

Full Length Research Paper

Effects of head teachers' leadership styles on the performance of examinations in public primary schools in Kikuyu District, Kenya

Caroline Wanjiku Karori¹, Agnes K. Mulewa², Charles Ombuki² & Joash A. Migosi²

¹Doctoral candidate, Maasai Mara University

²South Eastern Kenya University

Accepted 12 June, 2013

Literature shows headteachers' leadership styles impact on students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E). Majority of the pupils who sat for K.C.P.E. over the last five years in Kikuyu district had average marks. This is despite the schools having qualified teachers, adequate resources and facilities to enhance effective learning and good performance. This study purposed to investigate the effects of headteachers' leadership styles on students' performance in K.C.P.E in public primary schools in Kikuyu district. The study adopted ex-post facto survey research design. All teachers and headteachers in all the public primary schools in Kikuyu district were targeted. Twenty seven headteachers and 154 teachers were randomly sampled from 27 primary schools. Responses were obtained using questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were utilized in data analysis. Findings revealed there was a significant relationship between headteachers' leadership styles and students' academic performance. There was no relationship between headteachers' gender, age, teaching experience and marital status and their leadership styles. Teachers perceived their headteachers as autocratic. Recommendations were that headteachers should enhance their leadership skills and use the most appropriate leadership style for a conducive teaching and learning environment.

Key words: Effects, headteachers, academic performance, leadership style, public schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important investment. It empowers men and women and provides opportunities for active participation in development by inculcating knowledge, skills and attitudes that are compatible with sustainable development (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Muthondu (2007) asserts that global world is changing very rapidly and indeed this speed of change makes it almost impossible for any one person of either gender or preferred leadership style to have all the knowledge, insight or power to achieve success. The old form of leadership that gave power and a title to one or to a few individuals, in most cases the males is rapidly becoming dysfunctional. It is becoming much more difficult to command people who are better educated and more informed. Potential leaders of any gender should train

themselves to adapt to the changing society and make every effort to teach and model the style of leadership which will most effectively lead the institution into achieving its goals. Performance of students in examinations is attributed to a number of factors. These include provision of physical facilities, classroom size, effective school discipline policies, administrative support and effective leadership. Other studies done in Botswana, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea concur to this (Muli, 2005). Good leadership provides necessary guidance, clarity of direction and rewards for effective performance of an organization. Okumbe (2001) pointed out that, in any organization human resources are the most important resources it has and therefore, the success of the organization depends entirely on how effectively its workers are managed. This means that continuous effort is needed to achieve integration where all the members are involved and work together with a sense of common purpose of achieving the organization's goals. A school is a social system. From the management

*Corresponding author. E-mail: jmigosi@seuco.ac.ke, jmigosi@gmail.com

point of view it is important to conceptualize school administration as a social process. A social system involves two classes of phenomena which, although they are independent, are interactive. The first class consists of the institution, its roles and expectations which are in line with the goals of the system. The second class consists of the individuals inhabiting the system with their personalities and dispositions (Okumbe, 2001). A school consists of the head teacher, teachers, non-teaching staff and students who interact with each other to accomplish predetermined goals. For a school organization to be held together, good leadership and efficient management are a must (Farrant, 1997). Achieng (2000) defines leadership as the ability to conduct or guide the subjects, the ability to assimilate and translate ideas, rules, regulations and procedures to guide subjects in carrying out a mission within a defined mandate. So a leader is a person with a commanding authority or influence. Luthern (2002) contends that the difference between success and failure, whether in war, business, a protest movement or basket ball will be attributed to leadership. Effective leadership in a school has been widely noted as a factor that will make a difference between achievers and non achievers. Dramatic changes noted in a work environment will result due to a visionary leader who encourages and persuades rather than commands followers towards common goals. Bell and Bush (2003) emphasize that head teachers are directly involved in influencing the activities of the school towards goal setting and goal attainment. Omolayo (2009) identified different styles of leadership. They are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. An autocratic leader defines his goals and facilitates group movement toward them. This type of head teacher decides everything and tries to manipulate the teachers into approving his ideas on how the school should function. An autocratic leader does not trust anybody. A democratic head teacher helps the members of his staff define their own goals and facilitates action towards these goals. Democratic leadership can improve group efficiency and improved production and follows member participation in defining specific production goals. The Laissez-faire leader allows the employee to make the decisions. The leader tends to avoid power and authority. According to Ang Bay Lee (1995), the autocratic leadership style results in the group members reacting aggressively and apathetically in the work environment. This often results in unending industrial disputes in an organization hence affecting the overall achievement of the overall goals and objectives. Mwalala, (2008) observes that authoritarian and harsh climate leads to poor performance of students. Laissez-faire leadership style may lead in indiscipline due to non enforcement of rules and regulations in a school leading to poor performance in national examinations. In Kenya, the success of primary school students is mainly gauged by their performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Kenyan government and the citizens have attached higher importance to passing national examinations. Parents have seen education as a tool to equip the children with a good certificate for advancement to the next level of education. Therefore the aim has been to work hard in order to pass national examinations. Passing K.C.P.E. well is a prerequisite for admission into national and provincial secondary schools which have good and adequate facilities. Given the importance of passing K.C.P.E examinations, every primary school in each district in Kenya attaches high value to K.C.P.E., hence they strive to pass well. The majority of the pupils who have sat for K.C.P.E. over the last five years in Kikuyu district had average marks. This means that very few students joined provincial secondary schools yet all the primary schools in the district have qualified teachers, adequate supportive educational resources like books and good facilities to enhance effective learning and hence good performance in K.C.P.E. Stakeholders are worried that although the government of Kenya has employed qualified teachers and posted them in the schools in Kikuyu district and the facilities in the schools have been improved through the use of Constituency Development Fund (CDF), the performance of the pupils has not improved over years. Most studies done on leadership styles on students' performance give differing results and a few are in agreement. Amidst those contradictions and the other mentioned reasons, there is need to carry out further research on effects of leadership styles on performance. This study aimed at investigating the effects of leadership styles in K.C.P.E. performance in public primary schools in Kikuyu district, Kenya.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of head teachers' leadership styles on performance of K.C.P.E examinations in public primary schools in Kikuyu district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Establish whether there is a relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance in KCPE.

