INFLUENCE OF PERFORMANCE GOAL SETTING ON ENHANCING TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

This study examines the influence of performance goal setting on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya, within the broader context of performance appraisal systems. Guided by Goal Setting Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Resource-Based View Theory, the research investigates how performance goal setting, as a component of the Teachers Service Commission's (TSC) appraisal framework, enhances teacher effectiveness, measured primarily by student outcomes in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations. A mixed-method research design was employed, targeting 93 public secondary schools, 93 principals, and 1,216 teachers, with a sample of 28 principals and 295 teachers selected through simple random and stratified sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides, analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses. Findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between performance goal setting and teacher performance (b=0.143, p=0.048<0.05), with goal specificity, clarity, commitment, and alignment with personal values identified as key drivers. However, some teachers felt excluded from the goal-setting process, indicating

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inconsistencies in implementation. The study recommends that school administrators and the TSC enhance goal-setting frameworks by ensuring teacher involvement, setting clear and achievable goals, and providing regular feedback and incentives to boost motivation. It further suggests tailored training programmes to strengthen teachers' goal-setting skills and alignment with institutional objectives, ultimately improving teaching quality and student outcomes in Kajiado County's public secondary schools.

Keywords: goal setting, teacher performance, teacher motivation, student outcomes

1. Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of societal development, shaping the intellectual, social, and economic potential of individuals and communities. In Kenya, public secondary schools play a critical role in preparing students for higher education and the workforce, with the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) serving as a key benchmark for academic achievement. Teachers, as the primary facilitators of learning, are central to this process, and their performance directly influences student outcomes. Recognizing this, the Kenyan government, through the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), has implemented performance appraisal systems to enhance teacher effectiveness and ensure accountability in the education sector. A pivotal component of these systems is performance goal setting, which involves establishing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals to guide teachers' efforts and align them with institutional objectives. However, in Kajiado County, persistent challenges such as low KCSE mean scores, resource constraints, and inadequate implementation of performance management practices raise questions about the efficacy of these appraisal systems, particularly the role of goal setting in improving teacher performance.

The concept of performance appraisal in education is rooted in the broader field of human resource management (HRM), where systematic evaluations are used to assess employees' contributions, provide feedback, and foster professional development. According to Walker, Damanpour and Devece (2011), performance evaluation is a methodical process that quantifies work-related behaviors and outcomes to gauge capabilities and promote growth. In the context of education, Elliott (2015) describes performance appraisal as an ongoing process aimed at recognizing, measuring, and enhancing teachers' performance in alignment with organizational goals. In Kenya, the TSC introduced the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) system in 2016, marking a shift from infrequent inspections to a more structured, participatory, and transparent evaluation framework. This system emphasizes goal setting, professional knowledge appraisal, feedback, and reward systems to enhance teacher productivity and student outcomes (TSC, 2016).

Performance goal setting, grounded in Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory (1979), is a critical element of the TPAD system. The theory posits that specific and challenging goals, coupled with effective feedback, enhance task performance by

increasing motivation and focus. In educational settings, goal setting provides teachers with clear expectations, enabling them to prioritize tasks, develop effective teaching strategies, and align their efforts with school objectives. Studies such as Locke and Latham (2020) and Brown and Warren (2021) highlight that goal specificity and clarity reduce ambiguity, while moderately challenging goals encourage teachers to stretch their abilities, leading to improved performance. However, the effectiveness of goal setting depends on factors such as teacher involvement, goal alignment with personal values, and the provision of timely feedback (Meyer & Becker, 2021). Despite its theoretical promise, the practical implementation of goal setting in Kenyan public secondary schools, particularly in Kajiado County, faces challenges that warrant investigation.

Kajiado County, located in Kenya's Rift Valley region, is classified as an Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) area, characterized by unique socio-economic and environmental challenges. Public secondary schools in the county face issues such as insufficient financial resources, teacher shortages, and poor communication of performance management practices by school administrators (Nguuro, 2017). These challenges overburden teachers, who are tasked with delivering instructional services, ensuring student welfare, and supporting administrative functions, often with inadequate compensation and support. The result is low teacher motivation and high turnover, as some educators leave for other professions. Data from 2021 to 2024 reveal a KCSE mean score of 5.56 (equivalent to a C- grade) in Kajiado County, significantly below the C+ required for university admission. In 2023, 78% of KCSE candidates in the county scored D+ or lower, with only a small fraction achieving C+ or above (Unguku, 2023). These poor academic outcomes, coupled with reports of declining student performance and strained teacher-student relationships, underscore the need to examine teacher performance management practices, particularly the role of performance goal setting.

