Fatherhood among South African university students: Identities and responsibilities

Tamir Cohen and Nicola Kruger

The University of Cape Town

Psychology Department

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Contents

Abstract

A large number of studies on young fatherhood have neglected the experiences of student-fathers, particularly within South Africa. This phenomenological qualitative study examined the lived experiences of young student-fathers in universities within South Africa. It explored how student-fathers negotiated these two identities and their accompanying responsibilities and examined whether or not student-fathers felt sufficiently supported by their university. This study found there are numerous factors that influence South African students-fathers' success in both roles. Participants expressed feeling unsupported by universities, especially with regards to mental health, which placed an increased pressure on their ability to succeed. This was exacerbated by external factors both cultural and financial, that they were expected to navigate. This study was theoretically located within the Paternal Involvement Framework. Information about these experiences was obtained through semi-structured interviews with eight student-fathers. Themes that emerged include 'perceptions of fatherhood', 'parenthood as a positive influence on studies', 'frustrations at university', 'support structures', 'financial pressure' and 'contradictory roles and identities.

Key words: student-fatherhood, Paternal Involvement Framework, South Africa, thematic analysis

Fatherhood among South African university students: Identities and responsibilities.

The dual role of being a university student and a father is associated with numerous challenges experienced when attempting to navigate both identities (Lucchini-Raies et al., 2018). The experience of time poverty paired with the need to be a good father and student can result in feelings of inadequacy (Estes, 2011). Both internal and external conflicts that arise are often intensified by socio-economic and cultural challenges that some fathers experience, particularly those in developing countries such as South Africa (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Moreover, these fathers often do not receive the institutional and social support necessary to deal with these challenges (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). These context-specific factors are not often considered in literature produced outside of South Africa, where most research is currently conducted. This phenomenological study seeks to explore the experiences of student-fathers at South African universities and was theoretically located within the Paternal Involvement Framework.

This review will analyse the dual role dynamic associated with being a student-father, particularly in South Africa. It will address the demands associated with fatherhood followed by a discussion of the context-specific challenges South African fathers face. Furthermore, it will focus on the demands associated with being a university student, and how these demands conflict with the role of the father. It will conclude with an argument in favour of more context-specific research to be done with South African student-fathers.

Fatherhood in South Africa

Global constructions of fatherhood situate the father as the main financial provider and authoritative figure. These constructions characterise men in the public rather than the domestic realm, therefore, influencing the extent to which men are, and can be, involved in their children's lives (Richter & Morrell, 2006). Factors such as cultural practice and perception, employment, economic status, as well as age, assist in shaping these constructions (Richter & Morrell, 2006). For example, young fathers have different lived experiences to older fathers, both in terms of their financial capabilities and the extent to which they are able to be present (Richter & Morrell, 2006). Many of the studies which focus on young fatherhood highlight themes such as absent fathers, delinquency, and lack of income (Nelson, 2004). Studies have also found that young

fathers feel as though they do not have the necessary skills to be a "good-father" due to their lack of education and previous life experiences (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Much of the literature suggests that young fathers have specific requirements for educational and psychological support, and life skills training (Lane & Clay, 2000; Weinman et al., 2005). Hipke (2002) emphasises that these men often provide limited support in the parenting role because they lack their own support network. However, despite the adverse factors impacting young fathers, it has been shown that they have a willingness to participate both in their child's life and childcare (Hipke, 2002). This highlights a change in dominant fathering attitudes to include participation in childcare, in addition to provision (Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2013; Richter & Morrell, 2006)

Studies have shown that younger generations do not believe that work commitments should come before family, thus reassessing the value which men place on roles associated with fatherhood and challenging the traditional "provider" role (Hosking, 2006). A longitudinal study conducted by Miller (2011) which investigated discourses of first-time fathers in the United Kingdom supports these findings. Participants mentioned a shift towards emotional, hands-on, "shared care", a style deemed as vastly different from traditional norms. Similar findings emerged in a study conducted by Wall and Arnold (2007) which investigated the changing of fatherhood culture in Canada. The shift entailed higher expectations for father involvement, including more nurturing, closer emotional relationships and shared work of caregiving (Wall & Arnold, 2007).

It is important to note, however, that the bulk of current studies focusing on young fatherhood are conducted in the global north (Miller, 2011; Wall & Arnold, 2007; Sarkadi et al., 2007). The relevance of research lies within a specific context, thus meaning, that the experiences of young fathers in the global north vary in relation to the experiences of young fathers in the global South (Swartz & Bhana, 2009).

Notably, young fathers in developing world contexts experience greater levels of poverty, unemployment and the prevalence of diseases such as HIV and AIDS (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Young South African fathers in particular face factors such as unemployment, poverty and income inequality (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). In South Africa, financial responsibilities are recognised as the number one barrier to positive fatherhood experiences (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). A study conducted by Swartz and Bhana (2009) with black teenage fathers living in contexts of poverty in South Africa found that this often played a key role in denial of paternity.

Many of the men interviewed explained that they would be shamed by the mother's family and their communities if they were unable to provide financially.

Majority of the research conducted in South Africa is centered around the experiences of historically disadvantaged males, which encompasses a range of cultural challenges not addressed in international literature (Chili, 2013). For example, black South African fathers' practice of paying 'damages' to a girl's family when she falls pregnant. As explained by Chili (2013), if young fathers are unable to pay damages, a fine paid to the mothers' family, they will not be allowed to live with their child, thus limiting their impact in their child's life. These financial factors are exacerbated by the lack of structural and social support available (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). For example, men in the study who did choose to accept the responsibility of fatherhood were often excluded from childcare arrangements, as these were settled through family negotiation (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Young men who did not have the support of their own parents had limited or no say in the discussion (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Despite this, many young South African fathers have a view of fatherhood which emphasised contact time, physical affection and everyday involvement, similar to international research findings discussed above (Swartz et al., 2013). However, financial insecurity and lack of support may make it difficult for fathers to develop these relationships with their children. There is limited discussion of these factors in the current literature, highlighting the importance of doing research with this demographic in the South African context.

Lastly, many young men father children while they are still studying, this comes with a range of challenges as they attempt to navigate these two roles. Thus, a study focusing on young fatherhood should simultaneously look at the impact of education on fatherhood.

The impact of university on young fathers

The process of becoming a parent requires adopting a new role with a range of challenges to overcome (Lucchini-Raies et al., 2018). Similarly, university students are expected to navigate an unfamiliar environment while developing their intellectual abilities (Lucchini-Raies et al., 2018). International research has addressed this conflict. According to Estes (2011), there is a contradiction between the institutional norms and ideals associated with being a parent and a university student. For example, the 'ideal parent' is characterised as an individual who is

financially stable, married and educated whereas, the 'ideal student' is free from external responsibilities. However, when encountered with the role of being a student-parent the ability to fulfill both these roles effectively diminishes and individuals need to rethink how they manage their responsibilities (Estes, 2011; Lucchini-Raies et al., 2018).

