Relationships in Ratings of School's Chosen ACIALL of English and Form Three Students Academic Performance

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Abstract: This study explored the relationship between the implementation of the Authentic Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment for Lifelong Learning (ACIALL) model and Form Three students' academic performance in English across selected secondary schools in Kenya's Rift Valley region. Using a concurrent mixed-method design, data were collected from 84 English teachers and 898 students through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The findings revealed that ACIALL practices had varying effects based on gender and school performance levels: female students' academic performance strongly correlated with authentic instruction and assessment, while male students showed a weak or negative correlation. Interestingly, low-performing schools reported higher use of authentic instruction compared to high-performing ones, though both categories showed similar application of authentic curriculum and assessment. Challenges in implementing ACIALL included limited time for individualized instruction, inadequate teacher preparation, and insufficient assessment strategies. Despite these obstacles, the study concluded that ACIALL holds strong potential to improve English learning outcomes if integrated with real-life tasks, supported by inclusive and gender-responsive teaching strategies. It recommends reforms in curriculum design, enhanced teacher training, and equitable resource distribution to maximize the benefits of authentic learning across all learner demographics.

Keywords: Authentic Learning, Curriculum Implementation, English Performance, Gender Differences, Secondary Education.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, education systems globally are shifting focus toward aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the broader goal of lifelong learning. In the United States, reforms have emphasized authentic learning that integrates real-world applications with higher-order thinking skills, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). These reforms support the development of Authentic Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment for Lifelong Learning (ACIALL) models, which promote deeper student engagement and practical skill acquisition (Grossman et al., 2020). Similarly, in Canada, educational frameworks prioritize student-centered approaches that reflect real-life contexts and promote transferable competencies such as digital literacy, inquiry, and global citizenship (Alberta Education, 2021). Studies indicate that when schools implement authentic instruction and assessment practices, students demonstrate improved academic performance and long-term retention of knowledge (OECD, 2020).

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education supports functional education aimed at equipping learners with

problem-solving skills and lifelong learning capabilities. However, the effective implementation of authentic instruction remains limited due to inadequate teacher training and misalignment between curriculum delivery and assessment practices (Yusuf et al., 2022). Research has shown that English language instruction often lacks authenticity, impacting learner outcomes negatively (Oluwatosin & Akinbode, 2021).In Rwanda, the introduction of a Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) has promoted learner-centered pedagogy and authentic assessment strategies. Teachers are encouraged to use project-based learning and integrate real-life experiences into lessons, particularly in English instruction (Mugiraneza & Uwizeyimana, 2021). Evaluation reports suggest that the curriculum reforms have improved students' communication skills and critical thinking abilities (Ndayambaje, 2020).

Kenya launched the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2017 to foster creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning (KICD, 2021). Although the CBC framework is progressive, its implementation—especially in secondary schools—has encountered challenges. These include limited teacher capacity to design authentic tasks, inconsistent assessment practices, and inadequate alignment between instructional methods and the intended curriculum goals (Mutai & Kimutai, 2023). English language learning, in particular, faces issues related to the authenticity of instruction and the relevance of assessment methods to learners' real-life contexts.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the global shift toward learner-centered education that emphasizes authenticity in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, many secondary schools in Kenya continue to experience challenges in aligning English language teaching with real-life applications, as envisioned in the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) (KICD, 2021; Mutai & Kimutai, 2023). Ideally, the implementation of the Authentic Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment for Lifelong Learning (ACIALL) model should enhance learner engagement, promote critical thinking, and improve academic performance across genders and performance levels (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Grossman et al., 2020). However, the current state reveals inconsistencies in the application of ACIALL practices in English classrooms, including inadequate teacher preparation, weak instructional strategies, and minimal use of authentic assessment tasks (Yusuf et al., 2022; Oluwatosin & Akinbode, 2021). These gaps contribute to disparities in student achievement, particularly among male learners, and reflect a misalignment between curriculum intentions and classroom realities. To address this, it is necessary to examine the relationship between how schools implement ACIALL in English with the goal of informing teacher

professional development, improving instructional practices, and promoting equity in learning outcomes.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between a school's chosen Authentic Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment for Lifelong Learning (ACIALL) of English and form three English students' academic performance in selected Secondary Schools within specific counties in the Rift Valley region, Kenya considering;
   (i)   Gender
   (ii) The high performing schools and low performing schools.

2. Literature Review

Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, (2014) stated that curriculum is the "missing link" in effective schools and school improvement research. Most research has used standardized test scores as the criteria for effective or improved schools without attention to either the school curriculum or whether the learning measured by the test was valuable. Schools teach mandated content and prepare students for the test without assessing the value of the content or improving the curriculum. In one sense, current practices make sense; externally mandated standards and high stakes achievement tests provide schools with a ready- made curriculum of sorts. When K-12 educators allow external mandates to completely displace local curriculum, they have abdicated their responsibility to participate in an incredibly important moral decision: What should students learn?

Stiggins et al (2007), posits that the curriculum is the first assessment guide and a curriculum with problems is one that sits on the shelf. Furthermore, teachers often substitute the text book, a list of units or activities, or a series of projects for a curriculum. Textbooks contain too much content to successfully teach in one class in a year and most often lack in-depth treatment of any one concept. They provide little or no guidance on which information is of lesser or greater importance, leading teachers to choose idiosyncratically what to teach, thus cover material at a fast pace that far outstrips learning for most students. Teachers may have to rely on an outside program to straighten them out, imposing a 'drop-in' remedial mini-curriculum. None of this is in the best interest of students.

More challenges of authentic curriculum include difficulty to authenticate learning experiences in EFL contexts; difficulty to identify "local English-using situations in which a task can be authentically contextualized" (Chan, 2013); possibility for a conflict between two indicators of curriculum authenticity and developing evaluation instruments to assess the criteria (Tomlinson, 2012). In Kenya and in the past, undue emphasis has been laid in

reading and writing at the expense of listening and speaking an imbalance that must be corrected because every language skill is important and the emphasis should be on the acquisition of communicative competence (KIE, 2002). In fact, becoming proficient in the language is a desirable life-long goal.

