

# The Effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Productivity at Kisumu County Government

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## Abstract

Employee productivity is the output of an employee against set timelines. Performance management practices are one of the strategies that human resource professionals use to alleviate employee productivity. The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of selected performance management practices on productivity of employees at Kisumu County Government. The specific objective was to establish the effect of goal setting on the productivity of employees in Kisumu County. This study was guided by the goal-setting theory. The target population of the study was the 3709 employees of the county government of Kisumu. Proportionate stratified random sampling was done to determine a sample size of 361 respondents. The research adopted a quantitative research design. Data was collected through the use of five-point Likert Scale questionnaires that were self-administered. Data was organized and analyzed through SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to generate frequencies and percentage of the general information questionnaire while also to determine variances and standard variation of the different variables. Inferential statistics of correlation and regression coefficients were used to show the extent of relationship between the variables. The Validity of measurement scales was determined through content validity by supervisory expertise. The reliability of the measurement scales was tested through the test-retest method where a preliminary study was carried out on 13 staff who were re-examined again after a week. The subset of 13 was settled to represent each department. The findings of the study were that the independent variable had a significant effect on the improvement of employee productivity when applied objectively. The findings revealed that Goal setting had a positive and significant effect of ( $\beta=.399$ ) and accounted for 15.9% variance. It was concluded that goal setting has a significant effect on employee productivity. It was recommended that performance management be improved in order to enhance employee productivity. The findings of the study will be applicable to other human resource managers, other county governments, and other researchers in the same field.

**Keywords:** Performance Management Practices, Employee Productivity, Goal Setting

**Introduction**

Employee productivity is the output of an employee against a set timeline. Poor employee productivity can be registered through constant strikes in an organization, which allude to poor governance. A report from the Kenya Urban Areas Performance (KUAP) Index research conducted in 2018 by the Lithuania Free Market Institute (LFMI) ranked Kisumu's performance last among urban cities in Kenya.

A separate report by Info-track Research has shown that the productivity level of Kisumu County has dropped from 55% in 2015 to 53.4% in 2020. This means that employee productivity in the country is suboptimal and, therefore, measures should be taken to improve it. Performance management practices are one of the strategies that human resource professionals use to increase employee productivity. Research conducted on the effects of performance management practices on the productivity of employees has not touched on the variables of goal setting, performance feedback, and performance rewards, nor has any of these studies been conducted in the Kisumu County Government.

The history of performance management dates back to the 1920s, when companies were focused on maximizing mass production and gaining operational efficiency. Employee development and engagement were considered less important in achieving these goals. Toselli (2019) explains that in the 1950s, organizations started using personality-based performance appraisals to rate their employees. They gradually realized that personal attributes such as job knowledge or loyalty had little effect on the performance of staff. They then proceeded to formal annual appraisals which were focused on goals and objectives, hence the term "management by objectives" (M.B.O). Later on, in the 70's, performance appraisals were also deemed to be subjective in their reflection of individual performance and were discarded. This led to the birth of the 360-degree feedback system, which was highly popular as it gathered information from all involved supervisors and did not allow for bias. However, it became expensive to implement over time as it engaged many people. In the late '90s and early 2000s, organizations began focusing on employee development and engagement. They ditched the annual performance reviews and opted for continuous feedback practices, which are currently still being utilized.

According to Aguinis (2005), performance management is a "continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning them with the strategic goals of the organization". In recent years, the term "performance management" has come to refer to the process of performance planning and evaluation that managers conduct on their subordinates. Armstrong (2014) describes it as "a purely employee development-focused intervention that aims to change behavior to achieve strategic goals of the organization and create a performance culture". He further argues that "it is an intentional process by the organization to ensure they get the best performance out of each individual at the workplace."

In developed countries, studies show that performance management practices still strongly improve employee productivity, even for highly skilled laborers in highly professional settings. That it is a key source of the high levels of productivity among employees within different organizational sectors. It is explained that performance management is a function of human resource development that has established its relevance besides other factors such as financial capability and regulation of labor markets in strategic planning of better businesses. Literature has proved that monitoring behaviors that are related to productivity can provide profits for firms as they reduce input costs. Moreover, performance targets lead to productivity gains beyond those motivated by monitoring alone. Greer et al (2019) state that

incentives or rewards do not necessarily improve productivity beyond the targeted goals, but they lead to increased job satisfaction, which may have long-term positive effects on the employees' performance and productivity.

Regionally, studies carried out closer to home on the African continent also highlight the importance of performance management practices in improving employee productivity. In Anambra state in southeast Nigeria, a study was undertaken on selected large organizations to investigate how selected performance management practices affected employee productivity. The study revealed that practices such as the 360° performance feedback appraisal, performance review, and evaluation had significant positive effects on the level of employee productivity achieved for a set period against set targets, (Okeke et al., 2005). According to Natukunda (2016), similar studies conducted in Uganda show that organizations in African countries are gradually breaking free from the grip of customary norms and embracing these performance management practices that are largely regarded as western and foreign because they have been shown to be effective in improving employee and organizational productivity. This is opposed to earlier resolutions that they should stick to purely African norms such as Ubuntu, which look out for the good of everyone in society rather than individual or purely organizational goals.

Organizations need performance management as a tool for success as it gives room for communication of expectations and drives behavior towards achieving preset goals. Pulakos (2009) also states that, "It is how organizations identify ineffective performers for development programs or other personnel actions." Managers should therefore devise different techniques to manage employee performance. These techniques include goal setting, performance feedback, and performance rewards. Managers can apply these interventions to improve the performance of their subordinates and cushion the organization from failure.