Identify the extent to which head teachers involve teachers by calling joint meetings to discuss performance of students in academics.

Determine whether there is any relationship between the head teachers' selected demographic variables and their leadership styles.

To examine whether exposing head teachers to in-service courses has any significant influence on their lea-

dership styles.

To examine how head teachers' leadership styles are rated by teachers in public primary schools.

Research questions

What is the relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance in KCPE?

To what extent do head teachers involve teachers by calling joint meetings to discuss performance of students in KCPE?

What is the relationship between the head teachers' selected demographic variables and their leadership styles?

How does exposing head teachers to in-service courses affect their leadership style?

How are head teachers' leadership styles rated by teachers in public primary schools?

Significance of the Study

This study may provide information that may help Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI) to improve the scope of in-service preparation programmes for headteachers to enhance efficient and effective leadership style. The findings may be useful to headteachers in helping them to re-examine and appraise their own leadership styles and make adjustments where necessary. They may also realize that their leadership styles may vary depending on who they are dealing with and the situation they are in. The findings may also be useful to educational policy makers in formulating policies on leadership and management of schools which will enhance efficient and effective leadership. The findings may also stimulate interest and further research in Kikuyu district. This study may add to the existing body of knowledge on educational administration. The autocratic style of leadership is generally in disfavor in modern organisations as expressed by the consensus of several current leadership theorists (Aldag, 2001). Burns (1978) states that an autocratic leader maintains most of the authority by issuing orders and telling group members what to do without consulting them. To the autocrat, the basis of leadership is formal authority. This often results in disputes and the objectives of an organization not been achieved. Mwalala, (2008) observes that authoritarian and harsh climate leads to poor performance of students in academics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aldag (2001) observes that, a democratic leader is one who shares decision making authority with the group. Democratic leadership occupies enough space on the

continuum of warrant dividing it into 3 subtypes; consultative, consensual and democratic. A consultative leader solicits opinions from the group before making decisions, yet does not feel obliged to accept the group's thinking. A consensual also encourages group discussion about an issue and then makes a decision that reflects the consensus of the group members. Democratic leadership style is associated with high performance in academics. Newstrom and Keith (2002) say that a laissez-faire leader turns over almost all authority to group members and does as little leading as possible. Given a situation in which the work to be done by each employee is clearly defined; such leaders maintain a hands-off-policy. They make few attempts to increase productivity to their employees. At times the laissez-faire leader is an abdicator who cares very little for achieving productivity, goals or supporting subordinates. This style of leadership may result in indiscipline due to non enforcement of rules and regulations in a school leading to poor performance in examinations. A strong leadership is the most important ingredient of an effective school. Incompetent head teachers are a big problem to the overall administration and management of education in any country (Otiende, 1994). Luthan, (2002) asserts that efficiency will be valid only to the extent to which it will contribute to achievement of goals of the organization, goals of actors in the organization and the extent to which it meets the requirements of the environment for the survival of the organization. Bell (1993) notes that effective leadership will provide a school with a vision, explicit philosophies laid on consultation and team work leading to success in attainment of good results in national examinations. Mwalala (2008) cites lack of management skills by head teachers as a major factor contributing to poor performance in national examination. The school head teacher will have to engage the teaching staff in their teaching through use of appropriate leadership styles in order to succeed in redirecting staff effort and in creating a conducive climate for students to improve performance in academics. Bersy and Blanchard (1995) advise that the leadership style adopted by a leader should be on the basis of linking the situation at hand with an appropriate style. The Bureau of Business Research at the Ohio state University initiated research on leadership by involving researchers. Two dimensions of leadership behavior emerged from data analysis labeled consideration and initiating structure. Findings showed that initiating structure would be related to delineating the relationship between the leader and subordinates and at the same time establishing defined patterns of organization, channels of communication and methods of procedure. Consideration includes leader behavior that indicates friendship, trust, warmth, interest and respect in the relationship between the leader and members of the work group. Four major findings emerged from the study: Initiating structure and consideration are fundamental dimensions of leader behavior. The most

effective leaders are described as those integrating both high initiating structure and high consideration. Superiors and subordinates tend to evaluate the contributions of the leader behavior dimensions appositively in assessing effectiveness. Only a slight relationship exists between how leaders say they should behave and how subordinates say that they do behave (Wayne, 2008). Luthan (2002) in support of this research cites effective leadership as being a process of consideration and initiating structure.

