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**KIRIRI WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION, 2024/2025 ACADEMIC YEAR**  
**FIRST YEAR, FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION**  
**FOR THE DEGREE OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE**

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2024  
Time: 11.30am –1.30pm

**KLC 2101 - COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

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**ANSWER QUESTION ONE (COMPULSORY) AND ANY OTHER TWO QUESTIONS**

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**QUESTION ONE (30 MARKS)**

**Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow**

In 1988, American vocalist Bobby McFerrin released “Don’t Worry, Be Happy.” Accompanied by an entertaining video featuring comic actors Robin Williams and Bill Irwin, McFerrin’s acappella song had a catchy tune, but it was the simple, upbeat message that listed it to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. As stated in the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are inalienable rights. Happiness motivates us. Without it, our lives would be empty and meaningless. Of course, what makes a person happy differs greatly from individual to individual. For some it’s money, fame, or power; for others, it’s family, relationships, work, adventure, creativity, or peace of mind. In its short refrain, “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” offers a straightforward formula for happiness—one that most people would agree with—but not worrying and being happy aren’t always so easy. Or is it possible that by simplifying our lives, by reducing the clutter that worries and burdens us, we can find true happiness? The majority of people have always lived simply, and most of humanity still struggles on a daily basis to eke out a meagre existence under dire circumstances.

Only in industrialized countries do people have the luxury of more goods and services than they need to survive. On the basis of material wealth, North Americans and Europeans should be the happiest people on earth, but according to the 2012 Happy Planet Index (HPI), they are not. Introduced in 2006 by the New Economics Foundation as a challenge to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Human Development Index (HDI) as measures of a country’s well-being, the Happy Planet Index assesses happiness in terms of life expectancy, experienced well-being, and the country’s ecological footprint. The results are astounding. The top five ranking countries are Costa Rica, Vietnam, Colombia, Belize, and El Salvador, in that order; these poor countries also have a minimal ecological footprint between 1.4 and 2.4. The least happy of the 161 countries listed are Mali, the Central African Republic, Qatar, Chad, and Botswana. Except for oil-rich Qatar with an ecological footprint of 11.7, these countries are poor and have an ecological footprint between 1.4 and 2.8. Not only are Americans, Canadians, Britons, Germans, Australians, the Swiss, and the Japanese less happy than their counterparts in Central and Latin American countries, but—ironically— in the last few decades, some people, particularly in North America, have been turning away from consumerism and embracing a simpler, more natural lifestyle.

In the 1960s, there was a trend for mostly young people to reject the “American Dream” and the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) work ethic. Even professionals and intellectuals were “dropping out” of society and moving “back to the land” to commune with nature. In the 1980s, surveys conducted in the

United States revealed that 25 percent of the adult population had simplified how they lived and worked. The results of a 1991 Time-CNN survey published in Time magazine showed that 69 percent of participants wanted to slow down and enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle, and that 60 percent found that work made it difficult to enjoy life. What had begun as an experimental lifestyle evolved into a quiet revolution that spread the word through books such as Duane Elgin's best-selling *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life that is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich* (1981), as well as numerous magazines, alternative communities of the like-minded, and, later, Internet websites. Combined with a growing awareness of the environmental consequences of **consumerism**, the voluntary simplicity movement sought to reduce the consumption of goods and energy and to minimize one's personal impact on the environment. "Voluntary" denotes a free and conscious choice to make appropriate changes that will enrich life in a deeper, spiritual sense. "Simplicity" refers to the lack of clutter, that is, eliminating all those things, patterns, habits, and ideas that take control of our lives and distract us from our inner selves.

Voluntary simplicity is not to be confused with poverty, which is involuntary, degrading, and **debilitating**. Neither does it mean that people must live on a farm or reject progress or technology, or do without what is necessary for their comfort and welfare. For example, we need food and shelter, but we don't necessarily need to eat steak and lobster or to live in a palace. In today's world, most of us need a computer and an Internet connection for work and school, but at home we don't need a computer in every room—and we don't need to spend our time endlessly **surfing** the Internet. To practice voluntary simplicity, one must differentiate between what one wants (psychological desires) and what one needs (basic requirements of life), and seek a healthy balance that is compatible with both. In a consumer society where advertising bombards us with the message that without this, that, and the other product, we are unsuccessful, undesirable, and unimportant, being clear on what you really need and resisting what you don't can be an ongoing struggle. The beauty of voluntary simplicity is that it is a philosophy, and not a dogma. How one goes about it depends on individual character, cultural background, and climate. Although there is no single right way to practice voluntary simplicity, there are some general guidelines that one can apply to one's individual circumstances: Take stock Before you make any changes, you must examine your life. Do you spend your time and energy on activities that fulfil you, or do you let other people or pressures control you? Do you use your time effectively, or do you waste it on activities that bring neither satisfaction nor results? How much stuff do you own? Do you use what you have on a regular basis, or do most of your possessions just take up space?

Set priorities Once you have taken stock, you can identify what you value most and what you can definitely dispense with. Making a list and assigning a numerical value to each item can help you sort things out. Next, you can decide how much time and energy you will dedicate to your priorities. If family is important, how will you make sure that you give your loved ones your full attention? If learning a new skill means a lot to you, how can you free up your schedule to accommodate taking a course? Reduce, recycle, and reuse the three Rs represent the best way to get a handle on rampant consumerism. In economies driven by the quest for ever more, living with less is erroneously equated with poverty and social inferiority. By conserving energy, for instance, you are actually ensuring that more resources are available for future use. By making a **frugal** budget and sticking to it, you can eliminate unnecessary expenses. Recycling paper, metal, plastic, and glass and reusing building materials and old clothing keep materials in the loop and out of landfills. Share, give away, and use public resources Pooling skills and resources through barter networks not only saves money, but sharing with others establishes bonds and fosters a sense of community. You can donate what you no longer use to charitable organizations or give it away to someone in need, rather than throwing usable items into the trash. You can also utilize public libraries, public transportation, and other public facilities.