Employee productivity is the output derived from staff against set time deadlines. It is measured in terms of how much work an employee can complete within a given period given the available resources. The indicators of employee productivity revolve around work output, work employee efficiency, employee efficacy, quality of service provided, and the rate of absenteeism and turnover. Employee productivity is deemed the cornerstone of assessing the performance of individuals. McNamara (2005) asserts this notion by saying that "results are usually the final and specific outputs desired from an employee." Rather than concentrating on the process of achieving the desired output, employee productivity is strongly hinged on the end product.

Measuring employee productivity is important to organizations as it reveals the employees that produce the required results and those who don't. It emphasizes to the organization that employees require additional training and motivation to achieve set goals. The level of productivity varies from one employee to the next as people are affected differently by different circumstances. Nzuve (1992) observed that apart from factors such as salary increments, bonuses, and promotions, individual employee productivity can also be affected by intrinsic issues. These issues range from job satisfaction, employee motivation, and available resources to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the employee. Styles of management such as planning, supervision, and circulation of information can also affect employee productivity.

As much research continues to be carried out in the field of performance management and its relation to employee productivity, there is a clear gap as none of these studies are carried out in private organizations or in public offices. The downside of this is that results may not

be valid across the divide as there are different structures, systems, and processes in place. There is a need to conduct more studies in government offices to establish the influence of these practices on employee productivity. These studies will also highlight practices that are more applicable to government organizations, as there are different protocols and directives in government bodies and how effective they are in delivering the desired results. This, therefore, necessitates the need for this study in one of the key government bodies in Kenya, which is the Kisumu County Government.

The Kisumu County Government was formed in 2013 as one of the 47 county governments that resulted from the promulgation of the 2010 constitution. This new constitution proposed the creation of devolved governments in Kenya to decentralize operational power, resources, and presentation from the national government. The national government of Kenya initially consisted of seven provinces in Kenya from which administration took place. These provinces were Nyanza, Western, Eastern, Central, Rift Valley, Coastal, and Nairobi provinces. The county governments are therefore a breakdown of these provinces into little counties that offer government facilities to local people. The constitution was enacted as an act of parliament in 2012 as the County Government Act 2012. After the general elections of 2013, the county governments steered into action. The purpose of these governments is to promote regional economic and cultural growth and development by bringing key government services closer to the people and reducing regional alienation as witnessed by opposition politics.

Kisumu is located on the shores of Lake Victoria in Western Kenya, formerly Nyanza Province. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, the county is "bordered by Homa Bay County to the South, Nandi County to the North East, Kericho County to the East, Vihiga County to the North West, and Siaya County to the West. The County covers a total land area of 2009.5 KM<sup>2</sup> and another 567 KM<sup>2</sup> covered by water and has a total population of 1,155,574. The population density is 550 people per km<sup>2</sup>. The population distribution by sex is 556,942 male and 594,609 female, intersex 23".

Apart from its unique shoreline, Kisumu enjoys an array of natural touristic sites such as Kit Mikayi, the Ndere Island National Park, Impala Park, the Kisumu Museum, Hippo Point, and the Dunga beach and wetland, among other sites. It also enjoys vast recreational and accommodation hotels and restaurants that serve as venues for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. It also has widespread social amenities like churches, temples, mosques, markets, and schools, as well as institutions of higher education, hospitals, parks, and a robust transport system. It also enjoys an international airport and a standard gauge railway line that boosts transport to other far-flung counties like Mombasa. Its economic activities include fishing, irrigation rice farming in the Kano plains, and sugar farming in Muhoroni, among other trades enjoyed by its occupants.

The county website describes the city as subdivided into seven constituencies, which are Kisumu East, Nyakach, Kisumu West, Seme, Kisumu Central, Muhoroni, and Nyando. The county administration structure consists of the county executive members, the county assembly, the governance and administration sector, and ten departments. The executive members are the Governor, his deputy, and the cabinet ministers, while the county assembly consists of representatives elected by the people from their wards. The county's vision is to "have a peaceful and prosperous county where all citizens enjoy a high quality of life and a sense of belonging." Its mission is "to provide strategic leadership, policy direction and set the agenda for achieving socio-economic and political development in Kisumu County".

As much as Kisumu County's performance index has improved in the second tier of devolution government, 2017–2021, it has failed to optimize delivery of key government functions such

as health, education, agriculture, infrastructure, trade, and housing. Staff from the health sector of the county government have been embroiled in numerous strikes that have stalled service delivery to its residents. These strikes have been brought about by a lack of provision of medical facilities and poor working conditions such as long hours and delayed salaries, among other reasons. As a result, patients may end up facing escalated situations or even fatalities. In the water and sanitation docket, there have been instances where garbage has failed to be collected by city workers. This is usually in protest of late payments. Apart from the unsightly image of uncollected garbage in the streets, this can also lead to diseases caused by poor sanitation, such as cholera, dysentery, and typhoid. Employee productivity has also been affected when the county staff don't collect parking fees from residents and also don't collect revenue from local traders as a form of protest to their employers. The roads within the county are also in a sorry state, often leading to accidents and strained access to destination zones. Efforts to rebuild this infrastructure always prove futile as work is done to poor standards, which cannot sustain the roads through the changing weather seasons.

According to the County Track, InfoTrack Research conducted in 2020, Kisumu has recorded subpar performance and productivity in most areas of delivery. In the agricultural sector, Kisumu County is ranked eleventh amongst all counties with a performance index of 45.5%. Similarly, in education, Infotrack ranks Kisumu County eighth with a performance index of 57.1%. Although this is an above average performance level, it means that nearly half the county residents do not believe that the county is productive in the education function. In health, Kisumu County is ranked fifth with a performance index of 57.3%. In general, it is evident that a significant population of the county's residents, do not have confidence in the delivery of key functions within the county and find productivity to be dismal. These results are similar across all the key functions of Kisumu Devolved Government. It is therefore upon this background that the researcher aims to find out the influence of goal setting on the productivity of employees at the county government of Kisumu.

