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**THE EFFECT OF GOAL SETTING ON THE SERVICE DELIVERY OF ECDE
TEACHERS IN ISIOLO COUNTY, KENYA**

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Abstract:

Purpose of the Study: The study sought to determine the effect of goal setting on the service delivery of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) teachers in Isiolo County, Kenya. Specifically, it examined whether clarity, teacher participation, curriculum alignment, and regular review of performance goals significantly influence the quality and consistency of ECDE teacher service delivery.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive research design and targeted 200 respondents comprising ECDE teachers, head teachers, and county ECDE officers. A sample of 133 respondents was selected using stratified

random sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression in SPSS.

Findings: Goal-setting practices were moderately implemented among ECDE teachers in Isiolo County (aggregate mean = 3.04, SD = 1.027). While teachers strongly endorsed that set goals improve teaching effectiveness (M = 3.68, SD = 0.902), they reported limited participation in goal formulation (M = 2.64, SD = 1.128) and infrequent goal reviews (M = 2.57, SD = 1.089). Service delivery was rated relatively highly (aggregate mean = 3.53, SD = 0.922), with lesson preparation (M = 3.62) and curriculum adherence (M = 3.59) as the strongest dimensions. Goal setting demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship with service delivery ($r = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$) and significantly predicted service delivery, explaining 17.0 percent of its variation ($R^2 = 0.170$, $F(1,116) = 23.78$, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: The study concludes that goal setting significantly and positively influences ECDE teacher service delivery in Isiolo County. Strengthening clarity, teacher participation, and regular review of performance goals could improve service delivery. However, goal setting is not the sole determinant of performance, necessitating complementary interventions in supervision, professional development, and teaching resources.

Keywords: *Goal Setting; Service Delivery; ECDE Teachers; Performance Appraisal*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Goal setting is a deliberate management practice in which specific, measurable performance expectations are established for employees to direct their effort, sustain motivation, and provide a basis against which performance can later be assessed (Locke & Latham, 2002). In the education sector, goal setting forms a core component of teacher performance appraisal, since it translates broad curriculum objectives into concrete, individually owned targets that teachers can pursue in the classroom. For Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) teachers, whose work directly shapes the cognitive, social, and emotional foundations of young learners, the presence or absence of clearly defined performance goals is likely to have a direct bearing on the consistency and quality of service delivery. Where goals are vague, poorly communicated, or rarely reviewed, teachers may lack the direction needed to prioritise lesson preparation, learner engagement, and curriculum compliance, undermining the overall quality of early childhood education services.

1.1.1 Global Perspective

Internationally, goal-setting and appraisal practices in early childhood education vary considerably by system maturity and policy investment. Across Europe, the OECD's TALIS Starting Strong 2024 survey gathered data from early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff and leaders across seventeen countries and subnational entities, examining working conditions, professional development, and appraisal-related practices, and found that structured induction, mentoring, and goal-linked feedback were associated with stronger reported job satisfaction and instructional confidence among ECEC staff (OECD, 2025). In Asia, Yang, Rao, and Sun (2024) examined 52 early childhood classrooms across Shanghai and Guizhou in China and found that the frequency and diversity of teachers' professional development experiences, closely tied to institutionally set developmental goals, were associated with higher classroom interaction quality and, indirectly, with improved child development outcomes. Together, these findings from a high-income European survey and an Asian classroom-based study demonstrate that structured goal-related practices are consistently linked to stronger early childhood service quality, regardless of the income level or governance structure of the education system.

1.1.2 Regional Perspective

Within Africa, evidence from West and Southern Africa illustrates both the potential and the limitations of goal-setting practices in early childhood settings. In Ghana, Anyidoho and Ogina (2025) examined the organising and management practices of early childhood care and development (ECCD) centre directors and found that centres in which directors communicated clear organisational objectives and coordinated staff around defined targets demonstrated stronger accountability and more consistent service delivery than centres lacking such structured direction. In South Africa, Leach and von Fintel (2025) developed a multi-

dimensional measure of municipal-level service delivery for children, drawing on thirteen sub-domains of health, nutrition, and early learning provision, and found that municipalities with more clearly defined and monitored service targets achieved measurably higher levels of adequate service delivery for children than those without such structured accountability mechanisms. These West African and Southern African cases indicate that the presence of clear, monitored goals at both the centre and municipal level is associated with more consistent early childhood service outcomes across diverse African contexts.

