



WOMEN TEACHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OVERCOME

TEACHING WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OVERCOMING



SOUZA, Solange de¹
HEIN, Adriana Kroenke^{two}

Summary

Throughout the formation of Brazilian society, it is known that women were delegated to conditions of subordination and servitude in relation to men, with their role restricted to domestic and maternal activities. But, with the Industrial Revolution and, mainly, from the 1920s onwards, women, in addition to gaining greater study rights, began to occupy roles in teaching children. This situation has changed over the years and the female gender has also become present in higher education. With this background, the general objective of this work aims to understand the condition of female teachers in higher education in an attempt to assimilate the main points of challenges and overcomings to be faced. To this end, exploratory and quantitative research was used, through the study of theoretical references and the application of questionnaires *online*, which enabled a better understanding of points relating to female performance in Brazilian university teaching.

Key words: Women teachers. University education. Education and society.

Abstract

The formation of Brazilian society, it is known that women were delegated to conditions of subordination and servitude in relation to men, and their performance was restricted throughout to domestic and maternal activities. But with the Industrial Revolution, and especially from the 1920s, women, in addition to gaining greater rights to study, began to occupy roles in child teaching. This picture changed over the years and the female gender was also present in higher education. With this background, the general objective of this paper aims to understand the condition of female teachers in higher education in an attempt to assimilate the main points of challenges and overcoming to be faced. To this end, exploratory and quantitative research was used, through the study of theoretical framework and the application of online questionnaires, which enabled a better understanding of the points related to female performance in Brazilian university teaching.

Keywords: Women teachers. Higher education. Education and society.

¹Master's student of the Postgraduate course in Administration *strict sense*. Email: solsouza@furb.br

^{two}Post-doctorate in analytical and simulation models from the National Institute of Pure and Applied Mathematics (Impa). Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Accounting Sciences at the Regional University of Blumenau (PPGCC/FURB). Email: akroenke@furb.br



1. Introduction

According to Astelarra (1983), the female condition is something quite complex in Brazilian society, being a woman in this society is mixed with our roots, and social relations marked by patriarchy, authoritarianism and violence. Throughout the history of Brazil, women have been relegated to conditions of subordination and servitude in relation to men. It can be said that this situation is, to a large extent, marked by colonizing origins and Christian religiosity, clearly predominant in the country.

Soares (1994) adds that the lives of women in Brazilian society are inevitably linked to struggles, resistance, advances and setbacks in the desire for respect, social positions and rights. It is essential that women understand that each and every achievement is the result of the entire historicity of the women who precede us.

Thus, the present work, with the theme of the role of women teachers in higher education, presents itself as relevant, given the historicity that surrounds women in Brazil, since this social group is placed in a permanent struggle condition. Given the inequalities present in Brazil between genders, it is extremely urgent and necessary to think and rethink the role and condition of women in the country, in order to facilitate the unveiling of these contradictions and enable the advancement and achievements of this gender as a path to the liberation of humanity. from the bonds of prejudice (PINTO, 2003).

The general objective of this work is to understand the condition of female teachers in higher education in an attempt to assimilate the main points of challenges and overcomings to be faced.

2 Theoretical foundation

The theoretical foundation will cover the evolution, current panorama and remuneration of female participation in teaching.

2.1 Evolution of female participation in teaching

Until the 1980s, studies relating to education in Brazil were quite limited to the relationship between gender and teaching. Nowadays, there are still few reflections on the relationship between the feminine and academic practice (CASTRO; LAVINAS, 2002). Despite the scarcity of studies, several associations have already been consolidated between



women, teaching identity and related aspects, such as career construction, family organization, remuneration, among other points.

3 According to Lima (2007), until the 19th century, the female gender was suppressed in the school environment, as they were oriented towards the practice of domestic and maternal activities, whose education was, at most, provided in homes or chapels under the supervision of the Church and parents. From the aforementioned period onwards, women began to conquer the academic environment, despite strong prejudice, and economic changes, which spanned the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, as a result of the Industrial Revolution and, consequently, urbanization, restructured the educational field. At that time, the spread of equality ideals became stronger and the feminist movement gained strength, with several demands emerging.

According to Louro (2008), the movement gained strength, mainly in the 1920s in the West, and women, in addition to gaining greater study rights, began to occupy roles in teaching children, being considered an ideal activity for the female gender, since it did not hurt her morals and corresponded to the innate gift of education due to motherhood. This argument was used by the feminist movement itself to demonstrate the viability of women performing tasks outside the family sphere.