Choose quality over quantity. With the glut of cheap goods that are usually designed for **obsolescence**, quality products that last are becoming progressively harder to find. In the long run, a more expensive but durable and repairable item or even an older used item that is still in good condition is a better investment than a brand-new piece of junk that will only break down and end up in the trash. Resist pressure We are raised to believe that more and bigger are synonymous with better, and that without lots of money, a big

house, a new car, and the latest fashions, we are nobody. What we are never told is that all these things come with an enormous price tag, and that we have to sacrifice much of our lives chasing after the dollars we need to pay for them. Choosing a simpler life means going against the grain of mainstream society, and you must be committed in order to withstand the pressures that society, the media, and even sometimes family and friends exert on you to conform. Take time; they say that time is money, but time is actually more precious than money. You do not have to change your life or your habits overnight. *Not only is it impossible, but unlike crash diets, rush behaviour is sure to backfire.* Only by taking small, reasonable steps and giving yourself time to adjust and evaluate your progress will you be able to commit yourself to your choices and see them through. Be grateful. People chase after more because they either have accumulated the wrong things or do not appreciate what they have. If you can be genuinely grateful for what you have, you will always have enough. At the heart of voluntary simplicity is the conscious realization that less is really more. Less consumption means more resources for future generations. Less activity that brings little satisfaction or reward is more time for yourself and your loved ones. Less stuff is more space to move around in. Less stress means more relaxation and better health. Less worry provides more enjoyment and more fulfilment in life. How we live our lives is essentially our choice, but one choice we can make is simple enough: in the words of Bobby McFerrin, “Don’t worry, be happy.”

- a) According to the passage, explain what the writer considers to be voluntary simplicity. (3 marks)
- b) Infer the meanings of the following words as used in the passage:
- i) Frugal
  - ii) Obsolescence
  - iii) Debilitating
  - iv) Surfing
  - v) Consumerism
- (5 marks)
- c) Provide a correct APA reference for the book mentioned in the passage above. (4 marks)
- d) Using the information provided in the passage, make notes of about 150 words explaining what true happiness entails. (8 marks)
- e) Correctly rewrite the following sentence extracted from the passage: *Not only is it impossible, but unlike crash diets, rush behaviour is sure to backfire.* (2 marks)
- f) You are the lead musician for a popular band of about eight vocalists. Write a memo to the band members reminding them of their performance at an International concert organized by EABL. One of the most famous musicians- Bobby McFerrin has been invited too. Include details such as the date, time, venue and dress- code. (8 marks)

## **QUESTION TWO (20 MARKS)**

- a) Janet has been a group leader in one of the academic groups for Communication Skills Unit. Her group has had numerous instances of submitting incomplete assignments. Consequently, this has adversely affected the overall academic performance of the members.
- i) Discuss **four** specific challenges that Janet could have had in coordinating the activities in the group. (8 marks)
  - ii) Explain **two** strategies that the group would have used to ensure that their discussions are fruitful. (4 marks)
- b) Written communication plays a significant role in interpersonal communication. Describe **four** instances where written communication is of utmost importance in fostering better interpersonal communication. (8 marks)

### **QUESTION THREE (20 MARKS)**

- a) As a marketing assistant at Nuvita bakeries, you are tasked with finding new buyers for the baked products. In order to increase sales, you are required to visit learning institutions and organizations in a bid to supply these products on a long-term scale.
- i) Explain **four** communication barriers you are likely to face and suggest ways of mitigating them. (8 marks)
  - ii) Describe **three** ways in which the use of audio-visual aids can play an important role in ensuring the success of your presentations. (6 marks)
- b) Besides making an application for a job, preparation for an interview is a key element in securing a job. Discuss **three** reasons as to why it is important to research about the company before the interview date. (6 marks)

### **QUESTION FOUR (20 MARKS)**

- a) During her first semester at Kiriri University, Naomi realised that despite having attended all her classes, her academic performance was wanting. She had scored poorly in all her CATs and exams.
- i) Discuss **three** listening strategies that Naomi would employ in order to boost her academic performance the following semester. (6 marks)
  - ii) Assume that you are Naomi, write an email to one of the lecturers requesting for guidance on study skills. The email should be between 50 and 70 words. Sign the email as Naomi. (8 marks)
- b) Develop **two** references of the sources you have so far used to carry out your revision for this exam. Use APA referencing style. (6 marks)

### **QUESTION FIVE (20 MARKS)**

- a) Your friend Anne, after successfully completing her Bachelor's Degree, has been making applications to a number of reputable organizations in search for a job as an accountant. She, unfortunately, has not been able to secure a job for the past three years.
- i) Anne is convinced that part of the problem lies with her email applications. This is because she has not received any response from them. Discuss **four** key reasons as to what could have led to her predicament. (8 marks)
  - ii) In the event that Anne gets invited for an interview in the coming days, advise her on how proper use of the **four** aspects of paralanguage can boost her chances of passing the interview. (8 marks)
- b) Using a real-life example, explain the role of feedback in the communication process. (4 marks)