1.1.3 Local Perspective

In Kenya, goal setting has been formally embedded in the Teachers Service Commission's performance appraisal framework, yet its implementation within early childhood education remains uneven. Njiru and Odundo (2024) examined ECDE teacher preparedness for Competency-Based Curriculum delivery in Kenyan institutions and found that teachers who had clearly defined professional development targets and regular institutional support demonstrated stronger curriculum implementation than those without such structured guidance. At the primary school level, Muriuki, Kimosop, and Gachahi (2022) examined headteachers' goal-setting strategies in Nyeri and Murang'a counties and found that schools whose leadership set clear, monitored academic targets recorded correspondingly higher levels of learner achievement. More recently, Ojwang, Mulwa, and Munguti (2025) examined performance goal setting within the Teachers Service Commission's appraisal framework in Kajiado County and found that inconsistencies in how goals were communicated and reviewed limited the extent to which goal setting translated into improved teacher performance. Isiolo County, an arid and sparsely resourced county in northern Kenya, faces comparable and, in some respects, more acute constraints in supervisory capacity and appraisal consistency, making it a pertinent setting in which to examine how goal-setting practices relate to ECDE teacher service delivery.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective performance appraisal in ECDE centres would ideally involve clearly communicated, participatory, and regularly reviewed performance goals that give teachers a shared and current understanding of what is expected of them, enabling supervisors and teachers alike to identify progress and address emerging gaps before they affect learners. In practice, this ideal is unevenly realised in Kenya. Ojwang, Mulwa, and Munguti (2025) found that inconsistencies in the implementation of performance goal setting within the Teachers Service Commission's appraisal framework in Kajiado County limited its contribution to teacher effectiveness, while Njiru and Odundo (2024) found that many ECDE teachers in Kenyan institutions lacked adequate structured guidance to translate broad curriculum objectives into specific classroom-level targets. These local findings echo a broader regional pattern: Anyidoho and Ogina (2025) found that Ghanaian ECCD centres without clearly communicated organisational goals experienced weaker staff accountability, while Leach and von Fintel (2025) demonstrated, at a much larger scale in South Africa, that the absence of clearly monitored service targets was associated with materially lower levels of adequate child service delivery across municipalities.

Despite this accumulating evidence that goal clarity, participation, and review matter for service quality in early childhood settings, there remains limited empirical documentation of how these specific dimensions of goal setting relate to the day-to-day service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County. Isiolo County combines a predominantly rural and pastoralist population with comparatively limited numbers of qualified ECDE supervisory personnel, conditions that plausibly constrain the consistency with which performance goals are set, communicated, and reviewed. Without county-specific evidence on whether, and to what extent, goal setting is associated with ECDE teacher service delivery, county education officers and school leaders lack a clear empirical basis for prioritising investment in appraisal reform over other competing interventions. This study therefore sought to determine the effect of goal setting on the service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of goal setting on the service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H01: Goal setting does not have a statistically significant effect on the service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County, Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Goal-Setting Theory Goal-Setting Theory, developed by Locke and Latham (1990), offers a robust theoretical perspective for examining the influence of clearly defined goals on employee performance and organisational outcomes. The theory postulates that individuals given specific, measurable, and appropriately challenging goals tend to perform at a higher level than those given vague or general instructions, because clear goals improve concentration, sustain a higher level of effort, increase persistence, and strengthen commitment to goal pursuit. Locke and Latham (2002) further elaborate that feedback is an essential component of this process, enabling the performer to gauge progress against the expected standard and make the adjustments necessary to close any performance gap. The theory also holds that individual participation in setting goals increases both ownership and motivation, thereby yielding enhanced performance.

Within performance appraisal systems, the role of Goal-Setting Theory is significant because appraisal is fundamentally concerned with establishing standards of expected performance and assessing whether these standards are met. A teacher who holds a clear understanding of specific teaching goals, the expectations attached to lessons delivered, and the outcomes expected of learners is better positioned to execute their duties effectively. Within ECDE centres specifically, goal setting helps to ensure that teachers' day-to-day activities remain aligned with curriculum objectives, to the benefit of learner service provision, while regular

feedback reinforces this process by helping to address performance shortfalls and to recognise good performance where it occurs. This study draws on Goal-Setting Theory to examine how clearly established performance goals, teacher participation in goal formulation, alignment of goals with curriculum objectives, and regular goal review relate to the service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County.