Studies on leadership styles and students' performance in examinations

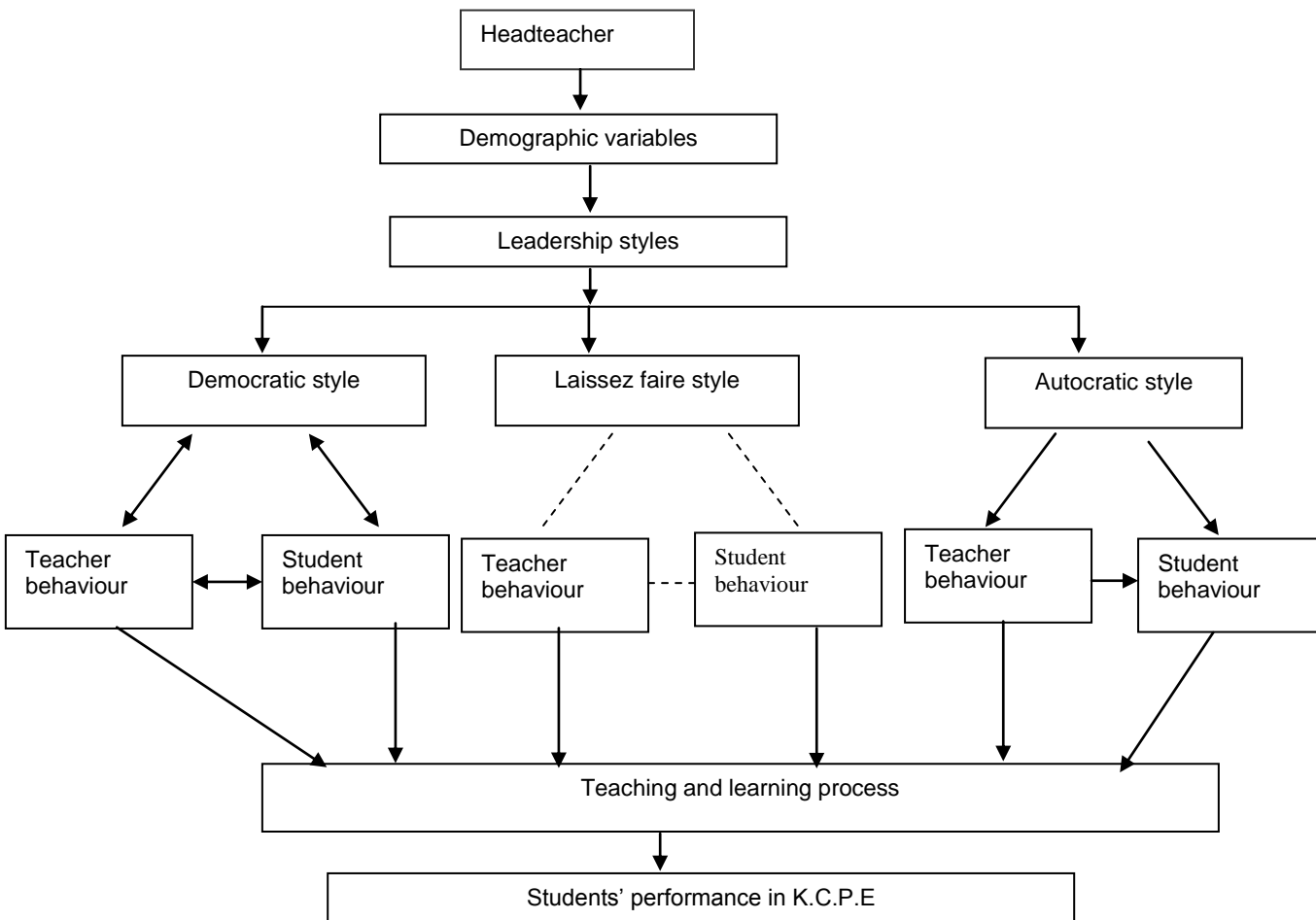
Different researchers have investigated the relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance. They have come up with different findings. Achieng (2000) found that head teachers rated as being democratic had high mean performance than autocratic head teachers. The findings concur with Kimacia (2007) who observes that there is a relationship between leadership styles and students performance in national examinations and notes that democratic head teachers had higher performance than autocratic head teachers. Huka (2003) contradicts by noting that head teachers who are rated most democratic had the lowest mean score while autocratic head teachers had higher mean score. Muli (2005) and Wangui (2007) had the same findings. Kimacia (2007) found that there is no significant difference between head teachers age and leadership style. This contradicts with Achieng (2000) in her study that leadership styles are as a result of age. Head teachers aged 41-45 years are democratic. Kimacia (2007) found out that age does not influence teachers in rating head teachers leadership styles. This contradicts with Huka (2003) who notes that teachers aged 40 years and above rated headteachers as being democratic while those between 20-25 years rated them as autocratic. There is need to carry out further research on age as a variable in leadership styles and whether teachers' different age brackets rate head teachers' leadership styles differently. Gacanja (2007) found that female head teachers practice high consideration structure. This concurs with Ndegwa (2002) findings that female head teachers practice high consideration structure while male head teachers practice high initiating structure. Achieng (2000) found that female head teachers are found to be autocratic while male ones as democratic. This finding concurs with Gacanja (2007) but contradicts with Wangui (2007) findings that male head teachers are rated as being autocratic while their female counterparts as democratic. Huka (2003) found out that there is a relationship between head teacher leadership style and professional experience. Head teachers with experience of 16 years and above are rated higher on consideration behaviour. This concurs with Achieng (2000) that head

teachers with administration experience of 11-15 years are being democratic than those with less administrative experience. This concurs with Wangui (2007) but contradicts Kimacia (2007) who says there is no relationship between administrative experience and leadership style. This research will fill the gap of whether there are effects of leadership styles on performance of students in academics.

Summary of Literature Review

The reviewed literature has revealed that head teachers' leadership style have effects directly or indirectly on teachers and students in attainment of educational goals. Autocratic leadership results in distrust and conflict which make human enterprise worthless. There is hostility, hatred and open defiance toward school administration contributing to poor performance of students in KCPE. Democratic leadership style lead to the essence of goal ownership as all players in the group perceive the policies and goals they set as theirs hence work hard to achieve them. Laissez faire is indicative of a leader who will depend largely on the group to set goals, means of achieving progress and success. This lead to creating a power vacuum and conflicts in power struggles ensuring leading indiscipline in the organization. Literature review indicates different findings. In some cases there are relationships while others there were none. The same reflected on selected independent demographic school variables. There is no consistency in the findings of the studies. This study therefore intends to carry out further research on the effects of leadership styles on students' performance. Theoretical framework for this study was based on the Path-goal leadership theory of House (1996). The theory purports that people are satisfied with their work and will work hard if they believe that their work will lead to things that are highly valued. It emphasizes that the managerial behavior should be motivating or satisfying to the extent that it increases goal attainment by subordinates and clarifies the path to these goals. It rests on two propositions: that the leader behavior will be acceptable and satisfying when subordinates perceive it to be an immediate source of satisfaction or as being instrumental in obtaining future satisfaction. That leader's behavior will be motivating to the extent that it makes subordinate satisfaction contingent upon effective performance and to the extent that complements the subordinates work environment by providing necessary guidance, clarity of direction and rewards for effective performance. This theory as applied to the study holds that it is important for educational managers to develop leadership talents that will facilitate institutional effectiveness. The leadership training attempts are made to develop individuals like head teachers to their fullest potentials through varieties of training techniques. These training techniques should inc-

Relationship Between headteacher' leadership styles and students' performance in K.C.P.E.



lude general management skills programmes, human relation training, problem solving and decision making programmes. The conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 2.

