

# ‘MOTHERHOOD PENALTY’: ACTUAL PRICE TAGGED WITH MOTHERHOOD IN EAST ASIA IN THE CASE OF MONGOLIA AND LAOS

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After the pandemic, one in three working women with young children in North America considered leaving the workforce or scaling back their careers significantly (Krivkovich et al., 2022). While this study highlights trends in a specific region of North America, comparable data is scarce for Asia where, despite progressive developments towards gender equality, male dominance remains prevalent in many social sectors.

This research focuses on Mongolia and Laos, post and current communist regimes respectively, where legal frameworks supposedly support women in the workplace. For instance, in Mongolia, women are entitled to up to three years of maternity leave, with the first four months paid and the remainder unpaid, during which their job position must be held open. However, these policies, while supportive in theory, often do not translate into practical benefits and may negatively impact both women and businesses.

The objective of this study is to delve into the complexities faced by working mothers in Mongolia and Laos in the tourism sector, encompassing domestic responsibilities, childcare, and professional commitments.

Research Questions:

1. To what extent are Mongolian/Lao women of reproductive age aware of the challenges motherhood poses for working mothers in the tourism sector?
2. What roles do men in the household play in supporting working mothers?
3. How are employers in the tourism sector in Mongolia and Laos adapting to the challenges faced by working mothers within the context of government regulations on maternal employment?

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