There is an array of studies that have been conducted in Kisumu to determine factors that affect employee productivity in Kisumu County. Nyamunga (2016) looked into factors such as motivation, training, and job security. Even though the study was consequential to the employees of the county government as it informed on which variables affect their performance, it did not touch on factors such as goal setting, employee feedback, and employee rewards, which the current study aims to look into. Otieno (2019) examined the influence of job satisfaction on employee performance in Kisumu County. Again, the study only focused on job satisfaction and not the variables that the current research aims to study. Many scholars that have published in the country have focused on employee performance and not on productivity. Therefore, this study aims to focus on employee productivity and investigate the effects of performance management practices such as goal setting on employee productivity.

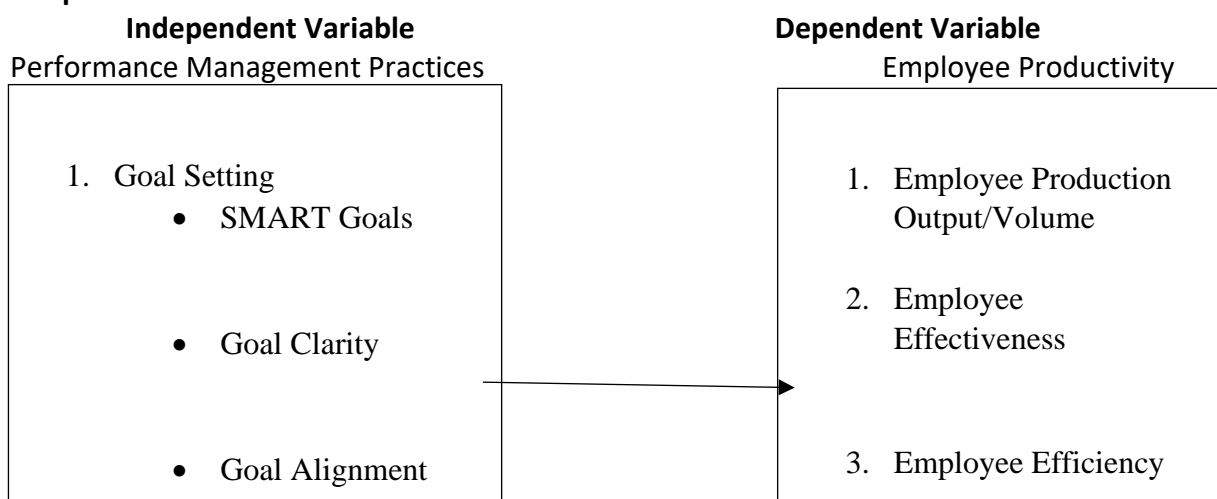
### **Problem Statement**

Low productivity issues are often a direct reflection of poor governance. According to the Kenya Urban Areas Performance Index report in 2018, Kisumu County was ranked last. The cities researched were Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Machakos, and Eldoret. Kisumu County had an approval rating of 47.6% compared to Nairobi, which had an approval rating of 56%. In this report, Kisumu performed poorly in the clusters for investment, conditions for residents, and principles of good governance. Due to the constant strikes carried out by its employees, cases of poor productivity have been evident in the county. According to county

performance assessment research done by InfoTrack Research and Consulting Company in 2020, Kisumu County’s performance index has considerably dropped from 55% in 2015 to 53.4% in 2020. In this study, a significant percentage of the county's residents expressed dissatisfaction with how key functions of governance were being executed. These functions included health, infrastructure, housing, and water and sanitation services. The poor service delivery from the county employees has resulted in difficult lives for the residents as they find it difficult to access key services satisfactorily.

The Kisumu County government has employed various performance management practices like staff appraisals that have still not reflected positively on its productivity. Therefore, this study seeks to research the effects of other measures such as goal setting. Although there is much literature on performance management practices and employee productivity, the variables studied differ, and therefore the findings cannot be generalized. The existing literature does not clearly define the effects of goal setting on employee productivity in Kisumu County Government. On the basis of the highlighted problems, the drop in the performance index of the county and the mentioned literature gaps, this study intends to analyze the effect of selected performance management practices on the productivity of employees at the Kisumu County Government.

**Conceptual Framework**



Source: Adapted from Armstrong 2014 and Locke 1960.

The figure above depicts the relationship between the independent variable, performance management practices, and the dependent variable, employee productivity. The aspects of performance management practices discussed is goal setting. Goal setting has been looked at in terms of the smartness of goals, that is, their specificity, measurability, attainability, realistic nature, and how time-bound they are. Goal setting has also been discussed in terms of clarity and its alignment to organizational strategy. The dependent variable, employee productivity, will be measured in terms of employee work output, employee effectiveness, and employee efficiency.

**Theoretical Review**

**Goal-Setting Theory**

According to the thesaurus dictionary, goal setting refers to "the development of an action plan designed to help a person achieve a goal." It further elaborates that "goals are more

deliberate than desires and momentary intentions, and therefore, goal setting tunes a person's commitment, emotions, and behavior towards achieving the set goals." Goal setting is a common mechanism in organizations that helps drive performance and productivity within employees. Therefore, the goal-setting theory comes in handy to explain the relationship between the two variables.