Another prevailing reason for the insertion of women in teaching were the new conceptions held about education, since, following the Escolanovista Movement that occurred in 1930, this began to be interpreted as the basis for economic progress and modernization of society. From this perspective, education began to be seen in a different way, there was an increase in investments in the area, in addition to the expansion of the possibilities of teaching jobs, allowing women to enter. In this way, industrialization caused part of the positions held by men in teaching to be vacated for insertion into professions with better salaries (FARIA FILHO, 2004).

Thus, in accordance with the conclusions of studies by Auad (2006), it can be said that the teaching profession was essential for women to enter the job market and move towards financial independence, mainly in the low and middle classes, showing that social ascension would be possible through education. In this sense, women, through teaching, gained greater notoriety in the public sphere and their access to universities increased. Entering education was, for women,

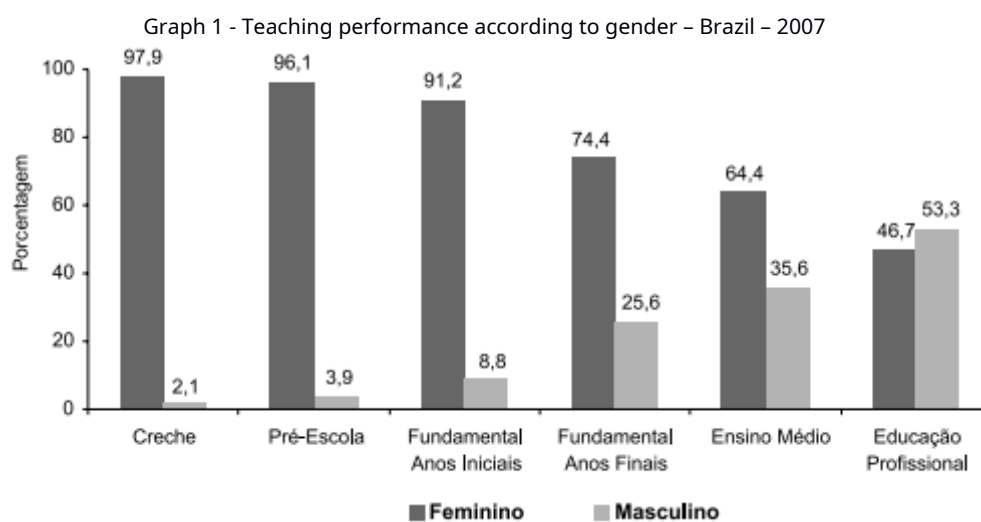


move from an invisible place focused on individual relationships to visibility and collectivism.



2.2 Current overview of female participation in teaching

According to a study carried out by the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP) in 2007, it is noted that the predominantly female profile of teachers changes from early childhood education to secondary education and professional education (Graph 1). It can be noted that the female predominance in the teaching universe is limited mainly to the initial stages of teaching, and, starting from regular education, the participation of men increases. The one that presents a different situation is vocational education, which ranges from technical, technologist and university courses.




Pereira and Anjos (2014) portray in their studies that, according to the census carried out in 2011 by INEP, there are 325,804 teachers working in higher education in Brazil, of which 60% of this group are in private institutions. Furthermore, it is known that 16.5% have doctors, 44.1% masters and 39.4% are specialists, confirming previous statements about the prevalence of teachers with a higher level of education within universities.

The 2011 census also shows that the profile of university professors, both in private and public institutions, is strongly marked by the presence of men. In private institutions there are men with an average age of 33, masters, hourly workers - those who do not work full time - and masters. In public institutions, these are, on average, 47 years old, have a doctorate and work full time.



2.3 Remuneration for women in teaching

5  In the development of the research carried out by Araújo (2016), there is the assertion that the remuneration for teaching activities did not differ between genders, resulting exclusively from different levels of education. In the analysis carried out, women with only primary (elementary) education earned substantially lower salaries than those with secondary (secondary) education. As secondary education was mostly made up of men, they had the best salaries.

In this sense, it can be said that salary differentiation also comes as a result of inequality of opportunities, with males having greater access to education than females, especially in the lower classes. It is noted that the prestige and salaries of teaching professionals increase according to the level of education achieved and, as women mainly occupy the nursery, child and elementary education levels, they receive lower salaries (ARAÚJO, 2016).