Cennamo, Ross & Ertmer (2014), posit that instructional activities are naturally going to be more challenging for students and teachers. Giving students choices in their learning as well as responsibility for managing and assessing their learning process may cause confusion and frustration at first. Having a classroom full of students who are all pursuing different interests and experiencing a host of different difficulties may tempt teachers to give up. Students may also feel more frustrated to participate in authentic instruction activities due to their open-ended nature. As authentic learning intersects with a variety of ongoing debates about how and what schools should teach critics may question whether authentic-learning experiences can cover enough academic content in the core subject areas to ensure that students acquire a broad, well-rounded knowledge base. Critics may also argue that authentic learning, and related instructional strategies may displace more traditional yet effective forms of teaching, fail to equip students with "the basics" or lead to disorderly classrooms (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

Authentic learning may also place more burdens—both logistical and instructional—on teachers for example, it may require significantly more planning and preparation and teachers may need to acquire new and more sophisticated instructional techniques or substantially revise lesson plans they have used for years. It may also introduce more logistical complexities, particularly when learning experiences take place outside of the school or classroom. In schools, even seemingly minor logistical tasks, such as making travel arrangements or securing parental permissions, can take up a lot of time (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014)...

Further, more challenges include authentic assessments being new to most students who may be suspicious at first; years of conditioning with paper-pencil tests, searching for the single right answer, are not easily undone (O' Malley & Pierce, 2011). Some authentic forms of assessment can be time-consuming than the traditional ones (O' Malley & Pierce, 2011, Yang, 2015) because the work teachers are asking students to do is more time-consuming. Applying, analyzing, evaluating, and, creating usually take more time than reciting and restating (Whitlock & Nanavati, 2013). Apart from time, another big hurdle is money (richer tests require more of both to design and administer), and politics (that rarely tamable beast) (Rubenstein, 2008).Authentic assessment may not be equal or fair to all especially limited English proficient (LEP) students after they are mainstreamed, to use the same instructional strategies as with native English speakers who have adequate English skills (O' Malley & Pierce, 2011). Additionally, teachers often fail to note cultural and linguistic differences that can affect how LEP children learn, resulting in teachers having difficulty accepting differences and appropriately accommodating LEP students' needs.

Ensuring curricular validity and minimizing evaluator bias is another challenge. Evaluation of cognitive learning level 4-6 is more subjective than the traditional one and we assume that the teacher would be at a better (or higher) position to evaluate students (Yang, 2015). Criticism generally involve both informal development of assessments and difficulty in ensuring test validity and reliability given the subjective nature of human scoring rubrics compared to computers scoring multiple-choice test items (Donges, 2016). There are doubts that more complex tests can be done on a large scale and making them comparable from year to year could be too impractical. But, based on the value to student outcomes, the advantages of authentic assessments outweigh these concerns. The value is in creative contextualized courses designed to be authentic learning opportunities to allow for greater student engagement with each course having a link to a vocational pathway (Heretaunga College, 2017).

2.1 Solutions to the Challenging Nature of ACIALL

If each school exists within a unique context and serves a unique population of students and families, then it makes sense that at least some of the school curriculum should be tailored to the local context and community. Giving students the subject, topic, resource and activity is not enough. Explaining the intended learning in student – friendly terms at the outset is the crucial first step in helping students know where they are going. When we have clear vision of where we're headed with students, we can communicate that vision to them. Statements of intended learning should be devised with students and be posted, not just shared verbally because when teachers displayed learning intentions and success criteria in poster form; Clarke in (Stiggins et al, 2007) recounts the following anecdotal results:

- All children talked about "Learning intentions", how their teacher wrote it up on a board even giving them examples of learning intentions from that day.
- Brighter children said that it helped them focus on the aspect at hand and not get distracted by other things.
- Less able children said that they looked up at the learning intention – and especially the success criteria – to remind themselves of what they were supposed to be doing. It has different benefits for different abilities.

Learning targets must imply the evidence that students should be looking for (Brookhart, 2013).Sending home or posting on your website a list of learning targets written in parent – friendly language can help communicate the depth and breadth of the academic work their children are engaged in (Stiggins et al, 2007). Having

understood the intended learning, parents will focus their assistance in productive ways. They will understand what grades mean in terms of what their children have and have not learned and at home, talk specifically with their children about their strengths and areas of improvements helping them avoid damaging generalizations such as, "I'm no good at the English subject."

International textbooks should be flexible and provide teachers and students with real opportunities to choose materials that suit their personal preference and local context. Publishers could produce online global 'course books' that provide opportunities to select adjust and change language materials as, materials may be authentic but above learners' proficiency level (Alshumaimeri and Alzaydi, 2015) thus, do not meet their needs. Such issues present a fragmented view of authenticity because there is a tendency to highlight an aspect over another (Trabelsi, 2006). To tackle the issue of imbalance, a table of specifications (TOS) can be used to add precision and clarity to teaching. The information in the table helps teachers break down standards into meaningful components that exactly convey the purpose of the instruction (Guskey, 2005, Stiggins et al, 2007). Teachers clarify the individual components that students must master to demonstrate their proficiency then link instructional activities more meaningfully to standards (Guskey, 2005). The teacher develops a table of final test specifications for a final unit test *before* the unit is ever taught, shares a copy of that plan with every student, reviews it carefully at the beginning of the unit and explains the expectations at that time while also involving students in the process of devising the original plan, or from time to time through the unit in checking back to the blueprint. It balances "in Depth" with "coverage" as teachers use that well developed curriculum to map – out the year in advance, maximizing the chances that they will teach important concepts where they need to be by the end of the three/four years (Stiggins et al., 2007) and know what assessments reflect at a finer grain. Teachers won't need to hire outside consultants to help them know what to focus on to improve learning for all students. According to Stiggins et al, 2007, perhaps the most powerful benefit to teachers of having an agreed curriculum and teaching to it is the common ground it offers in working with other teachers. TOS also guarantees consistency and thoroughness (Guskey, 2005). TOS clarifies the learning goals of a course or unit so that students understand what they are expected to learn as teachers share their tables with students to reinforce students' understanding and learning progress (Guskey, 2005). Students can hit any target they can see that holds still for them (Stiggins et al, 2007).