Trying to manage the role of being a student-parent can be made easier if met with support. A study conducted with eight undergraduate students at a Chilean University found that students required financial and emotional support from both their family and university (Lucchini-Raies et al., 2018). In terms of institutional support, participants in this study had differing experiences. While some felt supported, others felt invisible in the university environment. Those who did receive support found it easier to reconcile both roles. Similarly, a study conducted by Estes (2011) found that participants were able to reconcile both roles through continuous support and by attributing a positive connotation to the identity of the student-parent. Participants managed the conflict between their identities by viewing their education as important for their children and describing their children as advantageous to their studies (Estes, 2011). The student-parents explained that their children acted as a motivator which encouraged them to be more studious and education better equips fathers to provide for their children (Estes, 2011).

Many of the points raised in international literature were also emphasised in one study conducted with young fathers in community colleges in South Africa. The study highlighted similar themes, such as finding support and overcoming barriers. The study found that young mothers and fathers did not experience or make use of support networks in the same way; with fathers not being able to readily identify sources of support (Cook, 2004). It is important to note that this study cannot be generalised to the experiences of fathers at university, however, it does give a closer look into experiences of fathers in institutions of higher education.

As shown above, there is still a dearth of research on the topic of young fatherhood, particularly in South Africa. This is especially true for research on fathers in university. The few South African researchers who do conduct studies with young fathers tend to draw focus to teen fathers in secondary education. This can be attributed to the fact that the criteria for what constitutes a young father differs between researchers (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Chilli, 2013). According to the Department of Health and Human Sciences, men are more likely to become fathers between the ages of 20 and 24 than in their teens (Office of Adolescent Health,

2016). The international studies discussed above do not tackle context-specific factors which South African fathers face thus, additional research with local universities needs to be conducted.

Aims and Objectives

Research aims

This study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of young student-fathers in university, focusing on South African fathers and how cultural, social and economic factors impact their experiences. This research was guided by three primary objectives, the first being to explore the ways in which South African student-fathers negotiate these two identities and their accompanying responsibilities. The second objective was to situate these experiences within a local context, highlighting relevant contextual factors. Lastly, this study seeks to identify whether student-fathers feel as though university administrators, staff, and policy makers provide them with sufficient support. The hope is that these findings may be able to potentially inform future support of a diverse student body.

Research question

Primary research questions:
1. What are the lived experiences of young South African fathers attending university and how do they negotiate their different identities and responsibilities?
2. What context-specific factors shape the way in which student-fathers navigate these two roles and responsibilities?
3. Do university staff and policies provide young fathers with adequate support?

Theoretical Framework

This research made use of the Paternal Involvement Framework, made up of three fundamental aspects of fatherhood; interaction, availability and responsibility (Lamb et al., 1985). Interaction is defined as direct contact with children, such as caretaking responsibilities, availability refers to the ability of the father to be present or accessible and responsibility refers

to the maintenance of available resources, not directly referring to the role of "provider" (Lamb et al., 1985). These elements are viewed as a fundamental change in the field of parenting. This is relevant to our study as it investigates contemporary South African fatherhood, as experienced by university students. These key elements informed our research by highlighting key areas of investigation, which then guided the kinds of questions asked. The concept of direct contact was investigated in relation to parental involvement and how it is influenced by student-fatherhood. This is similar to how the concepts of availability and responsibility influenced questions of presence and financial provision. This framework allowed for exploration of these three key elements with regards to their definition within this specific study and to what extent these elements were impacted by student-fatherhood.

Studies exploring dynamics of violence, divorce and positive outcomes of involvement in relation to fatherhood have had success using this framework (Marsiglio et al., 2000).

This framework considers the lack of research on fatherhood dynamics and is flexible in its inclusion of diverse factors, meaning that researchers have the ability to apply a well-fitted framework to whichever niche of fatherhood they are researching (Lamb et al., 1985; Chili, 2013). This inclusive flexibility means that contextual factors such as South Africa's social, political and economic climate may be acknowledged.

Method

Research design

This research took on the form of a phenomenological qualitative study which focused on participants' subjective experiences of being a student-father. This approach is often used when there is a scarcity of research on a topic, thus, making it the ideal choice for a study which focuses on an under-researched group of individuals (Vavar et al., 2011). A phenomenological approach provided us with the tools to document and describe the experiences of participants and identify aspects of their lives both individually and as a group (Vavar et al., 2011). This approach focuses on how people make sense of their lives and how they construct meaning (Atieno, 2009). Implementing this approach was necessary to understand how interdependent individuals, groups

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and institutional components function together (Berkwits & Inui, 1998). This was critical for this research, as the university is a complex system in which each aspect interacts with the other.

Participants

In current fatherhood studies, there is no consensus on how to define the age of a young father. Many studies consider a young father to be under the age of 20 (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Deslauriers, 2011), whereas other researchers define young fathers as being aged 16-33 (Weinman et al., 2005). Since this study was conducted with university students, the participants all had to be aged between 18-30 and had to be the biological father of a child. Furthermore, they had to be enrolled at a university currently or if they had graduated, had a child while completing their degree. The participants also had to have access to a smartphone or a computer as well as internet connection.

Sampling

Guided by the qualitative nature of the study, both purposive and snowball sampling methods were used. Applying purposive sampling meant that the participants were specifically chosen to fit the research criteria, this being university fathers aged 18-30 with access to the internet (Etikan, 2016). The strategy of purposive sampling was suitable for the current research which aimed to explore the lived experiences of a group of individuals (Reissman, 2008). The target group was sampled through two channels. Our first method used social media to try and identify individuals who fit the research criteria. This was achieved by creating a participant invitation which outlined what the study was about, who the study was aimed at and provided our contact details. This post was then shared on three social media platforms namely, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. We received four participants from this initial method.