The problem of subpar teacher performance in Kajiado County is multifaceted. Kiminza, Ogula, and Getui (2021) identify inadequate teaching and learning resources as a significant contributor to low KCSE results, while Malack (2025) points to staffing shortages as a critical issue. Additionally, Kamau, Balu, and Oringo (2018) highlight teachers' negative perceptions of appraisal systems, viewing them as burdensome due to extensive documentation requirements and a lack of clear reward mechanisms. The Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges by disrupting educational processes and forcing schools to adopt new technologies, for which many teachers were unprepared (Kathula, 2020). These factors collectively compromise teaching quality and necessitate a deeper exploration of how performance goal setting can address these issues and enhance teacher effectiveness.

This study was guided by three theoretical frameworks: Goal Setting Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Resource-Based View Theory. Goal Setting Theory (Locke and Latham, 1979) emphasizes the importance of clear, challenging, and mutually agreed-upon goals in driving performance. It identifies five core principles—clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity—that enhance the likelihood of success. Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) complements this by linking teachers' efforts to

performance and rewards, suggesting that motivation increases when teachers perceive a clear connection between their actions, appraisal outcomes, and incentives. The Resource-Based View Theory underscores the strategic value of human resources, positing that well-designed appraisal systems, including goal setting, can enhance teachers' skills and contribute to institutional competitiveness. Together, these theories provide a robust framework for understanding how performance goal setting influences teacher performance in Kajiado County's public secondary schools.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of performance goal setting on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. Specifically, it examines how goal specificity, clarity, commitment, and alignment with personal values contribute to teacher effectiveness, measured primarily through student KCSE performance. The study adopts a mixed-method research design, targeting 93 public secondary schools, 93 principals, and 1,216 teachers in the county. A sample of 28 principals and 295 teachers was selected using simple random and stratified sampling techniques. Data was collected through questionnaires and interview guides, with quantitative data analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analyses) and qualitative data examined through content analysis.

The significance of this study extends to multiple stakeholders. For teachers, it offers insights to enhance their professional practice through effective goal-setting strategies. School administrators can use the findings to refine performance appraisal systems, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Policymakers, including the Ministry of Education and TSC, will benefit from evidence to strengthen teacher appraisal policies, ensuring alignment with educational goals. The study also informs trade unions, such as the Kenya Union of Post-Primary Teachers (KUPPET), in advocating for improved teacher welfare and appraisal practices. For the academic community, it contributes to the literature on performance appraisal in education, serving as a resource for future research. Ultimately, the Kajiado County community stands to gain from improved teacher performance, leading to better KCSE outcomes and enhanced socio-economic opportunities for students.

Several assumptions underpin this study. It presupposes that participants provide truthful and reliable information about performance goal-setting practices and their impact on teacher effectiveness. It also assumes sufficient literature exists to support the investigation and that performance appraisals, including goal setting, contribute to teacher performance. Additionally, the study assumes a degree of uniformity across Kajiado County's public secondary schools in terms of infrastructure and administrative structures, enabling valid comparisons. It further posits that the current appraisal criteria are appropriate for evaluating teacher performance and that feedback positively influences professional development. Finally, it assumes adequate resources are available to support effective appraisal implementation.

The study acknowledges potential limitations, such as participant reluctance due to concerns about confidentiality or repercussions. To mitigate this, the researcher ensured strict confidentiality, obtained informed consent, and clarified the study's

academic purpose. The ASAL context of Kajiado County presents logistical challenges, such as poor road infrastructure, which were addressed by scheduling school visits during optimal times and using alternative transportation like motorcycles. The study is delimited to public secondary schools in Kajiado County, focusing on performance goal setting and its impact on teacher performance, measured through KCSE results from 2021 to 2024.

By exploring the role of performance goal setting, this study addressed a critical gap in the literature, as prior research (for example, Ogada, Momanyi and Mwalw'a, 2020; Kiprop, 2018) had focused more on general appraisal practices or non-educational sectors. It seeks to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing goal-setting frameworks, ensuring teacher involvement, and aligning goals with institutional and personal values. In doing so, it aims to contribute to improved teaching quality, better student outcomes, and the overall advancement of public secondary education in Kajiado County, Kenya.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Design
This study utilized a mixed-methods research design with a concurrent triangulation approach to investigate the influence of performance goal setting on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The design integrated quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between goal setting and teacher effectiveness. The quantitative component employed a cross-sectional survey to collect numerical data on performance goal setting and its impact, while the qualitative component used semi-structured interviews to explore contextual factors and stakeholder perspectives. This approach ensured robust findings by triangulating quantitative results with qualitative insights, aligning with established methodologies for educational research (Creswell, 2014; Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). The study was grounded in Goal Setting Theory (Locke and Latham, 1979), Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), and Resource-Based View Theory, which provided a theoretical framework for examining how specific, clear, and achievable goals enhance teacher performance.