Collaborative work groups when done right can ease some of the challenges teachers face when students work independently on a host of different projects (Cennamo, Ross & Ertmer, 2014). Authentic instruction is collaborative, encompassing problem- and project- based learning, two prevalent forms of authentic instruction. At the heart of these collaborative activities is the engagement of students in deep conversations which technology supports by providing a platform for participation and by connecting learners across the room or across the globe (Cennamo, Ross & Ertmer, 2014). Gains have been documented due to the following factors: opportunities to observe more advanced students think through a problem or perform a task, who thus provide models of the knowledge construction process; the ability to divide complex tasks into smaller, more manageable parts; and the opportunity to receive feedback from, as well as to give feedback to multiple others. Both educators and business professionals have increasingly emphasized the importance of developing group interaction and problem-solving skills among future workers.

Scaffolds are also solutions particularly for students who have less experience in inquiry-based methods, to help them understand what's involved in the process and what it takes to initiate and complete different inquiry activities. An expert (the teacher or more experienced peer model) can show students how to complete a task, investigation, or process. Modeling can prompt students to complete their own approaches with that of the expert while simultaneously learning the language of the discipline. While teachers themselves can provide continuous timely support (referred to as "soft" scaffolds) based on their observations of students' ongoing efforts, technological scaffolds (as one type of "hard" scaffolds) can be built into many of the planned activities, based on teachers' knowledge of where students are likely to struggle.

Students thus reach higher levels of understanding that would not be possible without them and deal with the complexity of difficult tasks by structuring them in ways that reduce, or constrain that complexity while also learning how to accomplish the tasks independently. Scaffolds may assume multiple forms depending on the learning environment, the content, the instructor, and the learners. In addition, they may serve different functions depending on where they are used in the instructional process: at the beginning, to provide entry into the task; in the middle, to support students' inquiry efforts; or at the end, to help students make sense of what they have observed, discussed or read (Cennamo, Ross & Ertmer, 2014). Project guidelines, templates and grading rubrics are means to support student's efforts and spelling and grammar tools in word processors, list managers in spreadsheets, and auto-form filling features, in web browsers can be considered scaffolds to support teachers and students, depending on how they incorporate them into classroom activities with the teacher being free to perform additional soft scaffolding (Cennamo, Ross & Ertmer, 2014).

On authentic instruction, advocates contend that the criticisms made on it are unfounded, and that a well-planned curriculum built around authentic learning experiences can cover all the academic subjects and concepts that students need (unless the learning

experiences are poorly designed and executed). In some cases, criticism arises in response to a negative experience with authentic learning or from an insufficient understanding of the concept (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).The purpose of public education is to look beyond test scores or graduation rates—success *in* school—to the knowledge, skills, and character traits students actually need to succeed in adult life—success *outside* of school (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Despite the challenges, efforts must be made to appropriately assess all English students using assessment strategies that can empower them to take control of their own learning and become independent thinkers and users of the English language hence the solutions. Specific assignments or tasks to be evaluated and the assessment criteria need to be clearly identified at the start. It may be best to begin on a small scale introducing authentic assessments in one area (for example, on homework assignments) and progress in small steps as students adapt providing a fair bit of handholding to students (Whitlock & Nanavati, 2013).

The steps students can take to improve their English language skills include being extra careful to be sure to use correct materials recommended by a reliable teacher of English, they must make a deliberate and conscious effort to learn with or without a class teacher, get audio materials so he/she can hear the correct pronunciation of sounds and words (Ama, 2019).Language teacher educators should train teachers of English to use appropriate approaches in integrated English (teaching of literature in English language while integrating the language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing plus the subsidiary skills of grammar and punctuation teaching) and in the instructional strategies to be used(Manyasi, 2014). Newman and his associates (Newman, Secada, & Wehlage, 1995 in preus, 2012) studied 24 elementary and secondary schools by evaluating instruction and student work, the relationship between instruction and student performance, and access to such instruction for diverse groups of students (Newman, Marks & Camoran, 1996). Where authentic instruction was identified, the average student performance improved from the 30th to the 60th percentile. All students, including those with disabilities, can achieve authentic standards if given adequate support strategies and instructional resources (Preus, 2012). Both authentic learning and high standards in the academic disciplines could be achieved in inclusive settings. Graduates of Schools of Authentic and Inclusive Learning (SAIL) had higher levels of participation and achievement in postsecondary education, college completion, job satisfaction, and civic involvement than comparable national samples, with little difference between those with and without disabilities (Preus, 2012). Miller (2013) states Authenticity works! Research supports the value of authentic reading and writing with real-world problems, scenarios and challenges, creating relevance in the work and engagement with real-world audience looking at their work, giving them feedback, and helping them improve.

To address the expenses and manage the time intensive nature, technology will make this revolution possible (Rubenstein, 2008). Already, computers have enabled institutions to create interactive questions, search environments where students can find new information, and simulations to make problems more engaging and real. These tools can record students' answers as well as their thought process: what kind of information they sought, how long they spent on each Web page, and where they might have gone off track. Artificial intelligence is likely to play a big role in the scoring of such exams. If the technology becomes sophisticated enough to handle answers to trickier problems, it could make better assessment more affordable.

On politics, the key is to fight the political battle to convince states that it's practical, affordable, and clearly better than today's exams at providing meaningful information as it matches the demands of the twenty-first century. Federal money ought to be pumped into pilot projects to help states create richer assessments, paired with richer curriculum; for assessment, educators have to make a trade-off between objectivity and relevance (Rubenstein, 2008).

To ensure fairness, accommodate LEP students well after they are mainstreamed (O' Malley & Pierce, 2011). Whenever possible, according to Mueller (2011), evaluation criteria, like learning outcomes, should be made explicit to students and written in language that is easily understood by a wide audience and rubrics, tools for communicating evaluation criteria, should be constructed well. Educators should also embrace the differences that *all* children bring with them in order to educate each of them according to his/her own needs because "Fairness" does not exist when assessment is uniform, standardized, impersonal, and absolute (O' Malley & Pierce, 2011) but it is appropriate, personalized, natural, flexible, and can be modified to pinpoint specific abilities and function at the relevant level of difficulty, and when it promotes a rapport between teachers and students.