The theory has, however, faced criticism, notably that its focus on individually assigned targets can understate the influence of factors beyond an employee's control, such as administrative constraints, high learner-to-teacher ratios, and inadequate teaching resources (Mento, Steel, & Karren, 1987). This limitation is acknowledged in the present study: while goal setting is examined as a significant predictor of service delivery, it is not treated as its sole determinant, and the discussion of findings accordingly considers contextual constraints that may temper the practical influence of goal-setting practices within ECDE centres in Isiolo County.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Goal Setting and Service Delivery in Early Childhood Education

Evidence from both African and international settings demonstrates a consistent, though not uniform, association between clearly structured goal-setting practices and the quality of service delivered within early childhood and basic education institutions. In Ghana, Anyidoho and Ogina (2025) investigated the organising practices of ECCD centre directors and found that centres in which directors clearly articulated institutional objectives and coordinated staff activity around those objectives demonstrated stronger day-to-day accountability and more consistent delivery of care and learning services than centres where organisational goals were poorly defined or communicated. This finding underscores that goal clarity operates not only at the level of the individual teacher but also as a centre-wide organisational practice that shapes the working environment within which individual teachers deliver services.

At a larger scale, Leach and von Fintel (2025) constructed a thirteen-domain measure of multi-dimensional service delivery for children across South African municipalities and found substantial variation in the extent to which municipalities met adequate service thresholds, with municipalities that maintained clearer, monitored service targets consistently outperforming those without such mechanisms. Although their unit of analysis was the municipality rather than the individual teacher, the finding reinforces the broader proposition that measurable, monitored targets are systematically associated with more consistent service outcomes for children, a proposition directly relevant to how individual teacher-level goal setting might similarly shape ECDE service delivery in Isiolo County.

In the Kenyan context specifically, Njiru and Odundo (2024) examined ECDE teacher preparedness for Competency-Based Curriculum delivery and found that teachers who had access to clearly defined professional development goals and structured institutional support were better able to translate curriculum requirements into effective classroom practice than teachers without such guidance, directly linking goal clarity to curriculum-aligned service delivery. Complementing this, Muriuki, Kimosop, and Gachahi (2022) found that in private

primary schools in Nyeri and Murang'a counties, headteachers' goal-setting strategies, particularly the clarity and consistency with which academic targets were communicated, were positively associated with learner academic performance, suggesting that the benefits of clear goal setting extend from classroom-level teaching practice through to measurable learner outcomes.

Nonetheless, not all Kenyan evidence points toward smooth translation of goal-setting policy into practice. Ojwang, Mulwa, and Munguti (2025), examining the influence of performance goal setting on teachers' performance within the Teachers Service Commission's appraisal framework in Kajiado County, found that although goal setting was formally embedded in national appraisal policy, inconsistencies in how goals were communicated, the extent to which teachers were involved in setting them, and the frequency with which they were reviewed, limited the extent to which the practice translated into consistently improved teacher performance. This finding is particularly instructive for the present study because it illustrates that the mere existence of a goal-setting policy is insufficient; it is the manner of its implementation, specifically clarity, participation, and review, that determines its effect on service delivery.

Internationally, comparable patterns are evident. The OECD's TALIS Starting Strong 2024 survey found that early childhood education and care staff across participating European systems who experienced structured induction and goal-linked mentoring reported stronger job satisfaction and greater confidence in meeting instructional expectations than those without such support (OECD, 2025), while Yang, Rao, and Sun (2024), studying early childhood classrooms in China, found that the frequency and diversity of goal-oriented professional development activities were positively associated with classroom interaction quality, which in turn predicted better child development outcomes. Taken together, this body of evidence, spanning Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, Europe, and China, indicates that clearly communicated, participatory, and regularly reviewed goal-setting practices are consistently associated with stronger service delivery in early childhood and basic education settings, while inconsistent or poorly implemented goal setting, as observed in Kajiado County, limits these potential benefits. This provides a strong empirical basis for examining the specific effect of goal setting on ECDE teacher service delivery in Isiolo County.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study proposes a direct relationship between goal setting, as the independent variable, and service delivery by ECDE teachers, as the dependent variable. Goal setting was operationalised through indicators of the clarity of performance targets set for teachers, the extent of teacher participation in formulating those targets, the alignment of goals with ECDE curriculum objectives, and the regularity with which goals are reviewed. Service delivery was operationalised through indicators of lesson preparation, use of learner-centred teaching methods, active learner engagement, punctuality and consistency of attendance, and adherence to ECDE curriculum requirements. The framework holds that improvements in the clarity, participatory formulation, curriculum alignment, and regular

review of performance goals are expected to translate into more consistent and higher-quality service delivery by ECDE teachers, consistent with the theoretical expectation, drawn from Goal-Setting Theory, that specific and well-communicated goals sustain higher effort, concentration, and commitment than vague or infrequently reviewed expectations.

