

10

Student Fathers and the Challenge to Masculinities in Kenyan Universities

Charity Mwangi-Chemnjor

Introduction

The increasing presence of students who are parents in universities and parents who become students in universities poses a challenge to educators and to the institutional policies and practices of the traditional university set-up. In Kenya, there has been both an increased demand for university education and an increase in the number of universities as a result of a policy of liberalization and privatization of university education. This has led to a diversification in the university student population. Into this diversity enters the issue of student parents and the considerable attention they attract. Two angles of this scenario are presented in this study. One is of students seen as clients attending university, with needs and expectations of equity and equality of opportunity for a quality education. The other angle is the university or institution, its policies, practices and/or support structures for this changing clientele, and the expectations of society in the provision of quality education.

Traditionally, public universities have admitted students who expect to be housed in university hostels. These students are presumed to be single, without children and unaccompanied by dependants. Various universities in Kenya have adopted different policies concerning student parents, and these will usually be found in the university student handbooks and manuals. A review of some public university handbooks was carried out. The handbook of Egerton University, for example, recommended that expectant students vacate the university halls of residence three months before delivery: 'Since pregnancy disrupts academic performance' (Egerton University 2004: 35). In another campus the orientation and information manual stated: 'Maternity services are not provided ... expecting students should vacate the halls of residence at least three months prior to the

expected date of delivery' (Egerton University, Laikipia Campus 2004: 37). Another Kenyan public university handbook commented: 'in the event of pregnancy either before or after taking residence in the halls, students move out of the residence at least three months before confinement and reapply three months after delivery' (University of Nairobi 2001: 637).

The student who is expecting and soon to be a parent is left with very few options. One is deferment of studies for a semester or whole year. Alternatively, the student may choose to defer studies till the baby is old enough to be left on their own, usually at home with the students, parents or spouse, at which point the student may reapply to enter university hostel accommodations. Another option, which most student parents prefer, is to vacate their rooms in the halls of residence as per the university regulation, look for a place to reside around the campus and continue with classes after delivery. Then as soon as they are able physically to get through the lectures and the long day they resume classes. The implication of the second option is that they have the responsibility of looking for a place to reside around the campus. In many cases their resources can only allow for a small room. They also need to budget for a child minder. The consequences are a situation where student have to fend for themselves, child and child minder on money that they are advanced from their student loan, which caters for the upkeep of only one person.

Thus there has arisen a growing population of student parents in the neighbourhood of campuses with their young ones, infants and babies, living in conditions that leave a lot to be desired. Most are squalid, unhygienic and inadequate given the meagre budgets available. These conditions are not conducive to the mental and physical health of the student parents. Academic performance is affected since the social environment is not enabling for learning. Students who choose to be parents feel alienated or ostracized since they do not fit into the expectations of 'traditional' university policies and practice. The student parent has needs that the university has not been able to address and which it needs to take seriously.

Reasons for the Study

The student father in many cases is caught up in this situation and faces conflicting issues in terms of parenthood and studying. This study seeks to explore this predicament of student fathers as they attempt to take up their responsibilities as a parent, and facing choices that will have an impact on their life situations and on the course of their studies.

As earlier mentioned, following liberalization and privatization of university education in Kenya, public universities have found themselves in an increasingly competitive situation, with demands to be innovative and sustainable, and giving evidence of growth, efficiency and effectiveness so as to remain institutions of choice. In distinguishing between efficiency and effectiveness in an organization Barnard (in Hoy and Miskal 1991: 84) argues that efficiency is geared towards the

person and the feelings of satisfaction derived from being a member of the organization, while effectiveness is geared towards the system and has to do with organizational goals. The university as an educational organization will be seen to be efficient when members of the organization are satisfied with their needs being attended to or met. The university itself as an organization will be seen to be effective when it is able to attain its goals as an organization. As the university attains its goals, one of which is provision of educational services to the community in innovative and sustainable ways, it will remain seen as an organization of choice leading to its growth and relevance to the society. Among these members who are looking to the university to address their needs are the student parents. On a rating scale of efficiency there is need for the public universities to assess where they rate and to correct or improve this rating as this is instrumental in their being a university of choice. On being effective, this is seen in how the goals of the organization are met, one of which is maintaining educational standards of students or clients. As the universities look for ways and means to help enrolled students attain high academic standards, the university will be seen to be effective, which will lead to the university being able to sustain itself and grow, with perceived relevance to the changing needs of the society.

