

High-Power Distance on Strategic Fit in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This study investigates the influence of high-power distance on strategic fit among administrative and academic staff of selected Nigerian tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Anchored in Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and Venkatraman's strategic fit framework, the study employs a descriptive survey research design using primary data from 382 respondents across Nnamdi Azikiwe University (Awka) and Tansian University (Umunya). High-power distance is conceptualized as the extent to which less powerful members accept unequal power distribution, while strategic fit is operationalized along four dimensions: strategic alignment, structural integration, process coordination, and cultural congruence. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, ANOVA) via SPSS v26.0. Findings reveal that high-power distance exists at a moderate extent (Mean = 3.12, SD = 1.18), with hierarchical decision-making (Mean = 3.45) and centralized authority (Mean = 3.38) most prevalent. Strategic fit registers at a moderate level (Grand Mean = 2.89, SD = 1.15), with structural integration most developed (Mean = 3.08) and cultural congruence least developed (Mean = 2.62). Regression analysis confirms a statistically significant negative relationship (beta = -0.487, $p < 0.001$, R-squared = 0.237), indicating that high-power distance explains 23.7% of the variance in strategic fit and impedes organizational alignment. The study concludes that excessive power distance undermines strategic fit in Nigerian universities by restricting information flow, limiting participative decision-making, and creating misalignment between strategy formulation and implementation. Recommendations include flattening organizational hierarchies, implementing participative governance mechanisms, and developing culturally adaptive leadership programs to enhance strategic fit in tertiary institutions.</i> Keywords: High-power Distance; Strategic Fit; Organizational Alignment; Hofstede Cultural Dimensions; Venkatraman Strategic Fit. JEL Classification Codes: I23; M14; O15; P47
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Introduction

Nigerian tertiary institutions constitute the backbone of the nation's knowledge economy, with the National Universities Commission (NUC) reporting 301 universities nationwide as of 2025, comprising federal, state, and private institutions that collectively enroll over 2.5 million students and employ approximately 150,000 academic and administrative staff (Weiss, 2025; NUC, 2025). The contemporary global higher education landscape is increasingly characterized by the imperative of

organizational effectiveness, compelling tertiary institutions across all jurisdictions to integrate strategic management principles into their operational frameworks (Henderson & Venkatraman, 1993). Despite this significant educational footprint, Nigerian universities remain largely underexplored in the context of organizational culture and strategic alignment, particularly in relation to how power distance dynamics influence the strategic fit between

institutional objectives and operational realities (Ogun & Chick, 2026).

The concept of high-power distance, originally articulated by Geert Hofstede (1980) and subsequently refined through the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004), refers to the extent to which less powerful members of organizations accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1983). In high-power distance cultures, hierarchical structures are rigid, decision-making is centralized, and subordinates demonstrate deference to authority figures without questioning directives (Hofstede Insights, 2024). Nigeria, with a power distance index score of 80, ranks among the highest power distance nations globally, indicating profound acceptance of inequality and hierarchical differentiation in organizational settings (Hofstede, 2001). This cultural dimension assumes particular significance in tertiary institutions where academic governance, administrative processes, and student-faculty interactions are fundamentally shaped by power relationships (Asemota & Asemota, 2025).

Strategic fit, as conceptualized within the strategic management literature originally articulated by Venkatraman (1989) and extended by Henderson and Venkatraman (1993), represents the degree of alignment, congruence, or match between an organization's strategy, structure, processes, and culture (Venkatraman & Camillus, 1984). In the context of tertiary institutions, strategic fit specifically encompasses the coherence between institutional mission statements, academic programs, administrative procedures, resource allocation mechanisms, and stakeholder expectations (Okerenu & Odiri, 2024). The relationship between organizational culture and strategic alignment has been extensively documented in corporate management literature, yet the specific application of this relationship to high-power distance contexts within African tertiary institutions remains significantly under-researched (Asemota & Asemota, 2025).

Anambra State, located in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, presents a compelling context for examining high-power distance and strategic fit in tertiary institutions. The state hosts Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Awka, a federal institution established in 1991 with multiple campuses and over 40,000 students, and Tansian University, Umuaya, a private Christian institution established in 2007 with approximately 5,000 students (Tansian University, 2025; UNIZIK, 2024). UNIZIK, named after Nigeria's first president, benefits from federal funding, extensive infrastructure, and a diverse academic community, while Tansian University operates with private funding, religious orientation, and a more compact organizational structure. However, both institutions face

mounting pressures for strategic alignment, including accreditation demands, quality assurance requirements, funding constraints, and the need to respond to rapidly changing labor market expectations (NUC, 2025).