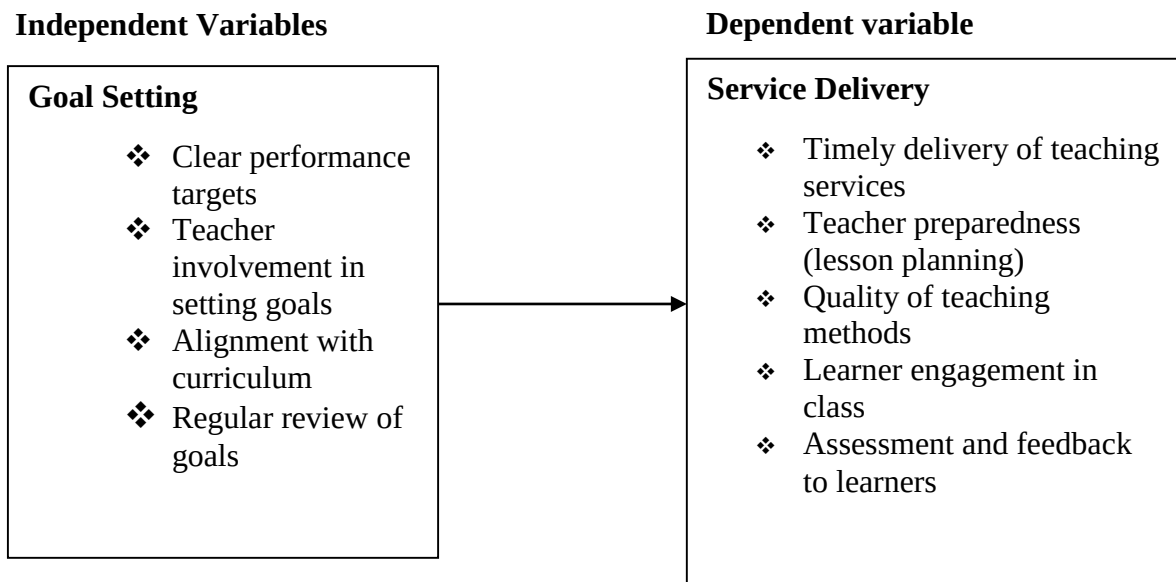


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the effect of goal setting on the service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County, Kenya. The study was conducted across ECDE centres in Isiolo County, which provided an appropriate setting for assessing performance management practices among ECDE teachers. The target population comprised 200 respondents, including 120 ECDE teachers, 50 head teachers, and 30 county ECDE officers. Using Yamane's formula at a 5 percent margin of error, a sample size of 133 respondents was obtained. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure adequate representation of the respondent categories.

Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire containing closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale and open-ended questions. The instrument captured information on goal setting and service delivery, together with relevant respondent characteristics. A pilot study involving 13 respondents was conducted in a neighbouring county to assess the clarity, suitability, validity, and reliability of the instrument. Content and face validity were enhanced through expert review, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable.

Quantitative data were coded, cleaned, and analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression were used to examine relationships and effects. Qualitative responses were analysed thematically. Ethical principles, including informed

consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and research authorisation, were observed.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

The study targeted a sample of 133 respondents comprising 80 ECDE teachers, 33 head teachers, and 20 county ECDE officers drawn from Isiolo County. Out of the 133 questionnaires administered, 118 were correctly filled, returned, and found suitable for analysis, giving a response rate of 88.7 percent. As shown in Table 4.1, ECDE teachers recorded a response rate of 90.0 percent, head teachers 84.8 percent, and county ECDE officers 90.0 percent.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Category	Sample Size	Questionnaires Returned	Percentage (%)
ECDE Teachers	80	72	90.0
Head Teachers	33	28	84.8
County ECDE Officers	20	18	90.0
Total	133	118	88.7

Source: Field Data (2026)

A response rate of above 70 percent is generally considered excellent for social science research, meaning the 88.7 percent response rate achieved in this study provides a strong basis for analysis and interpretation. This achievement is attributable to the researcher's prior engagement with county education offices, assurance of confidentiality, and the direct relevance of the study to respondents' professional roles in ECDE service delivery and appraisal. The relatively high and fairly uniform response rate across all three respondent categories suggests that the data collected were sufficiently representative of the target population and provided an adequate basis for subsequent descriptive and inferential analysis.

