EFFECTS OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES ON STAFF SOCIAL STATUS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES (A STUDY OF SELECTED UNIVERSITY IN FCT ABUJA)

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ABSTRACT: *This investigation explores effects of individual differences on staff social status and academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities with specific reference to selected Universities in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. There are few societies around the world that ascribe everyone (at least adults) equal status, most societies do have some form of social hierarchy with some people in stronger, more dominant positions, and other people in weaker, lower positions. This inequity is built into the social system itself through various forms of structural components and institutions. Social and economic roles are distinguished and accorded different status according to what a particular society or culture deems valuable. Social status is the degree of honor or prestige attached to one's position in society. The perception of social status is very wide and many aspects can contribute to elucidate on the hierarchies of social status. Achievement, individual merit, wealth, occupation, family background and style of life might explain individuals' social status within a social group. The objectives of this paper are to: Determine the extent, to which certain domain of individual characteristics attributes one to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities; ascertain the degree to which staff social status impact positively on the performance of staff of Nigerian Universities, and examine the intensity to which individual differences and social status influences students academic performance. The researcher adopted secondary methods of data collection in the review of related literature with specific reference to management journals, periodicals and internet, while primary information was sourced from key informants in the selected Nigerian Universities and analysis and test of hypotheses was done with the use of F test statistical techniques. The results of the study indicate that certain domain of individual characteristics causes one to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities and the intensity of individual differences and social status influences student's academic performance. It was recommended that institutions should review individual characteristics quarterly to*

determine which position will best suit individual peculiarity than individual struggling to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities. This will enhance competition and the desire for better attitude to work and performance by all staff.

KEYWORDS*: Change, Status, Individual Differences, Academic Performance and Social Status*

INTRODUCTION

All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others. Thus, there tend to be a certain hierarchical order in a given society. A society may deem someone to be of higher status than others based on certain factors. Those of higher status in society tend to have a better life than those of lower status. However, social status can be understood as the degree of honor or prestige attached to one's position in society. Social stratification is associated with the ability of individuals to live up to some set of ideals or principles regarded as important by the society or some social group within it (Omale, 2015).

Social status and hierarchies of social status are ever-present. They have been addressed in a great number of idealistic, theoretical, and empirical discussions across a diversity of fields of studies. Ganzeboom and Treiman (1996) argue that, status is one of the most essential factors of human relationships and in human society. Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, (2001); Hogan, (1991), maintain that, hierarchies are not only everywhere in human social groups but relative position of an individual in a hierarchy has been shown to be related to a number of significant outcomes. Research has shown that people with higher social status are more likely to have access to resources and to be perceived to possess power (Ibarra, 1993; Ibarra & Andrews, 1993; Krackhardt, 1990).

There are a few societies around the world that ascribe everyone (at least adults) equal status, most societies do have some form of social hierarchy with some people in stronger, more dominant positions, and other people in weaker, lower positions. This inequity is built into the social system itself through various forms of structural components and institutions, social and economic roles are distinguished and accorded differential status according to what a particular society or culture deems valuable (Omale, 2015).

Philosophers and scholars have questioned not only the process by which some individuals come into positions of supremacy and influence, but also argues about who should be in positions of authority (for instance, Plato's Republic, Homer's Illiad, Machiavelli's, The Prince, Hobbes' Leviathan, Locke's Liberty, etc.). One relentless focus has been that there may be differences in character and ability that distinguish those who possess prestigious and influential positions from individual who do not possess prestigious and influential position.

Omale (2015) opines that, occupying a high status due to a characteristic that one possesses means that on the basis of that characteristic, an individual acquires more power and privilege. That person's opinions, ways of thinking, values, needs, and feelings are thought to have more value. There is an entitlement to society's resources, including health care, education, and attractive

employment. All these benefits are often derived simply from having a particular skin color, being of a particular gender, or having a particular degree or profession. It is against this background that the researcher seeks to examine effects of individual differences on staff social status and academic performance of students in Nigerian universities with reference to selected University in FCT Abuja.

Research Questions

i.   To what extent does certain domain of individual characteristics attribute one to acquire prestigious positions in Nigerian Universities?

ii.   To what degree does employees' social status impact positively on the performance of academic staff of Nigerian universities?

iii.   Does individual differences and staff social status influences student's academic performance in Nigerian Universities?