Secondly, UCT students were sent an email from the Department of Student Affairs, containing information regarding the study and our contact details. We received three participants from this second method. A second recruitment technique, snowball sampling, was used, in order to recruit additional participants. This method involved asking our existing participants for the recommendation of relevant individuals (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). We received

one participant using this method. The study consisted of eight participants, this sample size is in line with the qualitative nature of the study, which aimed to get in-depth information, rather than to generalise findings. Due to the time constraints, we would struggle to produce in-depth results with a bigger sample. The sample consisted of four participants who identified as coloured, three participants who identified as black and one participant who identified as white. Six of the participants were 24 years old, two were 22 years old and one was 29. Four of the participants were married, one participant was with their child's mother but not married, one participant was not with their child's mother but had a good relationship, and two participants were not with their child's mother and had bad relationships. Only one participant had more than one child, twins. Five of the participants attended the University of Cape Town (UCT), one attended the University of the Western Cape (UWC), and one attended the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

Data collection

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured online interviews. A semi-structured interview guide includes broad, guiding questions that allow the researcher to generate follow-up questions during the interview (Rahman et al., 2019). This form of interviewing solicits thick-descriptive responses of subjective experiences. Thus, making it best suited to fulfill the aims of qualitative research (Evans & Lewis, 2018).

Ideally, these interviews would have been conducted face-to-face, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the need for social distancing and quarantine, interviews were conducted online. This was done in order to ensure the safety of both the participants and researchers. Interviews were conducted via Zoom. Nevertheless, as researchers we understood that issues pertaining to internet and computer access could have potentially limited our participant pool, therefore we included a second method of data collection.

The second option was to conduct the interviews over WhatsApp voice notes. This method is defined in literature as an 'instant messaging interview' (Rahman et al., 2019). In this type of interview, there is a lot of flexibility as participants and interviewers are not tied to a fixed meeting schedule which allows participants to respond when they have a sufficient time to do so (Rahman et al., 2019). Half of the participants opted for a Zoom call, while the other half opted for an interview over WhatsApp.

Data Analysis

Guided by the objectives of this study, thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. This method aims to identify and organise patterns of meaning in the data. These meanings are defined as themes, identifying them allowed us to make sense of shared meanings and experiences (Lane & Clay, 2000; Koka & Pathak, 2002). The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify points which are relevant to answering the research question. This analysis was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it is accessible to first-time qualitative researchers, such as ourselves (Lane & Clay, 2000; Lane et al., 2002). Secondly, thematic analysis is flexible, meaning that the researcher can use either an inductive or deductive approach. Due to the limited literature on the topic of our study, the inductive approach was used. This means that the data was coded without being placed into a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The data was analyzed according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach to thematic analysis. The data analysis process was as follows: 1. *Familiarizing yourself with the data*: We read the transcripts and made notes highlighting important aspects of the data we felt were most relevant to our research question. 2. *Generating initial codes:* We systematically analysed the data through coding, meaning that we identified and provided labels for aspects of the data that we viewed as being relevant to the research question. 3. *Searching for themes:* We clustered similar codes together to form themes that reported meaningful patterns in the data. 4. *Reviewing potential themes:* The evolving themes were analysed in relation to the coded data and the entire data set. Similar themes were joined together 5. *Defining and naming themes:* During this stage we clearly stated what aspect of the data each theme was describing. 6. *Producing the report:* Lastly, we presented the themes in a logical and meaningful structure in order to produce a coherent story about the data.

Ethical Consideration

Voluntary and Informed Consent

Consent was gained from the participants through the signing of a consent form. This form was sent out at the beginning of the study, before any exchange of data had taken place

(Appendix B). The consent form clearly outlined the purpose of the study as well as potential risks and benefits. Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and had complete agency to withdraw at any time. Participants filled in the consent form online and the consent form was discussed with participants at the beginning of the interview (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is viewed as a personal right of privacy and freedom from harm, especially important for research making use of personal experience (Baez, 2002). Confidentiality was ensured through the use of pseudonyms in the research made public. We cannot fully ensure anonymity as we as the researchers know the names of our participants, however we are the only individuals with access to the data. As stated above, participants have given their consent to their information being included in a mini-thesis and other publications that may emerge from this work, as long as no identifying information is included.

Risks

Interviews were conducted online, thus there was no risk of physical harm and no deception was used. There was the possibility that the discussion of personal experience may have evoked difficult emotions (Corbin & Morse, 2003). However, the nature of the interview meant that participants had agency over the content of the interview (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Researchers remained conscious of any issues that may have arisen. Participants were debriefed by asking participants whether they had any further questions or concerns, and a list of counselling resources was provided.

Benefits

There were no direct benefits to the participants, however, this research sheds light on the experiences of people who are not usually the focus of studies on fatherhood. Indirect benefits may include the ability to contribute to a sense of purpose, being granted a sense of empowerment and promotion of healing (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Furthermore, the interview

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space can be a therapeutic safe space for participants to share their experiences (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a fundamental process related to producing trustworthy and representative research which is important in an experiential qualitative study, such as our own (Shaw, 2010). It is the responsibility of the researchers to reflect on how our lived experiences and social positioning may impact on the research (Shaw, 2010).

Our positionalities as researchers could have played a large role in the narratives that participants chose to share, as well as the biases we brought into the interview. One such factor which could have potentially impacted the study is the fact that we were female researchers conducting research with male participants. As explained by Lefkowich (2019), when conducting research about and with men it is important to reflect on gender norms as well as intersectional experiences of privilege and oppression. It is important to question our ability to engage in meaningful and credible work with men as young female researchers (Lefkowich, 2019). It is also important to consider issues of safety and how our feminine appearances could have influenced the interview process (Lefkowich, 2019). However, because we were conducting online research, issues of safety became less prominent.

Qualitative interviews need to be viewed as a dynamic space, in which both aspects of the researcher-participant relationship are acknowledged (Underwood et al., 2010). The interpretation of interviews may have affected the analysis of data, specifically with regards to the meaning of the narratives. In addition, we ourselves are not parents and this could have potentially influenced what the participants chose to share with us, as we do not share the same experiences.

Reflexivity of research often lacks the mentioning of age. We are two young student researchers who engaged with student-fathers of a similar age. This may have benefitted the research process as it has been shown that researchers and participants of a similar age communicate more easily and often share generational ideologies and language (Underwood et al., 2010). Only one participant stood out as slightly older, with an age gap of seven years.

Lastly, an important factor to consider is race. It was important to be aware of this factor while conducting interviews as it is a very contentious topic, especially in the context of South Africa. All of the participants, barring one, were people of colour. One of the researchers was coloured and the other researcher was white; therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics of race particularly with regards to the white interviewer conducting all their interviews with people of colour.

Analysis and Discussion

As mentioned above, 6 main themes emerged, namely: perceptions of fatherhood, parenthood as a positive influence on studies, frustrations at university, support structures, financial pressure and contradictory roles and identities.

Perceptions of fatherhood

This theme emerged as a prominent influence for participants, informed by different notions of culture, religion and racialised ideas of fatherhood. The range of this theme represents the different lived experiences of participants, speaking to a broader notion of South Africa's diversity. It was extremely important as it addresses a range of cultural challenges which most international literature has failed to recognize (Chili, 2013).

