46 - THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF LABOR GYMNASTICS AMONG A PRACTITIONERS GROUP IN THE HYGIENIC CLEANING SECTOR FROM CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO FEEVALE

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INTRODUCTION

Work has always been a part of men's life, originating the most diverse feelings and representations. In many situations, it has an impact on the individual's health in a harmful way. At the same time, alternatives had always been searched in order to try to solve such aggressions. Different work forms, new equipment and new machines had been created to give agility to the process and results in terms of production. But, beyond the iron machine, there is a "human machine" that needs equal or even more preventive maintenance and also repairs. Thinking about this, several practices had been adopted in order to contribute for the worker's health and life quality. Amongst these practices, there are Labor Gymnastics.

We think it is opportune and challenging to perform the approach between Social Sciences and Physical Education, more precisely with the practice of Labor Gymnastics. Therefore, we find a fertile base to develop our study.

For this to happen, we used the Social Representations theory, whose term is originated in the Philosophy field, and that are defined, in Social Sciences, as thought, action and feeling categories that express reality to explain it, to justify it or to question it (MINAYO, 2000). Under another look, we have the concept of Moscovici, saying that "Social Representations, as scientific theories, religions, or mythologies, are representations of something or of somebody" (MOSCOVICI, 2004, P. 106). Through the Social Representations we will understand how reality is structured and organized, being, therefore, the way through which we will make the connection between the studied object.

Labor Gymnastics is a practice performed in the work environment itself, with the objective of softening the harmful impacts of the work in the individuals. It has as a main goal to act in a preventive way, in relation to work related accidents, as well as in stressful situations, also acting in the increase of well-being and in people's willingness, promoting the relationship and the cooperation between the several collaborators (CAÑETE, 1996). We understand that Labor Gymnastics goes beyond simple physical exercises. It also serves as a way of stimulating and of valuing the promotion of health, diminishing sedentary habits and stress, in addition to favoring the body consciousness and the interpersonal relationships of its practitioners. According to Lima (2003, P.12) "The healthy relations in the work environment facilitate the communication, transform the environment, provide greater interaction, and increase the willingness to work". The author complements affirming that the Labor Gymnastics program "establishes a daily social relationship, being also a marked appointment with health, integrating people, in a way that they get to know each other, through an active communication, expressed by the body and by the cooperation" (LIMA, 2003, P.12).

It is the approach of the social aspect that we want to emphasize, bringing to the light Social Representations inserted in the interior of Labor Gymnastics and relating them with the practice of it.

RESEARCH METHOD

Study Characterization

The researched group was constituted of 8 (eight) collaborators from the Hygienic cleaning Sector from Centro Universitário Feevale, in which the practice of Labor Gymnastics is propitiated since September, 2001. The group was chosen for being the most numerous and most active group.

The study was performed under the qualitative paradigm, through Comprehensive Sociology, that, in general lines, "places as a task of Social Sciences the understanding of the human reality lived socially [...]". Thus, our concern will not be in quantifying, but describing the social relations established and that can be learned through the everyday life, through the existence, and through the common sense explanation (MINAYO, 2000, P.11). Comprehensive Sociology has its origin in Max Weber, who defines sociology as "a science that intends to understand the social action interpretatively and, thus, to explain it causatively in its course and in its effect" (WEBER, 2000, P.3).

The adopted paradigm for the data reading and interpretation was the phenomenological, for being the one that approaches to the everyday life and brings to discussion the subjectivity question. Schütz (apud MINAYO, 2000, P.56) asserts that "the intention of the social scientist is to reveal the meanings that penetrate in the universe of the social actors". According to Víctora (2000), the phenomenology searches to describe, neither to explain nor to analyze data. In such way, we judge this to be the most appropriate for the intention of identifying how the Social Representations are revealed in the work of Labor Gymnastics practitioners.

Data collection technique

We used the participant observation, the half-structuralized interview and the focal group as work instruments, in order to obtain a maximum of information and depositions from the involved participants in the present research. Besides, in order to, as appears in the quotation Minayo (2000, P.203), "to exceed the common sense level and the subjectivism in interpretation and to reach a critical monitoring towards the document communication, literary texts, biographies, interviews or observation". In the application of the individual interview, as well as in the use of the focal group, there are limitations, advantages, and disadvantages. Therefore, we opted for using both techniques to surpass these disadvantages.

