

Formal Sector Employment, Economic Capital and Human Capacity Development: Voices of Single Mothers from South Africa and Germany

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Abstract : This paper considers the formal employment sector, human capacity development and economic capital of single-mother households' as they strive to sustain livelihoods. This paper advances empirical data in the field of economic and social development policy. The correlation between educational level, human capacity development and economic self-reliance of single-mother households is considered. This paper presents empirical evidence obtained from qualitative in-depth interviews conducted with twenty-five single mothers who were working in the formal work sector in Hagen, Germany and two provinces, namely KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in South Africa. This is an underexplored research area as most of the international literature focuses on pathology and victimhood related to single-mother households. Instead, this paper presents the biographic profiles and discusses two key themes that emerged from the data analysis namely; formal and informal streams of income enhanced human capital development through access to further education and training opportunities. The women perceived these themes as facilitating factors which helped them sustain their households. The paper presents some suggestions for policymakers and social work practitioners to consider to improve support systems and avoid economic exclusion of single mothers who work within the first economy.

Keywords : single mothers, formal work sector, economic capital, human capital

Conference Title : ICSW 2019 : International Conference on Social Work

Conference Location : Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Dates : September 16-17, 2019