

MOTHERHOOD PENALTY IN HIRING PRACTICES: EXPERIENCES OF MOTHER PROFESSORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

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Introdução

The Motherhood Penalty is a strand of literature that deals with disparities in the labor market between mothers and childless woman (Budig & England, 2001). Usually associated with wage disparities (Budig, Misra & Boeckmann, 2016), the motherhood penalty also manifests itself in the difficulties encountered by mothers in recruitment and selection processes (Correll, Benard & Paik, 2007). In this area, experimental laboratory studies indicate that women are often evaluated differently from men in recruitment and selection processes (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2004).

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

The aim of this article is to analyze the experience of mother professors in hiring processes at public and private higher education institutions in Brazil. Little is known about the incidence of motherhood penalty in hiring process in Brazil. Besides, considering the particular features of the professor work in Brazilian HEIs, it is important to understand women's experiences in this specific scenario.

Fundamentação Teórica

The motherhood penalty regarding hiring discrimination is well known and documented in different parts of the world (Correll, Benard & Paik, 2007). Two of the main explanations provided in the literature about why barriers to employment occur for working mothers are based on Status Characteristics Theory and Social Role Theory (Cheung et al., 2022). It is understood that the nature of the work, as well as the cultural norms of the country and workplace, influence the way in which working mothers are evaluated in hiring processes.

Metodologia

Qualitative research was conducted through semi-structured interviews supported by a script with twenty-six working mothers who worked as professors while their children were under twelve years old. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using content analysis. The Atlas.ti software was used to support data coding.

Análise dos Resultados

From the accounts of the participants the experience of penalties (or challenges) in hiring processes at Brazilian HEIs is a unique and individual experience, but one that is anchored in a social context rooted in perceptions of the ideals of motherhood and work. However, the context of the sector in which the woman works, as well as the organizational context in which she is inserted, are also determining factors in her experience of penalties in hiring. In addition, individual factors such as the way in which the worker relates to her profession and her family are also pointed.

Conclusão

It was observed that the experience of hiring penalties for teaching mothers in higher education in Brazil goes through different aspects. Firstly, it is a process that is constituted by the social conception of the ideals of motherhood and work (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Secondly, the experience (or not) of penalties is linked to the patterns that govern selection processes in the sector of work (Hoffmann et al., 2019). Finally, the results showed the unique and individual nature of each participant, who experience motherhood differently as they have resources - such as a support network.

Referências Bibliográficas

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