Rosemberg (2001) makes it clear that the disparities between salaries at different levels of education are reducing due to "the result of sexual composition by level and education, the average improvement in initial training and salary policy in the public system" (ROSEMBERG, 2001, p. 525). It is also added that despite the male preponderance in the analysis of salaries, the workforce in the teaching area is made up of 80% of women, where they occupy positions that involve everything from teaching, itself, to administrative activities.

According to Mariussi *et al.* (2016), currently, it can be seen that there is a greater presence of women in universities, and this was also leveraged due to the changes made to the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, in 2006, which led to the proliferation of university institutions private. From this prerogative, it is inferred that the increase in female participation in teaching activities at a higher level of education was enabled by their greater insertion in universities.

3 Methodology

This research used the exploratory-qualitative method as a methodological procedure for data analysis. In this section, initially, we attempt to justify the research approach; then, the processes and criteria for bibliographic choice and data collection are elucidated; Finally, aspects of the analysis of



information collected to ratify or rectify the hypotheses developed during the analysis. During the process, characteristics and possible interference from the environment are highlighted to situate the research context. Regarding the data coming from the subjects, these characteristics and interferences are considered in the objective scope, as it is based on responses to questionnaires *online*.

3.1 Exploratory position of the research

Exploratory research brings the possibility of providing the research hypothesis to *posteriori*. In this way, it does not follow the order of first raising a hypothesis and seeking empirical or documentary data or formulating a rationalization to corroborate it, but rather undertaking the effort to understand a reality and raise emerging questions. Gil (2008) states that these investigations have as their main purpose the improvement of ideas or the exploration of intuitions.

3.2 Qualitative position of the research.

Quantitative research is based on modern scientific conception, which can be crystallized in the figure of positivism. In this context, the belief that science is impartial is strong, since it is argued that pure data has no side, that is, it is impartial. However, this restricted conception of science has suffered scathing criticism that has shown that the data, at some point, requires the researcher's intervention. This view of "pure" science is called naïve by Chalmers and Fiker (1993).

In education, strictly quantitative research does not seem to be appropriate when the object of investigation is practice guidelines and the discovery of concepts. In quantitative research, much more value is given to pure data and how its configuration can say something about a hypothesis than to its interpretation.

A qualitative look seems to be closer to the phenomena, a characteristic that can prevent the observation of a large number of data, the opposite of a quantitative analysis, which gives up an in-depth analysis of the data to be able to work with a greater amount of information, using statistical and probabilistic analyzes (BOGDAN; BILKEN, 1994).

For Bogdan and Bilken (1994), qualitative research has five particular features. The first is that this type of investigation connects the researcher to the environment, since, to analyze



qualitatively, it is necessary to understand the everyday situations that modulate the meanings of that environment. Thus “[...] they understand that actions can be better understood when they are observed in their usual environment of occurrence.” (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 1994, p. 48).



The second feature corroborates exactly what was mentioned above: qualitative research generates descriptive data. Then, Bogdan and Bilken (1994) indicate as a third feature the importance of the process in qualitative research. This is considered more important than the research product itself. This is because it is the process that will generate more results for the researcher in the first place than the final product itself. From this perspective, the research process is a transformer of meanings, it is what will lay the foundations for a final product or result from which the researcher leaves deeply transformed.

The fourth feature raised by Bogdan and Bilken (1994) denotes that qualitative research is essentially done through deductive inferences. In the research process, countless inductive reasonings occur, not in the sense of raising a law or general rule from a naive inductive process, but from an inductive chain made, gradually and continuously, in the research process.

The fifth trait of qualitative research designates that the construction of meaning is vital importance to the process. This is why the researcher surveys the location, its respective characteristics, the private life of the research subject and their impressions on a given topic directly or indirectly through interviews, observations, notes, which give rise to descriptions of the subject. qualitative researcher, with the purpose of understanding more clearly the perspective of the research subject.

Thus, the present research, by exploring and qualitatively analyzing the practice of women's work in teaching, raised an understanding of the problems and challenges faced by them, given the historical evolution of patriarchal society. This understanding comes through a perspective constructed through a journey through the bibliography about women's participation in teaching.

3.3 Data collection

To facilitate data collection regarding women's role in teaching and the challenges faced, the research uses a questionnaire *online* applied to



selected audience residing in Santa Catarina who will have access to the content through the link: <https://www.onlinepesquisa.com/s/7bfdabd>.