N/B:

----- (The broken lines) indicate that there is no real leadership since the teachers and the students are left to do what they feel like. The conceptual framework shows that the head teacher is affected by factors such as age, academic and professional qualifications and administration. Teachers have their own characteristics such as age, gender, academic and professional qualifications, teaching experience needs and maturity. All these factors plus the school environment interact in diverse situations to produce the head teachers' lifestyle. The leadership style affects teachers and students to influence their behavior and the final outcome of the examinations. A favorable style stimulates all the key players towards the achievement of goals. Autocratic

leadership style is often characterized by centralized decision making and members are obliged to respond. Democratic approach motivates the key players to make decisions and feel committed to the resolutions and success of the organization. Laissez faire style is where the leader does not set goals, make decision or supervise. The students do what they feel like. This leads to indiscipline and poor performance as the head of the institution does not provide direction.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted ex-post facto research design. Best and Khan (2002) define ex-post facto design as a descriptive research where variables that exist have already occurred with the non intervention of the researcher. Inferences about variables were made without manipulation of independent and dependent variables by the researcher. This design was applied in this study because variables for the study namely leader-

ship styles of the head teachers', leadership styles and students' performance in KCPE examinations have already occurred. Simple cause effect relationship was explored. Demographic variables that feature in the study cannot be manipulated. This design was found appropriate for this study because the researcher sought to investigate and establish existence of relationship between the leadership styles (independent variable) and students' performance in examinations (dependent variable). This study was carried out in Kikuyu District targeting all public Primary schools. Kikuyu District had at the time of study fifty five primary schools with fifty five head teachers and seven hundred and seventy teachers (MOE, 2010). All the teachers in the school together with the head teachers were targeted. Random sampling which is the key to obtaining a representative sample was used. In random sampling every sample of a given size in the accessible population has an equal chance of being selected (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). This narrowed down to simple random sampling, whereby schools were given numbers as the names appear in the list of schools obtained from the District Education Office in Kikuyu District. According to Kathuri and Pals (1987), 20-50 subjects in minor sub-group are appropriate. The target population in this case was 55 schools. The researcher took 27 schools which meant all the head teachers, which was a number between 20-50 and which was deemed appropriate. There are 770 primary school teachers in Kikuyu district. Gay (1992) approves for twenty percent sample of the total population. Twenty percent of 770 is 154 teachers. Half of every sample taken was ensured to be female and the other half male. Data was collected using self administered questionnaires. Two sets of questionnaires were used; one for the teachers and one for the head teachers. The questions were open ended and closed ended. Teachers questionnaire part A gathered data on demographic variables of respondents like age, gender, academic qualifications and professional experience. Part B had open ended questions and part C had a Likert scale on consideration and initiating structure. Head teachers' questionnaire part A gathered data on demographic variables like age, gender, academic qualifications and professional experience. The questionnaire was chosen because it saves time and also the targeted respondents are literate and therefore comfortable for them to respond. They also allow uniformity in the way questions are asked ensuring greater comparability in the process. In addition, the respondents feel free to give frank answers to sensitive questions especially if they are not required to disclose their identity (Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). A pilot study was carried out in schools that were not involved in the main study. The pilot study revealed deficiencies in the instruments' which were addressed before main study. The questionnaires were pre-tested in 5 schools within the population. The assumptions were that the pilot schools being in the same district as the study schools

have a similar experience and so the outcome of their responses would be fairly similar. Responses from the pilot group were used by the researcher to make modifications to the instruments. Items poorly responded to or not responded to well were omitted or modified before the instrument was finally administered to the sample group. Respondents who participated in the pilot study were excluded in the final administration of the instrument. This helped to control the extraneous influence on the research findings due to their prior knowledge of the information required by the instrument. Content validity was ensured by checking whether the items in the questionnaires reflected the research questions. The reliability of a standardized test is usually expressed as a correlation coefficient, which measures the strength of association between variables. Such coefficients vary between 0.00 and 1.00 with the former showing that there is no reliability whereas the latter shows perfect reliability, which is very difficult to achieve in practice. Reliability coefficient shows the extent to which an instrument is free of error variance, which is caused by factors such as ambiguous questions, language and mood of respondent or even the way the researcher ordered the item in the instrument. To determine reliability, the test-retest method was used. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) say this involves administering the same instrument twice to the same group of subjects keeping all initial conditions constant. Test-retest method was chosen among other methods because the same instruments are administered to the subjects unlike equivalent form technique where two equivalent instruments are used. It is not time consuming unlike in split-half technique where the instrument is divided into two parts and the subjects' scores from one part are correlated with scores from the second part. Then the scores from both testing periods were correlated. The instruments obtained 0.57% which shows reliability. After field work, the questionnaires were cross examined to ascertain their accuracy, completeness and uniformity. The collected data was then coded and organized into different categories. Qualitative data was analysed using tables, graphs, charts and explanations. Detailed information about the phenomenon being studied is obtained and then trends, relationships and patterns are established. Quantitative data was analyzed using inferential and descriptive statistics. To establish whether there was a significant difference between the samples a selected probability level analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used.

STUDY RESULTS

Completion rate is the proportion of the sample that participated as intended in all the research procedures. Out of 27 head teachers, 25 (92.5%) returned the questionnaires. Out of 154 teachers sampled, 150

(97.4%) returned the questionnaires. These return rates were deemed adequate for the study and hence were used to data analysis.

Demographic information of respondents

This section presents the demographic information of the respondents namely the teachers and the head teachers. The section presents the demographic information of the head teachers first and then that of the teachers.