Objectives of the Study

i.   Determine the extent to which certain domain of individual characteristics attributes one to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities.

ii.   Ascertain the degree to which staff social status impact positively on the performance of academic staff of Nigeria.

iii.   Examine the intensity to which individual differences and social status influences students academic performance.

Research Hypotheses

i.   Certain domain of individual characteristics does not attribute one to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities.

ii.   Employees' social status does not impact positively on the performance of academic staff of Nigerian universities.

iii.   Individual differences and staff social status does not influence student's academic performance in Nigerian Universities.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Status implies the position or rank one holds in a social group. The basis of status system is the recognition of the position of an individual in the social system and the authority he holds. Status is the position that one holds in a given system. It means the location of the individual within the group--his place in the social network, duties, rights, obligations and privileges (Omale, 2015). According to Davis, "status is a position in the general institutional system, recognized and supported by the entire society, spontaneously evolved rather than deliberately created, rooted in the folkways and mores". Lundberg posit status as "a comparative amount of prestige, deference or respect accorded to persons who have been assigned different roles in a group or a community". Anderson et al., (2001) and Hogan, (1991) maintain that human beings are social creatures who live in social groups. Regardless of the size, type, and formality of the organization, there are always hierarchies of social status because one of the fundamental motives of human beings is obtaining higher social status (Adler, 1930; Allport, 1937; Barkow, 1975; Hogan, 1983, 1991; Hogan & Hogan, 1991).

Nevertheless, people vary in their capacities to obtain higher social status, which lends support to the emergence of individual differences in determining one social status. Social status is initially conceptualized by Weber, 1978. Weber, (1978), conceptualized social status as "an effective claim to social esteem in terms of positive or negative privileges", p. 205. Weber (1978) distinguished social status from economic status by unfolding it as a positional and relational entity of social structure. Previous studies on social status by Bourdieu, (1984); Weber, (1978), revealed that social status is relatively a position of members within social groups.

The perception of social status is very wide and many aspects can contribute to elucidate on the hierarchies of social status. For instance, achievement, individual merit, wealth, occupation, family background and style of life might explain individuals' social status within a social group (Omale, 2015). The term social status means that a society ranks individuals on a scale, with some being more superior to others. This is based on their possessing a certain characteristic, or being born into a certain situation. While all individuals possess the characteristic on which the hierarchy is based, some individuals have a higher degree of it, from which springs their superior standing in the society.

Anderson, et al. (2001:117) explored the effects of Big Five personality traits on social status and they conceptually distinguished their sample (fraternity and sorority group) from other social groups, referring in their study "face to face group social status". This study limits the context to newly-formed small groups. This context is similar to the face to face groups utilized in Anderson, et al. (2001) but different because there are no previously established hierarchies of social status. Every position (father, mother, teacher, employee and employer etc) defines a different status. It is by status differentiation that social positions are defined and distinguished from one another by assigning to each a set of rights and responsibilities. A number of researchers have established that people in high social status tend to maintain good health status (For instance, Carroll, Smith, Sheffield, Shipley, & Marmot, 1997; Hemingway et al., 1997; Singh-Manoux, Adler, & Marmot, 2003). They also can readily access valuable resources and information (e.g., Baldwin, Bedell, & Johnson, 1997; Ibarra, 1993). There are many characteristics and benefits of social status based on the broad and different theoretical concepts.

Theories of Individual Differences
Scholars have attempted to explain the theories of individual differences in social certain. Among these theories are Bandura theories of learning, Ausubel theory, Bruner theory, Gagne theory, Skinner theory and Vygotsky theory of Zion Proximal Development.

Bandura Theory
Bandura's theory of learning relies heavily on the concepts of self-efficacy, self-regulation, and modeling. Each of these components is largely influenced by individual differences between learners. Self-efficacy describes how an individual feels about his or her capabilities to accomplish a particular task. Bandura notes that self-efficacy influences an individual's choices, amount of effort, persistence, and esteem. Self-efficacy is a purely individual concept. Within a classroom of students, it is likely that there are as many different levels of efficacy for a specific learning as there are students. These differing levels have a complex influence on how best to conduct instruction.

Bandura also notes the importance of modeling. Modeling is learning vicariously through watching others and seeing them receive rewards or punishment. Modeling is largely influenced by individual differences. In order for modeling to be effective, a learner must find the model competent, powerful and/or prestigious, and relevant. For modeling to be effective, the rewards a model receives must be relevant to the learner. This value is determined by the individual. The determination of a model's overall effectiveness is determined solely by the individual learner. Self-regulation is important for learning. Self-regulation is the ability an individual has to make choices concerning in which behaviors he or she will participate. Through self-regulation the learner can decide not to do something that he or she was directly reinforced for or something that he or she learned through modeling. There are three steps of the self-regulation process: 1. Self-monitoring 2. Judging performance 3. Self-response. Each of the steps in this process is conducted at the individual level. An individual's ability to successfully conduct the self-regulation process greatly influences success in learning.

