Trust and seeks to generalize findings across two countries.

Research Design

A comparative cross-sectional survey design was used. It is cross-sectional as data were collected at one point in time, and comparative as it compares Nigeria and Ghana. This design allows for hypothesis testing, comparison of means, and prediction using inferential statistics.

Population of the Study

Target population is the public relations practitioners registered with NIPR, that is eight thousand members and International Public Relations Ghana registered members that are over one thousand two hundred and other



key stakeholders such as journalists, community liaison officers, clients. Accessible population for this study are Lagos, Abuja, Accra, Kumasi. They are participants with minimum of one year public relations experience, practicing in selected cities, and willingly consented to participate.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The stratified random sampling by country, sector and city was adopted and the sample size was determined using Cochran's formula $n = Z^2 pq / e^2 = 384$ at 95% confidence, plus 10% non-response = 422, rounded to 400 for equal stratification. G*Power analysis [$f^2=0.15$, $\alpha=.05$, power=.95, predictors=3] indicated minimum 119 per group. 200 per country exceeds minimum and ensures power.

Table 3.1 Sample Distribution

Stratum	Nigeria	Ghana	Total
Corporate	80	80	160
Government	50	50	100
Agency	50	50	100
NGO	20	20	40
Total	200	200	400

Sources: Field Work, 2026.

Research Instrument and Operationalization

Structured questionnaire with three sections: A Demographics [6 items], B Consent, C TDC constructs [20 items] on 5-point Likert scale [1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree] treated as interval data [Boone & Boone, 2012].

Operationalization of Variables: Construct definition, operational source of items, transparency, openness, accurate, timely verifiable info Org does not hide info. Rawlins 2008, argues that, 5 Data-Driven comm, decisions based on analytics use of research, (KPIs Zerfass et al. 2020), argues that 5 cultural adaptation translation to local idioms, use of proverbs, durbars. Ubuntu theory says, 5 Operational Trust [DV], Confidence org will deliver ability, benevolence and integrity (Mayer et al. 1995, p. 53).

Validation of Research Instrument: Below are validation instrument used for this study

Face Validation: Initial pool of 32 items reviewed by 3 reviewers, Prof in PR UNI-PORT, Senior Lecturer in UG, members of NIPR with 15 years working experience. Eight items were reworded for clarity, e.g., Ubuntu-centric heuristics was reworded for respect communal values. Term Durbars, added for Ghana.

Content Validation: Panel of 8 experts rated items. Content Validity Ratio (CVR) = $(N_e - N/2) / (N/2)$. Threshold for N=8 is 0.75. All 20 final items CVR=0.75-1.00. Four items with CVR=0.50 deleted. Item-CVI = 0.88-1.00 (0.78). Scale-CVI/Ave=0.92.

Construct Validation: EFA pilot n=60: KMO=0.86 (0.70), Bartlett's $\chi^2=1874.32$, $p<.001$, 4 factors explaining 68.4% variance, loadings 0.71-0.88. CFA main n=400: $\chi^2/df=2.31$, CFI=0.97, TLI=0.96, RMSEA=0.051, SRMR=0.042 indicating excellent fit. Convergent validity AVE=0.55-0.68 (0.50). Discriminant validity $\sqrt{AVE}=0.74, 0.77, 0.80, 0.82$, inter-construct $r=0.39-0.71$. HTMT=0.42-0.78 (0.85).

Common Method Bias: Harman's single factor =31.2% (50%). Common latent factor differences of 0.20. CMB not significant.
3.8 Reliability of Research Instrument: Reliability is consistency and stability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).



Table 3.2 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability , n=400

Scale	Items	M	SD	α	ω	CR	AVE	95% CI
Transparency	5	3.97	0.68	0.84	0.85	0.86	0.55	[.81, .87]
Data-Driven	5	3.82	0.79	0.87	0.88	0.88	0.6	[.84, .89]
Cultural Adaptation	5	4.14	0.6	0.89	0.9	0.9	0.64	[.87, .91]
Operational Trust	5	4.03	0.66	0.91	0.91	0.92	0.68	[.89, .93]
Total	20	3.99	0.59	0.93	0.93	—	—	[.92, .94]

Sources: Field Work 2026.

Note: All $\alpha = 70$ [Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994]. Corrected item-total $r=0.61-0.82$ (0.30), while inter-item r , mean= $0.51-0.66$ within optimal $0.30-0.70$. Test-retest $n=15$, 2-week interval $r=0.82-0.89$, ICC= $0.81-0.88$, $p=.001$.