Demographic data of the head teachers

To establish the category of the schools, the heads were asked to indicate the category of their schools. Data on the category of schools indicated that 23 (92%) were mixed day schools while 2 (8.0%) were mixed boarding. The head teachers were also asked to indicate their gender. Their responses indicated that 18 (72%) were male while 7 (28%) were female. This implies that most of the schools were headed by male heads. Only a small percentage of the female heads headed schools. The data further shows gender imbalance in terms of gender distribution in the schools. These findings indicate that the government policy of having at least 30% of female in every sector has not been adhered to in the district. The head teachers were also required to indicate their professional qualifications. The findings are presented in Table 1. Findings indicated that a majority of the head teachers had a Bachelor of Education degree as represented by 9 (36%) while others had a P1 certificate and also ATS IV as indicated by 8 (24%) the data implies that all the teachers were qualified as teachers in the primary schools and as well as heads. This means that they have been adequately trained and hence are able to provide information on how leadership styles influences academic performance. The head teachers were also asked to indicate the number of years that they had been school heads. Findings imply that a majority of the head teachers had been school heads for the duration of below 6 years as indicated by 18 (72%). There were others who had an experience of above 7 years. The duration of time that the school heads had been heads is deemed for them to have had adequate information on how leadership styles influence academic performance in the schools. They were also asked to state the duration that they had been classroom teachers in the schools. Findings indicated that 4 (16%) had a classroom experience of less than a year, while the majority had a classroom experience of above 4 years as indicated by 13 (52%). The experience of the teachers is important in that teachers may have had experience of how leadership styles of head teachers influence the academic performance of their schools. The respondents were also asked to indicate the number of streams in

their schools. Data revealed that most of the school had two streams as indicated by a majority of 23 (92%) of the respondents. Only a few schools 2 (8%) had three schools. The data implies that the schools were not very large and hence manageable. The heads were also asked to indicate whether they had attended any course or seminar on primary school headship. The data indicated that 19 (76%) had attended while 6 (24%) had not. Asked to indicate who had organized the course, they responded as indicated in Table 2.

Data revealed that the course had been organized by different organizers.

They were also asked to state the duration of the course. Data revealed that the majority of the courses attended were one week as indicated by 15 (52%) of the head teachers. The data implies that a majority of the courses were short courses and hence may not have adequately prepared the head teachers in management.

Teachers' demographic data

The demographic data of the teachers were based on their gender, highest academic qualification, age in years and the duration they had been in the teaching profession. To establish the gender of the teachers, they were asked to indicate their gender. Data revealed that 58 (38.7%) were male while 92 (61.3%) were female. The data shows that the district has more female teachers than the males. The study also sought to establish their highest academic qualifications. Data revealed that the majority of the teachers 78 (52%) were P1 holders, while others had diploma, ATS and even Bachelor of education holders. The data shows that all the teachers were qualified as primary school teachers and hence able to identify how leadership styles influence performance in the schools. The teachers were also asked to indicate their age in years. Data on the distribution of teachers by age revealed that close to half of the teachers were aged between 36 and 40 years as indicated by 48 (32%). Only a small percentage 30 (20%) were aged below 35 years. This means teachers were relatively young and hence considered as energetic in the teaching profession. The percentage that was above 40 years was represented by over 38% which give them more experience in determining the leadership styles of their head teachers and how it influenced academic performance. The teachers were also asked to indicate how many years they had been in the teaching profession. Data revealed that most teachers had a considerable experience as teachers. For example, 26 (17.3%) had been in the teaching profession for between 1 and 5 years, while a majority 109 (72.7%) had been in the teaching profession for a duration of above 11 years. This is a relatively long experience in the profession which may have given the teachers knowledge and experience on how leadership

Table 1. distribution of headteachers by professional qualifications.

Qualifications	F	%
Bachelor of Education	9	36.0
Diploma	6	24.0
PI	2	8.0
ATS IV	8	32.0
Total	25	100.0

Table 2. Responses on the organizer of the course.

Organisers	F	%
KRT	2	8.0
S.E.P, S.B.T.H	2	8.0
Life skill	5	20.0
Leadership, Managerial	10	40.0
Primary school action for better health Life skill	4	16.0
PRISM	2	8.0
Total	25	100.0

Table 3. Teachers' view on the performance of their schools.

Performance	F	%
Above average	7	4.7
Average	98	65.3
Below average	45	30.0
Total	150	100.0

styles influence academic performance of pupils in the schools.

Leadership style and academic performance

This study sought to establish the effects of head teachers' leadership qualities on pupils' performance in Kikuyu district. The variables of the study were the relationship between the head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance, involvement of teachers by head teachers in discussion of academic performance, the in-servicing of head teachers and how it impacted on their leadership styles, and the perception of teachers towards the leadership styles of the head teachers. This section discusses and analyses the data on this issue,

Relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance in K.C.P.E.

To establish the relationship between the head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance in K.C.P.E., the teachers were asked to indicate how they viewed the performance of their schools in K.C.P.E. Their responses are presented in Table 3. Findings indicated that a majority of the teachers were of the opinion that the performance of K.C.P.E. in their schools was average as noted by 98 (65.3%). This shows that the schools did not perform well in the examinations hence the need to establish whether the poor performance could have been

contributed by the head teachers' leadership styles. To determine the relationship between head teachers' leadership style and students' performance, the mean scores of different schools were correlated with the means and standard deviations of different category of schools. The relationships were checked through coefficients of skewness and kurtosis outside the normal limits. The non-parametric correlation Spearman's ρ was used to determine the relationships. Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance (r -value = 0.004) this was tested for significant at 0.001 level of significant. These findings further indicate that the leadership style of the head teachers as perceived by the teachers had an effect on the student' performance. The findings concur with Kimacia (2007) who observes that there is relationship between leadership styles and students' performance in national examinations and notes that democratic head teachers had higher performance than autocratic head teachers. Huka (2003) contradicts by noting that head teachers who are rated most democratic had the lowest mean score while autocratic head teachers had higher mean score. Muli (2005) and Wangui (2007) had the same findings.

Extent of involvement of teachers by head teachers in discussing performance

To establish the extent to which the head teachers involved the teachers in issues of the schools, the head

Table 4. Relationship between headteachers' leadership styles across gender.

Leadership style	Gender	Mean	Sd	t	p
Autocratic	Male	76.0	1.9	.723	.612
	Female	2.1	2.1		
Democratic	Male	2.4	2.9	.870	.143
	Female	1.4	6.6		
Laissez –faire	Male	80.5	3.7	1.101	.231
	Female	72.2	3.9		

Table 5. One way ANOVA for relationship between headteachers' leadership styles across age.

