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## The influence between work goal setting and employee performance in private hospitals in Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya

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### Abstract

This study sought to examine the influence between work goal setting and employee performance in private hospitals in Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya. An Explanatory research design approach was adopted. The study population consisted of 2,298 employees of 31 private hospitals in Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya. The study utilised a sample of 317 employees. The data was gathered with the aid of a self-administered questionnaire. Data was analysed using inferential and descriptive statistics with the aid of SPSS software. The hypothesis was tested using the hierarchical regression analysis technique. The study's findings demonstrated a positive and significant effect between Work Goal Setting and Employee Performance ( $\beta = .548$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Generally, these findings suggest embracing work goal setting in hospitals, specifically private hospitals in Uasin-Gishu County, which enhances employee performance. The findings of this study recommends that private hospitals consider work goal setting to enhance employee performance and overall organisation performance. Therefore, the absence of goal ambiguity and the presence of goal clarity will lead to multiple positive outcomes for an organisation that will improve employee performance and, thus, overall organisational performance. Hospitals should practice work goal setting and prioritisation as part of time management to enhance employee performance, specifically private Hospitals in Kenya.

**Key words:** Employee performance, explanatory research design, organisation performance, time management practices, work goal setting.



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### INTRODUCTION

Employee performance and productivity are fundamental concepts in many world economies. Choudhry (2009), in his study on the determinants of labour productivity, notes that African and South Asian countries, except India's performance in labour productivity, are not very encouraging. For instance, Sub-Saharan Africa experienced the lowest labour productivity compared to other regions in Africa. Organisations today are required to achieve certain standards of performance by boosting their performance, and short of this, a lot of issues will surface, including the risk of closing down the business. This performance relates to the company or individual level, which sees human resources becoming the most determining factor to achieve jobs. According to Kiruja and Kimencu (2020), an organisation's overall performance relies heavily on its employees' performance. Rotundo and Sackett (2012) view employee performance as the employee's ability to perform effectively; it requires that they understand the requirements of job performance and the standards they are anticipated to meet. Performance is divided into organisational and employee performance (Riyanto et al., 2017). However, job performance in many organisations is measured subjectively; that is, it is not independently measured and will depend on other factors in the environment of work. Job performance is defined as the results obtained from an employee's work (Hunter, 1986). Employee performance is the measure of how well a person performs their job responsibilities and duties satisfactorily. Employee performance can also be described as how well employees carry out job-related activities assigned to them regarding facilities provided and their efficiency in utilising such (Bruning & Campion, 2019).

Pradhan and Jena (2017) defined employee performance as a measure of how well an individual carries out tasks delegated to them, all dependent on a single person. They further defined performance as behaviour, which differentiates performance from outcomes. Outcomes result from external influences as well as an individual's outcome, which can be in the form of non-observable actions such as decisions and answers. However, performance is under an individual's control, whether it is mental or

behavioural. Singh et al. (2016) note employee performance to be the leading factor that influences an organisation's success. An individual employee's productivity level benefits both the employees and the organisation. According to Bandura (1997), employees who record high performance demonstrate high levels of employee performance, mastery of the job and high self-efficacy. The many rewards associated with high employee performance enhance their career opportunities (Riaz et al., 2018).

This study relates to the current study as it deals with biometric registration and service delivery, though much focus was put on data accessibility. Studies linking employee performance to time management are difficult to come by in Kenya, while those carried out on biometric authentication systems dwelt on system effectiveness and efficiency. This problem can be traced to their employees' poor performance and may lead to loss of business. However, employee productivity, job satisfaction, and customer satisfaction levels are influenced by time management practices (work planning, work organisation, goal setting and work schedule) and the use of a biometric authentication system. Therefore, this research sought to establish the effect of work goal setting on employee performance. This study relates to the current study as it deals with biometric registration and service delivery, though much focus was put on data accessibility. Studies linking employee performance to time management are difficult to come by in Kenya, while those carried out on biometric authentication systems dwelt on system effectiveness and efficiency. This problem can be traced to their employees' poor performance and may lead to loss of business. However, employee productivity, job satisfaction, and customer satisfaction levels are influenced by time management practices (work planning, work organisation, goal setting and work schedule) and the use of a biometric authentication system. Therefore, this research sought to establish the effect of work goal setting on employee performance.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Locke and Latham developed a goal-setting theory to address questions about the effect of goals on performance. This theory explains an individual's performance by looking at the goals set. Goals are