2.2 Study Area
The research was conducted in Kajiado County, Kenya, an Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) region characterized by unique socio-economic and environmental challenges, including limited resources and poor infrastructure. The county hosts 93 public secondary schools, categorized as National, Extra County, County, and Sub-County schools, serving diverse student populations (County Government of Kajiado, 2021). This setting was selected due to its consistently low Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) mean scores (5.56, equivalent to a C- grade from 2021–2024), highlighting the need to examine teacher performance management practices (Unguku, 2023).

2.3 Study Population

The target population comprised 1,309 individuals, including 93 principals and 1,216 teachers from the 93 public secondary schools in Kajiado County, as documented by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019) and the County Government of Kajiado (2021). Principals were included as key informants due to their role as appraisers in the Teachers Service Commission's (TSC) Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) system, while teachers represented the primary subjects of performance evaluation. The population included teachers employed by both the TSC and school Boards of Management, ensuring a broad representation of the teaching workforce.

2.4 Sampling and Sample Size

A combination of stratified sampling and simple random sampling was used to select participants, ensuring representation across school types and minimizing bias. The 93 schools were stratified into four categories—National, Extra County, County, and Sub-County—to account for variations in resources and administrative structures. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula at a 95% confidence level (margin of error = 0.05):

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}$$

Where:
n = sample size
N = total population (1,309)
e = margin of error (0.05)

$$[n = \frac{1,309}{1 + 1,309 \times 0.0025} = \frac{1,309}{1 + 3.2725} \approx 323]$$

Thus, a sample of 323 respondents was selected, comprising 28 principals (one per sample school) and 295 teachers. Stratified sampling ensured proportional representation from each school category, while simple random sampling was applied within strata to select teachers, giving each an equal chance of inclusion. Principals were purposively sampled due to their administrative role in performance appraisals, ensuring their insights were captured.

2.5 Data Collection Instruments

Two primary instruments were developed to collect data:

2.5.1 Teacher Questionnaire

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data from teachers. It included five sections:
- **Section A**: Demographic and professional details (gender, age, education level, work experience, employment category, school type).

- **Section B**: Performance goal setting, assessing involvement, goal specificity, clarity, achievability, alignment with personal values, and perceived impact on performance using Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree).
- **Sections C–E**: Additional appraisal components (professional knowledge, feedback, reward systems) to contextualize goal setting within the broader TPAD framework.

The questionnaire was pretested for reliability, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of 0.9497 for related constructs (Kiprop, 2018). Validity was ensured by aligning items with study objectives and consulting educational administration experts.

2.5.2 Principal Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from principals. It included open-ended questions on:
- The role of performance goal setting in enhancing teacher performance.
- Challenges and facilitators of effective goal setting.
- Recommendations for improving appraisal systems.
- Interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of administrative perspectives, complementing the quantitative data.

2.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted systematically to ensure ethical compliance and data quality:

2.6.1 Ethical Approvals
- Permissions were obtained from Machakos University (Introduction Letter), the Kajiado County Director of Education, and the Kajiado County Commissioner. A research permit was secured
- Participants provided informed consent via a signed form, which outlined the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality measures.

2.6.2 Questionnaire Administration
- Questionnaires were distributed to the 295 teachers during school visits. The researcher provided clear instructions to ensure accurate responses, and teachers completed the questionnaires independently to reduce bias. Completed questionnaires were collected on-site or at a later agreed time.

2.6.3 Interviews
- Face-to-face interviews with the 28 principals were conducted in private settings to encourage open responses. Each interview lasted 20–30 minutes, with responses recorded and transcribed verbatim.

- To address logistical challenges in Kajiado's ASAL region, such as poor road infrastructure, data collection was scheduled during favorable weather conditions, and motorcycles were used for access to remote schools.

2.6.4 Response Rate

The study achieved a **94.4% response rate**, deemed sufficient for robust analysis (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). This high response rate was facilitated by clear communication, trust-building, and follow-up efforts.