Leadership style		Ss	Df	Ms	f	p
Autocratic	Between group	5.05	2	2.2	.230	.723
	Within group	76.2	7	88.4		
Democratic	Between group	81.6	2	56.7	.125	.008
	Within group	342.8	20	7.3		
Laissez –faire	Between group	12.4	2	5.6	.188	.991
	Within group	342.5	11	29.2		

teachers were asked to indicate how often they met with the staff to discuss issues of the schools. The data on the frequency of head teachers meeting teachers is presented in Table 4.13. Data on the number of times that the head teachers met the teachers indicate that they met them thrice a term. There is always need for constant meetings between the teachers and head teachers to discuss the academic progress of the pupils. This implies that the number of times that the head teachers meet teachers was therefore not adequate and could affect pupils' performance. They were also asked to indicate what was discussed during such meetings. Data revealed that teachers and head teachers meet to discuss school performance and discipline. Other issues discussed included improvement of the schools' standards and conveying information from the education officials. The teachers were also asked to indicate the frequency at which they meet with their head teachers. Data showed that the majority of the teachers indicated that they met with their head teachers for about three or four times a term, findings that correspond with the head teachers' responses who indicated that they meet teachers three times a term. Findings on the issues discussed during the meetings included performance and discipline. These findings indicate that although the head teachers and teachers discussed school matters which included performance and discipline, the number of times that they meet may not have been very adequate since there is

need for continued meetings for planning and monitoring academic progress of the pupils.

Relationship between the headteachers' selected demographic variables and their leadership styles

To establish how selected demographic variables of the head teachers influenced their leadership styles, one way ANOVA was used to calculate the significant difference. To establish the relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across gender Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (ρ or r) was calculated which reflects the degree of linear relationship between two variables. The findings are presented in Table 4. According to the table there was no significant relationship in the autocratic ($t=0.723$, $p > .05$), democratic ($t = .870$, $p > .05$) and laissez -faire ($t = 1.101$, $p > .05$). These findings disagree with findings of Ndegwa (2002) who found that female head teachers practice high consideration structure while male head teachers practice high initiating structure. The findings disagree with Achieng (2000) who found that female head teachers are found to be autocratic while male ones as democratic. This finding concurs with findings of Gacanja (2007) but contradicts the findings of Wangui (2007) who found that male head teachers are rated as being autocratic while their female counterparts as democratic.

Table 6. Difference in the headteachers' leadership styles across administrative experience.

Leadership style		Ss	Df	Ms	F	P
Autocratic	Between group	8.945	4	1.978	.287	.826
	Within group	564.765	5	9.897	0322	
Democratic	Between group	41.987	4	14.543	1.645	.244
	Within group	178.454	17	11.342		
Laissez- faire	Between group	39.345	3	12.231	.532	.731
	Within group	387.564	11	30.436		

Table 7. Relationship between headteachers' leadership styles across marital status.

Leadership style		Ss	Df	Ms	F	P
Autocratic	Between group	4.89	2	1.9	.232	.804
	Within group	88.7	7	98.9		
Democratic	Between group	79.8	2	66.5	.133	.112
	Within group	324.65	21	8.3		
Laissez –faire	Between group	13.4	2	6.5	.099	.867
	Within group	343.56	10	26.5		

Table 7. Relationship between headteachers' leadership styles across marital status.

Leadership style		Ss	Df	Ms	F	P
Autocratic	Between group	4.89	2	1.9	.232	.804
	Within group	88.7	7	98.9		
Democratic	Between group	79.8	2	66.5	.133	.112
	Within group	324.65	21	8.3		
Laissez –faire	Between group	13.4	2	6.5	.099	.867
	Within group	343.56	10	26.5		

To test for any significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across age, one way Anova (F) was used to test significance of mean differences. The data is presented in Table 5. For each style of leadership drawn from the teachers' perception, means between and within group Sum of Squares (ss) were worked out, degree of freedom (df) and mean scores (ms). The findings demonstrated that there was no significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across age. Autocratic leadership revealed ($F=.230, p > .05$), democratic ($F= .125, p > .05$) and laissez- faire ($F= .188, p > .05$). The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across age. These findings agree with Kimacia (2007) states that

there is no significant difference between head teachers' age and leadership style. This contradicts with Achieng (2000) in her study that leadership styles are as a result of age. These findings contradict Huka (2003) who notes that teachers aged 40 years and above rated head teachers as being democratic while those between 20-25 years rated them as autocratic. To find out whether there was any significant difference between head teachers' leadership styles across years of experience as head teachers, the ANOVA test (F) was used to establish whether there was any linear relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and years of experience as a teacher before appointment to headship. The findings are presented in Table 6. The results indicate there were no significant differences in the head teachers' leadership

Table 8. Teachers' responses on the type of leadership in their schools shown by initiating structures.

Statement	Always		Often		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
He/ she makes his / her attitudes (intentions) clear to the staff	39	26	28	18.7	34	22.7	29	19.3	20	13.3
He/ she tries new ideas with staff	23	15.3	38	25.3	41	27.3	24	16.0	24	16.0
He/ she is very strict	37	24.7	26	17.3	46	30.7	27	18.0	14	9.3
He/ she assigns staff members particular duties.	75	50	20	13.3	36	24.0	14	9.3	5	3.3
He/ she speaks in a manner not to be questioned	54	36.0	19	12.7	28	18.7	30	20.0	19	12.7
He/ she makes sure that His/ her part is understood by all members	63	42	19	12.7	12	8.0	28	18.7	28	18.7
He/ she asks that staff members follow standards rules and regulations	113	75.3	14	9.3	12	8.0	11	7.3	-	-
He/ she lets staff members know what is expected of them	94	62.7	11	7.3	8	5.3	25	16.7	12	8.0
He/ she lets staff members working to capacity	91	60.7	16	10.7	17	11.3	20	13.3	6	4.0
He/ she does personal favours for the staff	13	8.7	17	11.3	34	22.7	53	35.3	53	35.3
He/ she does things to make it pleasant to be a member to staff	32	21.3	32	21.3	31	20.7	29	19.3	26	17.3
He/ she is very easy to understand	54	36.0	11	7.3	32	21.3	17	11.3	36	24.0
He/ she finds time to listen to members of staff	60	40.0	16	10.7	31	20.7	10	6.7	33	22.0
He/ she keeps to himself/ herself	28	18.7	17	11.3	17	11.3	48	32.0	34	22.7
He/ she looks out for the personal welfare of individual staff members.	61	40.7	24	16.0	21	14.0	20	13.3	24	16.0
He/ she gets staff approval on important matters before going ahead	46	30.7	22	14.7	20	13.3	25	16.7	37	24.7
He/ she is approachable and friendly	62	41.3	24	16.0	30	20.0	19	12.7	15	10.0
He/ she is willing to make changes	62	41.3	17	11.3	22	14.7	25	16.7	24	16.0