“the object or aim of an action” (Latham & Locke, 2019). In other words, goals specify the desired outcomes or performance that should be realised, whereas performance refers to what is accomplished. The theory is used at the individual and team levels: a team goal concerns the outcome that is aimed for by a team. In the literature, different types of performance are distinguished: organisational results and behavioural outcomes. Performance, as measured in this study, concerns the first category, team effectiveness and efficiency, as experienced by team members (Hamid et al., 2019). Efficiency and effectiveness are very common private-sector outcome measures and are highly appreciated in the light of performance management (Van et al., 2018). Considering this study’s aim, these performance forms seem relevant to examine. According to goal setting theory, an employee performs better if the goals that guide work are clear, specific, and challenging rather than vague, ambiguous, and unchallenging (Latham & Locke, 2019; Rainey & Jung, 2015). Furthermore, the theory proposes that goals activate motivational mechanisms that stimulate performance. Four stimulating mechanisms are distinguished: direction, effort, perseverance, and strategy (Latham & Locke, 2019).

Simply said, if you understand what is expected of you, the line of action you should follow to accomplish the objective becomes clearer, and the chances you will reach the goal increase. This enhanced self-efficacy through positive reinforcement and roused commitment benefits future effort and performance (Bandura, 2012). In addition, goal clarity supports employees in knowing what is expected of them and what behaviour is

functional for achieving goals, lowering role ambiguity (Davis & Stazyk, 2015; Pandey & Wright, 2006). If belief in one’s capacities is strong and role ambiguity is low, higher performance can be expected (Bandura, 2013; Davis & Stazyk, 2015). The effect of goal setting applies to the team level in the private and healthcare sectors (Michie & West, 2004). The absence of goal ambiguity and the presence of goal clarity have been found to relate to multiple positive outcomes, including performance (Rainey & Jung, 2015). The common reasoning goes that goal ambiguity increases uncertainty and thereby inhibits the motivational mechanisms of clear goals to benefit performance, although the interpretive leeway that goal ambiguity presents can be useful as well (Davis & Stazyk, 2015; Rainey & Jung, 2015). However, the focus of this existing work has not been on teams but on organisations and individual employees. Combining insights from these streams of research informs the expectation that setting goals in private hospitals will increase employees’ performance.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Response rate**

Out of the 341 distributed questionnaires, three hundred and seventeen (317) were filled out and returned, giving a response rate of 92.96 per cent. This response rate is an excellent representative and conforms to Mugenda and Mugenda’s (2003) stipulation that a response rate of 50 per cent and above is sufficient for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60 per cent is reasonable, while a response rate of 70 per cent and over is excellent. Based on this assertion, the response rate of 92.96 per cent was, therefore, ideal.

**Table 1: Response Rate of Questionnaire**

	Number of questionnaires	Percentages
Administered Questionnaires	341	100.00
Returned Questionnaires	317	92.96

Source: Research Data (2020)

**Correlation Findings**

Work goal setting was positively and significantly correlated to employee performance [ $r = 0.685$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$  ( $p=0.00$ )], implying that work goal setting is expected to influence employee performance by  $(0.685^2) = 46.92$  per cent based on the coefficient of

determination; hence it was suitable in predicting employee performance. The results in Table 2 conform to the findings of a study done by Shoaib and Kohli (2017) on employee engagement and goal-setting theory, where the results established a

significant relationship between goal-setting and | employee performance.