Bandura believes that instruction should be altered to account for individual differences. Instruction must be based on modeling, self-regulation, and self-efficacy. Instructors should develop environments that create and encourage self-efficacy within individual learners, which is most effectively done by direct encouragement of students and providing opportunities for students to experience mastery or success in particular learning tasks. Self-efficacy can also be influenced through positive modeling in which students observe others experiencing success at a particular academic task. Instruction on self-regulation includes the introduction of strategies, how to use them, and what the benefits are of self-regulated learning.

Ausubel theory
Ausubel believes that individual learning is based upon what the individual already knows; the key individual difference variable is one's cognitive structure or a mental map of existing knowledge. The key component in Ausubel's theory is meaningful learning. He believes that the individual is able to acquire more knowledge if the new information is meaningful thereby facilitating subsumption into the existing cognitive structure. Ausubel would support pretesting to determine exactly what a student knows. New information would not be introduced without ensuring the new knowledge could be tightly linked and connected to the students existing cognitive structure. He would use elaborate multiple choice, visuals, pictures, sequencing, grouping, and sorting activities to determine the organization of the learner's cognitive structure. Ausubel would group students who have related knowledge and differentiate direct instruction. Instruction should be systematic, direct, and explicit with the learner being told exactly what is expected. He favored individual intermittent practice that provides opportunities for the learner to make more connections and anchor concepts meaningfully into the cognitive structure. If instruction does not take individual differences into account by considering what the learner already knows, instruction will result in rote, temporary, and arbitrarily anchored connections that will soon be lost.

Bruner theory
Individuals differ in what type of prior knowledge they bring to a learning task. Each individual has a cognitive structure built from prior learning experiences, which differs from any other learner. The instructor should adjust instruction to fit the learner's current state of understanding.

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Bruner believes that every individual has the ability to acquire knowledge. The key to reaching each individual with knowledge is instruction. Bruner thinks that any student learns best through a process of discovery.

Bruner classifies an individual's cognitive ability using three stages: enactive (use of manipulatives), iconic (use of visual images), and symbolic (use of language and reasoning). Unlike Piaget, Bruner sees these stages as developing and accumulating during the learner's educational process and does not link the stages necessarily to age or physical development. This aspect of Bruner's theory demonstrates an individual difference, which is the rate at which learners move through these stages. Children should be provided with study materials, tools, and activities that are matched to and capitalize on their developing individual cognitive abilities. Bruner would alter curriculum and instruction based on an individual learner's interests. In this vein, Bruner would allow the individual students to change topics, rebuild and revisit the curriculum while simultaneously varying learning mode (enactive, iconic and symbolic) and pace to meet an individual learner's needs.

Each individual constructs a world through representation of his or her experiences with it. Education is concerned with assisting each individual in developing or constructing a world. The personalization of knowledge, i.e. making it meaningful and useful in regards to the learner's thinking, attitudes, and feelings, creates interest in learning. If instruction does not heed the individual's particular position, i.e. their prior knowledge, schema, or mental models they bring to the learning environment, then learning will not occur successfully for that individual.

Gagne theory
According to Gagne, the level of pre-requisite skills acquired by students may differ by student; therefore, instruction must meet the needs of the individual learner. Gagne determined that a set of ordered intellectual skills made up an instructional plan for teaching a particular concept. Mastery of lower level skills would promote deeper understanding and acquisition of more complex intellectual skills. Even though Gagne's learning hierarchy presents a fixed learning sequence, all students may not have attained mastery of lower level perquisite skills creating multiple entry points where different students may enter into the learning sequence. These multiple entry points require the teacher to assess students' abilities and skills to determine each student's position within the learning hierarchy in order to tailor instruction by the learning tasks. Unless instruction begins at each student's individual level, the student will not acquire the skills necessary skill to solve complex problems related to the learning. A variety of instructional activities would then be developed to ensure mastery of the sequenced prerequisite skills required for the learning goal, permitting students to work at their own pace.