styles across their teaching experience. That was revealed by autocratic leadership style ($F=.296, p > .05$), democratic leadership ($F=1.645, p > .05$) and laissez-faire ($F=.532, p > .05$). These findings also disagree with findings of Huka (2003) who found out that there is a relationship between head teachers' leadership style and professional experience. He found that head teachers with experience of 16 years and above are rated higher on consideration of their behavior. The findings further disagree with Achieng (2000) who found that head teachers with administration experience of 11-15 years are being democratic than those with less administrative experience. This concurs with Wangui (2007) but agree with findings of Kimacia (2007) who found no relationship between administrative experience and leadership style. To establish whether there was any difference in the leadership style against marital status, the ANOVA was calculated. The results are tabulated in Table 7. To establish the relationship between the leadership styles of the head teachers across age the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (p or ρ) was used. The findings demonstrated that there was no significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across marital status. Autocratic revealed ($F=.232, p > .05$), democratic

revealed ($F=.133, p > .05$) and laissez-faire ($F=.099, p > .05$). The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across marital status.

Influence of in-service courses of head teachers on their leadership styles

The study also investigated whether the in-service courses attended by the head teachers influenced their leadership styles. Data indicated that 19 (76.0%) had attended an in-service course and asked whether the in-service had influenced their leadership style, the head teacher only 6 (24%) indicated that the course influenced them in their leadership styles. This was shown by the head teachers who indicate that the course that they attended was based on leadership and management. This implies that the courses attended were not leadership oriented and hence could not have influenced the leadership styles of the head teachers.

Teachers' perception of their head teachers' rated leadership styles

To establish the teachers' perception of the leadership styles of their head teachers, the teachers were asked to

indicate who made decisions in the schools. Data on this item showed that half the number of teachers indicating that the decisions were made by the head teachers solely while the other half indicated that decisions in their school were made by all the teachers and the head teachers. These findings show that although teachers were involved in decision making process, half of the school heads made decision on themselves which indicates a dictatorial type of leadership. The teachers were also asked to rate the leadership styles of their head teachers. Teachers' responses indicated that most of the teachers viewed their head teachers as autocratic as indicated by 70 (46.7%) while 68 (45.3%) stated that their head teachers were democratic. Aldag (2001) observes that a democratic leader is one who shares decision making authority with the group. These findings show that although there was a balanced number of respondents who indicated that they were democratic an equal number stated that they were autocratic which shows that the two types of leadership were in existence in the district and which could translate into having the two styles influencing the performance differently. To further establish the leadership style of the head teachers, teachers were requested to indicate how their head teachers portrayed their leadership in statements given them. The data is presented in Table 8.

Frequency

- 1) Never
- 2) Rarely
- 3) Occasionally
- 4) Often
- 5) Always

Findings revealed that the majority of the head teachers initiated structures. For example 39 (26%) of the teachers indicated that their head teachers always made their intentions clear to the staff, 28 (18.7%) did it often while 34 (22.7%) did it occasionally. Results also revealed that most of the head teachers were very strict as shown by 37 (24.7%) who said the heads were always strict, 26 (25.3%) were often very strict. Half of the teachers 75 (50%) indicated that their head teachers always assigned duties while 20 (13.3%) did that often. It was also seen that head teachers spoke in a manner not to be questioned as indicated by 54 (36%) who said they did so always. This shows that most of the head teachers were autocratic. This can affect the schools in K.C.P.E. performance in that the teachers may opt to perform below their capability after realizing that their views are not considered. There will be hostility, hatred and open defiance toward school administration leading to poor performance. Findings also revealed that the head teachers always asked their staff members to follow the standard rules and regulations as shown by 113 (75.3%)

who said that they did it always. The majority were of the opinion that their head teachers let staff members know what is expected of them as indicated by 94 (62.7%), it was also shown that the head teachers let staff members work to capacity as indicated by 91 (60.7%) who did it always. Results also revealed that headteachers were democratic in that they find time to listen to members of staff, look out for the personal welfare of individual staff members, were approachable and friendly and were willing to make changes. Findings indicated that the head teachers were viewed by a majority of the teachers as autocratic.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of head teachers' leadership styles on performance of K.C.P.E examinations in public primary schools in Kikuyu district. Five research questions were formulated to guide the study. Research questions which sought to establish whether there is a relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance in KCPE. Research question two sought to identify the extent to which head teachers involve teachers by calling joint meetings to discuss performance of students in academics. The third research question sought to determine whether there is any relationship between the head teachers' selected demographic variables and their leadership styles. Research question four sought to examine whether exposing head teachers to in-service courses has any significant influence on their leadership styles while research question five sought to examine how head teachers' leadership styles are rated by teachers in public primary schools. This study adopted ex-post facto research design. A sample of 27 head teachers and 154 teachers were sampled from 27 primary schools in the district. The findings revealed the following:

- There was a significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and students performance (r -value = 0.40044) this was tested for significant at 0.001 level of significant. These findings further indicate that the leadership style of the head teachers as perceived by the teachers had an effect on the students' performance.
- Head teachers rarely meet teachers to discuss school performance. This was indicated by 20 (80%) of the head teachers and a majority of teachers. During such meetings, the head teachers and the teachers discussed performance and discipline of the schools.
- There was no significant relationship between head teachers' gender and their leadership styles. This was shown by the p values which were greater than .05 degree of freedom.