Our main objective, when adopting the participant observation, is to set a look on how the collaborators relate to their own bodies, and also on the social and affective interactions that may occur during this only moment in which the group is effectively congregated. We agree with Becker & Geer (apud BAUER & GASKELL, P.72) when they affirm that "the participant observation is the most complete way of sociological information".

We used the half-structuralized interview with the purpose to get "a detailed understanding of the beliefs, attitudes, values, and motivations related to the people's behaviors in specific social contexts" (BAUER & GASKELL, 2004, P.64). In this technique, what it is intended is not to count, but to explore the opinions and different representations about the subject in debate.

Data analysis and interpretation

In the data analysis and interpretation we used the theoretical triangulation, of methodological and reflexive sources, compiling information from the theoretical foundation, from the interviews answers, and from the focal group (CAUDURO, 2004).

In relation to the data analysis and interpretation itself, we looked in the content analysis for the appropriate data treatment, always remembering that "in the qualitative analysis it is the presence or absence of a given content characteristic or of a set of characteristics in a determined message fragment that is taken into consideration" (BARDIN, 1995, P.21). The content analysis adopted here relates to the meanings analysis, in this case, the thematic analysis.

Mounting the gears - categories construction

With the base in the great category - Labor Gymnastics - and searching to answer the research objectives, we dismembered into analysis subcategories and performed the triangulation using the collected information, the theoretical landmark and the researcher's reflections.

The importance of Labor Gymnastics

Perhaps the most significant aspect for the collaborators relates to the physical, to the well-being sensation, to the "renewal" that the practice searches to propitiate, being expressed by the speeches.

"Oh, it is good. Before, when we didn't come, I frequently had back pain, eight, and now I don't […] It is very good, oh, the elongations are great" (Interviewed 8)

*"Before I got tenser in the shoulders, right, now I don't, it already diminished a lot. We feel it when there isn't (*Labor Gymnastics*), on the days that we don't have it we feel, it makes a bid difference here* (pointing to the cervical and higher part of the back*) […] we don't get that tense. I feel much better; I fell like, more flexible." (Interviewed 6)*

According to Cañete, "Work in our society is synonymous for pain, suffering, solitude and, currently, for stress" (1996, P.57). With the practice of Labor Gymnastics, these people have their pain and/or discomfort sensation that their bodies suffer from during work or afterwards diminished. Still in accordance with the author, we believe that "free of pains and relieved in their tensions, people become more able and willing to do anything, from establishing relationships with the colleagues to the accomplishment of their labor activities" (CAÑETE, 1996, P.176). Such fact is proven by interviewed 8 when saying:

"We have more flexibility, ok. You have more to move, you learn better, also about how you are going to make the movements that you need to perform that task, you have to do it that way, right […] Then, before there were a lot of people with back problem there, now I have never seen that, ok, medical license because they are with back pain. It didn't happen anymore since Labor Gymnastics, I didn't see it. Even the sex is better (laughs). Of course, everything influences, right? We change a lot".

The collaborator initiates speaking about the improvement on her flexibility of movements, the bigger easiness to execute her tasks, the reduction of pains and medical licenses, and comments on something of her intimacy, in which she also realized there were positive changes: the sexual relationship with her husband. We notice in her speech a relaxation and excitement when speaking about Labor Gymnastics. That is confirmed when practicing it.

In all the speeches above, we narrated the collaborators representations about the benefits of Labor Gymnastics, which, besides emphasizing its importance, enclose in the space between lines something very important: the body consciousness. We want to strengthen Schilder's idea (1999) that considers the movement as a basic prerogative for the consciousness of the individual's own body illustrating it with the deposition below.

"It is amazing what is solves, the quality of life that we have after the gymnastics. For me it makes real good. Even our posture changes, even when I sit down somewhere, I always try to sit straight, you know. I'm very changes after the Labor Gymnastics". (Interviewed number 1)

Lima (2003) and Cañete (1996) also narrate psychological benefits originated in the practice of Labor Gymnastics, which is confirmed by the collaborator below.

"Oh it is, people get less stressed, I think. You stay there those few minutes, you unload, you know" (Interviewed 7).