Skinner theory
Skinner would propose that individual differences among students come from the fact that each student comes from different environments in which their learning behavior has been shaped and reinforced in various ways. Therefore, what may be considered a positive reinforcer for one student (or group of students) may not promote positive learning behavior for others. This change in behavior is the point at which learning occurs. Advanced student learning occurs through the shaping process, in which the teacher reinforces successive approximations in individual student behavior towards the desired learning outcome. If teachers do not adjust their instruction to

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individual student needs, then the steps that the student makes towards the instructional goal cannot be reinforced; thus, shaping (and learning) cannot occur. Teachers must diagnose the current level of behavior of the student and create an environment that allows for various rates of progression to fit the needs of the individual learner. The idea to begin each learner at a point where they can produce desired responses and be reinforced for those responses. Teachers must monitor each student closely and provide immediate feedback for each student's progress. Given the constraints and reality of the classroom, it is difficult for one teacher to monitor and reinforce the progress of a class thirty or so individual learners. As an alternative, Skinner proposes the use of computer-assisted instruction (CAI), in which computers present the information and provide immediate feedback to the individual learner.

Vygotsky theory of Zion Proximal Development
Vygotsky believes that the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the prime determinant of individual differences and development among students. He defines the Zone of Proximal Development as the discrepancy between the child's capacity to solve problems independently and the child's ability to solve problems with assistance. Vygotsky maintains that social interaction with a more knowledgeable person is critical for cognitive development. This interaction helps the child attain a higher level of development than can be achieved alone. The adult should scaffold instruction by adjusting the level of his or her assistance in response to the child's performance. If these adjustments are not made then the student will not attain a higher level of cognitive development. Vygotsky also believes that individual differences can be attributed to culture. He states that students first make learning connections on the social level with their environment and other people; then, learning connections are manifested at the individual level. Since culture plays an essential role in cognitive development, it should be incorporated during instruction. Out of school experiences should be related to school experiences for optimal learning to take place. Although Vygotsky acknowledges the relevance of individual differences, he does not believe that we should focus on a child's individual differences in isolation. Instead, educators should focus more on the student's potential by facilitating problem solving in a social context.

Individual Differences and Influence of Social Status
Researchers investigating individual differences have a tendency to take one of three approaches to understanding status attainment. Some have used the trait approach (e.g., Anderson et al., 2001; Judge et al., 2002; Klein et al., 2004), some have used motives (e.g, Chan & Drasgow, 2001; McClelland, 1975), and some have used abilities (Côté et al., 2010; Judge et al., 2004; Wolff et al., 2002). Researchers have employed multiple approaches in very few cases (e.g. Harms et al., 2007).

Socio-analytic theory provides the basic framework explaining how social status is formed. Hogan, (1983, 1991) suggests that social status is constructed through the interactions of group members. The interactions of people are framed through behaviors of members, and individual behaviors not only reflect individual characteristics but also are the function of interactions between the person and the environment (Lewin, 1935; Hogan, 1991; Hogan & Roberts, 2000). Among many situational contextual environments, Hogan and Roberts (2000) argued that other people and their characteristics should be considered as important environmental factors in social settings.

In order to recognize certain social status to others, members should be able to observe and identify behaviors of other members (Hogan, 1983, 1991; Hogan & Holland, 2003). Hogan, (1983, 1991) maintain that members grant higher social status to a member when they believe that the focal member possesses appropriate behavioral attributes. In addition to the quality of the behaviors, people also consider the perceived and expected performance and contribution of the focal member to the social group (Bunderson, 2003; Flynn, 2003; Fragale, 2006; Willer, 2009).

Roberts and Wood (2006) recommended neo-socio-analytic theory of personality. They argued that multiple domains of individual differences such as abilities, personality traits, and motive should simultaneously be considered in explaining human personality, and that personality should be linked to an appropriate social context, such as social roles and status, to comprehensively examine the theory of personality. Because people consider multiple aspects of individual characteristics when they evaluate and grant other people social status within their groups, a variety of individual differences should be simultaneously taken into account based on the theoretical framework of socio-analytic theory (Hogan, 1983, 1991; Hogan & Blickle, 2013).

On the other hand, the structure and hierarchies of social status within social groups are not static but continuously changing and evolving over time (Ilgen et al., 2005; Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; McGrath & Argote, 2001). Team development theorists have found that teams develop over time, and suggest that teams evolve through distinct phases (Kozlowski et al., 1999). They suggest that the nature of early stage and later stage of social groups are different.