4.2 Goal Setting

Goal setting was examined using five statements relating to the establishment, participation, alignment, review, and usefulness of performance goals among ECDE teachers in Isiolo County. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics on Goal Setting

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Clear performance targets are set for ECDE teachers.	2.98	1.041
Teachers are involved in setting performance goals.	2.64	1.128
Performance goals are aligned with ECDE curriculum objectives.	3.31	0.976
Performance goals are regularly reviewed.	2.57	1.089
Set goals help improve teaching effectiveness.	3.68	0.902
Aggregate Mean	3.04	1.027

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 4.2, the aggregate mean of 3.04 (SD = 1.027) indicates that goal-setting practices were moderately implemented in ECDE centres in Isiolo County; the practice was present but not consistently applied across institutions. The statement that set goals help improve teaching effectiveness recorded the highest mean of 3.68 (SD = 0.902), indicating relatively strong agreement that goal setting contributes positively to teacher effectiveness when it does occur. This finding is consistent with Njiru and Odundo (2024), who found that ECDE teachers with clearly defined professional development goals were better able to translate curriculum requirements into effective classroom practice, and with Muriuki, Kimosop, and Gachahi (2022), who found that clearly communicated academic targets were positively associated with improved performance outcomes.

The relatively high mean of 3.31 for alignment of performance goals with ECDE curriculum objectives suggests that respondents generally perceived some connection between appraisal expectations and curriculum requirements, consistent with Anyidoho and Ogina (2025), who found that ECCD centres with clearly communicated institutional objectives achieved stronger alignment between staff activity and curriculum-related goals. However, the comparatively lower mean of 2.98 for the clarity of performance targets, and the still lower means of 2.64 for teacher participation in goal setting and 2.57 for regular review of goals, point to specific weaknesses in how goal setting is implemented in Isiolo County. These weaknesses mirror the pattern reported by Ojwang, Mulwa, and Munguti (2025) in Kajiado County, where inconsistencies in how goals were communicated, the extent of teacher involvement, and the frequency of review were identified as the principal constraints limiting the translation of goal-setting policy into improved teacher performance.

The comparatively low mean for teacher participation (M = 2.64, SD = 1.128) suggests that ECDE teachers in Isiolo County have limited opportunity to help shape the goals against which they are subsequently assessed, which may reduce ownership and commitment to those goals, consistent with the participatory dimension emphasised in Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2002). Similarly, the lowest mean, recorded for regular review of goals (M = 2.57, SD = 1.089), indicates that once goals are set, they are seldom revisited to reflect changing classroom circumstances or to provide teachers with timely feedback, a gap that limits the

corrective, feedback-driven function that Goal-Setting Theory identifies as central to translating goals into sustained performance improvement. Taken together, these findings suggest that while ECDE teachers in Isiolo County recognise the potential value of goal setting, particularly its contribution to teaching effectiveness, the processes through which goals are formulated, communicated, and reviewed require considerable strengthening.

4.3 Service Delivery by ECDE Teachers

Service delivery by ECDE teachers was examined using five statements covering lesson preparation, teaching methods, learner engagement, punctuality and attendance, and adherence to ECDE curriculum requirements. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics on Service Delivery

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
I adequately prepare lesson plans before teaching.	3.62	0.891
I use learner-centred teaching methods effectively.	3.41	0.947
I engage learners actively during lessons.	3.55	0.913
I am punctual and consistently attend to my duties.	3.48	0.958
I adhere to the ECDE curriculum requirements.	3.59	0.902
Aggregate Mean	3.53	0.922

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 4.3, the aggregate mean of 3.53 (SD = 0.922) indicates that the level of service delivery among ECDE teachers in Isiolo County was relatively high, despite the moderate implementation of goal-setting practices reported in Table 4.2. Adequate lesson preparation recorded the highest mean of 3.62 (SD = 0.891), followed closely by adherence to ECDE curriculum requirements (M = 3.59, SD = 0.902) and active learner engagement (M = 3.55, SD = 0.913). The comparatively lower means for the use of learner-centred teaching methods (M = 3.41, SD = 0.947) and for punctuality and consistent attendance (M = 3.48, SD = 0.958) suggest specific areas in which service delivery, although generally sound, could be further strengthened.

