

How do we work?

The Profile of Qualifications and Professional Profile in Portugal: the case of Childhood Educators

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Knowing that the competences of the professionals are assumed as a competitive advantage in the most diverse contexts and areas of work, to understand if the qualification profile is appropriate to the professional profile demanded by the labor market is assumed as an essential study for the perception of the competences by professionals entering the same market.

It is within the scope of this problem that this communication proposes to present a framework of theoretical references and a model of analysis for the analytical approach of the evaluation of the relationship between the profile of qualification and the professional profile of any technical-scientific field.

This debate fuses several questions to current social and Human Resources challenges, such as employment and unemployment, employability skills, higher education action, the role of qualifications and even the processes of professionalization.

The concrete case of this work refers to the area of early childhood education in which we seek to perceive the elements of convergence and divergence between the qualification profile of institutions of higher education in Early Childhood Education and the professional profile of the Childhood Educators (CE) in Portugal. Thus, an analysis was made of educational-training offerings in the field of Early Childhood Education in Portugal, as well as the general and specific profiles of professional performance defined by the national normative-legal framework.

Therefore, taking into account the qualifications and competences of CE, we opted for a qualitative methodology, since the technique of data collection and processing of this kind appears as one of the main sources of analysis and understanding of this type of data, but also due to the focus on the qualification profile of these professionals.

The conclusions of this study have demonstrated that, despite the growing importance attributed to the development of CE competences from their basic training, this training can be questioned mainly as regards the integration of qualification level five courses in

the polytechnic institutions that, when assigning students a technical diploma, are able to perform the functions of guidance, support and supervision of school-age children, such as a graduate in Basic Education.

Other conclusions of this study were also the need and the emergence of the creation of a Competency Profile (CP) for the CE, since the existing performance profiles have been in force since 2001 without any kind of change. It is therefore urgent to create a CP capable of presenting openings where CE can be users and producers of their skills, but also efficient in adapting them to the needs of children, not the other way round.

Thereby, with this study we hope to start the debate about the adequacy of the qualification profile to the professional profile of professions of the education area, but also of any other area, so that Human Resources can follow the social and professional transformation of the work that we currently live.

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