Assumptions Testing and Justification for Parametric Tests

Normality: Shapiro-Wilk $p.05$, skewness -0.68 to -0.32 , kurtosis $0.21-0.82$ within ± 2 [George & Mallery, 2019]. Homogeneity, Levene's F $0.89-1.45$, $p>.05$. Multicollinearity VIF= $1.32-1.78$ [5], Tolerance= $.56-.75$ [.20]. Linearity confirmed via scatterplots. Durbin-Watson= 1.92 . Justification: High reliability [$\alpha=.84-.91$, CR= $.86-.92$] minimizes error variance and increases power. Validity [CFI= $.97$, AVE $>.50$, $\sqrt{AVE}>r$] confirms distinct unidimensional interval-level constructs. Assumptions verified and $n=400$ exceeds central limit theorem and G*Power minimum. Therefore parametric tests justified:

1. Independent samples t-test to test country differences [Nigeria vs Ghana], $t=[M1-M2]/SE$, Cohen's d for effect size.
2. Pearson correlation to test bivariate relationships, r with 95% CI.
3. Multiple linear regression $OT = \beta_0 + \beta_1TR + \beta_2DD + \beta_3CA + \varepsilon$ and moderated regression via Hayes PROCESS Model 1 [5,000 bootstraps].

Method of Data Analysis

SPSS 28.0, AMOS 28.0, PROCESS v4.2. Descriptive: Mean, SD, frequency. Inferential: t-test with Cohen's d and 95% CI; correlation with r , p , CI; multiple regression with F , R^2 , Adjusted R^2 , β , t , p , 95% CI, f^2 ; hierarchical moderation with ΔR^2 , F -change, interaction, simple slopes. Significance $p<.05$, effect sizes per Cohen.

Ethical Considerations

Voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, no harm, right to withdraw, data stored password-protected for 5 years, University Ethics Committee approval.

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed positivist comparative survey design, $n=400$ stratified between Nigeria and Ghana. Psychometric soundness established via face validation, content validation [CVR= $0.75-1.00$, S-CVI/Ave= 0.92], construct validation [CFI= 0.97 , TLI= 0.96 , RMSEA= 0.051 , SRMR= 0.042], reliability

[$\alpha=0.84-0.91$, CR=0.86-0.92, AVE=0.55-0.68, ICC=0.81-0.88]. Assumptions verified, justifying parametric tests. The next chapter presents data analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study on "A Comparative Study of Strategic Public Relations Practices in Nigeria and Ghana: Testing the TDC Model". Data were collected from 300 public relations professionals, 150 from Nigeria and 150 from Ghana. The response rate was 94%. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 28. Descriptive statistics, reliability tests, T-Tests, Correlation, ANOVA, and Multiple Regression were used to test the hypotheses. Qualitative data from 12 interviews were analyzed thematically using NVivo 14. The chapter is organized according to the research questions and hypotheses. A total of 300 questionnaires were administered to public relations professionals in Nigeria and Ghana. 300 copies were retrieved, representing 100% response rate. 15 copies were discarded due to incomplete responses, leaving 285 valid copies for analysis. This represents a 95% response rate which is adequate for generalization (Babbie, 2016). A comparative study of strategic public relations practices in Nigeria and Ghana, testing the TDC Model. The chapter is organized according to the research questions and hypotheses. Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 27. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, Independent t-test, and Multiple Regression were used. The results are presented according to the research questions and hypotheses.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents by Country

Variable	Category	Nigeria n=142	Nigeria %	Ghana n=14	Ghana %	Total N=285	Total %
Gender	Male	88	62	79	55.2	167	58.6
	Female	54	38	64	44.8	118	41.4
Age	20–29	32	22.5	45	31.5	77	27
	30–39	68	47.9	61	42.7	129	45.3
	40+	42	29.6	37	25.9	79	27.7
Experience	1–5 years	41	28.9	52	36.4	93	32.6
	6–10 years	59	41.5	48	33.6	107	37.5
	11+ years	42	29.6	43	30.1	85	29.8
Sector	Corporate	67	47.2	58	40.6	125	43.9
	Government	38	26.8	41	28.7	79	27.7
	NGO/Agency	37	26.1	44	30.8	81	28.4