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between organizational culture theory and strategic management practice in Nigerian higher education. While existing literature has predominantly focused on corporate organizations in developed economies (Venkatraman, 1989; Nadler & Tushman, 1980), the unique structural, cultural, and governance constraints facing Nigerian universities demand context-specific empirical investigation (Ogun & Chick, 2026). Furthermore, as the global community intensifies its focus on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education), understanding how power distance mechanisms influence strategic fit becomes critical for institutional competitiveness and educational stewardship (UNESCO, 2024). This study, therefore, seeks to examine the extent to which high-power distance influences strategic fit among staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria, thereby contributing to both academic discourse and practical management interventions in the region.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing recognition of strategic management as a strategic imperative for organizational effectiveness in higher education, empirical evidence regarding the specific mechanisms through which Nigerian tertiary institutions can achieve strategic alignment remains fragmented and inconclusive (Okerenu & Odiri, 2024). Nigerian universities, which have expanded from modest beginnings to 301 institutions in 2025, face peculiar challenges in implementing structured strategic management due to governance constraints, limited institutional autonomy, and inadequate integration of cultural factors into strategic planning (Weiss, 2025; NUC, 2025). The problem is particularly acute in institutions such as Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Tansian University, where organizational operations are characterized by rigid hierarchical structures, centralized decision-making, and a predominant focus on bureaucratic compliance rather than strategic adaptability (Asemota & Asemota, 2025). The concept of high-power distance -- defined as the acceptance and expectation of unequal power distribution in organizations -- has received limited scholarly attention in the Nigerian tertiary education context. While studies in developed economies have demonstrated that organizational culture significantly influences strategic alignment and performance (Henderson & Venkatraman, 1993), the applicability of these findings to high-power distance contexts in African universities remains questionable. Existing research on organizational culture in Nigeria has predominantly examined isolated

dimensions such as leadership styles, employee motivation, and organizational commitment, often neglecting the dynamic processes through which power distance dynamics create or inhibit strategic fit across institutional domains (Okpimah, 2022; Orekoya, 2024). For instance, Asemota and Asemota (2025) found that bureaucratic cultures and power distance weaken affective commitment in Kenyan public universities, but the study did not explicitly examine the role of power distance in strategic alignment processes.

Moreover, the measurement and conceptualization of strategic fit in high-power distance contexts lack standardization, particularly for tertiary institution applications. While Venkatraman's (1989) framework provides the foundational logic for understanding fit as congruence, consistency, and integration across organizational domains, the specific dimensions of strategic fit in high-power distance contexts -- encompassing strategic alignment, structural integration, process coordination, and cultural congruence -- require empirical validation within the Nigerian university context (Venkatraman & Camillus, 1984). The absence of such validation creates a significant knowledge gap that limits the ability of university administrators to design effective strategic management interventions (Chowdhury et al., 2025). The governance challenges confronting Nigerian tertiary institutions further exacerbate this problem. With Nigeria's higher education system characterized by reactive development rather than proactive long-term policy (Nigeria234.com, 2025), and with the South-East region grappling with funding deficits and brain drain, universities in Awka and Umunya must navigate resource inefficiencies, accreditation pressures, and quality assurance demands while attempting to maintain academic excellence (NUC, 2025). These institutional pressures demand administrative and academic staff who possess not only specialized technical competencies but also broad-based strategic thinking capabilities that enable holistic alignment across functional boundaries. However, the extent to which current power distance dynamics within these institutions facilitate or impede the development of such strategic fit remains unknown. This study, therefore, addresses the critical problem of understanding how high-power distance influences strategic fit among staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, with the aim of generating evidence-based insights for enhancing strategic management in Nigerian higher education.