Luke, a 24-year-old coloured male shared how racialised ideas of fatherhood impacted his experience of becoming a father, and the power of stereotyped expectations.

> *Especially in a coloured community, when everyone hears you are a father, you are expected to behave in a certain way… The expectations rise. And also, there is a kind of newfound respect in the community.* Luke, 24

This reinforces findings in current South African literature on fatherhood and masculinity that has highlighted fatherhood as a gateway to manhood (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). This may explain the "newfound respect" Luke experiences as a father. In addition, participants also

challenged the notion of South African men as absent fathers, a prominent theme in past fatherhood literature (Nelson, 2004).

> *There is a long tradition of absent fathers in the coloured community, people actually expect you to leave your girlfriend if she is pregnant. I got praise from people just for staying with her… which I think is stupid because that is your responsibility as a human being to care for your offspring* Luke, 24

Almost all participants made an active effort to be present in their child's lives and to care for them, thus, challenging the dominant narrative of fathers' who attempt to avoid the responsibility of childcare. Moreover, cultural laws and expectations also influenced perceptions of fatherhood. Junior, a 22-year-old black male who is not with his child's mother, shared their experience,

> *Yeah, and laws I could say because I've had to pay a lot, in Zulu there is this customary law you have to pay damages if you get someone pregnant. So, I did pay quite a lot, so they do hinder everything else.* Junior, 22

These cultural factors had an impact on the time Junior spent away from his child, which was identified as a negative aspect. These practices are in some respects considered gatekeepers that impact men's ability to be present in their children's lives (Chili, 2013). This ultimately acts as a limitation for young student-fathers who rely on their parents for financial support, because if they are unable to pay damages, they can be prevented from being in their child's life. Furthermore, it seemed that religion influenced a number of aspects related to fatherhood, such as a greater meaning for becoming a father, the identity of "the provider" and broader notions of masculinity as Ebrahim, a 24-year-old coloured male, shared,

> *I am also a very religious person, so believed it happened because it was meant to happen. So, I accepted it and I did whatever I needed to do.* Ebrahim, 24

Ebrahim gave insight into how his Islamic faith helped him feel more ready to accept and take on the roles and responsibilities of fatherhood. Further, the teachings of Islam informed his notions of identity, and the roles and responsibilities that accompany fatherhood,

In Islam the man has to provide, he has to. And that doesn't mean the woman can't provide, it just means that if there is no money coming in, it's his responsibility before hers. If she doesn't want to get a job, it isn't a sin on her, but if he doesn't get a job and there is no money coming in then it's a big problem. Ebrahim, 24

The above extract shows how religion impacted Ebrahim's perspective of fatherhood as closely linked to the role of the provider, emphasizing financial responsibility. The emerging narrative from Ebrahim in relation to perceptions of fatherhood, were consistent with literature which acknowledges how factors such as cultural practices characterise men in the public, rather than domestic realm (Richter and & Morrell, 2006). This does not mean to say that Ebrahim could not engage with the domestic realm, but rather that he perceived himself as having to financially provide first.

Parenthood as a positive influence

For most student-fathers, parenthood was defined as a positive influence, particularly in relation to academic motivation and performance. Although some participants mentioned how stressful this added pressure was, almost all participants expressed that it had improved their dedication to their university work, and in some cases improved marks. Luke was extremely vocal about how positively his son had impacted his dedication to his academics,

I think the benefits of being a father and student is, that with being a father, you mature a bit quicker. So that will obviously help you with university because you don't take any submission with a pinch of salt anymore. Luke, 24

It is interesting to note that Luke has been a father the longest of all the participants, as his son was born in 2015, the year Luke began university. This means that Luke has dealt with the challenges of student-fatherhood the longest and categorized it as a positive experience.

The findings of this study echo that of previous research, which found that student-fathers viewed both their education as important for their child and their children as beneficial to their academics, which motivated student-fathers to be better students (Estes, 2011). It seemed as though stressors, such as time or finance, created positive educational outcomes due to increased motivation. In fact, some participants mentioned that the increased responsibility that came with student-fatherhood may be good for others, especially those deemed irresponsible or immature. Luke even implied that those with children may even be more likely to graduate,

> *I'm not saying those that don't have kids don't graduate, but those that have kids tend to actually graduate… I think it's because you know they have responsibility... there's someone depending on you.* Luke, 24

Another significant finding was that the perception of parenthood as a positive influence on studies was impacted by the time fathers spent with their children, as this influenced how much time was allocated to academic work and contributed to increased stress. This finding was significant in relation to the theoretical framework. This framework acknowledges interaction as direct contact, an issue discussed by all participants, but especially those living far away from their children or those who had difficult relationships with their child's mother. Lethabo, a 22-year-old unmarried black male and Junior, shared important insight in regard to this,

> *I want to believe that parenting has not affected my studies and my studies have not affected parenting. I am saying this because I've never really had to take care of my son.* Lethabo, 22

In the above extract Lethabo admitted that his lack of interaction with his child meant that he could not accurately comment on how parenting might impact his studies, as he did not have to divide his time according to caretaking responsibilities. Junior also mentioned this, but regarding dominant ideas of fatherhood,

I don't think there has ever been any urgency for me to be a traditional father, where I have to be around, I have to discipline my kid and all that. So right now, I am focusing on being a student, but I am also a father. Junior, 22

This finding is significant as Junior is commenting on how interaction may constitute traditional ideology, not necessarily excluding the notion of responsibility. Junior's discussion of traditional fathering contrasts a large amount of modern literature, which defines current fathering environments as moving towards a more balanced identity, which is driven by a desire for engagement (Hatfield, 2018). Lethabo and Junior were the only participants that lived in a different province to their children whereas all other student-fathers either lived with their child or saw their child multiple times a week. Junior was the only participant that did not mention parenthood as a positive influence in particular, but he did not necessarily label fatherhood as a "negative" influence,

I wouldn't say he is a motivation or whatever. Like I would be lying, because I know that I have to provide for him at a certain point in my life, but I wouldn't exactly categorise it as a benefit. Junior, 22

It seemed as though Junior's thoughts were not negative, but rather informed by financial stressors. This sentiment was not unique to Junior, but he was the only father who shared this thought so bluntly. A few participants also noted parenthood as a positive influence within the greater scheme of their life. Thabiet, a 24-year-old coloured male, married with a 2 month old baby, touched on similar topics discussing how the news of becoming a father helped pull him out of severe anxiety and redirected his attention towards maturation and preparation,

I was like okay, I need to do things the right way, I need to learn about religious things, I need to know from a guidance perspective how I am going to run my house. Thabiet, 24.