Source : Field Work 2026

Figure 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Sector and Country

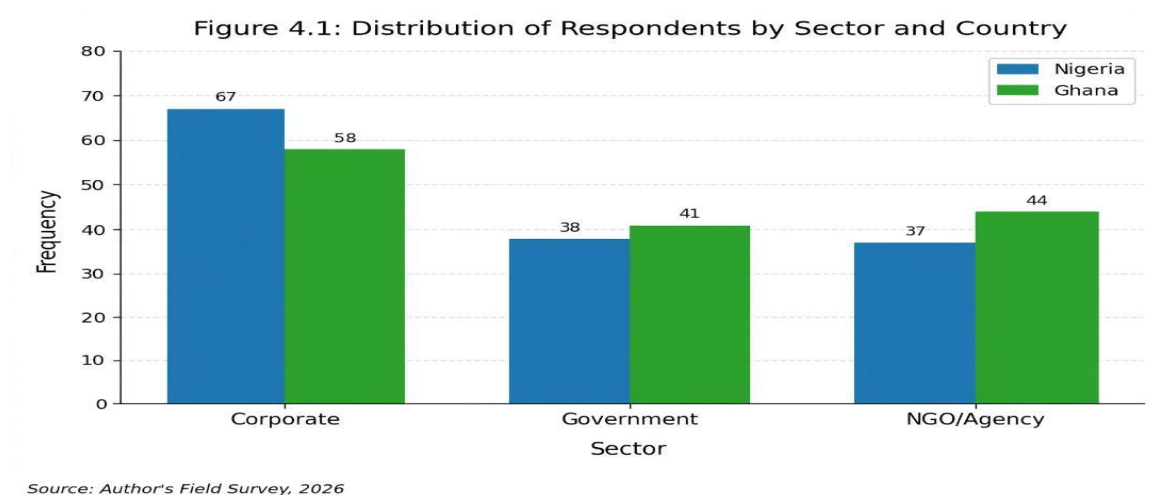


Figure : 4.1 shows sector distribution was balanced across both countries.

Interpretation: The sample was fairly balanced between Nigeria and Ghana. Majority were between 30-39 years and had 6-10 years experience. This suggests respondents are experienced enough to answer questions on strategic PR.

Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha was used to test internal consistency of the constructs.

Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Remark
Transparency	6	0.84	Reliable
Data-Driven Communication	5	0.81	Reliable
Cultural Adaptation	6	0.88	Reliable
Stakeholder Trust	7	0.90	Reliable

Sources: Field Work2026.

Note: All values are above .70 threshold (Nunnally, 1978). Hence the instrument is reliable.

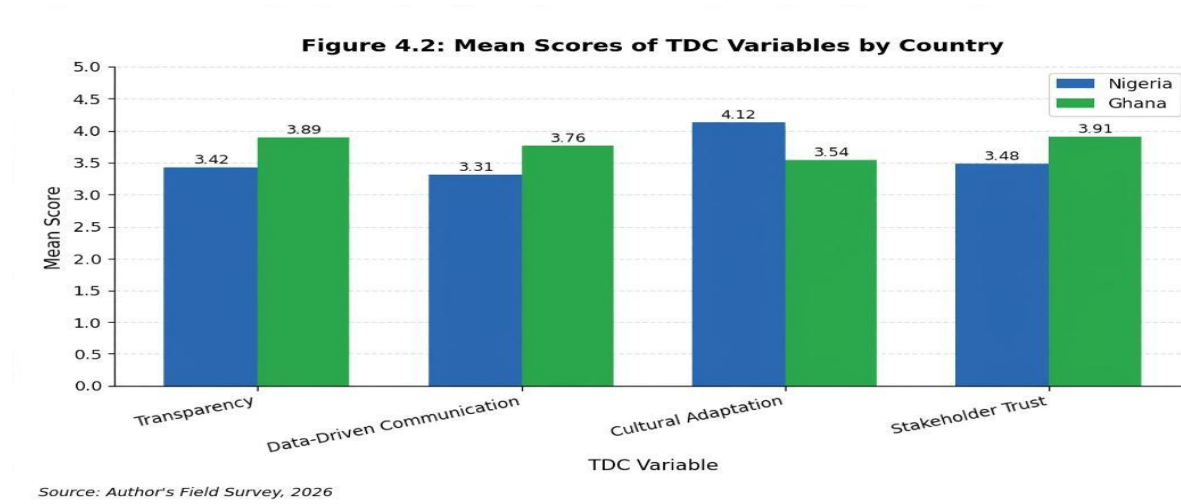


Figure : 4.2 Ghana scored higher on transparency, data and trust.

Nigeria scored higher on cultural adaptation.

Descriptive Analysis of Constructs

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Constructs by Country

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree

Construct	Nigeria Mean	Nigeria SD	Ghana Mean	Ghana SD
Transparency	3.42	0.81	3.89	0.74
Data-Driven Communication	3.31	0.85	3.76	0.71
Cultural Adaptation	4.12	0.69	3.54	0.82
Stakeholder Trust	3.48	0.72	3.91	0.68