Kozlowski et al., (1999) argues that in newly-formed small groups, there will be little or no social relationships during the early stage of social groups, since participants do not have interpersonal knowledge of each other in this phase. Members uncover their own information and at the same time seek information from others to learn about other members, (DeRue & Morgeson, 2007; Gabarro, 1990; Kozlowski et al., 1999). In this phase, however, members may only be able to obtain limited information about each other. They are mainly dependent on the most observable and identifiable behaviors of other members when they evaluate and grant social status of other members. Over time, members develop and accumulate interpersonal knowledge through repeated interactions among team members. The social relationships will become more dynamic and complex during the later stage of social groups (DeRue & Morgeson, 2007; Kozlowski et al., 1999). As a result, the relationships between individual differences and social status within social groups should be different between early and later stages of social groups.

In addition, individual differences are likely to be activated differently at different stages of social groups. Trait activation theorists (for instance, Tett and Burnett, 2003; Tett and Guterman, 2000) propose that personality traits are activated by relevant situational cues. Tett and Guterman (2000) argue that traits will be activated when there are opportunities to express the relevant traits. They propose that linking traits and behaviors should take into account relevance of situations to the traits. Their findings show that traits do not show consistency across different scenarios (Tett & Guterman, 2000). Traits are not always activated but only activated when there are relevant situational cues.

Based on the theoretical framework by Tett and Guterman (2000), the study further suggests that these individual differences will need different periods of time to be fully activated and effectively observed and identified by others. Considering the different stages of social groups, some individual differences are likely to be activated in the early stage of social group formation, while others are more likely to be activated in the later stages. Even if individual differences are activated at the same time (i.e., in the early stage of social groups) some might be immediately and fully activated and observed by other members while others might need time to do so. For example, individual differences that were not observed during the early stage of social groups could be observed and identified by members during the later stage of social groups. These would be then be activated and utilized at a later stage for members to evaluate and grant social status of other members. Moreover, some individual differences previously perceived positively or negatively by other members might diminish or disappear at a later stage due to the accumulated information and interpersonal relationships.

Determinants of Social Status

Omale, (2015) state that status can be determined in so many ways, these are highlighted below:

1. **Achievement:** One can earn one's social status by one's own achievements, which is known as achieved status. For instance, a noble prize winner or sport figures like Obi Mikel, J.J Okocha, Kanu amongst others are held in high public esteem not because they are wealthy, but because of their social achievement and standings.

2. **Wealth:** Wealth, while not necessarily a source of social status, is associated with social status according to Weber. Generally, the wealthier an individual, the higher his social status. Money that goes back a long way, rather than newly earned money, tends to confer greater social status.

3. **Family background:** A person born into a wealthy family characterized by trains such as popularity, talents and high values will have high status and many expectations growing up. Therefore, they are given and taught many social roles as they are socially positioned into a family becoming equipped with all these traits.

4. **Occupation:** Occupation is usually thought of as the main determinant of status as what we do to earn a living is associated with some honor and prestige. For instance, a medical doctor has higher status because of his/her ability to help the sick recover. In contrast, a mechanic or carpenters may have low status based on individual opinion. Occupation is a social standing of an individual based on his/her area of discipline.

5. **Individual Merits:** This status can be determined through education and marital status. Their place within the stratification structure is determined by society's bar, which often judged them being successful, being financial, being academic, being political and so on.

6. **Styles of life:** 'You are addressed the way you dress' is a common saying. High status groups tend to enjoy a lifestyle oriented to consumption. They also tend to associate with others of higher status. Low status groups, on the other hand, tend to look to the afterlife as a source of happiness. They look to salvation as their hope and expect they will be rewarded then.

The Psychology of Social Status

Nobel Laureate economist, John Harsanyi, believed that "apart from economic payoffs, social status seems to be the most important incentive and motivating force of social behavior." The more noticeable status disparities are, the more concerned with status people become, and the differences between the haves and have-nots have been extremely pronounced during the economic recession

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of recent years. He maintains that, Barack Obama's campaign was directly on the issue of the "dwindling middle class" during his 2008 presidential run and appointed Vice-president Joe Biden to lead a middle class task force specifically to bolster this demography. Despite some recent economic improvement, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont just two months ago cautioned that "the reality is that the middle class today in this country is in desperate shape and the gap between the very wealthy and everyone else is going to grow wider."

Concerns about status likely will not be leaving the public consciousness any time soon.