The goal-setting theory is a theory of employee motivation that impacts heavily on their performance and productivity. It was initiated by American psychologist Dr. Edwin Locke of the University of Maryland in the late 1960s. He argued that "employees were motivated to perform and be productive if they had well-defined goals and received feedback for their work." He later refined his perspective on the issue, saying that, "the difficulty and specificity of the goal were directly proportional to the level of motivation involved and, subsequently, the productivity and performance in general." This concept was then picked up by Dr. Gary Latham, and along with Dr. Locke, they conducted extensive research to support their theory. From their book, *Building a Practically Useful Theory in Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35-year Odyssey*, it is showcased in one study that, "from 1974-1975, they discovered that unionized truck drivers increased the number of logs loaded from 60% to 90% of the legally allowable rate as a result of goal setting, hence saving the company \$250,000." "In another study in 1982, another group of unionized truck drivers increased their daily trips to the mill as a result of assigned goals, hence saving the company \$2.7 million in 18 weeks." In the late 1990's, Drs. Locke and Latham published groundbreaking work on a book titled "A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance," often quoted in literal circles around employee motivation, performance, and productivity. The key principle of their study was that "for goals set to be motivational, they needed to fulfill the following dimensions: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and complexity".

An organization's goals and objectives should be clear and measurable, challenging with achievement as the end result, there should be a commitment on the part of employees towards achieving the goal, which can be done by instilling them in the goal formation process, there should be a program for issuing feedback on the progress of reports and the deserved recognition for effort input, and finally, the goal should be complex but not overwhelming. These key factors have been simplified in the acronym SMART, which means that goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound.

According to Latham (2004); Seijts (2005); Shaw (2004), "goals are deemed to be motivational and influential on employee productivity as they give direction on what employees should focus and fully direct their energy on, and as such, goals should always be aligned with the organization's strategic plans." Goals also energize employees and motivate them not to stop until the goal is achieved. Kerr & Landauer (2004) also explain that "goals provide a challenge, and people feel a sense of accomplishment when they achieve them. Smart goals urge people to think outside the box and rethink how they're working. They further expound that "this sprouts creativity and innovativeness, and if a goal is substantially difficult, merely working faster or longer will not get the desired results." However, one needs to rethink the way they work and devise a creative way of carrying out their duties. It has been argued that this method resulted in designers and engineers in Japan inventing the bullet train. Having a goal that went beyond the speed capabilities of traditional trains prevented engineers from making minor improvements and inspired them to come up with a radically different concept. At least three conditions have been identified to make goals more effective. According to Latham (2004); Latham & Locke (2006), these are "goal commitment, ability, and feedback". Goal commitment refers to the degree to which an employee is dedicated to reaching the

goal. Some companies, like Microsoft, have even gone ahead to call these goals 'employee commitments' Donovan & Radosevich (1998) explain that "goals are likely to be more effective if the employees are committed to achieving the goal." Klein et al (1999) state that "goal commitment can be triggered by publicizing the goal as this increases accountability to peers." Klein & Kim (1998) further explain that "commitment can also be increased by having a trust-based relationship with managers. When employers are engaged in the goal-setting process and their opinions are supported by management, goal commitment is likely to be higher. "Pritchard et al (1988) reinforce this point by stating that "the promise of a reward for accomplishing the set goals can also increase commitment".

Ability as a factor in making goals effective refers to the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources required to achieve the set goals. Resources can vary from financial, time, or even the work experience necessary for the job. When people fail to meet their goals, they often feel helpless and hopeless. Studies have shown that lacking the necessary abilities to pursue specific outcomes eventually leads to low performance and productivity. Seijts and Latham, 2005. The feedback aspect refers to the exchange of communication on the progress of the activity towards accomplishing the set-out goals. Goals are considered to be more effective if there is constant feedback between supervisor and employee on the actions undertaken towards achieving the goals.

Like all managerial techniques, the goal-setting theory also suffers from a few drawbacks. They include conflicts of interest between the employee and the organization and ethical issues that may arise from employees aggressively pursuing a specific goal and even being willing to use underhand methods to achieve it. A difficult and complex goal stimulates risky behavior from staff. Employee-organizational conflict may arise if the interests of both parties do not align, and hence the theory may fail to motivate the employee to increase productivity as expected. Another drawback observed from the application of this theory is single-mindedness. This occurs when employees obtusely focus on one goal at the expense of other areas of performance and can limit their adaptability in the event of unforeseen outcomes.

## **Empirical Review**

### **Goal Setting and Employee Productivity**

Asmus et al (2015) established that "goal setting is a promising way to help improve employee productivity". In their study; the impact of goal setting on worker performance-empirical evidence from a real-effort production experiment, they discovered that "even without financial incentives, goal setting improves worker output by 12 to 15% compared to situations where goals were not defined". They conducted a real-effort experiment at the Training Factory for Energy Productivity at the Technical University of Munchen. They used 120 subjects from the university who were divided into four groups. These groups were tasked with assembling gearboxes from the fragment tools provided. Group 1 had no particular goal to achieve other than just assembling the gearboxes while groups 2, 3, and 4 were tasked with quantity maximization, quality maximization, and energy consumption maximization respectively. After this, the participants were issued with a questionnaire asking for demographics and task-related information. The results of the three-dimension goals were written in a scoring sheet. Regression analysis was used to analyze the data where it was proved that the groups that had a defined goal in the exercise were more productive than those without one. The effect of the goal-setting on the exercise was also varied due to the specificity of the goals. The downside of this study however is that it was an experimental



study carried out in an industrial setting. As thus the results may not apply to the current study which intends to be carried out in a government office setting.