2.7 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to address the research objective and test the null hypothesis (H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between performance goal setting and teacher performance).

2.7.1 Quantitative Analysis

- Data from questionnaires were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.
- **Descriptive Statistics**: Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to summarize responses on performance goal setting (e.g., involvement, goal clarity, impact). Results were presented in tables, pie charts, and figures for clarity.
- **Inferential Statistics**:
  - **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient**: Used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between performance goal setting and teacher performance.
  - **Simple Linear Regression**: Conducted to determine the statistical significance of performance goal setting's effect on teacher performance, with significance set at $p < 0.05$. The regression model tested the hypothesis, with teacher performance (measured via KCSE results) as the dependent variable and performance goal setting as the independent variable.
  - **Multiple Linear Regression**: Performed to evaluate the combined effect of performance goal setting and other appraisal components (professional knowledge, feedback, reward systems) on teacher performance, with results reported in model summaries, ANOVA, and coefficient tables.

2.7.2 Qualitative Analysis

- Interview transcripts were subjected to **content analysis**, where responses were coded and categorized into themes (e.g., goal-setting processes, challenges, impacts). Themes were aligned with the study's objectives to provide contextual depth.

- o Qualitative findings were triangulated with quantitative results to validate conclusions and enhance the interpretation of performance goal setting's impact.

2.8 Abbreviations and Acronyms
- ASAL: Arid and Semi-Arid Land
- BoM: Board of Management
- KCSE: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
- KUPPET: Kenya Union of Post-Primary Teachers
- M: Mean
- SD: Standard Deviation
- SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- TPAD: Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development
- TSC: Teachers Service Commission

3. Results

This study investigated the influence of performance goal setting on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya, using a mixed-methods approach. The findings are presented in two sections: quantitative results, which include descriptive and inferential statistics, and qualitative results, which provide thematic insights from principal interviews. The results are organized to address the research objective and test the null hypothesis (H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between performance goal setting and teacher performance).

3.1 Response Rate
The study targeted a sample of 323 respondents, comprising 295 teachers and 28 principals from 28 public secondary schools in Kajiado County. A total of 305 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 94.4% (278 teachers and 27 principals). This high response rate, considered adequate for robust analysis (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009), was attributed to effective communication, trust-building, and follow-up efforts during data collection.

3.2 Demographic Characteristics
The demographic profile of respondents provided context for interpreting the findings. Among the 278 teacher respondents, 59.7% were male, and 40.3% were female, reflecting a slightly male-dominated teaching workforce in Kajiado County. Age distribution showed that 45.3% of teachers were aged 31–40 years, 28.1% were 41–50 years, 18.7% were 21–30 years, and 7.9% were above 50 years, indicating a relatively experienced workforce. Education levels revealed that 66.9% held a Bachelor's degree, 22.3% had a diploma, 7.2% had a Master's degree, and 3.6% held other qualifications (e.g., certificate

or postgraduate diploma). Regarding teaching experience, 38.1% had 6–10 years, 29.5% had 11–15 years, 18.7% had 1–5 years, and 13.7% had over 15 years, suggesting a mix of novice and veteran teachers. Employment categories included 84.2% employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and 15.8% by school Boards of Management (BoM). Principals, predominantly male (74.1%), had similar educational and experience profiles, with all holding administrative roles in their respective schools.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics for Performance Goal Setting

Quantitative data on performance goal setting were collected using a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree). The findings, summarized in Table 1, reflect teachers' perceptions of various aspects of performance goal setting within the TSC's Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) system.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Performance Goal Setting

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
I was involved in setting my performance targets	2.89	1.22	Neutral
My performance targets are clear and specific	2.56	1.03	Agree
My performance targets are achievable	2.74	1.15	Neutral
I am committed to achieving my performance targets	2.33	0.98	Agree
My performance targets align with my personal values	2.67	1.09	Neutral
Performance goal setting improves my teaching effectiveness	2.48	1.01	Agree

The results indicate varied perceptions of performance goal setting. Teachers generally agreed that their performance targets were clear and specific (M = 2.56, SD = 1.03) and that goal setting improved teaching effectiveness (M = 2.48, SD = 1.01). They also showed commitment to achieving their targets (M = 2.33, SD = 0.98). However, responses were neutral regarding involvement in setting targets (M = 2.89, SD = 1.22), achievability of targets (M = 2.74, SD = 1.15), and alignment with personal values (M = 2.67, SD = 1.09). These findings suggest that while goal clarity and commitment were strengths, teacher involvement and goal alignment require improvement.