Of course, status differences are not simply relevant to economic standing, but they appear to be on our minds at all times. Renowned neuroscientist, Michael Gazzaniga, note that, "When you get up in the morning, you do not think about triangles and squares and these similes that psychologists have been using for the past 100 years. You think about status. You think about where you are in relation to your peers." Between CEO and employee, quarterback and wide receiver, husband and wife, status looms large. Recent work by social scientists has tackled the topic, elucidating behavioral differences between low-status and high-status individuals, and the methods by which those at the bottom of the totem pole are most successful at climbing to the top. Psychologist P.J. Henry at DePaul University recently published an article demonstrating that low-status individuals have higher tendencies toward violent behavior, explaining these differences in terms of low-status compensation theory. Henry began this work by observing that murder rates were higher in regions with landscapes conducive to herding compared to regions that are conducive to farming, consistent with prior research showing an association between herding-based economies and violence. The traditional explanation for this pattern, popularized by psychologists Dov Cohen and Richard Nisbett, is that herding cultures have a propensity for maintaining a Culture of Honor. The story goes that because herders from Southern Britain originally settled in the Southern United States (and also established a herding economy on the new land), this left them in an economically precarious position. The possession of these herdsmen, the most important of which was their livestock, was susceptible to theft, forcing individuals to develop a quick trigger in response to threats, economic or otherwise. In comparison, the farming economy of the North was far more secure, requiring a less aggressive and protective stance toward one's personal resources.

Henry took on the Traditional Culture of Honor hypothesis to suggest instead that differences between herding and farming cultures in violence actually stem from differences in status. His theory is based on a considerable psychological literature demonstrating that individuals from low-status groups (e.g. ethnic minorities) tend to engage in more vigilant psychological self-protection than those from high-status groups. Low-status people are much more sensitive to being socially rejected and are more inclined to monitor their environment for threats. Because of this vigilance toward protecting their sense of self-worth, low-status individuals are quicker to respond violently to personal threats and insults.

Henry first examined archival data on counties across the American South to show that murder rates from 1972 to 2006 were far higher in counties that were dry and hilly (conducive to herding) than those that were moist and flat (conducive to farming). Above and beyond the effect of geography, however, the level of status disparities in a particular county explained these increased murder rates. Even after accounting for the general level of wealth in a given county (wealthier

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counties tend to have lower murder rates), status disparity still predicted murder rates. Not content with merely looking at the United States, Henry analyzed data from 92 countries around the world, to find a replication of this pattern. From Albania to Zimbabwe, greater status disparities predicted greater levels of violence. To provide evidence that tendencies for psychological self-protection were the crucial critical link between status and violence, Henry assessed survey data from over 1,500 Americans. In this nationally representative sample, low-socioeconomic status (low-SES) individuals reported far more psychological defensiveness in terms of considering themselves more likely to be taken advantage of and trusting people less.

Finally, in an experiment with both high- and low-SES college students, Henry demonstrated that boosting people's sense of self-worth diminished aggressive tendencies amongst low-status individuals. Henry asked some students in the experiment to write about a time when they felt important and valuable. Other students did not receive this assignment, but instead completed a rote task about defining nouns. In a second portion of the experiment, all participants answered questions about how willing they would be to respond aggressively to threats. Consistent with the general population studies, college students from low-SES backgrounds expressed more willingness to respond aggressively to insults, but this tendency diminished markedly for those who first wrote about themselves as important and valuable.

Although this pattern of low-status compensation is important on its own, it is also unfortunate given a separate body of research on how people actually attain higher status. This research, recently summarized in an article by psychologists, Cameron Anderson and Gavin J Kilduff, shows that those who are effective in attaining status do so through behaving generously and helpfully to bolster their value to their group. In other words, low-status individuals' aggressive and violent behavior is precisely the opposite of what they should be doing to ascend the societal totem pole. Anderson and Kilduff demonstrated that people in a group math problem-solving task who merely signaled their competence through being more vocal attained higher status and were able to do so regardless of their actual competence on the task. Research by psychologists Charlie L. Hardy and Mark Van Vugt, and sociologist Robb Willer have shown that generosity is the key to status. People afford greater status to individuals who donate more of their own money to a communal fund and those who sacrifice their individual interests for the public good. Demonstrating your value to a group—whether through competence or selflessness—appears to improve status. Anderson and Aiwa Shirako suggest that the amplifier for this effect is the degree to which one has social connections with others. Their studies involved MBA students engaging in a variety of negotiations tasks. They showed that individuals who behaved cooperatively attained a more positive reputation, but only if they were socially embedded in the group.Those who behaved cooperatively, but lacked connections went unnoticed. Social connectedness had similar effects for uncooperative MBA students. Those who were selfish and well-connected saw their reputation diminish.