Public organizations all over the world are increasingly being subjected to demands for efficiency and effectiveness, especially in the face of dwindling public resources. The universities are not exempted as they struggle to be sustainable in a fiercely competitive environment. The context of this study is a situation where government aid in form of grants is falling in public universities. Students are now entering an era where they choose specific universities for the programmes they are interested in as opposed to the past where the Joint Admission Board (JAB) selected and distributed students into various public universities. As students exercise their capacity to choose, the universities of choice will be those that are seen to be cost-effective and yet efficient in providing quality educational services, both academic and administrative.

As students are looking for universities that will address their needs, universities are being obliged to address a diversity of students seeking higher education. The universities face certain challenges in this changing landscape. One is sustainability. The public universities need resources to continue financing their activities. These resources will help in the university sustaining itself as a public entity, and in its being able to fulfil its role as a service provider of education, thus sustaining society. In this era students, including student parents, are assumed to be clients and are seen as resources, since they come in with money in the form of fees. Since the students enter the university and are willing to pay for the services provided, this in turn establishes the relevance of universities to society, since it proves the need and demand for these educational services. Therefore as more clients are willing to exchange money for educational services, this goes a

long way in sustaining demand and driving improvement in university education. These clients or students have resources and as the university courts these resources, they have to prove themselves worthy. With the diversification of the student body to include other non-traditional entrants such as student parents, can universities show that they are the educational organizations of choice? Students who choose to be parents, or parents who chose to be students, will increasingly find themselves in positions where they can choose an institution that will offer quality education in addition to other academic and administrative services that support their needs and expectations. Universities that offer these educational services efficiently and effectively will increasingly be in a better position as universities of choice for student parents.

Kenyan public universities are not alone in rising to this challenge. In their important Africa-wide survey, Zeleza and Olukoshi (2004) emphasize that the trade in educational services is part of the modern university's survival strategy in the face of cutbacks in government spending to public universities and the agenda of liberalization of the World Trade Organization (p.596). In response to liberalization public organizations enter private education to offer education services. The public universities must prove themselves able to rise effectively and effectively to this challenge. The authors point out there are simultaneous challenges posed to African public universities, and it is into this debate that student parents, including student fathers, are introduced, in order to highlight this group visible among the various non-traditional students seeking higher education as part of an ongoing debate on access to quality higher education.

This topic therefore situates the challenges posed by this group of students to the public universities in Kenya in the context of other challenges confronting the public universities in the continent as regards growth of educational services in an era of liberalization and privatization of university education. The provision of administrative and academic services to public universities will be seen against the background of the agenda of liberalization, thus placing the African public universities in a national and international perspective. The public universities have therefore to work at improving the delivery of their services, so as to attract more students, even the non-traditional ones like the student fathers who are a significant component of the student parent group. Retaining clientele is a challenge not only to Kenyan public universities, but also to African universities more generally (Zeleza and Olukoshi 2004). Another challenge in this situation is to attract and retain more students who will bring in resources that can be used to bridge budget deficiencies (Abagi 1999).

Focusing on parenthood and its implications in Kenyan universities as a case in point, this study attempts to analyse the situation in which students become fathers and fathers are students. It broaches the question of the increasing number of student parents in the universities, and the impact of parenthood on the potential

of these students to function simultaneously as fathers and students. Research on student parenting has tended to focus mainly on student mothers, and the impact on their educational potential, economic and social progress. For an assessment of the impact of interventions on student mothers to be effective, it will be impractical to exclude student fathers. This study attempts to bridge any such gaps.

It is argued that any measures taken should address the needs of both student fathers and student mothers in assessing the challenges to fatherhood. Any interventions that may be needed will require an assessment of the current policies and practices in the public universities and how they may influence the provision of academic and administrative services to student fathers. The argument running through this study concurs with the claim that men need to be incorporated in any attempt to redress change in any institution that will impact on both female and male. Men are often excluded from being part of the process of changing and confronting practices that are unequal. They will need to be encouraged to question their personal practices and the ideologies of masculinity they embody, otherwise the task of changing one part of gender practices will be made impossible (White 1997: 15, in Pease and Pringle 2001: 8). In addressing the process of change in any institution it is important to consider the dominant model of social relations in the specific group. In terms of student parents, one needs to answer the question where they are, and how they conceptualize student fatherhood and its implications.