A study conducted by Whitlock & Nanavati (2013) on a systematic approach to engage in authentic assessment suggested that ensuring curricular validity, and minimizing evaluator bias starts with: articulating learning outcomes; designing learning activities and assessments; establishing evaluation criteria; deploying activities and implementing assessments; and finally reflecting and revising. We use the data collected from the assessment process to discover what changes need to be made in learning outcomes, pedagogy, learning activities, assessment tools, and evaluation criteria. Teachers of English can evaluate student learning, implement changes, and continue this cycle and make improvement via assessment a regular part of the instruction.
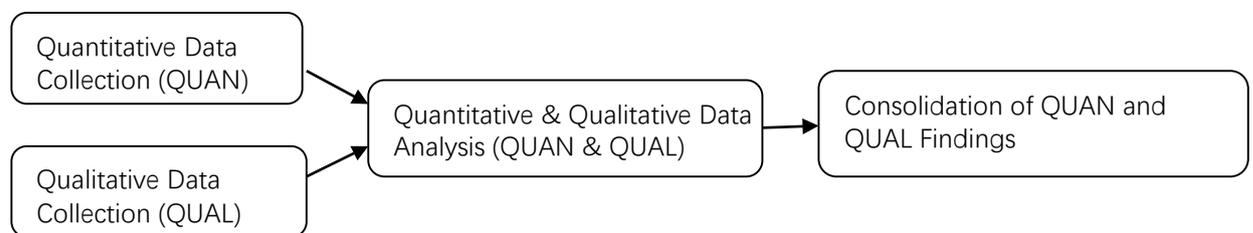
3. Methodology

This study used descriptive correlational research design which involved the collection of data to determine whether and to what degree Integrated English curriculum presented to students in Rift Valley Counties' Secondary schools fulfil the content validity and therefore authentic (Gay 1996).

The study adopted a concurrent mixed method approach using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data collection was carried out in structured and unstructured processes where numerical information enabled objective reality that was there to be discovered and the open-ended questions enabled authentic responses and observations. This study used quantitative approach which is descriptive, comparative and also correlational to examine the differences and relationships amongst the variables in question (Dornyei, 2007; Creswell, 2009).

This study was designed to determine the relationship between the independent variable, ACIALL of English and the dependent variable, English academic achievement in form three students in Rift Valley County Secondary schools, Kenya. The correlational design examined the ACIALL practices that made predictions of students' academic achievements and the possibility of the ACIALL existence causing good performance, determining a causal relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The study attempted to find a correlation between the two. Data was collected in form of surveys to measure and give a description of ACIALL of English and the schools' level of performance at KCSE and form three English end year

exam to measure academic level. The comparative element was used to explore differences in ratings among teachers and students in the ACIALL practices and academic achievements.

The qualitative approach explained ACIALL phenomenon more deeply and exhaustively, attempting to make sense of the meaning the students and their teachers brought to the study. Data was collected in form of interviews, focused group discussions, and other social media platforms such as pictures, audio and video recordings to get the general trends, perspectives, attitudes and practices (Dawson, 2009). This method provided a powerful tool for amelioration of the common criticism that Qualitative researchers work with very thin samples. Given the potential implications of the study, this method was necessary to make it possible to capture views in ACIALL of English in selected secondary schools in four Rift valley counties, Kenya from the diverse contexts (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2014) through interviews, documentary analysis and observations.

Concurrent mixed method approach (triangulation mixed methods design) was used. Quantitative and qualitative phases took place simultaneously and were weighted equally as illustrated in Figure1below. Creswell (2009) posits that it is more manageable to collect both quantitative and qualitative data at roughly the same time, rather than to revisit the field multiple times for data collection (p.206).

Figure 1: Concurrent Mixed Approach Design

3.1 Sampling

The stated research design was used to enable the researcher to collect data, describe, analyse, summarize and do the interpretation from multiple sources. Behaviour was investigated as it occurs in non-contrived situations. Data was presented in verbal descriptions, enabling researcher to describe the phenomena and discover the effects of ACIALL of English in selected secondary schools in Rift valley counties, Kenya.

The target population was one thousand five hundred and fifty-three (1553) secondary schools in 16 counties in Rift valley region, Kenya. Rift valley region was identified based on the fact that it continued to experience a widening gap between best performing and worst performing schools. It also had a number of schools with diverse enrolment yet students' performance in English is

low which affects overall performance in KCSE exams, therefore, ideal for comparative analysis of effect of authentic learning and its influence on students' English performance.

30% of the target population; 4 counties were randomly drawn from Rift valley counties. Form three students were used because they have been in school for long and are mature enough to understand the Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment modes. They understood different activities employed in English lessons due to exposer to secondary school curriculum for two years hence, more stable than the rest of the students except the form fours who have to be given time to prepare for the national exams.

The target population size of secondary schools was computed at 1553 schools as stated above. In the

Quantitative phase, the statistical procedure for sample size determination was applied and the researcher computed the sample size of the institutions (Survey System, 2012). The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2009), which involved random selection of the quantitative respondents and purposive sampling of the qualitative respondents. Purposive, cluster and simple random sampling techniques were used in this study. The Sampling was done through the following stages:

- For both quantitative and qualitative phases, schools were randomly selected to make the desired numbers.
- Based on the total target population (14 counties, 1553 schools =584,970 students) the researcher randomly selected a sample population of 4 counties,
465 schools = 175491 students in the sixteen schools.

- Sixteen (16) schools were randomly selected from the four Counties in Rift valley on the basis of both eight top boys' and girls' schools and eight lowest boys' and girls' schools based on the academic achievement of 2019 KCSE national examinations. Thirty (30) percent of all the form three boys and girls from the sixteen schools were randomly selected to participate in the study.

- All teachers of English, principals and form three students in selected secondary schools in Rift valley counties automatically participated in the study. The teachers were TSC employees and trained BOM employees who had handled the form three classes. Total of 988 participants took part in the study. The unit of analysis was 16 secondary school principals, 74teachers of English handling the form three class and 898 students.