**Table 2: Correlation Results**

N=317	Employee performance	$\rho$ -Value
Work goal setting	.685**	0.00
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)		

Source: Survey Data (2020)

**Regression Results**

The study findings reported a positive and significant effect between Work Goal and Employee Performance ( $\beta = .548$ ,  $\rho = 0.000$ ,  $\rho < .05$ ). Generally, these findings suggest embracing work goal setting in hospitals, specifically private hospitals in Uasin-Gishu County, which enhances employee performance. According to goal setting theory, an employee performs better if the goals that guide work are clear, specific, and challenging rather than vague, ambiguous, and unchallenging (Latham & Locke, 2019; Rainey & Jung, 2015). Furthermore, the theory

proposes that goals activate motivational mechanisms that stimulate performance. Four stimulating mechanisms are distinguished: direction, effort, perseverance, and strategy (Latham & Locke, 2019). Simply said, if you understand what is expected of you, the line of action you should follow to accomplish the objective becomes clearer, and the chances you will reach the goal increase. Lastly, goal setting enhances self-efficacy through positive reinforcement and roused commitment, which in turn benefits future effort and performance (Bandura, 2012).

**Table 3: Regression Analysis for Work Goal Setting On Employee Performance**

	Unstandardised coefficients	Standardised coefficients		
	B	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.699(.098)		12.365	.000
<b>Predictor Variables</b>				
Work goal setting	.548(.033)	.685	16.696	.000
<b>Model Summary</b>				
R	.784			
R Square	.469			
Adjusted R Square	.468			
F Change	278.742**			
Durbin-Watson	1.668			
<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: Employee performance				
Note: N= 317, Level of significance, * $\rho < .05$ , ** $\rho < .01$ . Standard errors are given in parentheses. From the table above, all numbers are rounded to three decimal places				

Source: Survey Data, 2020

The results depicted that work goal setting accounted for approximately 46.9 per cent of the overall variance in employee performance ( $R^2 = .469$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .468$ ). In addition, the ANOVA method showed that the combined estimation of the independent variable (work goal setting), as shown in Table 3 above, was statistically significant [ $F = 278.742$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$  ( $p = 0.00$ )]. Through work organisation, the model was thus fit to predict employee performance. The distribution F-statistic

test was used to test the research model's suitability, using the following two testable hypotheses:  
*H0: The model is inappropriate when the independent variables do not affect the dependent variables.*  
*H1: The model is appropriate; when the independent variables do affect the dependent variables.*  
 Study findings in ANOVA Table 3 indicated that the above-discussed coefficient of determination was significant as evidence of (Sig. F) ratio of 278.742



with p value  $0.000 < 0.01$  (level of significance), and the research accepted the alternative one, and therefore, the models used are appropriate. The following is the direct relationship's hypothesis;

The hypothesis predicted that there is no significant effect of work goal setting on employee performance. However, the results presented in Table 3 above indicated a positive and significant association between work goal setting and employee performance [ $\beta = .548, \rho < 0.05$  ( $p=0.00$ )]. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, the study concludes that goal setting influences employee performance positively. Essentially, the more a hospital adopts or engages in goal setting as a way of time management aspect, the more they contribute to influencing employee performance. This implies that in Uasin-Gishu County, employee performance in private Hospitals is positively associated with work goal setting. The results of the study are consistent with the findings of the study done by Van der Hoek et al. (2018) on goal setting in teams and team performance in the public sector, where the results of their study established a significant relationship between goal setting and team performance.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

**Conclusion:** Work goal setting is a significant concept that any hospital or institution that anticipates increasing the level of administrative staff employee performance and avoiding the disadvantages that come with turnover should embrace. Hospitals that practice work scheduling and prioritisation as part of time management enhance employee performance, specifically private Hospitals in Kenya. Therefore, the absence of goal ambiguity and the presence of goal clarity will lead to multiple positive outcomes for an organisation that will improve employee performance and, thus, overall organisational performance.

**Recommendation:** Since the findings of the study showed that work goal setting significantly influences the performance of employees, several types of work goal setting should be adopted. In addition, some jobs should have work goal settings that change depending on the season. This will assist the employee in avoiding any surprises when they begin work and enhance performance through effectiveness and efficiency.

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