Objectives

One of the objectives of this study is to highlight the phenomenon of student fatherhood in an attempt to facilitate any help that may be given to student fathers to impact positively on their academic and other progress in the university. Another objective is to try and locate and address the issue of student fathers on work around masculinities and parenting, and the interactions and implications on these student fathers' life choices and academic potential. In the assessment of the parenting discourse, hopefully questions will be raised as to the responsibilities and relations within the act or process of parenting through reaching into the major areas of social life of the participants. From the discussion, it is hoped there will be an increased understanding of the social dimensions of student fatherhood and the response mechanisms of the student fathers.

This study uses the context of hegemonic masculinities in studying the university student fathers. In focusing on student fatherhood and its implications for Kenyan universities, there is a need to reflect on the ways that the institution responds to these groups of students, since their needs differ markedly from the traditional populations that universities were designed to serve. Not only do these student fathers carry the burden of parenthood, but also they have to continue education

at a time when public spending on higher education in Kenya is decreasing. Another objective of the study is to help clarify the role that universities can play in the management and provision of administrative and academic services to undergraduate student fathers, and show to what extent these services make a difference, thus making it easy to adapt the services to the needs of the student fathers.

A newspaper report on Kenyan primary and secondary schools has highlighted the increased incidence of student pregnancy, which invariably results in the emergence of student parents (Kigotho 2004). The report notes that the tremendous increase of school pregnancy has led to students being driven out of school. It also suggests that there may be other implications, including the limiting of the academic potential of the individual student. Measures taken in response to this trend should deal equally with male and female students for any effective and lasting solution to emerge. Attempts by university administrators to curtail this development motivated the original study, which attempted to discover how potential student fathers responded to the consequences of their actions: did they abandon their student female partners once pregnancy resulted or did they accept the responsibility of parenthood, becoming father, husband and student at the same time?

A comprehensive study carried out on school pregnancies in Kenya in 1988 showed that 45% of Kenyan schoolgirls aged nineteen were either pregnant or already mothers, and 70% of the girls dropped out of school owing to teenage pregnancy (Ferguson 2004). The figures given are for the primary education sector, but the secondary school sector attested to a similar trend. In the 2005 examinations at least five girls were in the news for delivering their babies during exam time, being brought their papers in the maternity ward in hospital (*Standard*, 10 November 2005). Such reports of secondary school student parents make it clear that this is part of the pool of students that university entrants are drawn from, in addition to other traditional entrants. In this study the pregnancy statistics given for girls in the primary and secondary level and the issue of student parents in the university would lead to a gap in the body of knowledge if the student fathers' experiences were excluded.

In the public universities a culture seems to be emerging whereby students enter into 'marriages' of convenience in response to economic pressures. Student entrants may not necessarily be assured of a student loan in the face of dwindling public funds. With money scarce various tactics are employed, including pooling resources, with male students contributing food and the female students doing housekeeping, cooking and laundry. As a result of parenting, the grades of these students are affected negatively once they combine the business of parenting with schooling. This situation is a concern both for the individual students who become parents and for the administrators of Kenya's universities, as evidenced by various

reports. One such report is from an opening address of a public university vice-chancellor to first years, in which he encouraged them to be aware of such practices and their negative impact on academic performance (Maritim 2005). Another warning came from the academic dean of a different university, who decried such practices for their effect on the education standards of the individual student parent and subsequently on the provision of quality education in the university (Shitemi 2005). Other studies have documented the effect on the public universities of such practices (Bartoo 2005). In separate reports on the numbers of primary school pregnancies, two researchers have surveyed the assumptions and feelings of the general public and of educators on the issue of school pregnancy, concluding that there is a need to assess and address the effects of pregnancy and what measures can be useful in helping student parents achieve their potential (see Kigotho 2004; Ferguson 2004).