The sum of these findings can begin to explain the troubled circumstances of those lowest in status. Ongoing efforts to maintain a positive view of oneself despite economic and social hardships can engage psychological defense mechanisms that are ultimately self-defeating. Instead of ingratiating themselves to those around them – this is the successful strategy for status attainment - low-status individuals may be more prone to bullying and hostile behavior,

especially when provoked. Research identifying factors that lead to successful status-seeking provides some optimism, though. Individuals capable of signaling their worth to others rather than being preoccupied with signaling their worth to themselves may be able to break the self-defeating cycle of low-status behavior.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a general research strategy that outlines the way in which research is to be undertaken in an orderly and theoretical manner. It comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge which encompasses concepts such as paradigm, theoretical model, phases and quantitative or qualitative techniques.
Methodology offers the theoretical groundwork for understanding which set of methods, or best practices can be applied to specific case. Therefore, the researcher adopted both primary and secondary methods of data collection with specific reference to management journals, periodical and internet. Information was sourced from key informants in the selected Nigerian Universities and test of hypothesis and analysis was done with the use F test statistical techniques.

Data Presentation
Data can be presented in various forms depending on the type of data collected. Presentation of data is the method by which people recapitulate, classify and converse information using a variety of apparatus, such as tables, diagrams, distribution charts, histograms and graphs etc. Incidence table is used to summarize categorical or numerical data as the percentage of the total number in the sample. The test of hypotheses was employed using chi-square statistical technique.
Six hundred and forty two (642) questionnaires were prepared and dispersed but only five hundred and eighty two hundred (582) were correctly filled and returned. Consequently, the researchers based his examination on the number that was correctly filled and returned.
Table 4.1 shows the questionnaire distribution and collection schedule.

Table 1   Questionnaire Distribution and Collection Schedule

No. Distributed	No. returned	No. rejected	No. accepted	No. not return
642	582	0	582	60
100	90.6%	0%	90.6%	9.3%

Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.1 portray that 682 questionnaire representing 100% were prepared and distributed, 542 (Representing 90.6%) out of 682 were correctly filled and returned, while 60 questionnaires representing 9.3% were not returned. The researcher therefore based his examination on the number that was correctly filled and returned which are 542.

Analysis Test of Hypotheses

Table 4.2 Certain domain of individual characteristics does not attribute one to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities.

Option	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agreed	19	3.5
Agreed	113	20.8
Strongly disagreed	252	46.5
Disagreed	153	28.2
No idea	5	0.9
Total	**542**	**99.9**

Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.2 shows that, 19 respondents representing 3.5% strongly agreed with the fact that certain domain of individual characteristics does not attribute one to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities. 113 respondents representing 20.8% agreed with the statement, 252 respondents representing 46.5% strongly disagreed and 28.2 % that is, 153 respondents disagreed while 5 respondents representing 0.9% failed to provide answer. Based on the above analysis, the researchers concluded that certain domains of individual characteristics attribute one to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities.

Table 4.3 Employees' social status does not impact positively on the performance of academic staff of Nigerian Universities.

Option	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agreed	38	7.0
Agreed	27	4.9
Strongly disagreed	342	63.1
Disagreed	124	22.9
No idea	11	2.0
Total	**542**	**99.9**

Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.3 shows that, 38 respondents representing 7.0% strongly agreed that Employees' social status does not impact positively on the performance of academic staff of Nigerian Universities 27 respondents representing 4.9% agreed that employees' social status does not impact positively on the performance of academic staff of Nigerian Universities, 342 respondents representing 63.1% strongly disagreed and 22.9% that is, 124 respondents disagreed while 11 respondents representing 2.0% failed to provide answer. This means that Employees' social status impact positively on the performance of academic staff of Nigerian Universities

Table 4.4 Individual differences and staff social status does not influence student's academic performance in Nigerian Universities.

Option	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agreed	74	13.7
Agreed	88	16.2
Strongly disagreed	251	46.3
Disagreed	129	23.8
No idea	0	0
Total	**542**	**99.9**

Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.4 reveal that, 74 respondents representing 13.7% strongly agreed with the fact that individual differences and staff social status does not in any influence student's academic performance in Nigerian Universities, 88 respondents representing 16.2% agreed with the statement, 251 respondents representing 46.3% and 23.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. This indicates that individual differences and staff social status have capacity to influence student's academic performance in Nigerian Universities.