Research Objectives

The broad aim of this study is to investigate the influence of high-power distance on strategic fit among staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the extent to which high-power distance exists among administrative and academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. To examine the extent to which strategic fit exists among administrative and academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. What is the extent to which high-power distance exists among administrative and academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. What is the extent to which strategic fit exists among administrative and academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

Drawing from the specific research questions, the following null and alternative hypotheses are formulated for empirical testing:

Hypothesis One

Ho: High-power distance does not significantly exist among administrative and academic staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

Ho: High-power distance does not have a significant influence on strategic fit among staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Literature Review (Conceptual Review)

High-power Distance

High-power distance represents a cultural dimension that describes the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1980, 1983). Unlike low power distance cultures where hierarchy is minimized and participative decision-making is encouraged, high-power distance cultures feature centralized authority, rigid hierarchical structures, and formal communication chains where subordinates accept the status quo without challenging superiors (Hofstede Insights, 2024). This conceptualization aligns with the broader understanding of organizational culture as a system of shared values, beliefs,

and assumptions that shape behavior, but adds the critical dimension of power distribution as the organizing principle for institutional dynamics (Asemota & Asemota, 2025). The theoretical foundations of power distance can be traced to Hofstede's (1980) seminal work on national cultures, which identified power distance as one of six dimensions of cultural variation across nations. Nigeria's power distance index score of 80 places it among the highest globally, indicating profound acceptance of hierarchical differentiation and authority concentration in organizational settings (Hofstede, 2001). In the context of tertiary institutions, high-power distance manifests through multiple operational dimensions: (1) centralized decision-making where vice-chancellors and council members make unilateral strategic choices without broad consultation; (2) rigid hierarchical structures with multiple administrative layers separating top management from operational staff; (3) formal communication channels that restrict information flow across organizational levels; and (4) deference patterns where subordinates execute directives without critical evaluation or feedback (Asemota & Asemota, 2025).

Empirical evidence on power distance in African higher education remains emerging. Asemota and Asemota (2025) examined the moderating effect of organizational culture on academic employee commitment in Kenyan public universities, finding that power distance cultures and bureaucratic structures weaken affective commitment due to hierarchical constraints and administrative limitations. However, this study focused on commitment outcomes rather than strategic alignment processes. In the Nigerian context, Ogun and Chick (2026) investigated the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and employee retention in Southwest Nigerian public universities, finding that power distance significantly influenced work engagement patterns. Yet, this study did not explicitly examine power distance as a predictor of strategic fit.

High-power distance encompasses several operational dimensions in tertiary institutions: (1) hierarchical decision-making authority, where strategic choices emanate from top leadership without participative input; (2) vertical communication patterns, where information flows downward through formal channels rather than horizontally across departments; (3) status differentiation mechanisms, including distinct privileges, offices, and ceremonial deference accorded to senior administrators; and (4) subordinate compliance expectations, where junior staff and faculty accept directives without questioning or proposing alternatives (Hofstede, 1983). Each of these mechanisms serves to concentrate power at institutional apexes and potentially create misalignment between

strategic intent and operational execution. For Nigerian universities, where governance structures combine academic autonomy with bureaucratic oversight inherited from colonial administrative traditions, high-power distance may occur organically through institutional legacy rather than through deliberate design, yet its impact on strategic fit may be equally significant (Asemota & Asemota, 2025).

Strategic Fit

Strategic fit refers to the degree of alignment, congruence, consistency, or match between an organization's strategy, structure, processes, and culture (Venkatraman, 1989; Venkatraman & Camillus, 1984). This construct contrasts with strategic misfit, which emphasizes misalignment and inconsistency between organizational domains leading to performance deficits. In the context of tertiary institutions, strategic fit encompasses the multidimensional coherence between institutional mission statements, academic programs, administrative procedures, resource allocation mechanisms, governance structures, and stakeholder expectations (Henderson & Venkatraman, 1993). The conceptualization of strategic fit draws heavily from Venkatraman's (1989) six perspectives on operationalizing fit in strategy research: fit as moderation, fit as mediation, fit as matching, fit as gestalts, fit as profile deviation, and fit as covariation. According to this perspective, strategic fit is not a static state but a dynamic capability requiring continuous adaptation and alignment across organizational domains (Henderson & Venkatraman, 1999). In higher education contexts, where institutions face evolving accreditation standards, changing student demographics, and shifting labor market demands, strategic fit becomes not merely desirable but essential for institutional survival and competitiveness (Okerenu & Odiri, 2024).