Methodology

Cultural texts and representations are important in exploring the possibilities available to individuals as they constitute themselves in a society (Cranny-Francis et al. 2003). For purposes of this study, texts, including published and unpublished representations, have been used in the effort to locate the student father in the social arena, bearing in mind that culture constitutes much of what we identify in society since we are cultured beings. In the analysis of texts (Cranny-Francis *et al.*) emphasize how this extends beyond the merely written in various forms to other ways of communicating such as in casual conversations, television, advertising, newspapers and parent/child interactions among others (p.92). These means are influential in locating others and ourselves in society.

The methodology used here includes the analysis of published and unpublished texts, oral conversations and other means used to communicate meanings to one another in society. There is a wealth of information yielded that may be useful in identifying the position of student fathers in the university, and the challenges they face in the area of masculinities in this location. In the discussions on parenting, masculinities and culture in the universities, the expectations of the student fathers and the expectations of the university organization towards them has been located in a cultural and social representation, thus helping us understand the relations and social dynamics operating in the life of the student fathers that lie behind their life choices.

Men are often excluded from being part of the process of change, especially when it deals with confronting the differences in treatment of male and female. In addressing any process of change in an institution, it is therefore important to address the dominant model of social relations in the specific group, so as to address changing men's practices in a globalized world (Pease and Pringle 2001: 8). In this issue of change great importance is placed on complementing localized

orientation with a focus on whole countries and ultimately the whole world. In that way changing subjectivities and practices of men are incorporated and validated, reflecting the globalizing processes at work. The university needs to recognize that any local assessment or change in practice will be influenced by international changes and that any internal changes in the way policy and practice are viewed will be influenced by local orientation.

To be able to understand masculinities in specific local context, Pease and Pringle argue the importance of thinking in global terms, since that provides the possibility of exploring felt experiences, culture and social networks (Pease and Pringle 2001: 9). The different subjectivities and practices will then reflect the individual local contexts. In research one is able to see where they stand in comparison to another. By locating the present study in hegemonic masculinities, it will facilitate transformation of policy and practice in the public university setting. Student mothers do not exist in the abstract but in relation to student fathers. To understand the implications of this division between men and women, Pease and Pringle's research argues that whether or not an individual acknowledges this association, the outcome of the political debate will impact on them at the societal level. They suggest that men and women should be recognized as discursive subjects, existing within political categories across the social web. Failing to acknowledge this reality is to fail to acknowledge that others exist beyond the individual (Whitehead 2002: 63). Hegemonic masculinity is seen to encompass 'the dominant interpretations and definitions of being masculine as embedded in and sustained by male dominated social institutions such as the state, the family and educational institutions'. Analysing men's practices at home or their involvement in childcare will require an unpacking of the private in the personal so as to better understand the public-private dualism in which Whitehead (2002: 149) contends the individual cannot be completely separated from society.

Focus at the international and national levels on issues affecting girls and women has led to a corresponding analysis on men, since in analysing one group questions on the 'other' arise that may lead to gaps in knowledge if left unanswered. In the research on masculinities there has been an increase of studies exploring fatherhood and focusing on reviews of research, policies and practices. These studies have shown a shift from an emphasis on women to the incorporation of women into already established agendas, then to the emphasis on gender relations, social structures, process and relations in specific international and local factors (Pease and Pringle 2001: 7). The conscious focus on the recurring themes of masculinity and fatherhood in everyday reality from media to academia has led to expansion of the debate to take into account student fathers and practices in public universities. This has been necessitated by the global change in focus from female-only to inclusion both of male and female.

Body

With both the government and other world organizations pegging their grants to performance of the public university, simultaneous challenges are posed to the African public universities in meeting the demands of these two stakeholders. It is into this debate that the student father is introduced, in order to make him visible and capture this group in the ongoing debate of access to quality higher education facilitated by whatever support is available.