Principals' manner of administration could influence authentic Curriculum-Instruction Assessment for lifelong learning of English, while teachers and students implement the policies which are responsible for ACIALL for English lifelong learning. Secondary schools were targeted because they struggle with enhancing performance of English. Teachers struggle with curriculum, instruction and assessment of English while students do not seem to know what curriculum of English entails, how to cover it and respond to questions asked in examinations (Kenya National Examinations Council, 2018).

Table 1: Target Schools, their Mean Scores, Populations &Sample Sizes

School Sample	KCSE 2019	Population	Student	Principals	Teachers	Mean
High performers						
School B1	9.001	520	156	1		13
School B2	8.102	420	126	1		10
School B3	7.69	350	105	1		10
School B4	10.1	330	99	1		12
School G1	8.771	390	117	1		11
School G2	7.633	411	123	1		12
School G3	7.2	250	75	1		10
School G4	9.5	330	99	1		12
Low performers						
School B5	3.537	300	90	1		6
School B6	2.805	280	84	1		5
School B7	1.8	258	78	1		4
School B8	2.2	150	45	1		3
School G5	2.800	237	72	1		7
School G6	2.367	300	90	1		6
School G7	3.2	213	64	1		5
School G8	2.1	115	35	1		4
TOTAL		3018	1458	16		129

3.2 Research Instruments

The quantitative and Qualitative data was generated using questionnaires, document analysis and interviews. The questionnaires had structured items and semi structured items. The questionnaires were formed in two parts to capture the data on the research questions in the study. In the first part, demographic data was collected. In the second part, Authentic Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment for English learning survey instrument including five components (curriculum, instruction, assessment, challenges of the notion of ACIALL and solutions) of authentic learning with 76 items for teachers and 63 for students was used to collect data. A four-point scale of agree (4), tend to agree (3), tend to disagree (2), disagree (1) was used.

Qualitative data was collected through the use of oral interviews and documentary analysis. Interview schedules were organized for principals, teachers as well as students for triangulation. This targeted the school infrastructure and generally all that went on in the school. The school learning facilities and the behaviours of students and teachers in school were also captured. Interview schedules was used to gather in-depth data about the effects of ACIALL in the lifelong learning of English. The items in the interview schedule covered all the research questions of the study. Moreover, qualitative data on the ACIALL was obtained from sampled secondary schools. The grades of the students in the third term was taken as the data for students' general academic success. The grades of the students were classified in three groups: Unsuccessful (E - D), average (D+ - C) and successful (C+ - A).

3.3 Validity of Research Instruments

The techniques to be used in validating this study included content validity; face validity and construct validity. The content validity is the degree to which a tool measures an intended content area.

Validity here depended primarily on the adequacy where the specified domain of content was to be sampled. The validity of the questionnaires was established to assess whether there was adequate representation of a construct of specified interest. It therefore compares content of the tools to the variables being measured. This was done through the conceptualization and operationalization from the review of literature. The same was done to maintain consistency and relevance of the problem under investigation. The interview schedules and the questionnaire items were formulated around the research questions. The researcher took them to the department of education to be subjected to panellists, comprising of supervisors and faculty members to validate their face and content validity as pointed out by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009). These experts in the area of curriculum and teaching and in research methodology judged the questionnaires to ascertain that they adequately sampled the domains. Other aspects looked at were the format of the instrument which included clarity of printing, font size, appropriateness of language, clarity of direction, and so on. The researcher made recommended adjustments on items following the judgment of the experts in agreement with, Jacobs & Razavieh (2002) that someone looks at the content and format of the instrument and judges whether or not it is appropriate.

Construct validity was done by comparing the items in the tools with theoretical expectations and hypothesized behaviour to see how well they fit. Clear definition of constructs was operationalized and provided so that the study cantered on the correct interpretation of the concepts. Face validity was done by pretesting the questionnaires doing a few minor modifications in wording or the elimination of a repeated question then incorporated into the final questionnaire.

3.4 Reliability of the instruments

Reliability of the instruments were done through a pilot study conducted in two secondary schools in Kisumu County bordering the study counties. The respondents who participated in the study were teachers and students. The questionnaires and interview guides were tested for appropriateness of question items in terms of language, content, clarity, time taken to administer as well as general administration logistics. In addition, the pilot study was used to determine whether:

1. The instruments would generate the type of data anticipated and;
2. The type of data desired could be meaningfully analysed in relation to the stated evaluation objectives.

After the analysis of data collected from the pilot study, ambiguities and unnecessary content in the questionnaires and interview guides were addressed (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2018). Cronbach's alpha co-efficient was computed to determine how items correlate among themselves (check internal consistency of the items) using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software program and a coefficient 0.6 and above was accepted as reliable. The internal consistency of the items was determined from scores obtained.

3.5 Data gathering procedures

After proposal defence and approval, the researcher obtained a clearance letter from the University of Eastern Africa Baraton (UEAB) Research and Ethics Committee then sought introductory letter from the Director of Research and Graduate Studies at UEAB to obtain a research permit from National Commission of Science, Technology and innovation (NACOSTI). This enabled the researcher to apply for the license from the government before commencing the data collection exercise. Authority was also obtained from the County Director of Education. When the necessary permits had

been obtained other relevant authorities were obtained from the school principals, who were contacted prior to the real day of data collection. Within the schools, the principals facilitated access to the teachers and students.

Once the organization of the selected respondents was complete, respective data collection instruments were administered. This happened when schools opened in term 1 (January) and the students had reported. The survey instruments were distributed to teachers through the HODs and then collected within one week. The student survey questionnaire with their codes was given to them by teachers of the school and asked to complete it immediately then return it to the class teacher to submit to the researcher for scoring. The survey contained questions with 4 choices as possible responses which were agree (4), tend to agree (3), tend to disagree (2), disagree (1) for a possible score of 70 from the student survey and another 70 from the teacher survey to be used to determine the effect of authentic Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment for life-long learning of English. The instruments used to measure each student's academic achievement was Form three English end year results for the year 2019.