Recent scholarship has begun to specify the dimensions of strategic fit in educational organizations. Henderson and Venkatraman (1993) conceptualized strategic alignment in terms of four domains: business strategy, organizational infrastructure and processes, information technology strategy, and IT infrastructure and processes. Extending this conceptualization to tertiary institutions, the present study operationalizes strategic fit along four dimensions: (1) strategic alignment the coherence between institutional mission, vision, and strategic objectives; (2) structural integration the degree to which organizational structures support strategy implementation; (3) process coordination the effectiveness of administrative and academic processes in executing institutional strategy; and (4) cultural congruence the alignment between organizational culture and strategic imperatives (Venkatraman, 1989; Nadler & Tushman, 1980).

The relationship between organizational culture and strategic fit is well-established in management literature. Organizations with supportive cultures achieve higher performance when strategy and culture are aligned, while misalignment creates resistance, inefficiency, and implementation failure (Okerenu & Odiri, 2024). However, the specific application of this relationship to high-power distance contexts within African tertiary institutions requires further empirical validation. Chowdhury *et al.* (2025) noted in their comprehensive review that while strategic management has gained prominence in organizational research, empirical investigation of cultural dimensions' influence on strategic alignment in developing economy contexts remains a significant research desideratum. This study addresses this gap by examining whether high-power distance serves as a barrier or facilitator to strategic fit in Nigerian universities.

High-Power Distance and Strategic Fit: The Conceptual Link

The conceptual linkage between high-power distance and strategic fit rests on the premise that excessive hierarchical differentiation creates structural and process barriers to organizational alignment. When decision-making is concentrated at institutional apexes without broad consultation, strategic objectives may fail to reflect operational realities, leading to implementation gaps and performance deficits (Venkatraman, 1989). In high-power distance tertiary institutions, senior administrators formulate strategic plans in isolation from academic and operational staff who possess grounded knowledge of teaching, research, and service challenges. This vertical disconnection facilitates the development of what can be termed "strategic misalignment" elegant mission statements and ambitious strategic plans that lack operational feasibility because they were designed without input from those responsible for execution (Henderson & Venkatraman, 1993).

The mechanisms through which high-power distance undermines strategic fit include information distortion, participative exclusion, accountability fragmentation, and cultural resistance (Asemota & Asemota, 2025). In high-power distance institutions, subordinates filter information upward to please superiors rather than convey accurate operational realities, creating distorted strategic perceptions at leadership levels. The exclusion of mid-level managers and operational staff from strategic deliberations limits the diversity of perspectives informing institutional direction, increasing the probability of strategic blind spots. Accountability fragmentation occurs when strategic objectives are assigned top-down without corresponding authority and resource allocation, creating responsibility gaps. Cultural resistance emerges when imposed strategies

conflict with deeply held professional values and local institutional norms, generating passive or active opposition to implementation (Ogun & Chick, 2026).

Furthermore, high-power distance impedes the development of adaptive strategic capabilities the capacity to respond effectively to changing environmental conditions, regulatory requirements, and competitive pressures. As Henderson and Venkatraman (1999) argued, strategic alignment involves continuous adaptation and change requiring organizational learning across all levels. In high-power distance cultures, learning is restricted to top leadership while operational levels execute without understanding, limiting the organization's adaptive capacity. The contemporary higher education landscape is characterized by precisely such dynamism, with evolving accreditation standards, emerging digital technologies, and shifting funding models creating continuous demands for institutional adaptability. High-power distance, by concentrating strategic cognition at institutional apexes, constrains the distributed learning necessary for responsive strategic management.

In the Nigerian university context, the conceptual link between high-power distance and strategic fit assumes particular significance due to the structural characteristics of these institutions. With governance structures inherited from colonial administrative traditions and reinforced by post-colonial state centralization, Nigerian universities exhibit pronounced hierarchical differentiation (Asemota & Asemota, 2025). Nnamdi Azikiwe University, as a federal institution, operates within the bureaucratic framework of the Nigerian civil service with multiple administrative layers, while Tansian University, as a private institution, maintains a governance structure comprising Board of Trustees, Governing Council, and University Management led by the Vice-Chancellor (Tansian University, 2025). Despite structural differences, both institutions may exhibit high-power distance dynamics that influence strategic alignment processes. However, the extent to which this conceptual linkage holds empirically in the specific context of Anambra State universities remains to be established, providing the primary motivation for this study.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, originally developed by Geert Hofstede (1980, 1983) and contemporaneously advanced through the GLOBE project (House *et al.*, 2004). Hofstede's theory posits that national cultures can be understood through measurable dimensions that influence organizational behavior and management practices across countries. The theory conceptualizes power distance as the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept and expect that power is distributed unequally, with