Research on student parents has primarily concentrated on the plight of student mothers. This may be as a result of the visibility of pregnancy as a sign of motherhood. Much more is known about student mothers than fathers, leading to a situation in which any academic or administrative support that may be offered to the student father is below what is expected. Through making visible the reality of this phenomenon and in the process of scrutinizing it, hopefully it will lead to ways of accommodating and or situating it in everyday social reality. In the book *Young Masculinities*, the authors show how student fathers are affected by the uncertainties over social role, identity and personal relationships among other issues. This is a situation replicated in most of the contemporary forms of masculinity. They argue that there are no clear models or images of masculinities (Frosh et al. 2002: 4). This then influences this study in that in trying to identify the position of the student father the identity of this group is drawn from the culturally available resources in social networks and in society. In the assessment of the parenting discourse, this study hopes to raise questions as to the responsibilities and relations within the act or process of parenting through reaching into the major areas of social life of the participants. For present purposes, parenting is seen to be work that involves childrearing, and this is taken to be a role involving both male and female parents. With the understanding that through each of the parents acknowledging and understanding expected responsibilities, the functions of bearing and rearing a child will be accomplished. In the literature on male parenting or fatherhood, contemporary theories help envision the diversity of fathering. These are based on regional, geographical and cultural spaces. There are rapid transformations, and Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003: 58) argue that there is need to combine theory with empirical studies of what the fathers are experiencing. The present study places fatherhood within the framework of hegemonic masculinities, and the social institution of fatherhood is seen against a background of gendered work of women and men in both private and public spheres. With this understanding, the student fathers should be able to locate themselves making responsibilities visible in an area that has been rendered invisible by dominant cultural practices.

Support services would include those that help students deal with factors interfering with their learning and performance in educational institutions. Most educationalists affirm that any such factors must be addressed if the education

mission is to succeed (Adelman 1996: 431). There is need for services that enable students to benefit from instruction, and Adelman argues that these should be organized in an integrated approach. In this study the university would need to address the barriers to educational achievement as concerns student fathers. This goes to show their commitment to the success of all their students, and the provision of excellent and quality education services. In maintaining standards of excellence the university staff and administration would need to show evidence of their involvement in this respect. In one of the local daily newspapers, a student captured the experiences of student parents in the public universities in Kenya. The writer illustrates these as falling under academic, financial and social challenges. Some of these negative experiences include ill health, poor accommodation and diet, and lack of access to medical facilities on campus (Mutya 2003). Other challenges are associated with pressure from family and friends, including low self-esteem through rejection and stigma associated with single parenthood. All these factors combine to interfere with student parents' academic performance (Empowering Student Mothers 2004: 6). The issues identified by the female student parents in the public universities underline the oral data collected, showing that socially the culture and environment in the university are not student parent-friendly. These are among the issues that contribute to making fathering invisible. The student author argues for the need of advocacy of the interests and wellbeing of student parents, including student fathers.

Recent studies on fatherhood range from practices to policies of support. In the practice of fatherhood, the social dynamics that have resulted in the invisibility of student fathers on campus may be explained by the scarcity of studies into the subjective experiences or feelings of fathers (Russell 2001: 57). In addressing the burden of parenthood for student fathers and mothers, the question of defining involvement and support of student fathers needs to be established within frameworks that help individuals and the university ascertain father provision. These may include support services and education programmes where the participation of both student parents is required and encouraged.

Social policy works best with community-based support as seen in nations where initiatives have been taken to encourage fatherhood. In promoting student fathers' support and the resulting respite in the burden of parenthood for student mothers, the Kenyan public universities will need to become more active in evaluating practice by developing support programmes. Some of these programmes have proved fruitful elsewhere in helping unmarried and young males through issues such as 'job search/training and employment, parent training and school involvement', with the key theme being encouraging 'responsible fatherhood' (Russell 2001: 60).

In the provision of such services, the universities will not only be helping individual student parents and student fathers, but will also be actively involved in programmes that ultimately lead to them being universities of choice. Critics may argue that this is encouraging students to become parents on campus. But given the trends of a growing incidence of schoolgirl pregnancy as aforementioned, the university system is part of the wider social system, and each of these systems have to do their part in addressing the reality of social responsibility towards student parents. It is significant to note that responsible fatherhood is a theme reflected in various international social debates, as evidenced in the Promise Keepers USA and the Million Man March, the Men and Family Relationship Initiative in Australia and Fathers Direct in the UK (Russell 2001: 10), where these initiatives begin a shift away from fathers only as breadwinners and their financial responsibilities to their inclusion in policy and workplace initiatives, with most of them identifying better access to advice and education as necessary for fatherhood support.