Labor Gymnastics as a socialization factor

Being that this is the moment when the sector is effectively congregated, this is not a very quiet moment. People talk a lot, tell the news, work facts, their lives, and joke with the others. From the following speeches we identify how this socialization is materialized among the practitioners.

"Oh, I feel good. I feel good with the colleagues. I don't have any complaints of nobody. By the way, today we were commenting, we are very united with the colleagues. I get along with everybody. I feel good. We feel more comfortable, it seems that we loosen up more. We joke around. That is, right, is one hour, when everybody is together, is kind of one hour of leisure, you can say, when everybody is relaxed, they're playing there [...] it is more open [...] it's nicer, I like it" (Interviewed 2).

The social aspect is strengthened by Lima (2003, P.11) in the moment that he affirms that the social health is an important factor in our lives, because "the healthy relations in the work environment facilitate the communication, transform the environment, provide to greater interaction and increase the willingness to work".

The depositions below come to reinforce the approach that occurs between people.

"They get more medical licenses, I think, because then everybody is in group, because outside of this is one group at one corner, the other at another, right, because it is separate buildings, then in Labor Gymnastics we get together and the thing become more united." (Interviewed 6).

We understand that the individual transforms himself into citizen and the involvement with other citizens results in a collective actor, modifying not only one or more bodies, but the entire context in which this insertion occurs, this relation with the social. Thus, it was evident that the contact with the other, the friendly and happy environment, the general relaxation and the trainee's stimulation, make the moment propitious to the promotion of socialization.

Labor Gymnastics as education for health and the quality of life

We believe in Labor Gymnastics as a way of stimulating the regular practice of physical exercises, of alerting the practitioners about the necessity to adopt a healthier life style, observing the body positions, balanced eating habits and the realization of periodic examinations to check the health. For us, it is rewarding when we manage to participate actively of this process and to get positive results in this direction.

"I also make gymnastics at home. At night if I arrive home like this and I think I have to do something, I jump ropes, I pretend it, ok, because I don't have a rope, I pretend that I'm jumping rope, I pretend that I'm running in the same place." (Interviewed 1).

Considering the collaborator mentioned above, when questioned if the Labor Gymnastics served as an incentive for her to try to put herself in motion outside of the work environment, we got as a reply:

"It was, it really was, it's amazing. And when I realize I'm very tired I start to make the breathing myself, hold the air, release the air [...] and sometimes I relax my arms, that helped a lot." (Interviewed 1).

Another important deposition is the one from the collaborator that says that she applies the knowledge obtained during the Labor Gymnastics lessons in other moments of her everyday life.

"Stretching is not something that you do on a daily basis, or during a regular work. You don't do it, right. And even at home, ok, I do something when I feel pain, I already know what to do, right. I don't need to run to the medicines. There are people that run to the medicines, right, I don't, I don't need to take medicines, then I try to stretch, I try to do something that I know that will help me" (Interviewed 4).

We can really observe that the orientations given during the practice are used at several moments. This occurs because the practitioners acquire a better consciousness regarding their bodies. According to Lima (2003), the corporal consciousness helps in recognizing the emotional states and points of tension, assisting in minimizing the discomforts, pains and injuries caused by inadequate posture and movements. In these other depositions, it is evidenced how much the suggestions and the orientations exceed the limits of the Institution and are incorporated in the daily life of the collaborators.

"Anywhere I am I stand up like this [...] because you stand up like this, I learned that this way I don't get hurt. When I wake up, I lay there, quietly, I stretch well. I rise on the side. That was the most important thing I've learned, because I was used to raising my head first."(Focal Group).

We observe in this other deposition the importance of Labor Gymnastics, emphasizing its contribution as factor of education for health and quality of life.

"Now this, oh! I think this Labor Gymnastics is very good, because this is the foundation that we are leaving, that we are doing with our organism for when we get to the third age, so that when we get there, in the end of life, we are whole" (Focal Group).