Hoek et al (2018) carried out a study on the effect of goal setting on team performance. They wanted to find out how goal setting contributes to team performance in the Dutch public sector. The data was collected through online questionnaires from high-performing teams from the database of the interior ministry where 105 teams with 914 members were selected. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the data instrument which had a coefficient of 0.8 which is deemed reliable. Ordinary least squares regression analyses were used to analyze the data. The data was interpreted to reveal that “clear goal-setting positively affects team performance. When companies set out to achieve ambiguous goals employees did not have clarity on their roles and therefore failed to be productive”. This study however focused only on goal setting in teams while the current study aims to include its effects on individuals and the organization as a whole. It also emphasized on performance as the dependent variable while the current study focuses on productivity.

Teo & Low (2016) researched the impact of goal setting on employee and organizational effectiveness in a high technology company in Singapore. The company asked for anonymity during the exercise and the researchers, therefore, referred to it as XYZ (Singapore) Pte Limited. Pte is a high-tech semiconductor test systems and equipment company. The researchers adopted a cross-sectional case study. The data used to test the hypotheses of the study was collected through eleven structured open-ended and closed-ended interviews questions. The data was collected for three weeks where appointments were made for 45–60-minute interviews which were recorded by tape. The interview targeted the CEO and departmental heads of the company who were six in total. Analysis of the study was done through content analysis whereby the recordings were reviewed and coded and the primary patterns were denoted. The study revealed that, “goal setting has a role to play in the relationship between employee performance and productivity”. Participants concurred that goal setting is very important as it provides a sense of alignment, direction, and purpose for both the employees and the organization. As such, employees work towards achieving these goals and increasing productivity. They established that, “clear communication of goals is vital from both ends for the employee to be effective in carrying them out. The supervisor has to determine what the goal is and the subordinate has to fully well understand what is expected of them in that set target”. Despite the relevance of the results to management, the study adopts closed-ended interview questions as a data collection technique while the current study intends to use only questionnaires. The study also focuses on organizational effectiveness while the current study aims to focus on employee productivity.

Reemts et al (2016) also conducted empirical research on the impact of goal setting on the individual performance and productivity of German civil servants. The research adopted a cross-cultural survey design. Data was collected through online surveys and questionnaires using fifty-seven closed-ended questions on a sample of 521 local employees from two municipalities in Northwestern Germany. Analysis of the data was done through descriptive statistics of mean values and standard deviation and also inferential statistics of bivariate correlations. The Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instruments where a correlation of 0.8 was found and therefore the instruments were reliable. The findings concurred with the Locke theory that “goals significantly uplift the performance and productivity of individual employees”. They investigated how factors such as goal difficulty, employee participation, and public motivation influenced the effectiveness of goal setting in achieving targets. The study showed that all these factors had a positive relation to goal

setting and significantly improved productivity in employees. Though the study targets the public sectors just like the current study, it is a foreign study and the doctrines of the German public sector may vary from those of Kenya and therefore may not apply to the current study setting. The study is also a descriptive study while the current study aims to use regression analysis.

Mukonabi (2016) investigated the effect of participative goal setting on employee performance and productivity at the Kenya Seed Company in Kitale. He used stratified and random sampling techniques to select middle and lower cadre employees while top management was picked purposively resulting in a sample size of 650 employees. Data collection was done through the use of questionnaires for employees and scheduled interviews for top management. Data instruments were tested for validity and reliability through a pilot study. Regression methods were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis based on the meaning of words and grouping the responses around common themes. The data was presented in tables and charts and percentages. The analysis of the data results revealed that “team goals, joint goals, and employee involvement in goal setting did improve the performance and productivity of staff”. Employees also relied on timely feedback on the progress of goals to boost their productivity. The study however only looked at participative goals which are joint goal setting and team goal setting and did not research the individual aspect which the current study will delve in. Mwakidi (2010) researched the human resource perspective on goal setting and employee performance and job satisfaction. He carried out the study at Crown Berger Kenya Limited where he adopted a simple survey design. Sampling was done through disproportionate stratified random sampling in all the seven departments which have a population of 500 employees of which 350 are permanent. This led to a sample size of 60 employees who consisted of both managerial and non-managerial staff. Data was collected for two weeks through a 7point Likert scale questionnaire. The data was analyzed through descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics of correlation and regression to establish the relationship between variables. He found out that “most employees considered goal setting to be an effective means to achieving performance, productivity, and job satisfaction”. It was noted that “employees’ productivity highly increased when they were engaged in the goal-setting process”. Although this study discusses key aspects of goal setting like clarity, specificity, and employee engagement/participation in detail, it incorporates the use of disproportionate random sampling method while this study aims to use stratified random sampling. The study also heavily researches on Job satisfaction as the dependent variable while the current study will focus on employee productivity.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

A research design refers to the framework of the methods and techniques to be used and applied in a research process. This design provides step-by-step guidance on how the research should be conducted. A research design is important as it restricts the researcher from deviating from the main purpose of the study and therefore creates clarity and saves on time. This study adopted a correlational research design. Cohen et al (2007) explain that, “this design establishes dependable, consistent and replicable findings over time, instruments and a group of respondents. It is concerned with precision and accuracy and it assumes the possibility of replication”. As is the case here, the study analyzes the effect of selected performance management practices such as goal setting on selected employees’ productivity

at the Kisumu County Government. Through this design the findings of the study were generalizable and valid across all the employees of the County Government.

### **Study Area**

Kisumu County is one of 47 counties in the Republic of Kenya. Its borders follow those of the original Kisumu District, one of the former administrative districts of the former Nyanza Province in western Kenya. Its headquarters is Kisumu City which is the third largest city in Kenya after the capital Nairobi and the coastal city of Mombasa. It has a population of 1,155,574 according to the 2019 National Census. The land area of Kisumu County totals 2085.9 km<sup>2</sup>. Kisumu County's neighbors are Siaya County to the West, Vihiga County to the North, Nandi County to the North East and Kericho County to the East. Its neighbour to the South is Nyamira County and Homa Bay County is to the South West. The county has a shoreline on Lake Victoria, occupying northern, western and a part of the southern shores of the Winam Gulf. The county was chosen because it is the third largest city in Kenya and has many human resource related problems including employee productivity.