The relatively strong overall service delivery observed alongside only moderate goal-setting implementation suggests that factors beyond formal appraisal practices, such as professional commitment, teaching experience, and established classroom routines, also contribute meaningfully to how ECDE teachers in Isiolo County perform their duties, a pattern consistent with the Goal-Setting Theory critique that individual performance cannot be attributed to goal clarity alone (Mento, Steel, & Karren, 1987). Nonetheless, the positive association between the statement on curriculum-aligned goals and stronger curriculum adherence echoes Njiru and Odundo's (2024) finding that structured professional goals support more effective Competency-Based Curriculum implementation among Kenyan ECDE teachers. The

comparatively weaker scores for learner-centred teaching methods and punctuality also point to areas where clearer, more consistently reviewed performance targets, of the kind found lacking in Table 4.2, could plausibly strengthen service delivery further, consistent with Leach and von Fintel's (2025) finding that South African municipalities with clearer, monitored service targets achieved more consistent child-focused service outcomes than those without such mechanisms.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between goal setting and service delivery prior to regression estimation. Pearson correlation was used because it indicates both the presence of a statistically significant relationship and the probable direction of that relationship, with coefficients closer to positive or negative one denoting a stronger relationship and coefficients closer to zero denoting a weaker one. The findings are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Correlation Between Goal Setting and Service Delivery

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Goal Setting ↔ Service Delivery	0.412**	0.000	118

Source: Field Data (2026). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 4.4, goal setting had a positive and statistically significant relationship with service delivery among ECDE teachers in Isiolo County ($r = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that clearer, more participatory, and more regularly reviewed goal-setting practices were associated with stronger service delivery. This finding is consistent with Ojwang, Mulwa, and Munguti (2025), who found a significant positive relationship between performance goal setting and teacher performance in Kajiado County, and with Anyidoho and Ogina (2025), who found that clearly communicated organisational goals were associated with stronger accountability and service delivery in Ghanaian ECCD centres. The moderate rather than strong magnitude of the correlation is consistent with the theoretical expectation that goal setting is an important, but not exclusive, determinant of service delivery, given that other factors, including teacher motivation, supervisory support, and resource availability, also shape how ECDE teachers perform their duties.

4.5 Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which goal setting predicts service delivery among ECDE teachers in Isiolo County. Table 4.5 presents the model summary.

Table 4.5: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.412	0.170	0.163	0.845

Source: Field Data (2026). Predictors: (Constant), Goal Setting.

The findings indicate an R value of 0.412, confirming a moderate positive relationship between goal setting and service delivery. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.170, indicating that goal setting explains 17.0 percent of the variation in service delivery among ECDE teachers in Isiolo County. The adjusted R^2 of 0.163 confirms that this result is not substantially inflated, and the standard error of the estimate of 0.845 indicates an acceptable, though not exceptionally precise, level of predictive accuracy. The relatively modest proportion of variation explained suggests that other factors not captured in this single-predictor model, such as performance feedback, supervisory support, and resource availability, also contribute meaningfully to ECDE teacher service delivery in Isiolo County.

Table 4.6: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	16.956	1	16.956	23.78	<.001
Residual	82.771	116	0.713		
Total	99.727	117			

Source: Field Data (2026). Dependent Variable: Service Delivery. Predictors: (Constant), Goal Setting.

Table 4.6 presents the Analysis of Variance results. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 116) = 23.78$, $p < 0.001$. Since the p-value was below 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that goal setting does not have a statistically significant effect on the service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County. This confirms that the relationship between goal setting and service delivery observed in the correlation analysis is not attributable to chance.

Table 4.7: Regression Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.312	0.241		9.60	<.001
Goal Setting	0.372	0.076	0.412	4.89	<.001

Source: Field Data (2026). Dependent Variable: Service Delivery.