The principals were subjected to interviews; one on-one for in-depth information. Their information was captured using digital voice recorders and note taking. All English teachers in the selected schools and students randomly chosen were interviewed for triangulation purposes. Using the observation schedule, available physical facilities were observed to establish their adequacy and appropriateness. Documentary analysis method was used to gather information on the effects of ACIALL of English, for teachers and students. Documentary analysis was also, used to get information on the schools KCSE curriculum and students' performance for the same period of study 5 years down the line.

3.6 Statistical Treatment of Data

The data collected both quantitative and qualitative was analysed statistically. Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data while qualitative data was analysed thematically, as explained below. Pearson product moment – correlation coefficient, Levenes Test, Independent sample T-Tests were used to investigate the content validity of ACIALL of English learning for question five. In addition, independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypotheses.

The process of Qualitative data analysis involved transcribing all the interviews. Content analysis was done on responses from interviews and open-ended questions

to identify the emerging themes. A summary of statistical treatment of the data was presented in table form.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher requested for permission to carry out this study in the selected public schools. With the recommendation of the supervisors, chair of the department of Education (UEAB), approval to conduct the research was sought from the Director, Graduate Studies & Research at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB). The national authority to collect data was acquired from NACOSTI. At the county level, the consent was obtained from the county director of education office. Institutional consent was acquired from the schools sheltering the participants before distributing questionnaires and gathering information from them.

Individual consent was sought from principals, teachers and students, who were involved in the interviews and questionnaire filling. That notwithstanding, all the heads of the institutions where data was generated were consulted in advance and their permission sought. Once in the institutions, the objectives of the study were explained to the potential participants and their consent sought before they were engaged.

Participants were assured that the information obtained from them would be used for the study only. All the data obtained from individuals and organizations was treated with utmost confidentiality. Absolute care was taken not to reveal the identities of informants either as individuals and/or institutions. No names were used during reporting. Pseudonyms were used to identify the citations and any statements that could reveal their identities was changed. They were assured that there would be honesty in reporting the findings. All the established and accepted educational research ethical standards were adhered to during the administration of data collection tools.

4. Results and Discussion

This section shows relationships of ratings of students. Pearson's correlation was used to determine the degree of the relationship for gender. The range of the correlation is from -1 to +1. Where a negative value is an indication of a negative correlation but a positive value is an indication of a positive correlation. The coefficient being < 0.3 indicates weak correlation,

> $0.3 < 0.5$ shows moderate correlation and

> 0.5 indicates strong correlation.

Significant correlation is indicated by a p value less than or equal to 0.05

Table 2: Pearson's Correlations Test for ACIALL among form three English students

ACIALL	GENDER	PERFORMANCE MEAN	N	PEARSON CORRELATION	SIG (2-TAILED)
Practices of Authentic	Male	5.32	172	-0.148	0.053
Curriculum	Female	5.49	163	-0.426	0.000
Practices of Authentic	Male	5.32	179	-0.136	0.070
Instruction	Female	5.49	169	0.528	0.000
Practices of Authentic	Male	5.32	177	-0.160	0.034
Assessment	Female	5.49	172	0.330	0.000
Challenges	Male	5.32	186	0.069	0.352
of ACIALL	Female	5.49	181	0.367	0.000
Suggested	Male	5.32	202	-0.012	0.863
actions to enhance Curriculum Authenticity	Female	5.49	193	0.029	0.684

Table 2 indicates relationship between a school's chosen ACIALL and form three English students' academic performance in terms of gender. There is a weak, negative and significant correlation between practices of authentic assessment and form three English students' academic performance for male students ($r=-0.160$ and $p=0.034$). This implies that practice of authentic assessment is weakly and negatively related with male students' English academic performance. There is no significant correlation between male students' English academic performance and practice of authentic curriculum, instruction, challenges of ACIALL suggested actions to enhance curriculum authenticity ($r= -0.148$ and $p=0.053$; $r= -0.136$ and $p=0.070$; $r= -0.069$ and $p=0.352$; $r= -0.012$ and $p=0.863$ respectively). This implies that no relationship between male students' English academic performance and practice of authentic curriculum, instruction, challenges of ACIAL and suggested actions to enhance curriculum authenticity.

Mwingi, (2014) and Wrigley-Asante et al, (2023) found female students generally outperformed male students in English and language subjects, while male students tend to perform better in science and math, factors like teaching methods, stereotypes, and opportunities for language practice may contribute to these gender gaps in academic performance. Challenges of authentic curriculum implementation are there for teachers due to factors like heavy workloads, lack of contact time with students, and difficulty in providing individualized feedback (Vinh, 2022) These may hinder effective delivery of an authentic curriculum and limit its potential benefits for students. In summary, search results suggest that an authentic curriculum using engaging, real-world materials can have a positive influence on students' confidence and willingness to communicate in target language. However, existing gender gaps in English performance indicate that male students may still face challenges in fully benefiting from an authentic curriculum approach. Successful implementation of an authentic curriculum would also require addressing pedagogical difficulties teachers may encounter.

Furthermore, there is a strong, negative significant correlation between female students' English academic performance and practice of authentic curriculum ($r=-0.426$ with $p=0.000$) but strong positive significant correlations between female students' English academic performance and practice of authentic instruction ($r=0.528$ and $p=0.000$, authentic assessment ($r=0.330$ and $p=0.000$) and challenges of the notion of ACIALL ($r=0.367$ and $p=0.000$. This implies that female students' English academic performance is strongly and positively related to practice of authentic instruction, authentic assessment and challenges to ACIALL concept. This agrees with Yu & Shen (2022) and Rudd & Honkiss, (2020) studies which provide strong evidence of a significant positive correlation between female students'

English academic performance and the use of authentic, corpus-based instructional practices that enhance their learning motivation and academic achievement in English. Oppong et al, (2022) states positive teacher-student relationships in schools also contribute immensely to female students' academic motivation and achievement of their goals. Teachers should provide equal opportunities and encouragement to both genders. In summary, research consistently shows that learning motivation, which is higher among female students, is a strong predictor and facilitator of academic success in English language acquisition. Intrinsic motivation stemming from authentic learning tasks, as well as extrinsic factors like teacher support, contribute to female students' high achievement in English.