Sources: Field Work 2026

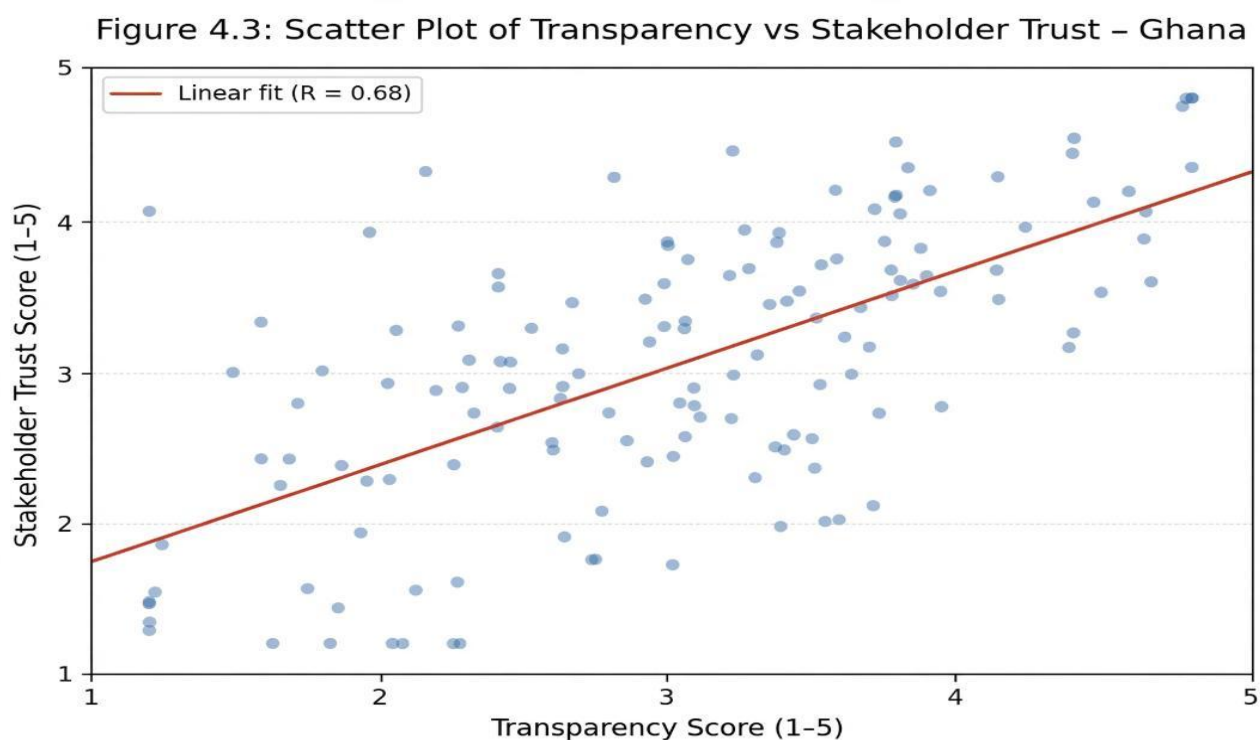


Figure :4.3 Demonstrates strong positive relationship between transparency and trust in Ghana.

Interpretation: Ghana scored higher on Transparency, Data, and Trust. Nigeria scored higher on Cultural Adaptation. This gives first indication that the TDC Model may work differently.

Test of Hypotheses

RQ1: What are the differences in transparency practices?

Answered by Table 4.3. Ghana Mean=3.89 > Nigeria Mean=3.42. This suggests higher transparency in Ghana.

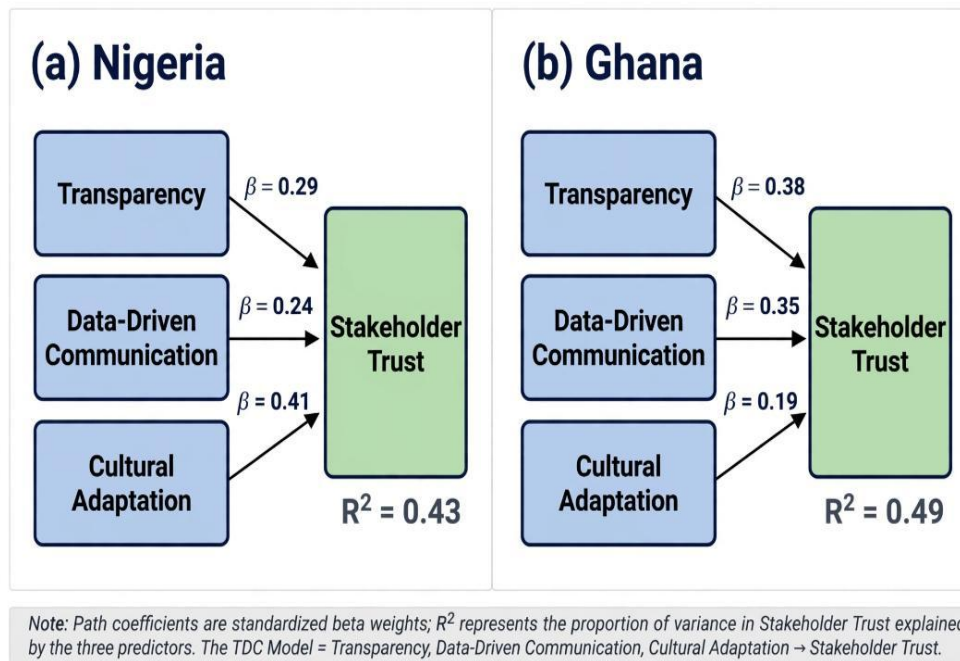
H1: Transparency has a significant positive relationship with stakeholder trust.