Thabiet's feelings mirror that of those reported in a small amount of literature that discusses the transitions of attitudes and behaviours of new fathers (Cabrera et al., 2000). Despite the overall

experience of student-fatherhood being perceived as positive, participants still faced challenges due to the lack of university support.

Frustration at university

The theme of frustration towards university included a diverse range of opinions. The main issues that participants seemed to mention was the lack of understanding and acknowledgment of fatherhood on the behalf of the university, followed by a lack of flexibility in regard to submissions and attendance. This depicted the university space as non-empathetic and lacking interpersonal care. Lethabo encapsulated this depiction by defining this relationship as business-like,

> *But remember the university is a business and they don't really have any use for how we feel, as long as we pay our fees.* Lethabo, 22.

It should be noted that although Lethabo expressed his feelings in this way, he also believed that the university should not change, which will be discussed in more detail later. Moreover, student-fathers valued not only practical or economic support, but emotional university support. This narrative matches the majority of literature which suggests that young fathers have requirements for both educational and psychological support (Lane & Clay, 2000; Weinman et al., 2005). This finding is significant as literature has shown that if universities want to meet the needs of a diverse student body, the university must begin to understand student challenges and develop strategies (Estes, 2011). Junior summarized these thoughts on mental health quite well,

> *The university just basically just doesn't care about anything. It's like, if they don't care about people's mental health, they are not going to care if you have a kid,* Junior, 22.

Junior perceived the university space as unsympathetic towards emotional stressors and responsibilities of fatherhood. In relation to university policy, student-fathers may not take family responsibility leave, but rather a leave of absence. Students may take a leave of absence

based on medical, compassion, exchange or maternity grounds. This means that student-fathers have very limited options. When it came to suggestions on how the university could better support student-fathers, the two main suggestions mentioned were acknowledgment and flexibility. Junior implied that acknowledgment would assist with flexible understanding of the student-father experience in an academic setting,

I wouldn't say they should put it as official policy, but they just need to acknowledge that. I don't want people to be hiding if they are going through something or whatever, they just need to acknowledge that we do have kids, we do need help. Junior, 22.

These thoughts from Junior are extremely useful to our study as it addresses the research question that investigates whether universities provide young fathers with adequate support. Junior and Ebrahim, although different ages, races and marital status, were both quite vocal about their experiences with flexible understanding of responsibilities and challenges,

When I was back home and I would have to do something with my son and I couldn't submit something, and I end up not getting that mark or whatever, and they wouldn't see it as an adequate reason for me to miss a submission. Junior, 22.

Junior felt that the university did not acknowledge his son as an important part of his identity and experience as a student. Ebrahim shared similar frustrations,

I think that they could be less strict on the tuts and stuff. Because sometimes when you have a family and children and it's difficult to remember that you have to be at that tut tomorrow morning. Ebrahim, 24.

It seemed that participants were not asking for "special treatment", but rather a line of communication that allowed for an understanding dialogue. Matthew, a 24-year-old unmarried coloured male shared that the university lacked a flexibility that other environments allowed,

Although I've seen it in workplaces like at previous jobs I've worked in, where if you're a parent you possibly get a better shift, Matthew, 24.

Matthew's insight, implied that some student-fathers may categorise the university environment as similar to a workplace, except that workplaces will often accommodate one's external responsibilities whereas universities will not. There seemed to be an underlying frustration on behalf of the student-fathers, as they all wanted to do well at university, and felt that success could be achieved if some flexibility was granted.

Overall, it seemed that student-fathers could very easily identify points of weakness and provide suggestions but felt despondent towards the reality of change. Junior believed that it would be because the university lacks care, while Joshua believed that it would be difficult to grant, due to the number of different challenges different students face, such as anxiety. Literature has shown that mental health concerns amongst student populations has increased, but that effective forms and use of support platforms are still developing (Stanley & Manthorpe, 2001). This dynamic of frustration towards the university was further influenced by COVID-19 adjustments that merged the two "spaces" of home and student life, making it harder to focus on university work as John, a 24-year-old white male living with his wife shared,

But yeah, in terms of university, I think it's difficult to say because we haven't been fully engaged during this time. But I don't think I would have gotten any type of special treatment because of having a baby. John, 24.

Adjusting to a new way of living resulted in new practical challenges. However, many participants felt that there were ways to support student-fathers, in relation to flexibility, not exemption. The pressures of balancing these two roles were often intensified by the need to balance a third role, of the provider, which our theoretical framework acknowledges under "responsibility".

I really feel like universities and institutions in general don't do enough to support young parents, because so many people feel like they can't go and study. They need to go and

do this 9-5 to provide for their kid. Whereas maybe if the university did something, like put some sort of day-care there, at university. Luke, 24.

It seems that Luke is suggesting that increased support from the university would mean that student-fathers could work more productively. It should be noted that UCT does provide day-care through their facility, Edu-care; however, this is not a free service meaning that this type of assistance is exclusionary. The other two universities do not seem to have a clear facility, this may be something they need to consider. This discussion once again contributes to the investigation of university support. Luke was particularly vocal about university support suggesting that the university could help create a sense of community support by facilitating support groups, similar to that of university society groups. Luke's suggestions reiterated the need for holistic institutional support. He then went on to highlight again the importance of mental health support below,

> *There is no real structure put in place for people specifically with children on campus. When I say that I mean like, parent support groups and mental support especially!* Luke 24

Literature has shown that support groups for student-parents are especially helpful, as feelings can be discussed in a non-threatening environment (Weinman et al., 2002). There were only two participants who had drastically different views from the rest of the participants. Lethabo shared a belief that supporting student-fathers should not be the university's responsibility,

> *Nothing must change. The university must continue operating the way they are operating. You see, when a person has a child, they must be responsible to that child.* Lethabo, 22

Lethabo emphasizes the idea that people must be responsible for their own actions and not expect help from others. Lethabo has previously classified university as a "business", indicating that how one perceives an institution impacts their expectation of support.

The differing opinions found within this theme mirror the findings of a previous study in which student-parents opinions differed; some felt invisible while others felt supported (Lucchini-Raies et al., 2018). This variety of views tells us that the student-fatherhood experience is extremely diverse, encouraging greater investigation into these dynamics.

Support structures

In addition to university help, personal support structures such as friends and families, was a also common theme. The kinds of support discussed in relation to these structures included a range of help, both financially and mentally.