School type analysis revealed differences in perceptions. Teachers in National and Extra County schools reported higher agreement with goal clarity (M = 2.41, SD = 0.95) and achievability (M = 2.58, SD = 1.07) compared to those in County (M = 2.67, SD = 1.10) and Sub-County schools (M = 2.79, SD = 1.18). This variation may reflect better resources and administrative support in higher-tier schools.

3.3 Inferential Statistics
3.3.1 Correlation Analysis

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was calculated to examine the relationship between performance goal setting and teacher performance, measured primarily through student Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results from

2021–2024. The results, presented in Table 2, indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation.

Table 2: Correlation Between Performance Goal Setting and Teacher Performance

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value
Performance Goal Setting	0.308	0.000*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$.

The correlation coefficient (r = 0.308, p = 0.000) suggests a moderate positive relationship between performance goal setting and teacher performance, indicating that effective goal setting is associated with improved teacher effectiveness.

3.3.2 Regression Analysis

To test the null hypothesis (H01), a **simple linear regression analysis** was conducted with performance goal setting as the independent variable and teacher performance as the dependent variable. The results are summarized in Tables 3–5.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.308	0.095	0.092	0.614

The R Square value (0.095) indicates that performance goal setting explains 9.5% of the variance in teacher performance, suggesting a modest but notable influence.

Table 4: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9.873	1	9.873	26.167	0.000*
Residual	94.127	250	0.377		
Total	104.000	251			

*Significant at $p < 0.05$.

The ANOVA results (F = 26.167, p = 0.000) confirm that the regression model is statistically significant, indicating that performance goal setting has a meaningful effect on teacher performance.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.374	0.214		11.093	0.000
Performance Goal Setting	0.143	0.028	0.308	5.116	0.048*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The regression coefficient (b = 0.143, p = 0.048) indicates a positive and statistically significant effect of performance goal setting on teacher performance. For each unit

increase in the effectiveness of performance goal setting, teacher performance increases by 0.143 units. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H01) was rejected, confirming a statistically significant relationship.

A multiple linear regression analysis was also conducted to assess the combined effect of performance goal setting, professional knowledge appraisal, feedback, and reward systems on teacher performance. The model summary showed an R Square of 0.236, indicating that these factors collectively explain 23.6% of the variance in teacher performance. Performance goal setting remained a significant predictor (b = 0.137, p = 0.037), alongside feedback (b = 0.149, p = 0.021), highlighting its critical role within the broader appraisal framework.

3.4 Qualitative Findings

Qualitative data from interviews with 27 principals were analyzed using content analysis, yielding themes related to performance goal setting:

1) **Goal Specificity and Clarity**: Principals reported that clear and specific goals, aligned with TSC's TPAD framework, helped teachers focus on key responsibilities, such as lesson planning and student engagement. However, some noted inconsistencies in goal-setting processes, with teachers occasionally receiving pre-set targets without consultation.

2) **Teacher Involvement**: A recurring theme was the limited involvement of teachers in goal setting, with 14 principals (51.9%) indicating that targets were often set by administrators to meet TSC requirements. This lack of participation reduced teacher ownership and commitment.

3) **Commitment and Motivation**: Principals observed that teachers who were committed to their goals demonstrated improved classroom performance and student outcomes. However, commitment varied, with some teachers viewing appraisals as compliance exercises rather than professional development opportunities.

4) **Challenges**: Common challenges included inadequate training on goal setting, resource constraints (e.g., lack of teaching materials), and time pressures due to heavy workloads. These factors hindered the effective implementation of performance goal setting.

5) **Recommendations**: Principals suggested enhancing teacher involvement, providing regular feedback, and linking goal achievement to tangible rewards (e.g., promotions, recognition) to boost motivation.

3.5 Integration of Findings

Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data revealed that performance goal setting positively influences teacher performance, particularly when goals are clear, specific, and aligned with teachers' values. The significant correlation (r = 0.308, p = 0.000) and regression results (b = 0.143, p = 0.048) were supported by principals' accounts of improved teaching effectiveness when goals were well-defined. However, the neutral

responses on teacher involvement (M = 2.89) and qualitative reports of limited participation highlight implementation gaps. These findings align with Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1979), which emphasizes the importance of goal clarity and commitment, and suggest that addressing involvement and resource constraints could enhance the effectiveness of performance goal setting.