Table 4.7 presents the regression coefficients. The results show that goal setting has a positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery ($B = 0.372$, $Beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$). This means that a one-unit improvement in goal setting is associated with a 0.372-unit increase in service delivery, holding other factors constant. The t-value of 4.89 and significance level

below 0.001 provide strong evidence that this relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance. The constant term of 2.312 indicates that a baseline level of service delivery would exist among ECDE teachers in Isiolo County even at minimal levels of goal setting, consistent with the descriptive finding that service delivery remained comparatively high despite only moderate goal-setting implementation, and consistent with the theoretical caution that goal setting, while significant, is not the sole driver of teacher performance (Mento, Steel, & Karren, 1987).

The regression equation for the study was expressed as:

$$\text{Service Delivery} = 2.312 + 0.372 (\text{Goal Setting})$$

These findings imply that goal setting is a significant predictor of service delivery among ECDE teachers in Isiolo County, consistent with the broader empirical literature reviewed in Chapter Two, spanning Kenya (Njiru & Odundo, 2024; Muriuki et al., 2022; Ojwang et al., 2025), Ghana (Anyidoho & Ogina, 2025), South Africa (Leach & von Fintel, 2025), and international evidence from Europe and China (OECD, 2025; Yang et al., 2024). Strengthening the clarity, participatory formulation, and regular review of performance goals is therefore likely to yield a measurable improvement in ECDE teacher service delivery in Isiolo County.

5.0 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study examined the effect of goal setting on the service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County. Descriptive findings showed that goal-setting practices were moderately implemented, with strong agreement that goals improve teaching effectiveness but comparatively weak implementation of teacher participation and regular goal review. Service delivery was rated relatively highly overall, with lesson preparation and curriculum adherence as the strongest dimensions, and learner-centred teaching methods and punctuality as comparatively weaker areas. Correlation analysis confirmed a positive and statistically significant relationship between goal setting and service delivery ($r = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$), and regression analysis showed that goal setting significantly predicted service delivery, explaining 17.0 percent of its variation ($R^2 = 0.170$, $F(1,116) = 23.78$, $p < 0.001$). These findings, consistent with evidence from Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Europe, and China, confirm that structured goal-setting practices meaningfully, though not exclusively, shape the service delivery of ECDE teachers.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that goal setting has a significant and positive effect on the service delivery of ECDE teachers in Isiolo County. The moderate implementation of goal-setting practices, particularly the limited teacher participation in goal formulation and the infrequency of goal review, represents an important constraint on service delivery that, if addressed, could yield measurable improvements in ECDE teaching quality. At the same time, the relatively high level of service delivery observed despite only moderate goal-setting implementation, together with the modest proportion of variation explained by goal setting alone, confirms the theoretical caution that goal setting operates alongside, rather than in place of, other

determinants of teacher performance, including professional commitment, supervisory support, and resource availability.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, county education officers and ECDE centre leadership in Isiolo County should strengthen the clarity and specificity of performance targets set for teachers, ensuring that goals are communicated in measurable and time-bound terms rather than left implicit. Head teachers and supervisors should institute structured mechanisms for involving teachers directly in the formulation of their own performance goals, so as to promote ownership and commitment consistent with the participatory principle central to Goal-Setting Theory. County ECDE offices should establish a routine schedule for reviewing performance goals during, rather than only at the end of, the appraisal period, enabling timely feedback and adjustment in line with changing classroom circumstances. Finally, given that goal setting alone explained only a modest proportion of the variation in service delivery, county education stakeholders should complement goal-setting reforms with parallel investment in supervisory support, teaching resources, and professional development, drawing on the broader appraisal and resourcing improvements demonstrated to matter in comparable settings such as Kajiado County (Ojwang et al., 2025) and Ghana's ECCD centres (Anyidoho & Ogina, 2025).

8.0 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future research should examine the combined influence of goal setting alongside other performance appraisal dimensions, such as feedback provision, clarity of appraisal criteria, and linkage of appraisal to rewards, on ECDE teacher service delivery, using a multivariate model that extends beyond the single-predictor scope of this study. Longitudinal research tracking how improvements in goal-setting practices in Isiolo County translate into measurable gains in service delivery over time would strengthen the evidence for the causal pathway proposed here. Comparative studies examining these relationships across other arid and semi-arid Kenyan counties would also help establish whether the findings from Isiolo County generalise across similarly resourced regions.

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