The important aspect of this theme is that support structures were noted as the very reason that student-fathers deemed themselves successful in both roles. The most vocal participant about the extent of his support structure was Luke, acknowledging both his own and his partners family. Luke also mentioned that non-systematic elements of university provided meaningful support,

> *And I can contribute all my success to the people around me, that provided me with that support structure. And talking about support structure, it may sound like the university itself doesn't really do much, but all my fellow students, especially the ones that are parents themselves, we are there for each other.* Luke, 24

It seems as though within the university system there were understanding individuals that existed independently from bureaucratic systems. This stood in contrast to the perceived institutional support. These findings support previous research, which found that student-parents required both financial and emotional support from both their family and university (Lucchini-Raies et al., 2018). It seems as though this sense of relatability allowed a different kind of emotional support, perhaps a sense of comradery or community. Student-fathers found this element of support even more helpful during a time of online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. John, discussed how despite this elevated stress, his parents made an effort to allow them some time to "enjoy" other elements of their identity, as well as have a break from responsibilities,

So, we'll like, give the baby to my mom for certain periods of time so we can both like, so
I can work and _____ can do other things. Because that was kinda the issue like, she'd
also need time to like, be a human and not be a full-time babysitter. John, 24

In this way, support systems seem interconnected; in order for John's partner to fully support them, they also needed assistance from another support system, parents. This extract shares how the presence of support systems can assist with both practical and emotional elements of managing time and responsibilities.

Additionally, financial stress was a consistent comment that emerged throughout every theme; however financial support was often not as directly addressed. Junior, spoke about what an important role his father had played in regard to helping with financial stress. The loss of this support system deeply impacted his sense of responsibility,

But I did lose my dad last year so that kind of, I don't know, in both aspects being a
student and being a father, I kind of had to take responsibility of everything, now
knowing, uthi, I am not receiving anything from like, a silver spoon. Junior, 22

Financial support was closely linked to mental health support, and the importance of holistic wellbeing was emphasized as an important way to help manage the multiple sources of pressure. Matthew shared how his parents had supported him,

I receive support from my family, especially after the divorce, they kind of allowed me to
do my own thing. ... then, as my child came on board, they were always there to assist
wherever they needed to Matthew, 24

Matthew's parents were not only a source of financial stability, but a guiding force which provided a safe space for emotional support. These two forms of support came from a single, interpersonal source, closely connected to the care of the student-father and their child. Thabiet, who is married also discussed the importance of guidance in regard to support,

I think you do need to speak to some kind of counsellor or somebody because sometimes you'll find yourself in a situation and you don't know what to do. Thabiet, 24

Emotional support was viewed as a way in which complex dynamics and the new challenges of parenthood could be addressed. This external assistance was especially helpful as power dynamics were absent, which contrasted internal dynamics. Many participants' internal support was influenced by the fact that they were receiving assistance from their parents, which influenced power dynamics. The findings of the need for emotional support for student-fathers is significant as literature shows that understanding emotions is important in helping students engage with education (Brooks, 2015). Mental health support has been shown as not only helpful for parents, but positively impacts children (Weinman et al., 2002).

Financial pressures

One of the biggest themes identified across all the interviews was the pressure of financial provision. Participants all felt as though they were expected to take up the role of being a provider which proved to be difficult. This was the result of numerous things; not having the qualifications to get a job, not having the time to study and have a job, and not making enough money if they were employed. One of the points raised was the disparity between wanting to have a job to provide for their child but not having the time to be able to be able to participate effectively in both roles.

So yeah, obviously with me being a student, a full-time student, I cannot go out there and get a job...Some things are going to suffer, either my studies or my job. Luke, 24

Luke's concerns are supported by previous works that have identified financial responsibilities as one of the biggest barriers to young men's experiences of positive fatherhood in South Africa (Swartz and Bhana, 2009). An interesting point raised by Luke was the idea that having a job may, in the long term, be to the detriment of his success. He described a disparity between wanting to have a job to provide but also believing that he should focus on his studies, as it would benefit him more in the future. A statement made by Luke, shown in the extract

below, highlights the fact that he struggles with the thought of needing to have a job but reconciles this with the fact that if he were to have a "normal 9 – 5" job that it could impact time spent with his child,

> *If I just did a normal 9 to 5 job my kid could have anything he wants right now, he could have it all". But then, I've done 9 to 5's before, ... and then again you spend way more time away from your kid because you're always working. I feel like being a student and still being a father, I am actively trying to provide a better future for my son, because, you know, I'm trying to better myself. Luke, 24*

Luke's thoughts are in line with previous research which found that young fathers often feel as though they cannot be a "good-father" due to their lack of education (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Overall, the idea of making sacrifices in the present moment with the belief that it will benefit them in the future was common among participants.

Participants all felt a lot of pressure with regards to being able to provide better lives for their children than what they were afforded, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Thus, the financial pressure was not only in terms of being able to provide for their family and fund their studies in the present but to be able to sustain this in the future. This is discussed by Lethabo, a 22-year-old black male with a 2-year-old child,

> *I am from a poor family, in a way my son will be a bit disadvantaged. If I don't succeed in life, there is a great chance that my failures will follow him.* Lethabo, 22

The above extract shows that Lethabo feels pressure to be able to break the cycle of poverty he experienced in his own life, for his child. This supports the findings by Estes (2011) which explained that young fathers view education as a way to provide a better life for their children than what they experienced. This finding, of educational motivation being mediated by financial stress, is not surprising with high rates of youth unemployment, which were well over 50% in the year 2017 (Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017). Furthermore, a lot of other literature shows that fathers are often motivated by their own experiences of being fathered, to do better for their children especially if they had bad experiences of being fathered.

The question of whether a father should undertake the role of the provider, caretaker or both was discussed by Ebrahim. This same question was addressed in a study conducted by Richter and Morrell (2006) which showed that there is currently a shift in young fathers' attitudes, with many of them emphasising and showing a willingness to engage in childcare. Previously fathers were depicted as being solely focused on financial provision. Majority of the fathers interviewed during our study emphasised the need to provide not only financially but also to be emotionally supportive. They emphasised the importance of quality time and building a relationship with their children. Thus, the role of the provider, although important, was not what these men viewed as being a father's primary responsibility.

> *Some people would want the father to be a provider, but other people would want the father to be more emotionally attached and available… What I actually want is to provide them with a stable life and a mentally and physically healthy one.* Ebrahim, 24

These findings are reinforced by Hosking (2006) who also found that younger generations do not believe that work commitments should come before family, thus reassessing the value that men place on roles associated with fatherhood and challenging the traditional "provider" role.

Contradictory roles

This theme focused on the way in which student-fathers navigate these two often conflicting responsibilities. Participants discussed a change in their identities after their child was born, as well as a newfound difficulty relating to peers. Many of the participants reflected on how they are expected to have two different identities, one as a student and one as a father.