### **Target Population**

Casteel and Bridier (2021) describes a target population as, "the specific, conceptually bounded group of potential participants to whom the researcher may have access that represents the nature of the population of interest. It is the group of individuals that the researcher intends to research on and draw a conclusion from".

This study is set in the administrative offices of the Kisumu County Government in Kisumu City which has a population of 3709 employees across all departments according to the current Human Resource Payroll Officer. An employee count list per department was used as a population frame for the study; this information from the Human Resource Payroll Officer was used to draw the Sample size.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Methods**

Since it is practically impossible to conduct a study on the whole population of an organization, a researcher must identify a sample of the population whose results will image the general patterns, mannerisms, and behavior of the whole population.

Cohen et al (2007) defines a sample as, "a subset or smaller group of a total study population that the researcher collects data from". The knowledge gained from this subset, however defined, represents the qualities and characteristics of the whole study population.

Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to determine the sample size since the population of interest was not homogenous. The population was divided into different strata based on the departments. According to Sekaran (2003), "this method of sampling is most effective for this study as each segment of the population is well represented and it gives more valuable and differentiated information for each group".

The study adopted Slovin and Yamane formula reached its sample size of 361 participants.

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

Where n= sample size, N=target population and e=accepted margin of error which is 5%

$$\text{Therefore } n = \frac{3709}{1 + 3709 * 0.05^2}$$

$$n = 361$$

### **Data Collection Instruments and Methods**

Data collection methods are ways in which information is extracted from subjects. The study employed quantitative methods to collect data from the participants. Quantitative data

collection methods are those that are measurable in numbers and quantities while qualitative data collection methods are those that are descriptive hence drawn from direct observation, interviews, and analysis of cultural records among others.

In quantitative methods, the study adopted the use of structured 5point Likert scale questionnaires that were self-administered to collect information from the subjects. A questionnaire is, "a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives. Questionnaires are an efficient data collection mechanism when the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the variables of interest" (Sekaran, 2003)

Personally administered questionnaires were chosen for this study because doubts can be clarified easily on the spot between the respondent and researcher and it also establishes a rapport between the two parties. This can motivate the respondent's enthusiasm to participate in the study compared to other methods. A Likert scale is a psychometric scale that is used to measure people's attitudes, perceptions, opinions, and sentiments regarding a variable in a study. A five-point Likert scale was deemed sufficient to draw the necessary information from participants without overwhelming them with options and therefore reinforcing the reliability of the results. (Likert, 1932). These questionnaires were issued to those employees who work under the supervision of team or departmental heads.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The reliability of an instrument of measurement is an indication of its stability and consistency over time to measure the variables of a study and help assess the 'goodness' of its measure. Reliability test was done through the test-retest method. This is where the reliability coefficient is achieved by repetition of the same measure on a second occasion. The questionnaire instruments were issued out to 13 members from each department to ensure adequate representation and generalization. The same respondents were issued with the same questionnaires after a period of one week to examine the extent of similarity of their responses. The similarity in answers of both exercises was used to determine reliability through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. According to Kothari (2013), the desired reliability coefficient ranges from 0.7 to 1. The tests on the different questionnaires revealed a coefficient of 0.8 and above. This falls within the range required to deem the instruments of data collection reliable. The reliability results of the different questionnaires are displayed in the tables below.

Validity refers to how well an instrument measures a variable that it purports to measure and how generalizable are the findings of the study. The study used face validity from supervisory expertise as well as practitioners to determine or confirm that the instrument of data collection indeed measures the variables of the study. Face validity confirms that the items in an instrument of measurement tap/reflect/mirror the variables of the study. Therefore, in this study, the researcher relied on the guidance of the supervisor and other senior lecturers within the department to determine if the contents of the questionnaire reflect the variables in discussion and they were deemed valid.

Table 3. 1

*Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
.855	.857

As per the reliability tests represented in the Table 3.2 above, all the instruments of data collection employed in the study were deemed reliable as the overall reliability statistics is 0.857 which shows a threshold required by the Cronbach Alpha scale to deem items reliable.

**Analysis of the Data**

The collected data underwent a series of steps to make it clear and easy to interpret. This is known as data analysis. The study used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to organize and arrange the collected data. The researcher then used inferential statistics, of correlation coefficient, regression analysis (RA) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to analyze the data.

Inferential correlation methods are used to describe the relationship strength and direction of variables. The study used Pearson correlation coefficient (r) to measure the strength of association between each variable. Since there was one dependent variable (employee productivity) and multiple independent variables (goal setting, performance reward and performance), the study used multiple regression analysis (MRA) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to measure the extent of effect of each the independent variables on the dependent variable. In some cases, small R square values are ideal for social sciences (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013).

The regression equation that was applied in this study is  $Y = B_0 + B_1(a) + b$

Where Y=employee productivity

$B_0$ = the regression constant

$B_1$ = regression coefficient of the performance management practice (beta coefficient)

a= goal setting

b= extent of error/percentage confidence

**Results and Discussions****Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings, analysis and presentation and interpretation of the data collected in line with the listed objectives. The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of specific performance management practices on employee productivity of the county employees of Kisumu. The specific objectives include establishing the effect of goal setting, investigating the effect of performance feedback and examining the effect of performance rewards on the employee productivity of Kisumu County Staff.