Test of Hypotheses
In testing the hypotheses, it is essential to find out whether the differences in views are considerable enough to draw conclusion. To determine the degree of freedom, the researcher uses the formula: numerator and denominator giving 95% as the significant level and the numerator has 2 (3-1) while the denominator has 12 (15-3).

4.3 Contingency Table

Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3
19	38	74
133	27	88
252	342	251
5	11	0
$\Sigma X 1 = 542$	$\Sigma X 2 = 542$	$\Sigma X 3 = 542$

The mean of each sample will be respectively $X_1 = 108.4$ $X_2 = 2108.4$ $X_3 = 108.4$ and the mean of the means or population mean will be $X = \dfrac{325.2}{3} = 108.4$

$X-\overline{X_1}$	$(X-X_1)^2$	$X-X_2$	$(X-X_2)^2$	$X-X_3$	$(X-X_3)^2$
-89.4	7992.36	-70.4	4956.16	-34.4	1183036
4.6	21.16	-81.4	6625.96	-20.4	416.16
143.6	20620.96	233.6	54568.96	142.6	20334.76
44.6	1989.16	15.6	243.36	20.6	424.36
-103.4	10691.56	-97.4	9486.76	-108.4	11750.56
$\Sigma(X-X_1{}^2)$	$= 41315.2$		$\Sigma(X-X_2{}^2) = 75881.2$		$\Sigma(X-X_2{}^2) = 34109.2$

$$S^2{}_P = \frac{41315.2 + 75881.2 + 34109.2}{108.4 + 108.4 + 108.4-3} = \frac{151305.6}{322.2} = 469.6$$

$$F \quad = \quad \frac{\text{Variance between means}}{\text{Variance within classes}} \quad = \quad \frac{5\,2\!\!\not/\,x}{SP}$$

$$F \quad = \quad \frac{108.4}{469.6} \quad = \quad 0.23$$

Now we compare our calculated f value of 0.23, with theoretical value obtained from the tables. In order to use the tables, we need to know the degree of freedom of the numerator, and the denominator of the ratio. In this research, the numerator has 2 degree of freedom, (3-1), and the denominator has 12 degree of freedom (15-3). We find the value for a 95% confidence level (f.95) to be 3.89.

Our calculated value is 0.23 and the theoretical value for 95% confidence is 3.89. Since our calculated level of 0.23 is smaller than the theoretical value of 3.89, we accept the hypothesis that all the samples come from one normally distributed population. This means that when the sample variance come from a normal population, the value 3.89 will be exceeded only 5% of the time.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following findings were arrived at after taking into consideration analysis and interpretation of data.
Firstly, findings reveal that certain domain of individual characteristics attribute one to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities.
Secondly, employees' social status impact positively on the performance of academic staff of Nigerian universities.
Finally, the result of the study indicates that the intensity of individual differences and staff social status influence student's academic performance in Nigerian Universities.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, this study proposes that the effects of individual differences on social status is not static but dynamic, due to combined effects of individual differences, the different nature of social groups between early and later stages, and different activations of individual differences. Through ongoing development of interpersonal relationships in newly formed small social groups, the hierarchies of social status are expected to be continuously reshaped and reformed.

Individual differences and social status are everywhere in social groups and institutions, and individual continues to seek social status as one of the basic human need that enhances organizational performance. Several techniques applied from a diversity of fields of studies and one of the most widely investigated topics is the role of individual differences and social status in organizations. The current study enhances our understanding of the effects of individual differences on staff social status and academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities. When we examine staff social status with respect to individual differences certainly we conclude that the value of individual or group of individual either through capability or selflessness appears

to improve social status and firm performance. The novelty lies on individual believe and actions that explain these differences in terms of low or high status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions should review individual characteristics quarterly to determine which position will best suit individual peculiarity than individual struggling to acquire prestigious position in Nigerian Universities. This will enhance competition and the desire for better attitude to work and performance by all staff.

Secondly, employees' social status should be improved through training, mentoring and employees development of academic staff of Nigerian universities. This will serve as a morale booster for effective performance in the organization.

Finally, since individual differences and staff social status influence student's academic performance in Nigerian universities, employees should be careful in their dealing and social standing in the society as negative attitude can impact negatively on students psychological standing and performance and positive attitude have the capacity to improve students' performance.

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