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Exploring black South African women academics' perspectives on the relationship between culture, education and parenting

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore black South African women academics' constructions of culture, mothering and education. The study further explored the relationships inherent between these aspects. The study followed a qualitative design through the utilisation of open-ended interviews that took place at a large urban public university in Johannesburg, South Africa. Nine women in academia who were linked predominantly to the field of health, who were of African descent and who had children between the ages of 0 and 18 years old were interviewed. The results illustrated that the women used multiple sources in the construction of their identities, some of which were congruent whereas between others there were tensions. The largest influence in their constructions of their identities was their religious affiliation, which took precedence over all other influences. At different stages of life their diverse identities held various significances to the women. This study is important because it is the first to investigate mothering in a low-risk African group.