This study is yet to identify examples from Africa on this social debate of fatherhood, but hopefully it will provoke a debate that will lead to inclusion in policy and inclusion in other institution initiatives. As centres of research and service providers the universities cannot afford to be left out in this paradigm shift. It is part of their responsibility to society to begin initiating debate on responsible fatherhood. They also need to begin implementation of social research that will be helpful in addressing the reality of fatherhood and how its implementation in the university's policies and practices can be used to encourage student fathers in the choices they need to take. Universities can position themselves and through this information be able to incorporate student fathers in their policies and practices thereby improving the services rendered to this group of the university community and wider society.

Other reports have identified various methods and contexts with which to address fatherhood. Public universities in Kenya would greatly benefit from these findings based on diversity programmes that incorporate fatherhood workshops and developing fatherhood programmes in response to needs assessed. Ongoing contributions to the debate on fatherhood and masculinities establish fatherhood as part of the sociology of masculinity. The concept of men and family is understood as a series of gendered interrelationships that are mutually constructed and maintain paternal masculinities, located in particular periods and geographical spaces (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2004: 44). Public universities will need to find their geographical space and how it has constituted fatherhood masculinities, and whether maintaining those gender relations is valuable and practical in this period. This research from other geographical spaces and periods show a 'conceptual shift from role reproduction to an active production of complex identity formations'. This would impact on public university practices and policies

by acknowledging that in sex roles, emotions and desires of the individuals are just as important as rational thinking in shaping paternal behaviour. In addressing student fathers an assessment of these roles and desires would be very helpful since this would expand the working space to allow social psychological and interpersonal considerations as well as emotional and future aspirations. The universities as public educational organizations need to acknowledge the fact that at any one time they are dealing with the issue of the potential of youth and their future goals in society. Every organization that deals with the youth has a duty to nurture potential, and if that organization is rendering education services and dealing with the youth as the public university is doing, it will need to be able to effectively harness this power so as to be seen to provide effective service as a university of choice. In the search to develop initiatives that address men's own issues and their roles as fathers, the approaches have moved gradually from role-deficient approaches with a need for 'fixing' to approaches that more directly address men's own issues and their roles as fathers (Brown 2004: 113). Instead of looking to fix the 'problem' of student fathers, it would be more productive if the universities started off by exploring the felt needs of these student fathers. As the study of parenthood and fatherhood intensifies, the significance of this work to individual student fathers and the society has been well expressed by Dollatite, Hawkins and Brotherson (1997). In their study they take the concept of generative fathering as caring for and contributing in the life of the next generation. Thus generative fathering would imply a positive influence in a child's life as being developmental and of importance not only to the child but also to the father. What positive developmental fathering can the universities begin exploring that would have beneficial results? This may take time but it would be time well invested. The goal would be a transformation of desires and reality over a period of time and a set of skills and behaviours to bring about this transformation that can be learned, depending on circumstances (Brown 2004: 113). This approach is crucial to student fathers in a culture where men are expected to be provider and protector, because they are not seen as a problem to be 'fixed' or as deficient in not measuring up to expectations, but rather as an opportunity for learning improvement. With this approach, then, the student father will not be 'penalized' but will be involved in unlearning old and learning new behaviour. For the individual student father, the notion of generative fathering with its positive implications may appear less confrontational than challenging the individual to 'fit'. Depending on the individual and the circumstances or demands the university will be able to put in place enabling structures to provide support services to individual student fathers thereby facilitating their work as fathers, and in the same way, help the university in uplifting educational standards of individual student fathers.