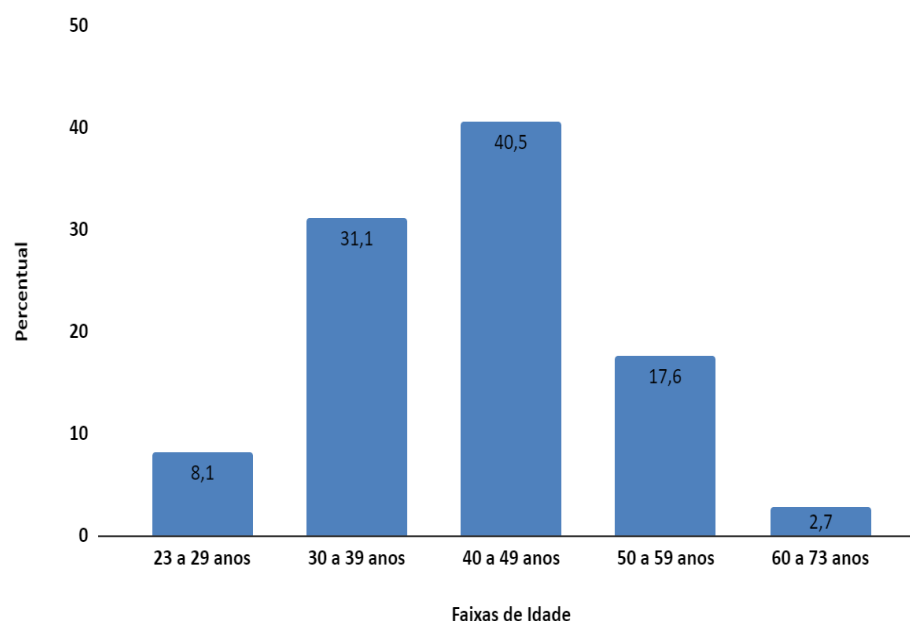


In this survey, the teacher will answer the following data: gender; age group; training; monthly income; type of Higher Education Institution (HEI) in which it operates; city where it operates; operating time; teaching modality. Thus, the respondent will be asked about the possible challenges that exist in teaching in higher education, covering issues ranging from excessive workload to discrimination between genders and providing the opportunity to describe possible ways of overcoming the challenges encountered.

4 Presentation and analysis of results

At first, it is crucial to remember that the results obtained come from a questionnaire *online* answered only by female teachers residing in the state of Santa Catarina, these factors being fundamental for adequate data analysis to be carried out.

Graph 1 - Distribution of respondents according to age group.



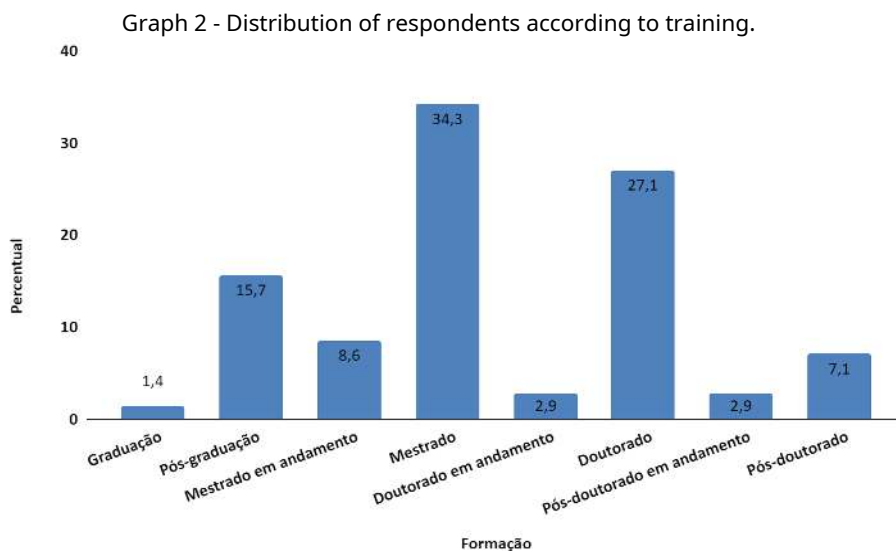
Source: prepared by the author

When analyzing the distribution of the age group among the women who make up the teaching staff of respondents (Graph 1), one can notice the prevalence of the age group from 40 to 49 years old, highlighting the presence of women with a higher level of experience and, supposedly, with greater training. This last statement can be confirmed through Graph 2, where