There is no significant relationship between female students' English academic performance and suggested actions to enhance curriculum authenticity (r=-0.029 with p=0.684). Specifically, the key findings from Mersha, Bishaw & Tegegne (2013) and Abdullahi, & Bichi, (2015) are: female students often have a high burden of domestic work at home, which reduces the time and focus they can devote to their studies, leading to poorer academic performance; parents' low educational backgrounds and negative attitudes towards educating girls can also negatively impact female students' academic achievement in English; teachers' biases and lower expectations of female students' abilities in English language classrooms contribute to these students participating less and performing worse. However, the findings do not directly address the impact of an "authentic curriculum" on female students' English performance. They suggest that factors related to the home, family, and school environment play a more significant role in determining female students' English academic achievement. To improve their performance, addressing these external factors may be more important than changes to the curriculum alone.

Independent samples t-test was used to determine degree of relationship for high and low performing schools. To see the significant difference, p-value ≤ 0.05 indicates the statistical significance level, (accept null hypothesis) p-value > 0.05 tells non-significant. (reject null hypothesis) Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the Practices of ACIALL in the teaching of English and form three English students' academic performance in terms of the high performing schools and low performing schools.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Authentic Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment Practices

	High/ Actual		N	Mean	Std	Std
	Low	Performance			Deviation	Error
Practices of authentic	Above 6	5.53	503	3.18 `	1.01	0.0451
Curriculum	Below 4	4.11	114	3.05	1.00	0.0939
Practices of authentic	Above 6	5.53	508	2.94	1.11	0.0755
Instruction	Below 4	4.11	115	3.07	1.13	0.1042
Practices of authentic	Above 6	5.53	506	3.25	0.93	0.0650
Assessment	Below 4	4.11	113	3.24	0.96	0.0921

There is a difference in mean response based on performance. The results of this study show that high performing schools' rate higher and exhibit greater practices of ACIALL when presented with authentic curriculum to understand the content of form three English lessons (x̄ = 3.18: SD =1.01) as compared to their counterparts in the low performing schools (x̄ = 3.05; SD = 1.00). The variations in the way the students in the high performing schools and low performing schools responded to the items on authentic curriculum was almost similar as exhibited by the standard deviation change of 1.01 and 1.00 respectively in their responses to the items therein. These findings seem to suggest that the high and low performing schools, when it comes to English learning, rate almost the same in authentic curriculum practices. However, the deviations seem to suggest that as much as the ratings are almost the same, the respondents still feel that there should be a difference between the high performing and low performing schools.

The results of independent samples t-test on table 26, t = .876, p=0.145>0.05 confirm that there is no significant difference in scores of practices of authentic curriculum among students when classified according to performance. The researcher, therefore accepts the null-hypothesis; there is no significant difference in practices of authentic curriculum in English learning among the high performing and low performing schools i.e.: "there is no significant relationship.

Table 4:Independent sample T-Test on Practices of Authentic Curriculum-Instruction Assessment for Lifelong learning

		Levine's Tests for Equality of variances		T-test for equality of means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	(Sig 2-Tailed)	Mean difference	Std error difference
Practices of authentic Curriculum	Equal variances assumed	29.514	.047	0.876	616	.145	.130	.112
Practices of authentic instruction	Equal variances assumed	20.390	.145	1.063	619	0.023	-.132	.115
Practices of authentic assessment	Equal variances assumed	29.806	.148	0.016	617	0.081	0.011	0.098

Villareal (2001), Cheng et al (2016) & Meka, Cherop & Cherotich (2021) confirm high-performing and low-performing schools do not necessarily rate similarly in terms of authentic curriculum practices for English learning. Successful high-performing schools with high concentrations of English language learners tend to have certain research-based attributes that support authentic curriculum practices, such as: balanced curriculum that develops basic and higher-order thinking skills; eclectic teaching approaches that customize instruction; strong focus on reading comprehension and writing skills development and embracing students' language and culture as assets.

In contrast, low-performing schools face several challenges that can hinder authentic curriculum practices for English learning, including: high teacher turnover and lack of experienced English teachers; low teacher motivation when posted to rural schools; ineffective teaching and learning processes for English; shortage of textbooks and other learning materials and inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, the available evidence suggests that high-performing and low-performing schools do not rate similarly in terms of authentic curriculum practices for English learning. High performing schools appear to have more research-based attributes that support an authentic, balanced curriculum, while low-performing schools face significant resource and instructional challenges that can undermine authentic practices in English education. This explains the difference in performance.

The results of this study show that low performing schools rate their experience higher and exhibit greater practices of ACIALL when their teachers inculcate practices of authentic instruction to help them understand the content of form three English lessons ($\bar{x}$ = 3.07: SD =1.13) as compared to their counterparts in the high performing schools ($\bar{x}$ = 2.94; SD = 1.11). The variations in the way the students in the low performing schools and high performing schools responded to the items on authentic instruction was different as exhibited by the standard deviation change of 1.13 and 1.11 respectively in their responses to the items therein. These findings seem to suggest that students who go through form three English learning in low performing schools rate their experience in ACIALL in their teachers using authentic instruction practices higher in English subject learning as compared to those in high performing schools. The standard deviations show there are differing opinions.

The results of the independent samples t-test on table 26, t = 1.063, p=0.023<0.05 also show a significant difference in the scores of ACIALL in the practices of authentic instruction among the students when classified according to the performance. The researcher, therefore while accepting the null-hypothesis that, there is a significant difference in practices of authentic instruction in English learning among the high performing and low performing schools i.e.,: "there is a significant relationship between a school's chosen ACIALL of English and students' academic performance in terms of the high performing schools and low performing schools also notes that the great disparity that was exhibited in the responses given by the students in the low performing schools, in this indicator of authentic instruction. While they may have presented a higher mean, compared to the high performing schools, the disparity in their responses seems to suggest that the scores to the items that checked their experiences in authentic instruction fell in the highest extremes on both ends away from the mean, more than they did for their counterparts.