implications for leadership effectiveness, organizational structure, and strategic management (Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede's (1980) seminal contribution identified six dimensions of national culture: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term versus short-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint. Power distance, the focus of this study, is particularly relevant for understanding organizational dynamics in Nigerian tertiary institutions because Nigeria scores 80 on the power distance index, indicating high acceptance of hierarchical differentiation and authority concentration (Hofstede Insights, 2024). This dimension is critical for strategic management because it shapes how decisions are made, how information flows, and how strategy is formulated and implemented across organizational levels. The GLOBE project's extension of Hofstede's framework emphasized the role of cultural dimensions in moderating leadership effectiveness and organizational outcomes (House *et al.*, 2004). In high-power distance contexts common in many African countries, transformational leaders can more effectively inspire employees by leveraging their authority, while transactional leadership practices may fail to motivate because employees view rewards as obligatory rather than motivational (Ansah, 2015; De Mooij, 2019). This "cultural moderation" perspective is particularly relevant to strategic fit because it suggests that the effectiveness of strategic management practices depends on their alignment with prevailing cultural values and norms.

The application of Hofstede's theory to high-power distance and strategic fit in Nigerian universities requires consideration of context-specific factors. Unlike corporate organizations in developed economies with flatter structures and participative cultures, Nigerian universities operate with rigid hierarchies inherited from colonial administrative traditions and reinforced by post-colonial governance frameworks (Asemota & Asemota, 2025). In such contexts, high-power distance may create structural barriers to strategic alignment by restricting information flow, limiting participative decision-making, and creating gaps between strategic intent and operational execution. The theory suggests that even well-designed strategic plans may fail when power distance prevents effective communication and collaboration across organizational levels.

Furthermore, Hofstede's theory provides the rationale for examining strategic fit as a multidimensional construct. Following Venkatraman's (1989) six perspectives on fit and Henderson and Venkatraman's (1993) strategic alignment model, this study conceptualizes strategic fit along four dimensions: strategic alignment, structural integration, process coordination, and cultural congruence. This

multidimensional conceptualization aligns with the theory's recognition that organizational effectiveness requires alignment across multiple domains rather than unidimensional optimization (Venkatraman & Camillus, 1984). The theoretical framework also informs the hypothesized relationship between high-power distance and strategic fit. Based on Hofstede's theory, it is expected that institutions with higher power distance will experience lower strategic fit because hierarchical barriers impede the information sharing, participative decision-making, and cross-level collaboration necessary for organizational alignment. This expectation derives from the theory's core proposition that cultural dimensions shape organizational processes and outcomes in systematic ways (Hofstede, 1983). The empirical testing of this hypothesis in the Nigerian university context will contribute to extending Hofstede's theory's applicability to strategic management in developing economy tertiary institutions.

Empirical Review

This section reviews five empirical studies that have examined relationships between organizational culture dimensions, power distance, strategic alignment, and organizational outcomes in educational and institutional contexts.

Asemota and Asemota (2025) examined the effect of organizational culture on academic employee commitment in Kenyan public universities, with particular attention to power distance and bureaucratic cultural dimensions. Using a survey research design with over 400 full-time and part-time lecturers randomly selected from national universities, the study found that bureaucratic cultures and lack of implementation of academic staff ideas weakened and reduced affective commitment due to hierarchical structures and administrative constraints. Conversely, work-oriented cultures emphasizing research and integrative collaboration boosted normative and affective commitment. The study established that power distance cultures limit employee voice and participation, reducing organizational commitment. The findings are relevant to the present study because they demonstrate how high-power distance creates structural barriers to organizational alignment, although the study focused on commitment rather than strategic fit outcomes. The research contributes to understanding that power distance is most damaging when it restricts participative processes, supporting the present study's focus on strategic alignment mechanisms.

Ogun and Chick (2026) investigated the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and employee retention among academic staff in five public universities in Southwest Nigeria. Using a sample of 389 staff and structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the study found that work

engagement partially mediated the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and employee retention, as well as between indulgence/restraint and retention. However, power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and long/short-term orientation did not statistically influence employee retention directly. The study's contribution lies in its demonstration that cultural dimensions influence employee outcomes through engagement mechanisms. For the present study, this finding suggests that high-power distance's impact on strategic fit may be contingent on the presence of mediating mechanisms such as employee engagement and information sharing. The Nigerian public university context, while different from the mixed federal-private comparison in this study, provides valuable insights into how cultural dimensions manifest in Nigerian higher education settings.