Conclusion

This study has focused on student fathers and the need to address administrative and academic support in a privatized, liberated and globalized world. In research on 'fatherwork' in the Caribbean, Brown concludes that when men start examining the negative as well as the positive effects of structured male privilege within their own lives, they advance their own fatherwork (p.117). She maintains that men recognize the limitations, brought about by 'narrow social definitions of manhood, and fatherhood', on their own development, but that support needed to broaden these concepts of fatherhood is limited. Using the assumption that Brown makes, public universities can begin addressing areas that have rendered student fathering a challenge in their academic performance and parenting duties. Though the scope of the literature is narrow, oral data indicates there is need for administrative and academic support. Debates about student fathers and the role of the public universities in addressing any academic and administrative support can be part of the broadening of debate that may provide the much-needed support to student fathers. From the onset this study has set out to address the rising number of university student parents, drawing attention to the student father. This has been projected against a background of changes in provision of educational services, accountability and accommodation in the provision of academic and administrative services. The factors that influence change in the provision of quality education services to various categories of students have been discussed. The case of student fathers was introduced with an emphasis on how masculinities influence student parenthood. This study has attempted a brief analysis of the policy practices and culture in the public universities as concerns parenting. It also raised the need for support structures for student fathers with suggestions on how they can be helped to confront the challenges posed by being both student and parent. All through, this study has stressed the need for recognition and anticipation of fulfilment of the role in father work by the student father, showing how it will significantly ease the burden for the student mother. Issues concerning the involvement of the university and the implications of this on the university of choice have been addressed. Various shifts in masculinities and internationally the involvement of both men and women in initiating social change have been mentioned. Suggestions of the ways others have addressed these socio-cultural changes have been presented, showing how the public universities in Kenya can benefit from them. In conclusion, it is hoped that work such as this will facilitate in any administrative and academic support strategies planned towards student fathers in educational organizations.

References

- Abagi, O., 1999, 'Education Reform in Kenya for the Next Decade: Implementing Policies for Adjustment and Revitalisation'. Available: <http://www.par.or.ke/ed3.html> [Accessed 9 April 2004].
- Adelman, S. H., 1996, 'Restructuring Educational Support Services and Integrating Community Resources', *School Psychology Review*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 431–6.
- Alon, T., 2004, 'Parenting Realities at the University of California, Berkeley: Balancing Work, School and Parenting in Academia'. Available: <http://www.eec5.berkeley.edu/programs/grad/parentpolicy.html> [Accessed 23 September 2005].
- Bartoo, V., 2005, 'Varsity Rocked by "Couples Crises"', *East African Standard*, 24 January.
- Brown, J., 2004, 'Fatherwork in the Caribbean', in S. Ruxton, ed., *Gender Equality and Men*, Oxford: Oxfam.
- Cranny-Francis, A., Waring, W., Stravopoulous, P. and Kirby, J., 2003, *Gender Studies Terms and Debates*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- East African Standard*, 2005, 'Candidates Sit Exams in Maternity Ward', 10 November: 18.
- Egerton Newslink, 2004, 'Empowering Student Mothers for Improved Academic Performance and Personal Development', Graduation Special: 6.
- Egerton University, Laikipia Campus, 2004, *Orientation and Information Manual*, Egerton University Press.
- Egerton University, 2004, *Student Handbook*, Egerton University Press.
- Ferguson, A., 2004, 'Teenage Motherhood: Epidemic Pushing Girls Out of School', *East African Standard*, 5 August: 6.
- Frosh, S., Phoenix, A. and Pattman, R., 2002, *Young Masculinities*, New York: Palgrave.
- Haywood, C. and Mac an Ghaill, M., 2003, *Men and Masculinities*, Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Hoy, W. and Miskal, C., 1991, *Education Administration: Theory, Research and Practise*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Kigotho, W., 2004, 'Silent Epidemic in Schools', *East African Standard*, 5 August: 5.
- Maritim, E., 2004, First Year Orientation Address by Vice Chancellor, Egerton University.
- Mutyanga, S., 2004, 'Student Mothers Face Tough Challenges at Universities', *daily Nation*, Blackboard, 5 September: 5.
- Nyangena, T., 2004, Interview by author with Dean of Students, Egerton University, Laikipia Campus, 20 December.
- Pease, B., and Pringle, K., eds., 2001, *A Man's World? Changing Men's Practices in a Globalized World*, New York: Palgrave.
- Russell, G., 2001, 'Adopting a Global Perspective on Fatherhood', in B. Pease and K. Pringle, eds., *A Man's World?* New York: Palgrave, pp. 52–68..
- Shitemi, N., 2005, 'Varsity Students Warned on "Campus Marriages"', *East African Standard*, 2 January, p. 14.
- University of Nairobi, 2001–2003, *Calendar*, Nairobi University Press.
- Wood, C. L., Nicholson, E. W. and Findley, D. G., 1979, *The Secondary School Principal: Manager and Supervisor*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.
- Zezeza, P. T. and Olukoshi, A., eds., 2004, *African Universities in the Twenty-first Century*, vol. 2: *Knowledge and Society*, Dakar: CODESRIA.