Francisco & Celon (2020) & Preus (2012) results provide relevant insights on the differences in instructional practices between high-performing and low-performing schools where, high-performing schools emphasize higher-order thinking, depth of knowledge, real-world connections, substantive dialogue, and positive social support for student achievement and have a strong culture of data use, collaboration, and growth mindset that drives authentic instruction. Low-performing schools focus more on lower order thinking skills, shallow knowledge, minimal real-world connections, and less substantive conversation, lack a culture of data use and growth mindset, with learning team meetings lacking clear purpose and improvement. Planning instruction is often characterized as un-engaging and teacher-driven, rather than differentiated for student readiness. These results suggest that the instructional practices in low-performing schools tend to be less aligned with the characteristics of authentic instruction, such as higher order thinking, depth of knowledge, and real-world relevance. There is no clear evidence that low-performing schools rate their experience higher or exhibit greater practices of authentic instruction when their teachers use such practices. The available information indicates the opposite - that low-performing schools struggle with implementing authentic instructional approaches compared to their higher-performing counterparts.

Furthermore, Saye & Social Studies Inquiry Research Collaborative (SSIRC) (2013) & Newmann, King, & Carmichael, (2007) results do not provide a direct answer as to why low-performing schools would rate higher in the use of authentic instruction. However, the information provided offers some relevant insights: Authentic instruction, which involves higher-order thinking, deep knowledge, connection to the real world, substantive conversation, and positive social support, is generally associated with higher student achievement. The benefits of authentic instruction are seen across all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and ability groups, including students with mild to moderate learning disabilities. It can help reduce the achievement gap between high and low SES students. It's possible that some low-performing schools may attempt to implement authentic approaches in an effort to improve student outcomes, but the effectiveness of this would depend on proper implementation.

The outcomes of this study also show that students in the high performing schools rate their experience slightly higher when it comes to teachers inculcating ACIALL when using practices of authentic assessment to help students understand the content of form three English lessons ($\bar{x}$ = 3.25: SD =0.93) as compared to their counterparts in the low performing schools ($\bar{x}$ = 3.24; SD = 0.96). The responses given by students in high performing schools as far as authentic assessment was concerned exhibited more homogeneity shown by the lesser standard deviation score (SD = 0.93). The standard deviation changes for the students in low performing schools was 0.96. This shows that their responses in their teachers using practices of authentic assessment had less

variations in the way they responded to the items therein. These findings generally seem to suggest that students who go through English subject learning in low performing schools enjoy greater ACIALL when teachers use practices of authentic assessment involving English subject learning as compared to those in high performing schools. The results of the independent samples t-test on table 26 for practices of authentic assessment, t = 0.016, p=0.081>0.05 shows no significant difference in the scores of ACIALL in the practices of authentic assessment among the students when classified according to the performance. The responses given by students in high performing schools as far as authentic assessment was concerned exhibited more homogeneity(similarity) in the students' shown by the lesser standard deviation score 0.93. The standard deviation changes for the students in low performing schools, which was greater (SD = 0.96), shows that their responses in practices of authentic assessment scores had more disparities in the way they responded to the items therein. These findings seem to suggest that students who go through English subject learning in high and low performing schools rate their ACIALL experience higher in the practices of authentic assessment in English subject learning.

The researcher, therefore, while accepting the null-hypothesis that, there is no significant difference in practices of authentic assessment in English learning among the high performing and low performing schools also notes the great disparity that was exhibited in the responses given by the students in the low performing schools, in this indicator of authentic assessment. While they may have presented a slightly lower mean, compared to the high performing schools, the disparity in their responses seems to suggest that the scores to the items that checked their experiences in authentic assessment fell in the highest extremes on both ends, more than they did for their counterparts.

The researcher therefore accepts the null-hypothesis that, 'there is a significant difference in practices of authentic assessment in the teaching of English among the high performing and low performing schools. This is confirmed by O'malley & Pierce (1996) that authentic assessment benefits all students. Authentic assessment, which involves real-world tasks and higher-order thinking, is generally associated with higher student achievement across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and ability groups. The benefits of authentic assessment are seen for students in both high and low-performing schools, as it can help reduce achievement gaps between high and low SES students.

Further, there could be implementation challenges in low-performing schools. However, the search results do not indicate that low-performing schools necessarily implement more authentic assessment in English. In fact, the evidence suggests the opposite - that students who experience higher levels of authentic instruction and assessment tend to have higher achievement. Low-performing schools may face greater challenges in

implementing authentic assessment effectively due to factors like lack of resources, teacher training, or administrative support. There are potential perceptions of authentic assessment. It's possible that in some low-performing schools, students may perceive the use of authentic assessment more positively, even if the actual implementation is not as strong, if they view it as an opportunity to demonstrate their skills in more meaningful ways. Students in low-performing schools may rate their authentic assessment experiences higher if they have fewer opportunities to engage in such tasks compared to their peers in high-performing schools. In summary, the available information does not directly support the premise that students in low-performing schools would rate their experience with authentic assessment in English higher than students in high-performing schools. The benefits of authentic assessment are seen across performance levels, but the actual implementation and effectiveness likely varies based on school-specific factors.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

In terms of gender, the practice of authentic assessment is weakly and negatively related with male students' English academic performance. There is no relationship between male students' English academic performance and practice of authentic curriculum, authentic instruction, challenges of ACIALL and suggested actions to enhance curriculum authenticity. However, female students' English academic performance is strongly negatively significantly related to practice of authentic curriculum. It is also strongly positively significantly related to practices of authentic instruction, authentic assessment and challenges of ACIALL notion though it is not significantly related to suggested actions to enhance ACIALL.

In terms of performance, there is no significant difference in practices of authentic curriculum and authentic assessment in English learning among the high performing and low performing schools but there is a significant difference in the practices of authentic instruction among the students when classified according to the performance. Both high and low performing schools rate their ACIALL experience higher in the practices of authentic assessment in English subject learning

5.2 Recommendations

To avoid challenges male students may still face in fully benefiting from an authentic curriculum approach, successful implementation would require addressing the pedagogical difficulties that teachers may encounter. Teachers should provide equal opportunities and encouragement to both genders. It is vital for teachers to be more conscious of the differences in students' learning methods and ensure that their syllabus presents

information that appeal to the students in different performance levels.

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