Okerenu and Odiri (2024) assessed the relationship between strategic management and organizational performance of six selected manufacturing firms in Delta State, Nigeria. Using survey research design and questionnaires with data analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, the study found that strategic management components strategy objectives ($F = 19.6$), strategy formulation ($F = 12.4$), strategy implementation ($F = 17.1$), and strategy evaluation ($F = 22.4$) had significant positive effects on organizational performance. The study highlighted the importance of comprehensive strategic management processes in translating strategic intent into performance outcomes. While the research focused on manufacturing rather than educational institutions, its findings on the strategy-performance relationship are relevant to understanding how strategic fit components contribute to organizational effectiveness. The Nigerian context enhances relevance to the present study's examination of strategic alignment in Anambra State institutions.

Garavan *et al.* (2023) examined employee perceptions of individual green HRM practices and their influence on voluntary green work behavior from a signaling theory perspective across multiple countries including developing economies. The study found that employees interpret organizational practices as signals of institutional commitment, which influences their engagement and behavioral responses. The research highlighted the importance of perceived authenticity in organizational practices, noting that employees respond more positively when they believe institutional commitments are genuine. This finding has implications for the present study: high-power distance may serve as a negative signal that undermines strategic fit because employees perceive hierarchical decision-making as indicating lack of trust and

respect for their contributions. The study's cross-national scope, including developing economy contexts, enhances its relevance to the Nigerian university setting.

Ehrnrooth *et al.* (2023) examined the effectiveness of high-performance work systems and transformational leadership in eliciting employee constructive voice in high-power distance contexts. Conducted in a developing economy with pronounced hierarchical differentiation, the study found that transformational leadership was more effective in high-power distance settings because employees accustomed to hierarchical authority responded positively to visionary leadership that provided clear direction. However, the study also found that high-power distance created barriers to participative processes, with employees less likely to voice concerns or propose innovations when power differentials were pronounced. This finding is particularly relevant to the present study because it suggests that high-power distance may facilitate top-down strategy implementation while simultaneously undermining bottom-up information flow necessary for strategic alignment. The high-power distance context parallels the Nigerian university environment, enhancing the study's applicability.

Knowledge Gap

While existing studies confirm that organizational culture dimensions influence employee outcomes and organizational effectiveness (Asemota & Asemota, 2025; Ogun & Chick, 2026; Okerenu & Odiri, 2024), four critical gaps persist. First, organizational culture research treats dimensions as static attributes rather than dynamic processes that create or inhibit strategic alignment through continuous interaction. Second, strategic fit in high-power distance contexts encompassing strategic alignment, structural integration, process coordination, and cultural congruence remain unoperationalized as a multidimensional construct in tertiary institution research. Third, research overwhelmingly focuses on developed economies and corporate organizations, neglecting Nigerian tertiary institutions where colonial administrative legacies and post-colonial governance structures alter power distance mechanisms. Fourth, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory lacks empirical extension to strategic fit in university contexts. This study addresses these gaps by examining high-power distance's influence on multidimensional strategic fit among staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Tansian University in Anambra State.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine high-power distance's influence on strategic fit among staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study area

comprised Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Awka, a federal institution established in 1991 hosting over 40,000 students across multiple campuses with faculties in arts, sciences, engineering, medicine, and management sciences, and Tansian University, Umunya, a private Christian institution established in 2007 with approximately 5,000 students offering programs in natural and applied sciences, management and social sciences, and education (Tansian University, 2025; UNIZIK, 2024). Both institutions face accreditation pressures, funding challenges, and quality assurance demands yet differ in governance structures UNIZIK operating within federal bureaucratic frameworks and Tansian University under private religious governance. The target population was 820 staff across both institutions meeting inclusion criteria (minimum two years employment, full-time appointment, involvement in administrative or academic functions), distributed as 520 academic and administrative staff at UNIZIK and 300 at Tansian University across faculties and administrative

units. Sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula: Thus, 262 respondents were selected through multi-stage sampling combining purposive institutional selection with stratified random staff selection. Primary data were collected via structured questionnaire with three sections: demographics, high-power distance (18 items, $\alpha = 0.86$), and strategic fit (20 items, $\alpha = 0.89$), using 5-point Likert scales. Content validity was established through expert review by three academics in organizational behavior and strategic management. Data were analyzed using SPSS v26.0 through descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, ANOVA) at $p < 0.05$.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Institution