> *So, there is some sort of identity change that happens with me being at university and then me being at home. At university, I'm like this young student, but when it's parenthood time then I need to put my big daddy shoes on.* Luke, 24

The above extract from Luke, echoes the findings discussed by Estes (2011), who explains that there is a contradiction between the institutional norms and ideals associated with being a parent and a university student. Many participants expressed a difficulty in being successful in both roles simultaneously, oftentimes sacrifices needed to be made in one or more aspects of their lives. Blessing, a black male, married with one child, was the oldest of all participants. It is interesting to note that Blessing was the furthest along with his studies, but still struggled,

> *Well at the moment I would say that there isn't much on the balance side. The fatherhood side is definitely suffering, because I spend a disproportionate amount of time at work and studying.* Blessing, 29

The extract above, echoes the findings discussed in the literature review, particularly with regards to the study by Lucchini-Raies and colleagues (2018). The study explained that when encountered with the role of being a student-parent the ability to fulfil both these roles effectively diminishes and individuals need to rethink how they manage their responsibilities. Almost all participants highlighted the concept of time poverty discussed in previous literature (Estes, 2011). Participants feel as though they do not have sufficient time to adequately manage both roles. Many participants expressed feeling as though their studies were contributing to lost time with their child, as discussed by Luke,

> *I do feel like I'm running out of time in regards to my studies, but most importantly I feel like I'm running out of time with him.* Luke, 24

Although all parents emphasise the fact that having a degree will be beneficial in the future, at the present moment, many feel as though it is a burden stopping them from truly experiencing parenthood. Moreover, almost all participants said that they prioritised the role of fatherhood first, as was expressed by Matthew,

What comes first is parenting all the time although you have deadlines due dates and so forth, uh, but the child's needs will always come first so I guess it all comes down to time management and how you manage yourself. Matthew, 24

Many participants expressed having difficulty balancing their newfound fatherhood responsibilities while still maintaining a social life. They spoke about issues such as lack of time, needing to prioritize certain responsibilities and disconnect between themselves and peers.

It's difficult to have friends when you have children, and you don't want to have friends because the things they are doing don't seem as important, you know? ... I just sometimes think it's difficult to relate to people who don't have children because often their problems don't appear so big. Ebrahim, 24

In the above extracts' participants express a shift in their priorities once they became fathers. Participants emphasised the importance of being present and felt as though being a father was more important than time spent with peers. Many believed that their peers were not able to relate to them anymore because of their new roles.

Lastly, a point of concern raised by Luke, was the difficulty of navigating his newfound identity of being a parent while still living in his parents' house, something which is attributed to the fact that he is not yet financially stable.

Don't have kids while you're still living with your parents. It is a little tough because I am still a child in this context. My parents, I still need to live by their rules, but at the same time, I am a parent myself. Luke, 24

The statement above reflects the difficulty navigating being a parent while still needing to abide by certain power dynamics within his household. This statement acts in contrast to many other participants' experiences as a large majority of those living with their parents live in a room or cottage separate from the house thus, affording them a certain kind of "freedom". Participants who had their own space found living close to their parents a lot easier.

Summary and Conclusion

The majority of student-fatherhood research is conducted in the global north and the few South African researchers who have conducted research tend to focus on teen fatherhood.

Thus, this study aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences of young student-fathers in university. This was done by addressing the lack of contextually relevant research through the acknowledgement of diverse experiences. This study has specifically focused on the perception of support for student-fathers on behalf of universities. The underlying intention of this research has been to potentially inform future developments of institutional support for student-fathers.

Many of the findings of this study were in line with previous research findings. This study found that many young student-fathers feel the pressure to be able to provide financially, something which they highlighted as a difficult undertaking, as many of them were still being supported by their parents. It also highlighted the fact that cultural factors, such as needing to pay damages to the mother's family, is often a financial limitation in young black men's abilities to be present in their children's life. Religion was also cited as a driving force behind young father's expectations of themselves as the financial provider. These findings highlight the context specific factors that have not been considered in previous literature produced in the global north. Participants did mention how fatherhood earned them newfound respect within their communities, thus highlighting the status fatherhood provides for young men. Furthermore, the study highlighted the fact that many student-fathers challenged the dominant narrative of the father's primary role as the provider and instead emphasised the importance of quality time and emotional support. This is similar to existing local and international literature.

Interestingly, this study found that at present, many participants viewed their education as more beneficial than having a job, because education will improve both their own and their child's future. This highlights the fact that young men are planning ahead. This finding is not usually cited in literature, which instead tends to present young fathers as irresponsible. Another significant finding was that many participants view parenthood as a positive influence on their studies. Participants emphasised feeling more motivated to study and do well after becoming parents. However, participants did feel as though parenting made it more difficult to manage their time when studying and felt as though this contributed to lost time with their child.

Participants also experienced feelings of frustration towards the university and viewed it as an unempathetic space lacking interpersonal care, particularly with regards to mental health. It was interesting to note that, despite offering suggestions, many participants were not confident in the ability of the university to change. Thus, highlighting the importance of the university being more accommodating and flexible towards students and focusing on mental health, as well as academics.

Possible real-life implications of these findings could be that student-fathers may struggle to either complete their studies or be fully present in their children's lives. This may have further extending implications, such as family life or financial security.

Limitations

This study was conducted over online and social networking platforms thus, data concerns and connectivity issues emerged. Some participants were unable to do Zoom interviews due to an insufficient amount of data. Another limitation that emerged during the interviews was Wi-Fi connection issues, which at times made it difficult to hear everything the other person was saying. This meant that a lot had to be repeated and during transcription there were certain parts of the interviews which were inaudible and thus, some of the meaning could have been lost. Another limitation was that over WhatsApp voice notes participants could choose when, what and how they chose to respond, ultimately affecting the length of the interviews. A smaller sample size, although not a big issue, did limit the application of findings to other contexts.

Recommendations

In relation to the findings and limitations cited above, we suggest that future studies make use of larger, even more diverse samples of participants and offer some sort of compensation for time of participation.We suggest that universities offer greater support to student-fathers. Mental health could be mediated through support groups, free or reduced fee daycare options offered, and family responsibility leave extended to include student-fathers. It would be beneficial to allow for more flexibility in regard to the granting of academic extensions. These suggestions

may assist student-fathers in completing their degree while fulfilling the role and responsibilities of fatherhood.

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Appendix A: Information sheet

Fatherhood among South African university students: Identities and responsibilities.