**Response Rate**

The researcher issued out 361 questionnaires on a face-to-face basis. 353 questionnaires were returned and they were fully filled, thus a response return of 97.8 percent. This fulfills the statistical threshold of 50% required to deem the response rate generalizable to analyze data and draw reliable conclusions from according to (Mugenda, 2009).

### Demographic Information

The demographics of the respondents include features that are specific to those participants that were included in the general information questionnaire. They involve the respondents' gender, education level, age, years of employment at the county government and their respective participants. The findings on demographic characteristics of respondents are presented as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4. 1  
*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Frequency	Percent
Male	203	57.5
Female	150	42.5
<b>Education Level</b>	Frequency	Percent
Primary	10	2.8
Secondary	43	12.2
Diploma	139	39.4
Degree	127	36.0
Master's degree and above	34	9.6
<b>Age</b>	Frequency	Percent
25-30	172	48.7
31-35	71	20.1
36-40	38	10.8
41-45	37	10.5
46 and above	35	9.9
<b>Years of Employment</b>	Frequency	Percent
1-3	142	40.2
4-6	121	34.3
7-9	90	25.5

Source: Field Data, 2022

From the findings on demographic characteristics, it emerged that majority of the employees, 203 (57.5%) were male employees. Most of them, 139 (39.4%) have a diploma level of education and 1-3 years of experience in the county, 142(40.2%). The findings also shows that most of the employees are in the department of health and sanitation, 200(56.7%) followed by those in Education, ICT & Human Capacity Development, 61(17.3%) and the rest of the departments. These findings imply that the target respondents were suitable for conclusion of the present study findings.

### Overview of Employee Productivity

The study sought to assess the Level of productivity of employees at the County Government of Kisumu. Respondents were therefore asked to share their views on employee productivity

Table 4. 2

*Employee Productivity*

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	STD
Employees achieve the target volumes set by the county	129(36.5)	159(45)	63(17.8)	2(0.6)	0(0.0)	1.82	.73
Employee achieve the quality standards set by the county	125(35.4)	157(44.5)	60(17)	9(2.5)	2(0.6)	1.88	.82
Employee produce required results when assigned duties	126(35.7)	166(47)	59(16.7)	2(0.6)	0(0.0)	1.83	.74
Employee meet the deadlines set by the county for work allocated	151(42.8)	148(41.9)	50(14.2)	4(1.1)	0(0.0)	1.74	.74
Employee provide timely feedback to their supervisors concerning assignments	148(41.9)	164(46.5)	34(9.6)	7(2)	0(0.0)	1.72	.72
Employee make quick and useful decisions that aid them in conducting their duties	167(47.3)	140(39.7)	38(10.8)	6(1.7)	2(0.6)	1.69	.78
Employee utilize the available resources efficiently while delivering tasks	190(53.8)	112(31.7)	43(12.2)	7(2)	1(0.3)	1.63	.79
Employee work outcomes are of a high quality	147(41.6)	159(45)	40(11.3)	7(2)	0(0.0)	1.74	.74
Employee accomplish tasks quickly and efficiently	169(47.9)	149(42.2)	33(9.3)	2(0.6)	0(0.0)	1.63	.70
Overall mean and Standard deviation						1.74	0.5

Table 4.2 findings shows that employees have low ( $M=1.82$ ,  $SD=.73$ ) achievement on the target volumes set by the county. Quality standards set by the county also received low rating ( $M=1.88$ ,  $SD=.82$ ) thus indicating low achievement. It is also clear that from majority of the indicators of achievement, there was low rating thus implying low achievement. For instance, producing required results when assigned duties was low ( $M=1.83$ ,  $SD=.74$ ), meeting deadline set by the county for work allocated ( $M=1.74$ ,  $SD=.74$ ), providing timely feedback for the supervisors ( $M=1.72$ ,  $SD=.72$ ), making quick and useful decisions that aid them in conducting duties ( $M=1.69$ ,  $SD=.78$ ) and utilizing the available resources efficiently while delivering tasks ( $M=1.63$ ,  $SD=.79$ ). It also emerged that there was low rating on employee work outcomes in terms of quality ( $M=1.74$ ,  $SD=.74$ ) and efficient task accomplishment by employees ( $M=1.63$ ,  $SD=.70$ ). The overall rating was low ( $M=1.74$ ,  $SD=.50$ ) implying that there was low level of productivity among employees in the county government.

### Goal Setting and Employee Productivity

The first objective of the study sought to establish the effect of goal setting on employee productivity in Kisumu County government. Data from questionnaires on a five-point Likert scale is presented as shown in Table 4.3 that follows.

Table 4. 3  
Rating on Goal Setting

STATEMENT	SA (1)	A (2)	N	D	SD	M	SD
1. The county sets clear and specific goals	89(25.2)	166(47)	66(18.7)	27(7.6)	5(1.4)	2.1 3	0.9 3
2. The county sets measurable goals	77(21.8)	162(45.9)	75(21.2)	35(9.9)	4(1.1)	2.2 3	0.9 4
3. The county sets realistic goals	64(18.1)	152(43.1)	100(28.3)	35(9.9)	2(0.6)	2.3 2	0.9 0
4. The county sets goals that align with my vision for self-improvement	73(20.7)	160(45.3)	70(19.8)	44(12.5)	6(1.7)	2.2 9	0.9 9
5. The county sets goals that are time bound	91(25.8)	131(37.1)	91(25.8)	36(10.2)	4(1.1)	2.2 4	0.9 9
Overall mean and Standard deviation						2.4 4	.77

Analysis in Table 4.3 showcases the descriptive response on the extent of goal setting on employee productivity. It was evident that goal setting does have a great significance on the productivity of staff as the generated results were centered around the mean and showed that most participants agreed with the statements of the questionnaire. The statement that the county sets realistic goals had a low mean and small standard deviation ( $M=2.32$ ,  $SD=.93$ ). It also emerged that that county sets measurable goals to a low extent ( $M=2.23$ ,  $SD=.94$ ), which also slightly ( $M=2.29$ ,  $SD=.99$ ) aligns with employees' vision and self-improvement. There was low rating on time bound setting of goals by the county ( $M=2.24$ ,  $SD=.99$ ) as well as setting of clear and specific goals ( $M=2.13$ ,  $SD=.93$ ). The overall mean and standard deviations were low ( $M=2.44$ ,  $SD=.77$ ) implying that the county goal setting was not adequate and satisfactory among employees.