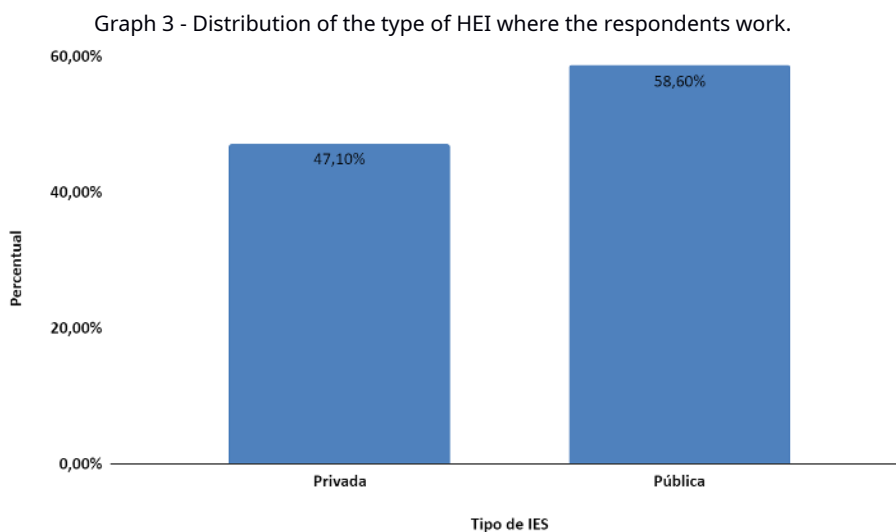
found that 61.4% of respondents have a postgraduate degree *Stricto Sensu*, with emphasis on the Master's degree.

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Source: prepared by the author

Chart 3 highlights the equal distribution of work in public and private HEIs, with the former standing out with the presence of 11.5% more teachers in the public network. In this sense, a hypothesis can be raised, the confirmation of which requires another series of quantitative and qualitative research. As admission to public universities is done through a public competition, this selection process allows access to employment or public office, in a broad and democratic way, it can be deduced that there is greater access to university teaching by women when the selection is done impartially and isonomically.

