



**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SPECIAL EXAM
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION
BAC 4101: COMMUNICATION AND POPULAR CULTURE**

DATE: 15 MAY 2026

TIME: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Instructions

- 1. This examination consists of FIVE questions.**
- 2. Answer Question ONE (COMPULSORY) and any other TWO questions.**

QUESTION ONE (30 Marks)

(Compulsory)

A Kenyan streaming platform called TrendWave has become extremely popular among university students. The platform uses algorithms to recommend music, comedy skits, reality shows, and lifestyle content based on users' viewing habits. Recently, concerns have emerged that the platform promotes unrealistic beauty standards, excessive consumerism, and Westernized lifestyles, which may lead young people to imitate foreign cultures at the expense of Kenyan values. At the same time, supporters argue that TrendWave has created opportunities for local artists, digital influencers, and youth entrepreneurs to gain visibility and income.

- a) Explain how media and technology shape popular culture in the TrendWave case. (10 marks)
- b) Discuss how the concepts of cultural imperialism, globalization, and commercialization are reflected in the case. (10 marks)
- c) Evaluate both the positive and negative impacts of TrendWave on Kenyan youth culture. (10 marks)

QUESTION TWO

(15 Marks)

A popular Kenyan fast-food chain launches an advertising campaign featuring influencers and musicians promoting unhealthy eating habits as symbols of status. The campaign goes viral on TikTok and Instagram, especially among teenagers. Illustrate how advertising and branding influence consumer behaviour and identity formation in popular culture.

QUESTION THREE

(15 Marks)

A reality television show in East Africa frequently portrays women as emotional and dependent while portraying men as dominant decision-makers. The programme attracts

large audiences and extensive social media discussion. Analyse the role of media framing, representation, and stereotyping in shaping public perceptions through the programme.

QUESTION FOUR

(15 Marks)

A Kenyan music artist combines Afrobeat rhythms with American hip-hop culture and gains international popularity. Some fans praise the artist for promoting African culture globally, while critics argue that the music reflects Americanization rather than authentic African identity. Using examples from popular culture, discuss the tension between Africanisation and Americanization in the music industry.

QUESTION FIVE

(15 Marks)

During a youth cultural festival, young people create and share memes online, mocking political leaders and highlighting social issues in Kenya. The memes quickly spread across social media platforms and attract national attention. Discuss how memes and digital participation demonstrate the relationship between popular culture, communication, and social commentary.