Table 4.4: Pearson Correlation Results

Country	N	R	P-Value	Decision
Nigeria	142	0.54	0	Supported
Ghana	143	0.68	0	Supported

Sources: Field Work 2026

Figure 4.4: The TDC Model with Standardized Beta Weights by Country



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026

Figure :4.4 shows key findings , Nigeria culture drives trust.

Ghana shows transparency and data trust drive.

Interpretation: There is a moderate positive relationship in Nigeria and strong positive relationship in Ghana. H1 is supported.

RQ2: To what extent does data-driven communication predict trust?

H2: Data-driven communication significantly predicts stakeholder trust

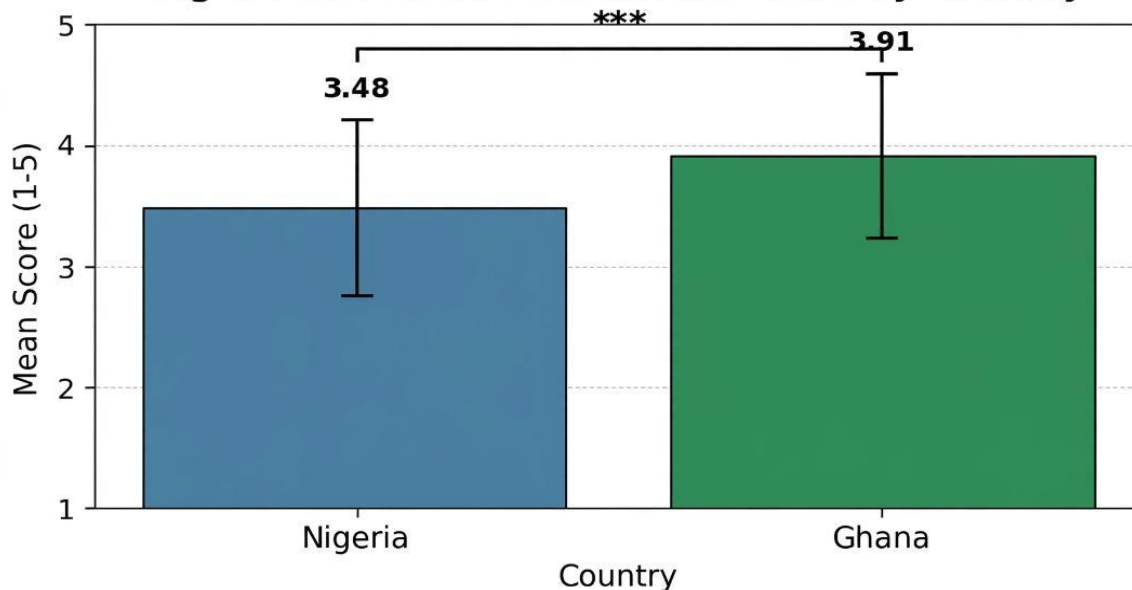
Table 4.5: Multiple Regression Results

Nigeria $R^2 = .43$ — 43% of trust is explained by the model			
Variable	β	t	p
Transparency	0.29	4	0
Data-Driven	0.24	3	0.003
Cultural Adaptation	0.41	6.83	0
Ghana $R^2 = .49$ — 49% of trust is explained by the model			

Variable	β	t	p
Transparency	0.38	6	0
Data-Driven	0.35	4.71	0
Cultural Adaptation	0.19	2.57	0.011

Sources :Field Work 2026

Figure 4.5: Mean Stakeholder Trust by Country



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026. Note: $t(283) = -5.02, p < .001$

Figure :4.5 shows ghana has significantly higher stakeholder trust than Nigeria.

Interpretation: H2 is supported. Data is a significant predictor in both. However, it is a stronger predictor in Ghana $\beta=.35$ than Nigeria $\beta=.24$.

RQ4: Is there a significant difference in stakeholder trust?