Dear Students

We are two psychology Honours students studying at the University of Cape Town. As a part of our Honours course, we are completing a mini thesis project. We are conducting research on the experiences of student-fathers. This study involves an interview that will be conducted either online or over an instant messaging platform.

We are inviting you to participate in this study if you:
- Are a South African adult between the ages of 18-30
- Are a biological father of a child
- Either be enrolled at a university currently, or if you have already graduated, you had a child while completing your degree

Your participation in this study is voluntary and your personal details will remain confidential. This interview is confidential.

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in participating, please email the contact below.This study has obtained approval from the Department of Psychology Research Ethics Committee.For any queries, comments or assistance, please contact Rosalind Adams via email: rosalind.adams@uct.ac.za

If you are interested in participating please contact either of the researchers listed below;

- Tamir Cohen - CHNTAM003@myuct.ac.za or Nicola Kruger - KRGNIC011@myuct.ac.za

Thank you

Fatherhood among South African university students

Dear Participant,

Study Invitation and Purpose

You are invited to take part in a study which explores the experiences of student-fathers in university in South Africa. This study is being conducted by two Psychology Honours students at the University of Cape Town. We know that the pressures of these two roles may compete, such as trying to split time between studying, looking after children and trying to earn an income, to name a few. There are many men trying to manage both roles, but we know very little about how that is for you. The information you give us may be helpful for shaping university priorities.

Study Procedure

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be interviewed about your experiences of being a father at university. This interview will be conducted online or via WhatsApp depending on your personal preference and your access to internet and data. The interviews should be between 30 minutes to an hour; however, this is just a general estimate and it will depend on the participant. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Possible Risks & Inconveniences

This study poses a low risk of harm to you. Interviews will be conducted online, meaning that there is no risk of physical harm as well as no travel expense. Possible inconveniences include needing to have access to Wi-Fi or data and a laptop or smartphone. Speaking about your experiences of student-fatherhood could bring up sensitive issues and could potentially be

emotionally distressing. However, you will have full control over what you choose to discuss in the interview and have the ability to withdraw from the study at any moment. This study will first obtain permission from the DSA before research commences. If you feel distressed by any of the content discussed or feel the need to seek professional help, please view the contacts listed on the referral sheet (call rates may apply, and help may be specific to location).

Possible Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you as the participant, however there is the possibility of engaging in important contextual conversations, which most people enjoy.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any point. You may refrain from answering questions which you are not comfortable with and may withdraw from the interview at any point without any consequences.

Confidentiality

Any information you share will be kept strictly confidential. The researchers will be the only ones with access to this information. You have the right to request that any information you have shared be removed from the study. With your permission, interviews will be recorded using an electronic voice recorder. Only the interviewer will have access to these recordings and they will be kept on a password-protected computer. Following the interview, the voice recordings will be transcribed (typed out). Your name will not appear in these transcriptions. The information from the interviews will be used to write up a research study and may be published in an academic journal. Any identifying details will not be included in the final report.

Questions

Any study-related questions, problems or emergencies should be directed to the following researchers:

Nicola Kruger   071 355 7311

                                 KRGNIC011@myuct.ac

Tamir Cohen   083 311 5554

                                 CHNTAM003@myuct.ac.za

Questions about your rights as a study participant, complaints about this study may be directed to
Rosalind Adams:

Rosalind Adams   021 650 3417

                                 Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za

Signatures

I (name)_____ have been informed of the purpose, procedures and risks
involved in this study. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and I feel satisfied with
the responses I have received. I hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the research study as
described.

_____   _____

                Signature   date

I (name)_____ agree to being recorded during the interview process.

_____   _____

                Signature   date

The Parent Centre

Telephone: +27 (0)21 762 0116

Email: marketing@theparentcentre.org.za

Address: 22 Wetton Road, Wynberg, 7800

Hours: 8am - 4pm

Focus on the Family Africa

Telephone: +27 31 716 3300 or +27 86 567 1535

Email: counselling@fotf.co.za

Address: Private Bag X7023, Hillcrest 3650, KwaZulu Natal

The South African Depression and Anxiety Group

Telephone: please see the appropriate number

- To find a Support Group in your area, call 0800 21 22 23
- To contact a counsellor between 8am-8pm Monday to Sunday, call 011 234 4837
- For a suicidal Emergency, call 0800 567 567
- For 24 hour help, call 0800 456 789

Address: It is best to contact the above numbers in order to locate the closest help as they are a widely based organization.

Families South Africa

Telephone: (011) 975 7106/7

Email: national@famsa.org.za

Address: There are 28 affiliates across the country with satellite offices, so it is best to contact the above number for guidance.

Counselling Hub

Telephone: 0214623902

Address: 52/54 Francis St, Woodstock

Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:00am - 4:30pm

Student Wellness Service (UCT)

Telephone: 021 650 1017

Address: Mowbray, Cape Town, 7700

Appendix C: Interview guide

- ● "Start"
  - introduction/ who I am etc.
  - How the interview will be working
  - You may ask questions at any point
  - You may refrain from answering any question should you not want to
  - This interview is confidential and only my partner and I will have access to your answers
  - You may withdraw at any point
- ● How would you identify yourself?
  - Please could you tell us your age
  - What university do you go to?
  - How do you identify in terms of race?
  - How many children do you have?
  - How old are your children?
  - Can you tell us about the relationship with your child's mother?
  - How much contact do you have with your child?
- ● Please tell me about your experiences as a father?
  - At what age did you become a father?
  - Please tell us more about how you are experiencing being a father and a student at the same time?
  - How has parenting affected your studies?
  - How have your studies affected parenting?
  - How do you balance the responsibilities of being a father with those of being a student?
  - Do you receive any support from a partner, family or friends?
  - What are some of the challenges of being a father and student at the same time?
  - What are the benefits of being a father and a student at the same time?
- ● Are there specific contextual factors that influence your ability to be successful in both roles? Such as your identity, environment, community norms or expectations
  - How do economic factors (eg.finances) play a role in your ability to be a father and student? Such as finances or laws
  - Are there any cultural factors which influence your ability to be a father and student? Such as religion, language or tradition

- Do you feel as though university staff provides you with adequate assistance as a father and student? For example staff, administrators or the policies in place?
  - What do you think can be done differently to support students who are fathers, better?
- "Goodbyes"
  - Ask if there are any questions
  - Mention referral list
  - Thank for the participation

Appendix D: Ethical approval

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa
Telephone (021) 650 3417
Fax No. (021) 650 4104

03 August 2020

Nicola Kruger and Tamir Cohen
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7701

Dear Nicola and Tamir

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your study, *Fatherhood among South African university students: Identities and responsibilities.* The reference number is PSY2020 -035.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Ward
Professor
Chair: Ethics Review Committee