In order to establish the effect of goal setting on employee productivity, the study used a simple linear regression model, which entailed regressing mean employee productivity on goal setting. The findings are presented as shown in Table 4.4 that follows.



**Effect of Goal Setting on Employee Productivity**

<b>Model Summary</b>										
Model	R	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change of R Square	Statistics F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	Durbin-Watson	
1	.399 <sup>a</sup>	.159	.46761	.159	66.567	1	351	.000	1.567	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Goal setting										
b. Dependent Variable: mean productivity										
<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>										
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance VIF			
1	(Constant)	1.153	.076		15.099	.000				
	Goal setting	.263	.032	.399	8.159	.000	1.000	1.000		
a. Dependent Variable: mean productivity										

The findings in Table 4.4 shows that goal setting has a positive and significant effect on employee productivity, ( $\beta=.399$ ,  $p<.05$ ), This implies that improving goal setting in the county improves employee productivity by a magnitude of 0.263 units based on the five-point Likert scale used in the analysis. This means that goal setting by the county significantly contributes to employee productivity. Results using model summary also indicated that goal setting accounts for a significant amount of variance in employee productivity,  $R^2=.159$ ,  $F(1, 351)=66.567$ ,  $p<.05$ . This implies that goal setting accounts for 15.9% variance in employee productivity in the county, thus leaving out the rest of the variance explained by other variables.

These findings when compared to the standard simple regression model, shows goals setting still maintains a significant effect ( $\beta=.262$ ,  $P<.05$ ) even when compared with other variables. However, the effect slightly reduces. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and adopt an alternative hypothesis that states that goal setting has a positive and significant effect on employee productivity in the county. These findings concur with previous studies by Mwakidi (2010) who established that employee productivity was positively influenced by the inclusion of employees in the goal-setting process. Therefore, it can be concluded that goal setting has a positive and significant effect on employee productivity. When the county sets achievable goals, it steers employees to be more productive. The study findings also agree with Mukonabi (2016) who demonstrated that timely feedback on staff assignments also provides a positive effect on their overall productivity. This is because staff have sufficient time to reflect and resolve any issues they may have and attend to the areas they perform sub optimally. The study as well agreed with Teo and Low (2016) whose study on the impact of goal setting on organizational effectiveness revealed that goal setting has a role to play in improving employee productivity. This is evident as the study showed that if the goals set are specific, measurable, attributable, realistic and time bound employee productivity is bound to rise.

### Overall Model Results

The overall standard linear regression model results are presented as shown in Table 4.11 that follows.

### Overall Model Significance

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change of R Square	Statistics F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.429 <sup>a</sup>	.184	.177	.46201	.184	26.248	3	349	.000	1.595
a. Predictors: (Constant), Goal setting										
b. Dependent Variable: mean productivity										
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>										
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance VIF		
	(Constant)	1.032	.086			11.933	.000			
1	Goal setting	.172	.043		.262	4.047	.000	.558		1.793

a. Dependent Variable: mean productivity

From the model, it is clear that comparing the predictors renders the goal setting a strong contributor to employee productivity ( $\beta=.262$ ,  $P<.05$ ). The overall variance in employee productivity accounted for by the goal setting predictor was 18.4% percent. The findings are significant as indicated by the analysis of variance results that are below threshold value of 0.03.

### Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

#### Summary

In regards to the influence of performance management practices on employee productivity, the findings indicate that goal setting and offering in-time performance feedback significantly improved employee productivity in Kisumu County Government. In line with previous studies, an effective management practice model positively enhanced the interest and performance of the employees, leading to the completion of specific targets geared towards the attainment of the institution's goals

Goal setting, as proved in the findings, significantly influence employee productivity. In performance management systems (PMS), it has proven vital as it allows employees and their respective departmental supervisors to participate in identifying competencies, discussing career development, developing goals, and employee motivation. The findings support previous works such as Latham (2004); Seijts (2005); Shaw (2004); "goals are deemed to be motivational and influential on employee productivity as they give direction on what employees should focus and fully direct their energy on and, as such, goals should always be aligned with the organization's strategic plans." In human resource management, goal setting has been proven to be a vital integral performance management practice.

**Conclusion**

From the findings, setting goals in the county is important for employee productivity. This is because when counties set up achievable goals, employees become flexible to work and therefore their productivity improves.

In theory, this study solidifies the notion that goal setting is an integral part of improving employee performance. It showcased clearly that employees performed better upon setting clear and specific goals that are timebound and aligned with the vision of the organization as well as the employee. In context, goal setting has improved the overall performance of employees at the Kisumu County government and should therefore be retained as a performance management mechanism. It can thus be concluded that goal setting in the county positively and significantly improves employee productivity

**Recommendations**

The study recommends an improvement in the goals set by the county to more realistic and achievable goals in order to enhance employee productivity.

Human resource practices should put more emphasis on goal-setting as forms of performance management practices.

**Suggestions for Further Studies**

The current study suggests further studies on the comparison of goal setting across the counties in Kenya in order to establish the actual status.

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