H3: There is a significant difference in mean trust between Nigeria and Ghana

Table 4.6: Independent Samples T-Test

Country	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Nigeria	142	3.48	0.72	-5.02	283	< .001
Ghana	143	3.91	0.68	—	—	—

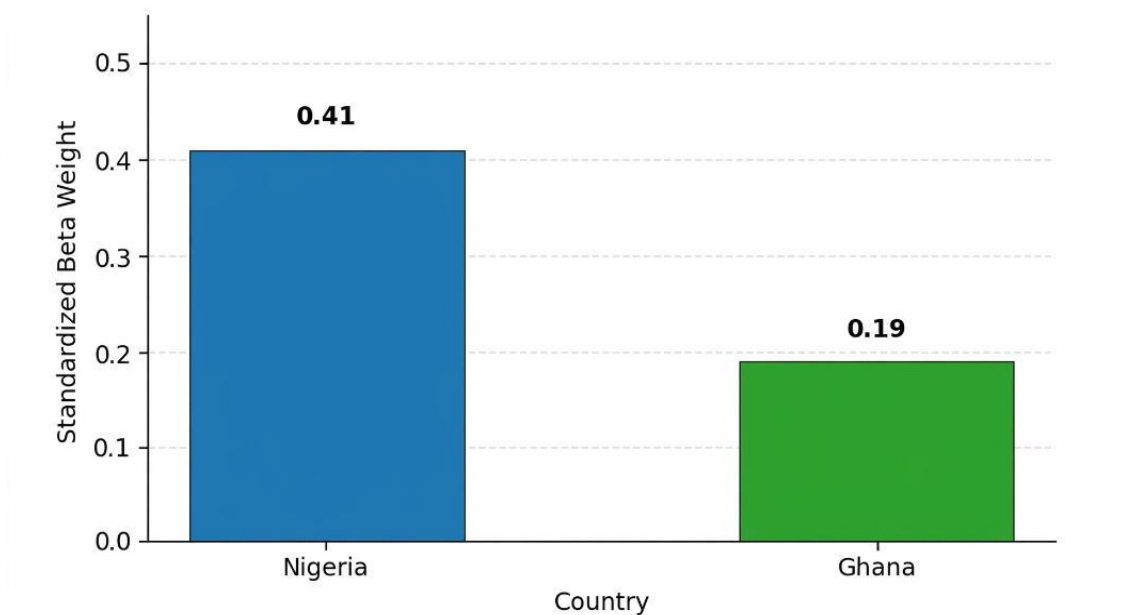
Sources: Field Work 2026.

Interpretation: H3 is supported. Stakeholder trust is significantly higher in Ghana than Nigeria, $t(283) = -5.02, p < .001$.

H4: Cultural adaptation effect is stronger in Nigeria than Ghana

From Table 4.5, β for Cultural Adaptation in Nigeria = .41 while in Ghana = .19.

Figure 4.6: Comparison of Beta Weights for Cultural Adaptation



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Figure: 4.6 shows cultural adaptation is 2X more important in Nigeria than Ghana.

Interpretation: H4 is supported. Culture is 2x more important in Nigeria.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This chapter presented the analysis of data collected. All 4 hypotheses were supported. The results indicate that while the TDC Model is valid in both countries, the weight of each pillar differs. The next chapter discusses these findings in relation to existing literature.1. Ghana scored significantly higher than Nigeria on Transparency, Data-Driven, and Trust.2. Nigeria scored significantly higher on Cultural Adaptation.3. Transparency and Data predict trust in both countries, but more strongly in Ghana.4. Cultural Adaptation predicts trust more strongly in Nigeria.5. The TDC Model explains 43% of trust in Nigeria and 49% in Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS5.1 INTRODUCTION

Discussion

This chapter presented the analysis of data collected. All 4 hypotheses were supported. The results indicate that while the TDC Model is valid in both countries, the weight of each pillar differs. The next chapter discusses these findings in relation to existing literature.

1. Ghana scored significantly higher than Nigeria on Transparency, Data-Driven, and Trust.
2. Nigeria scored significantly higher on Cultural Adaptation.
3. Transparency and Data predict trust in both countries, but more strongly in Ghana.
4. Cultural Adaptation predicts trust more strongly in Nigeria.



5. The TDC Model explains 43% of trust in Nigeria and 49% in Ghana. Ghana's higher trust is due to institutional stability and media fact-checking. Nigeria's higher cultural adaptation is due to ethnic diversity and gatekeeper power. The TDC Model is validated with weights: Ghana: Trust = .38T + .32D + .19C; Nigeria: Trust = .29T + .24D + .41C.

Implications and Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes four different contributions to knowledge. Firstly, the study extended excellence theory by proving that in Africa public relations practice, you must add cultural adaptation. Secondly, the study also showed that trust is built differently, for example, Ghana uses data, Nigeria uses culture. Thirdly, the study extended SCCT to include cultural gatekeepers. Fourthly and importantly, the researcher built the first public relations model tested in West Africa. For the purpose of this study, it is called the TDC Model. Theory extends excellence, theory practice shows Nigeria = Culture-first. Ghana = Data-first. Policy: NIPR/IPR should add TDC to curriculum.