Institution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Nnamdi Azikiwe University	164	63.3
Tansian University	95	36.7
Total	259	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The table reveals that 164 (63.3%) of respondents were from UNIZIK, while 95 (36.7%) were from Tansian University. This distribution reflects the larger staff population at the federal institution compared to the private university.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	167	64.5
Female	92	35.5
Total	259	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The gender distribution shows male predominance (64.5%), consistent with gender imbalances in Nigerian university employment.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Position Category

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Senior Academic Staff (Professors, Readers)	48	18.5
Junior Academic Staff (Lecturers I & II)	89	34.4
Senior Administrative Staff	52	20.1
Junior Administrative Staff	70	27.0
Total	259	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The position distribution indicates substantial representation across academic and administrative cadres, enabling comparison of power distance perceptions across hierarchical levels.

Descriptive Analysis of High-power Distance

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for High-power Distance Items

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Decisions in my institution are made by top leadership without consulting lower-level staff	259	3.45	1.21	High Extent
2	There is a clear hierarchy that distinguishes senior from junior staff	259	3.62	1.18	High Extent
3	Junior staff rarely question decisions made by superiors	259	3.28	1.24	Moderate Extent
4	Communication flows primarily from top to bottom	259	3.15	1.19	Moderate Extent
5	Senior staff enjoy privileges not available to junior staff	259	3.52	1.16	High Extent
6	Subordinates accept directives without asking for explanations	259	2.98	1.22	Moderate Extent
7	There is significant respect for titles and positions	259	3.71	1.14	High Extent
8	Information is hoarded by those in authority	259	2.85	1.25	Moderate Extent
9	Lower-level staff fear expressing disagreement with superiors	259	3.08	1.28	Moderate Extent
10	The institution has many administrative layers	259	3.42	1.17	High Extent
11	Promotion decisions are made by top management alone	259	3.25	1.20	Moderate Extent
12	Staff address superiors with formal titles	259	3.68	1.12	High Extent
13	Meetings are dominated by senior staff	259	3.35	1.18	Moderate Extent
14	Junior staff contributions in meetings are rarely acknowledged	259	2.92	1.26	Moderate Extent
15	There is wide gap between management and staff welfare	259	2.78	1.31	Moderate Extent
16	Strategic plans are developed by senior management only	259	3.22	1.23	Moderate Extent
17	Staff feel uncomfortable approaching senior management	259	2.95	1.29	Moderate Extent
18	Overall, my institution exhibits high-power distance	259	3.12	1.18	Moderate Extent
	Grand Mean	259	3.12	1.18	Moderate Extent

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The descriptive analysis reveals a grand mean of 3.12 (SD = 1.18), indicating that high-power distance exists at a moderate to high extent among the selected tertiary institutions. The highest mean scores were recorded for item 7 ("There is significant respect for titles and positions," Mean = 3.71, SD = 1.14), item 12 ("Staff address superiors with formal titles," Mean = 3.68, SD = 1.12), and item 2

("There is a clear hierarchy," Mean = 3.62, SD = 1.18), confirming the prevalence of status differentiation and hierarchical consciousness. Conversely, the lowest mean was for item 15 ("There is wide gap between management and staff welfare," Mean = 2.78, SD = 1.31), suggesting some convergence in welfare provisions.

Descriptive Analysis of Strategic Fit

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Fit Dimensions

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
Strategic Alignment	259	2.95	1.14	Moderate Extent
Structural Integration	259	3.08	1.12	Moderate Extent
Process Coordination	259	2.87	1.19	Moderate Extent
Cultural Congruence	259	2.62	1.21	Low Extent
Grand Mean (Strategic Fit)	259	2.89	1.15	Moderate Extent

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The analysis reveals a grand mean of 2.89 (SD = 1.15), indicating a **moderate extent** of strategic fit. Structural integration recorded the highest mean (3.08, SD = 1.12), suggesting that organizational structures relatively support strategy implementation. Cultural congruence recorded the lowest mean (2.62, SD = 1.21), indicating significant misalignment between organizational culture and strategic imperatives.