- There was no significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across age as shown by autocratic revealed ($F=.230, p > .05$), democratic revealed ($F= .125, p > .05$) and laissez- faire ($F= .188, p > .05$). This means age did not significantly influence head teachers' leadership styles.
- There were no significant differences in the head teachers' leadership styles across their teaching experience. The test revealed that the p value was greater than .05 degree of freedom.
- There was no significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across marital status.
- Teachers perceived their head teachers as autocratic as indicated by 70 (46.7%) while 68 (45.3%) stated that their head teachers were democratic. This was shown by head teachers' initiating structures which indicated autocratic leadership characteristics than other styles of leadership.

Based on the findings the study concludes that there was a significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and students' performance. It was also concluded that head teachers rarely meet teachers to discuss school performance. The study concludes that although the head teachers and teachers discussed school matters which included performance and discipline, the number of times that they meet may not have been very adequate since there is need for continued meetings for planning and monitoring academic progress of the pupils. In addition the study concluded that there was no significant relationship between head teachers' gender, age and teaching experience, and that there was no significant relationship between head teachers' leadership styles across marital status. This implies that the courses attended were not leadership oriented and hence could not have influenced the leadership styles of the head teachers. It was finally concluded that teachers perceived their head teachers as autocratic. This was shown by head teachers' initiating structures which indicated autocratic leadership characteristics than other styles of leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the study made the following recommendations:

- Head teachers should use the most appropriate leadership style that facilitates collective responsibility and which creates a conducive teaching and learning environment in schools.
- That there is need for facilitating head teachers' leadership styles as they had a direct relationship with students' academic performance.

- That there is need to involve teachers and parents in matters of students' performance in schools.
- That head teachers should be in-serviced in areas of management so that the teachers can also view them as democratic which is a recommended style of leadership.

Suggestions for further research

Taking the limitations and delimitations of the study the following suggestions for further research were made.

- A study on the relationship between head teachers' level of motivation and students' academic achievement.
- A study on teachers' perception of head teachers' leadership styles and their job performance.
- A study on the effect of students' characteristics on performance of KCPE.
- Effect of head teachers' related factors and students' performance.

REFERENCES

- Achieng OU (2000). "A Study of the Effects of Leadership Styles on Performance in K.C. S. E. Examination in Nairobi." Unpublished M.Ed. Project, University of Nairobi.
- Aldag RJ (2001) *Organisational Behaviour and Management*. An Integrated Skills Approach. U.S.A: Southwestern Press.
- Ang BL (1995). "An Investigation of the Leadership Styles of Principals in Selected Secondary Schools in the District of Muar Johor, Malaysia." M. Ed. Thesis.
- Bell J (1993). *Doing Your Research Project*, London, Britain: Buckingham Open University Press.
- Bell J, Bush T (2003). *Educational Management and Administration* .Journal of the British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society: London Sage Publications vol.3 (1): 78-82
- Bersey, Blanchard (1995). An investigation of leadership styles of principals in selected schools in The District of Muar Johor Malaysia M. Ed thesis, Malaysia.
- Best JK, Khan JM (2004). *Research in Education*: New Delhi, Prentice Hall of India. Burns JM (1978). *Leadership*. New York, U.S.A: Harper Collins.
- Farrant JS (1997). *Principles and Practice of Education*. Singapore: Longman.
- Gachanja RW (2007). "The Effects of Women Leadership Styles on the Performance of K.C.P.E Examination in Public Primary Schools in Limuru Division." Unpublished M.Ed. Project, University of Nairobi pg. 70
- House RW (1996). "A path-goal Theory of Leader Effectiveness". *Administrative Science Quarterly* vol. 16: 25-29

- Huka MD (2003). "A Study of Head teachers' Management Styles and Performance of K.C.S.E Examinations in Secondary Schools in Mandera District." Unpublished Med Project, University of Nairobi.
- Kathuri, Pals D (1987). Introduction to Education Research .Njoro, Kenya, Egerton University.
- Kimacia MK (2007). "Relationship Between Head teachers' Leadership Styles and Girl Student Performance in K.C.S.E in Public Secondary Schools in Narok District." Unpublished M.Ed. Project, University of Nairobi pg 31.
- Luthan F (2002). Organizational Behaviour. New McGraw Hill Book Company New York.
- Mugenda, Olive M, Abel GM (1999). Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. Nairobi, Kenya: Acts Press pg 45, 72, 97.
- Muli MM (2005). Effects of Head teachers Management Styles on Performance in Physics at K.C.S.E Examination in Mutomo Division, Kitui District." Unpublished Med Project, University of Nairobi pg72,75,76.
- Muthondu GW (2007). "Teachers' Perception of Female Head teachers' Leadership Styles in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi Province." Unpublished M.Ed. Project, University of Nairobi pg.75.
- Mwalala DB (2007). "The Influence of Head teachers' Leadership Styles on K.C.S.E Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Taita District." Unpublished M.Ed. Project, university of Nairobi pg 44, 65.
- Ndegwa LW(2002). "Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Styles of Male and Female Head teachers in Muranga District, Kenya." Unpublished M.Ed. Project, University of Nairobi.
- Newstrom JM, Keith (2002). Human Behaviour at work: Organisational Behaviour Newyork: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company.
- Okumbe J (2001). Human Resources Management- An educational perspective. Nairobi, Kenya: Educational development and research bureau pg. 6, 7.
- Omelayo B (2009) "Effects of Leadership Styles on Job-Related Tension and Psychological Sense of Community in Work Organizations: A Case study of Four Organizations in Lagos State, Nigeria." Bagladesh. E-J. Sociol. 4,(2). 133-157
- Otiende JE (1994). Theory and practice of education, Nairobi East African Education Publishers Limited Republic of Kenya. *National Report on the Development of Education in Kenya. Nairobi: Government printer, 2001.*
- Wangui EK (2007). "An Investigation of How Leadership Styles Affect Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Mathioya Division, Muranga District." Unpublished M. Ed. Project, University of Nairobi pg.45, 46, 39, 40.
- Wayne KH (2008). Educational Administration. *Theory , Research and Practice.* McGraw-Hill Publishers-New York.