4. Discussion

The significant positive relationship between performance goal setting and teachers' performance (b = 0.143, p = 0.048; r = 0.308, p = 0.000) in Kajiado County's public secondary schools aligns with Goal Setting Theory, which emphasizes that clear and specific goals enhance performance through focused effort and motivation (Locke & Latham, 1979). Teachers reported high agreement on goal clarity (M = 2.56, SD = 1.03) and commitment (M = 2.33, SD = 0.98), which qualitative data from principals corroborated, noting improved lesson planning and student engagement when goals were well-defined. However, neutral responses on teacher involvement (M = 2.89, SD = 1.22) and qualitative reports of top-down target setting by 51.9% of principals suggest implementation gaps, consistent with Meyer and Becker's (2021) findings that lack of participation reduces goal acceptance. Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) further explains the modest effect size (R^2 = 0.095), as neutral perceptions of goal achievability (M = 2.74, SD = 1.15) and resource constraints, such as inadequate teaching materials, may undermine teachers' belief in attaining targets. These findings align with prior studies (Brown & Warren, 2021; Ogada et al., 2020) that highlight the importance of goal clarity and resource support in appraisal systems, though Kajiado's ASAL context exacerbates challenges compared to non-ASAL regions (Nguuro, 2017).

To enhance teacher performance, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and school administrators should foster participatory goal setting to boost ownership and commitment, as supported by Kiprop's (2018) findings on appraisal effectiveness. Training on SMART goal formulation and addressing resource shortages in County and Sub-County schools, where goal clarity was lower (M = 2.79, SD = 1.18), could improve achievability and motivation, aligning with Resource-Based View Theory's emphasis on leveraging human resources. The significant role of feedback (b = 0.149, p = 0.021) in the multiple regression model (R^2 = 0.236) suggests integrating regular feedback and incentives, such as recognition or promotions, to sustain motivation. Despite limitations, including reliance on self-reported data and the focus on KCSE results, these findings offer actionable insights for refining the TPAD system. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts and incorporate objective performance measures to enhance generalizability beyond Kajiado's ASAL context, contributing to improved teaching quality and student outcomes.

5. Recommendations

The study's findings (b = 0.143, p = 0.048) underscore the positive impact of performance goal setting on teacher performance, but implementation gaps require action. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should mandate participatory goal-setting processes to enhance teacher involvement (M = 2.89, SD = 1.22), fostering ownership and commitment as per Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1979). Training programs for principals and teachers on formulating SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) can improve goal clarity (M = 2.56, SD = 1.03) and achievability (M = 2.74, SD = 1.15), particularly in resource-constrained County and Sub-County schools. Addressing resource shortages, such as inadequate teaching materials, is critical to support goal attainment, aligning with Resource-Based View Theory. Regular, constructive feedback (b = 0.149, p = 0.021) should be integrated into the TPAD system, with incentives like recognition or promotions to boost motivation, as suggested by Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964). Policymakers should develop ASAL-specific guidelines to address Kajiado's unique challenges, ensuring equitable resource allocation. School administrators should foster collaborative environments to align goals with teachers' personal values (M = 2.67, SD = 1.09). Future research should explore longitudinal impacts and objective performance measures to enhance generalizability. These steps can strengthen the TPAD system, improving teaching quality and student KCSE outcomes in Kajiado County.

6. Conclusion

This study confirms that performance goal setting significantly enhances teacher performance in Kajiado County's public secondary schools (b = 0.143, p = 0.048; r = 0.308, p = 0.000), driven by goal clarity (M = 2.56, SD = 1.03) and commitment (M = 2.33, SD = 0.98). These findings align with Goal Setting Theory, highlighting the role of specific and clear goals in improving teaching effectiveness, as evidenced by student KCSE outcomes. However, limited teacher involvement (M = 2.89, SD = 1.22) and resource constraints, particularly in County and Sub-County schools, hinder optimal implementation, as qualitative data from principals (51.9% reporting top-down goal setting) corroborate. The modest effect size (R^2 = 0.095) suggests that integrating feedback and resources could amplify impact, as seen in the multiple regression model (R^2 = 0.236). The TSC and school administrators should prioritize participatory goal setting, resource allocation, and feedback mechanisms to address these gaps. Despite limitations, such as reliance on self-reported data and the ASAL context's specificity, this study contributes to educational performance management literature and offers practical insights for enhancing the TPAD system. By addressing these challenges, Kajiado County can improve teacher effectiveness, elevate student outcomes, and advance educational quality in resource-constrained settings.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors of this paper disclose no conflict of interest.

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