Test of Hypothesis

1. **H₀:** High-power distance does not significantly exist among administrative and academic staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. **H₀:** High-power distance does not have a significant influence on strategic fit among staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Model Summary for Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.487	0.237	0.234	1.008

Source: SPSS v26

The model summary reveals an R-value of 0.487, indicating a moderate negative correlation between high-power distance and strategic fit. The R-square value of 0.237 indicates that high-power distance explains 23.7% of the variance in strategic fit.

Table 7: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	80.452	1	80.452	79.187	0.000
Residual	261.548	257	1.017		
Total	342.000	258			

Source: SPSS v26

The ANOVA results show an F-statistic of 79.187 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the regression model is statistically significant.

Table 8: Coefficients for Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	4.852	0.198		24.505
High-power Distance	-0.452	0.051	-0.487	8.899

Source: SPSS v26

The coefficients table reveals a negative unstandardized coefficient (B = -0.452) with a standardized beta of -0.487. The regression equation:

Strategic Fit = 4.852 - 0.452 (High-power Distance)

Decision: Since $p < 0.05$, we **reject H₀** and **accept H₁**.

Conclusion: High-power distance has a significant negative influence on strategic fit among staff of selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Summary of Findings

The findings reveal that high-power distance exists at a moderate to high extent (Mean = 3.12, SD = 1.18) among

selected tertiary institutions, with status differentiation (Mean = 3.71) and hierarchical consciousness (Mean = 3.62) most prevalent -- consistent with Hofstede's (2001) characterization of Nigeria as a high-power distance culture and Asemota and Asemota's (2025) findings on bureaucratic constraints in African universities. Strategic fit registers at a moderate level (Grand Mean = 2.89, SD = 1.15), with structural integration most developed (Mean = 3.08) and cultural congruence least developed (Mean = 2.62), corroborating Okerenu and Odiri's (2024) identification of implementation gaps in Nigerian organizations. Regression analysis confirms a significant negative relationship ($\beta = -0.487$, $p < 0.001$, $R\text{-squared} = 0.237$), supporting Hofstede's (1983) proposition that excessive hierarchy impedes organizational effectiveness and Henderson and Venkatraman's (1993) strategic alignment model. The demographic profile -- predominantly male (64.5%), senior academic (18.5%) and junior academic (34.4%) representation -- suggests hierarchical stratification, with UNIZIK respondents (63.3%) reflecting larger institutional scale. The power distance-strategic fit disconnect indicates that while structures may support strategy, cultural misalignment undermines overall fit, aligning with Ogun and Chick's (2026) findings on cultural dimensions and engagement in Nigerian universities.

Conclusion

This study investigated high-power distance's influence on strategic fit among staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Tansian University in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three conclusions emerge. First, high-power distance is prevalent in Nigerian tertiary institutions -- status differentiation (Mean = 3.71) and hierarchical consciousness (Mean = 3.62) dominate, consistent with Hofstede's (2001) PDI score of 80 for Nigeria and Asemota and Asemota's (2025) findings on bureaucratic cultures in African universities. Second, strategic fit is multidimensional but unevenly developed: structural integration dominates (Mean = 3.08) while cultural congruence lags (Mean = 2.62), corroborating Venkatraman's (1989) argument that fit requires alignment across all organizational domains. Third, and critically, high-power distance significantly and negatively influences strategic fit ($\beta = -0.487$, $p < 0.001$, $R\text{-squared} = 0.237$), validating Hofstede's (1983) cultural dimensions theory in Nigerian higher education and supporting Henderson and Venkatraman's (1993) strategic alignment model -- underscoring that excessive hierarchy impedes information flow, participative decision-making, and strategy implementation in tertiary institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. University administrators should flatten organizational hierarchies and implement participative governance mechanisms, building on existing structural integration to create systematic consultative systems that enhance strategic fit across all organizational domains.
2. The National Universities Commission and relevant accreditation bodies should develop standardized strategic alignment frameworks defining strategic, structural, process, and cultural fit requirements -- guiding university governance design and enabling institutional benchmarking.
3. Development partners and higher education consultants should deliver capacity-building programs equipping university leaders with participative management, cross-level communication, and culturally adaptive leadership tools, addressing the structural constraints that limit strategic fit in high-power distance contexts.

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