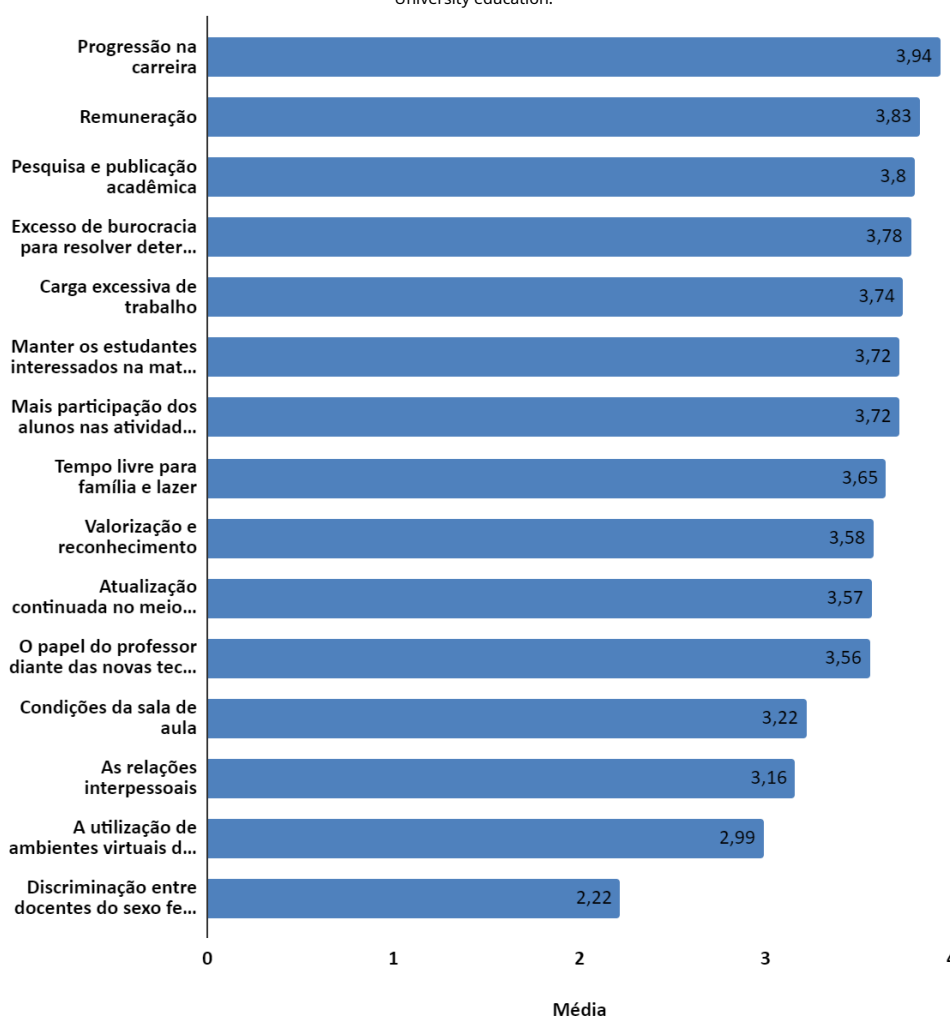


Source: prepared by the author



Graph 4 highlights the challenges to be overcome by teachers in higher education, the main ones being linked to career progression and remuneration. It can also be noted that soon after, issues relating to excessive service and bureaucracy appear, as most universities do not include the time they spend on administrative issues and extra-class activities in their teachers' remuneration. As a consequence of this factor, the fourth challenge to be overcome is listed as excessive workload. In this sense, it was necessary to stipulate the relationship between the work of teachers in more than one university and the main problems related to teaching (Table 1) and thus it was noted that, despite the similarity in identification with the problems, those who work in more than an institution - 26.7% of respondents, provided more information with the high demand and lack of free time for family and leisure.

Graph 4 - Degree of agreement among respondents regarding the biggest challenges faced as teachers in the University education.



Source: prepared by the author



Table 1 - Cross-over between the main challenges to be overcome by university teachers and their performance in more than one educational institution.

	Works in more than one institution at the time?			
	Yes		No	
	Average	Detour-Standard	Average	Detour-Standard
excessive work load free	4.00	0.973	3.66	1,277
time for family and leisure	3.90	1,071	3.57	1,087
the use of virtual teaching environments more	2.80	0.951	3.05	1,189
student participation in proposed activities	3.65	1,089	3.74	1,153
discrimination between female and male teachers	1.70	0.923	2.39	1,295
remuneration	3.70	1,129	3.87	1,056
classroom conditions	3.25	1,070	3.21	1,142
appreciation and recognition	3.40	0.995	3.64	1,017
interpersonal relationships research	3.30	0.979	3.11	1,199
and academic publishing keep students	3.70	0.979	3.84	0.986
interested in the subject the role of the teacher in	3.75	0.786	3.70	1,131
the face of new technologies	3.75	0.910	3.49	1,149
Career Development	4.00	1,124	3.92	1.005
continued updating in academia excessive	3.80	0.834	3.49	1,206
bureaucracy to resolve certain issues	3.60	0.883	3.84	1,200

Source: SPSS 21.

Another challenge related to discrimination among female teachers presents the lowest percentage of relevance among the others raised. Despite the reporting of this issue among the respondents, the problems that are currently seen as inherent to teaching, regardless of gender, gained more preponderance. This point can be reinforced in the descriptive report of the teachers within the questionnaire, whose main objection is linked to the low appreciation of teachers, both by the institution and by society as a whole.

5 Final considerations

Through the theoretical framework, it is possible to understand the trajectory of women's role in teaching, mainly from the 1980s onwards, a period in which studies relating to education also began to address the relationship between gender and teaching. Thus, it was observed that, until the 19th century, society was marked by the suppression of the female gender, whose activities were limited to domestic and maternal practices. However, the Industrial Revolution triggered a series of changes in the profile of the job market, which have consequences to this day. Thus, the insertion of women in the educational field took place



with emphasis from the 1920s onwards, and in addition to gaining greater study rights, they began to occupy teaching roles.

As a consequence of the beginning observed in the performance of teachers, nowadays, there is a greater predominance of female performance in the initial years of education to the detriment of professional education consisting of secondary and higher education. This question already makes the analysis of the answers offered when applying the questionnaire *online* must take into account that this public is a minority within universities and therefore represents an exception to the rule of male preponderance in higher education.

Despite this finding, it can be concluded that the main challenges to be overcome by women teachers working in higher education are of a generic nature and also present among those of the male gender. The problems mainly correspond to the difficulty in career progression, devaluation, inadequate remuneration, in addition to excessive workload. Therefore, this article warns of the need to change the standards of conception and appreciation of university professors, as they play an essential role in society.

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