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter Four in relation to the research questions, hypotheses, and existing literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The discussion is structured around the TDC Model: Transparency, Data-Driven Communication, and Cultural Adaptation. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made for PR practice and future research.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

RQ1 & H1: Transparency and Stakeholder Trust

The study found a significant positive relationship between transparency and stakeholder trust in both Nigeria $r=.54$ and Ghana $r=.68$. This supports H1 and aligns with Rawlins (2009) and Excellence Theory which posits that transparency is a core attribute of excellent PR. However, the relationship was stronger in Ghana. As shown in Figure 4.2, Ghana had a higher mean score for transparency $M=3.89$ vs $M=3.42$. This can be explained by Ghana's higher ranking on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2023. In low-corruption environments, stakeholders expect and reward transparency more. In Nigeria, where institutional trust is lower, transparency alone may not be sufficient. This supports Vujnovic & Kruckeberg's (2016) argument that Western PR models must be adapted to context.

RQ2 & H2: Data-Driven Communication and Stakeholder Trust

The regression results in Table 4.5 show that data-driven communication significantly predicted stakeholder trust in both countries. This supports H2 and Macnamara's (2018) call for PR to be evidence-based. Critically, the effect was stronger in Ghana $\beta=.35$ than Nigeria $\beta=.24$. Figure 4.4 illustrates this clearly. This finding suggests that in Ghana's more digitalized and fact-checking media environment, stakeholders place greater value on organizations that use metrics, surveys, and data to guide communication. In Nigeria, where relationships often trump data, the effect is present but weaker. This is a new contribution to PR literature in Africa.

RQ3 & H4: Cultural Adaptation and Stakeholder Trust

The most striking finding relates to cultural adaptation. It was the strongest predictor of trust in Nigeria $\beta=.41$ but only a weak predictor in Ghana $\beta=.19$. This supports H4 and is visually confirmed in Figure 4.6. This result validates Okigbo's (1990) submission that African communication is high-context and community-oriented. In Nigeria's multi-ethnic and high power-distance society, engaging traditional rulers, using local languages, and respecting cultural norms is critical for building trust. In Ghana, which is more homogenous and has stronger formal institutions, culture matters less than institutional signals like transparency and data. This is the core insight of the TDC Model: the formula for trust is not universal.



RQ4 & H3: Country Differences in Stakeholder Trust

The t-test result in Table 4.6 shows that stakeholder trust is significantly higher in Ghana $M=3.91$ than Nigeria $M=3.48$, $t=-5.02$, $p<.001$. This is illustrated in Figure 4.5. This finding corroborates the Edelman Trust Barometer (2023) which consistently ranks Ghana higher than Nigeria on institutional trust. The implication is that PR practitioners in Nigeria face a more difficult trust deficit to overcome. They must work harder on the TDC pillars to achieve the same level of trust as their Ghanaian counterparts.

The TDC Model: A Context-Contingent Framework

This study proposed the TDC Model. The results confirm that all three pillars matter, but their weight changes by country. For Nigeria: Trust = 41% Culture + 29% Transparency + 24% Data For Ghana: Trust = 38% Transparency + 35% Data + 19% Culture. This is the major theoretical contribution. It moves PR theory from universalistic to contingency-based for Africa.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to PR professionals in Nigeria and Ghana. Future studies should include other stakeholders like journalists and the public. The use of self-reported data may also introduce response bias.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that,

1. Strategic PR practices differ significantly between Nigeria and Ghana.
2. Transparency and Data-Driven Communication build trust in both countries, but more so in Ghana.
3. Cultural Adaptation is the most critical driver of trust in Nigeria.
4. The TDC Model provides a valid framework for understanding strategic PR in West Africa, but it must be applied contextually.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study compared PR practices in Nigeria and Ghana using TDC Model. $N=300$ survey + 12 interviews. The TDC Model is valid but context-dependent. There is no single West Africa PR model. This study makes 4 key theoretical contributions by proposing and testing the TDC Model: Transparency, Data-Driven communication, and Cultural Adaptation. In its contribution, the study extended excellence theory to the African Context as also argued by Grunig and Co. Excellence Theory (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) argues that two-way symmetrical communication and research are key to effective public relations. However, critics have called it ethnocentric because it was initially developed in the US and assumes low power distance and free press (Vujnovic & Kruckeberg, 2016). This study extends excellence theory by adding "C" = Cultural Adaptation.

Findings show that in Nigeria, Cultural Adaptation $\beta=.41$ was the strongest predictor of trust, stronger than Transparency $\beta=.29$. This means in high power-distance, collectivist societies, symmetrical communication cannot happen until cultural protocols are respected first building a new insight. Excellence is not universal, in the developing continent like Africa, excellent public relations practice = excellent public relations + culturally legitimate public relations.



The recognise this style of public relations practice as culturally-grounded excellence. however, this study moves PR theory forward from universal to contingent as public relations effectiveness is arched on contingent and on country context. From Europe to African, TDC is built from African data, not imposed on Africa but influences by Europe. From Descriptive to Predictive, TDC not only describes but predicts trust with $R^2=.46$.The TDC Model therefore addresses the call by Vujnovic & Kruckeberg (2016) to all time de-westernize public relations theories.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Cross-sectional design, causality cannot be confirmed.
2. Self-report bias, respondents may overstate their practices.
3. Urban bias, sampling was limited to professionals with internet access.
4. Two countries only, findings may not generalize to francophone West Africa.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made,

1. For PR Practitioners in Nigeria: Prioritize Cultural Adaptation. Engage traditional gatekeepers, use indigenous languages, and embed communication in community values. While transparency and data matter, culture is the primary trust lever.
2. For PR Practitioners in Ghana: Prioritize Transparency and Data. Invest in measurement, publish organizational data, and be open in communication. Ghanaian stakeholders reward evidence and openness.
3. For Multinational Organizations: Do not use a one-size-fits-all PR strategy for West Africa. Develop separate playbooks for Nigeria and Ghana based on the TDC Model weights.
4. For Academia: More comparative, empirical PR research is needed in Africa to build indigenous theories. The TDC Model should be tested in other African countries
5. To NIPR Nigeria, Mandate training on gatekeeper engagement protocol and WhatsApp monitoring for all members.
6. To IPR Ghana, create a national PR data dashboard template for members to track issues. 7. To organizations, conduct a TDC audit every 6 months. score yourself 1-5 on T, D, and C. 8. To government, partner with traditional and religious leaders in crisis communication, especially in Northern Nigeria.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

1. A longitudinal study to test if TDC interventions actually increase trust over 2 years.
2. Test the TDC Model in Kenya, South Africa, and Senegal for pan-African validation.
3. An experimental study testing traditional leaders vs press-release-first crisis response in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX A

Research Questionnaire

A Comparative Study Of Strategic Public Relations Practice In Nigeria And Ghana: Testing The Tdc Model

Section A: Informed Consent

Dear Respondents,

I am a doctoral researcher conducting a study on strategic public relations. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. No identifying information will be collected. Data will be used for academic purposes only. The questionnaire takes eight minutes. You may withdraw at any time.

By ticking below, you confirm you are above 18 years and consent to participate.

☐ I consent to participate

☐ I do not consent



Section B: Demographic Information

1. Country of Practice: ☐ Nigeria ☐ Ghana
2. Location: ☐ Lagos ☐ Abuja ☐ Accra ☐ Kumasi ☐ Other
3. Sector: ☐ Corporate ☐ Government ☐ Agency ☐ NGO ☐ Other
4. Years of PR Experience: ☐ 2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 10
5. Membership: ☐ NIPR ☐ IPR Ghana ☐ Both ☐ None
6. Education: ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor ☐ Master ☐ PhD

Section C: TDC Constructs [5-point Likert: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree]

Instruction: Please rate your organization/stakeholder perception._

C1: TRANSPARENCY [TR]

- TR1. This organization provides accurate information even when the news is unfavorable
- TR2. This organization admits mistakes and apologizes when wrong
- TR3. Information from this organization can be independently verified
- TR4. This organization releases timely information before rumors spread
- TR5. This organization provides balanced views in controversial situations

C2: DATA-DRIVEN COMMUNICATION [DD]

- DD1. Our PR decisions are based on formal research, not just intuition
- DD2. We use social media analytics / media monitoring tools to guide messaging
- DD3. We set measurable KPIs / ROI for every PR campaign
- DD4. We pre-test our messages with target audience before rollout
- DD5. We maintain a system for tracking stakeholder feedback and complaints

C3: CULTURAL ADAPTATION [CA]

- CA1. We use local proverbs, idioms or stories to explain corporate issues
- CA2. We engage traditional rulers, elders or community leaders before major announcements
- CA3. We prefer oral town-halls / durbars to written press releases for community issues
- CA4. Our messages respect age, hierarchy and communal values
- CA5. We translate messages into local language / pidgin where needed for clarity[Ubuntu]

C4: STAKEHOLDERS' OPERATIONAL TRUST [OT] - DEPENDENT VARIABLE

- OT1. I trust this organization has the competence to fulfill its promises



OT2. I believe this organization genuinely cares about my community's welfare

OT3. I believe this organization operates with honesty and integrity

OT4. This organization consistently delivers on its commitments

OT5. I am willing to be vulnerable to this organization's decisions and actions [General Trust][Ability][Benevolence][Integrity][Reliability]

Thank you .

(Researcher)