If we consider that "the gymnastics is the only possibility that a great part of the workers have to receive safe and serious orientations" (CAÑETE, 1996, P.189), this affirmation reinforces our positioning towards the contribution of this practice in the aid of people's education for health and quality of life.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our main objective, when initiating this study, was to identify how the Labor Gymnastics Social Representations are revealed among a group of practitioners from the Hygienic cleaning of Centro Universitário Feevale. Answering the objective proposed, we can say that, when analyzing the importance of Labor Gymnastics in the individual's interaction with work, that it is manifested under several angles. In first place, the physical benefits originated in the practice are the most perceivable and cited. The reduction of pains and discomforts, the well-being sensation, the renewal, the increase of the willingness to perform the daily activities, the improvement in the flexibility, in the resistance and in the body consciousness, as well as the reduction of the medical consults, reduction of the medical licenses and of physiotherapy and chiropractics sessions are the benefits that are considered important by the collaborators and that end up influencing for a better relation with work. Another important aspect is related to the psychological aspect, pointing the relaxation and the stress reduction as a consequence of the practice.

Considering the social and affective relations among the Labor Gymnastics practitioners (another important disquietude that we had and that we would like to reveal), we observed that they are expressive for the group. All participants affirmed that the moment of practice propitiates the meeting, the interaction and the relaxations, since it is the only chance when everyone is actually congregated. The intermeshing, the union, the friendship, the relaxed and joking feeling, summarize well what this social and affective relations represent, reflecting in the socialization that also is propitiated by the Labor Gymnastics.

The change of attitudes with the awareness of how primordial it is to give attention to our body completes the roll of aspects that determine the importance of Labor Gymnastics in the relation of the individual with work. We believe that an individual in good terms with his body can relate better with his labor activity. According to Cañete (1996, P.82) "the Labor Gymnastics is an excellent agent of changes and of prevention in the health and human well-being field [...] But is does not make miracles". Labor Gymnastics may be one of the strategies, one of tools or one of the actions adopted by companies, that will certainly has effect, but that might be powered by other strategies and action.

Therefore we expect to have demonstrated the ways that the Labor Gymnastics Social Representations are manifested, extracting observations from the way of thinking of the collaborators. We agree with Tamayo (2004, P.11) when he says that the work is not reduced to the activity itself and "the human being has the right to a work environment that does not compromise his health and that, moreover, offers him the possibility to get pleasure, professional satisfaction and accomplishment as a person". Through the link formed between Social Representations and Labor Gymnastics, we expect that new reflections and investigations are made. More than that, we understand that if that can leave the speech and become a practice. A practice that favors all workers, propitiating a job that takes care of its necessities and dreams, with dignity and justice.

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THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF LABOR GYMNASTICS AMONG A PRACTITIONERS GROUP IN THE HYGIENIC CLEANING SECTOR FROM CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO FEEVALE

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the Social Representations of Labor Gymnastics among a group of practitioners from the Hygienic cleaning sector in Centro Universitário Feevale, with the objective of identifying how these are revealed, being characterized as a case study. The adopted methodology uses Comprehensive Sociology, inside the qualitative research paradigm, and the data reading and interpretation is made through phenomenology. The researched group was constituted by 8 (eight) collaborators from the Hygienic cleaning sector and the instruments used in the data collection were the half-structuralized interview, the focal group and the participant observation. The theoretical landmark approached: the Social Representations, where we intend to clarify a little of this still recent theory; and the Labor Gymnastics. We evidence that the Labor Gymnastics is very well received by the collaborators, who emphasize all its benefits. We also have to mention its contribution as education for health and quality of life, because of the important role that it represents. We expect that this research may serve as a consultation source to other researchers, as well as stimulation so that a bigger approach between Physical Education and Applied Social Sciences occurs.

Keywords: Labor gymnastics - Social Representations - Comprehensive Sociology.

LES REPRÉSENTATIONS SOCIALES DE LA GYMNASTIQUE DU TRAVAIL PARMI UN GROUPE DE PRATIQUANTS DU SECTEUR D'HYGIÉNISATION DU CENTRE UNIVERSITAIRE FEEVALE

RÉSUMÉ

L'étude fait l'investigation des Représentations Sociales de la Gymnastique du Travail parmi un groupe de pratiquants du Secteur d'Hygiénisation du Centre Universitaire Feevale, avec l'objectif d'identifier de quelle façon elles se manifestent, en se caractérisant comme une étude de cas. La méthodologie adoptée utilise la Sociologie Compréhensive, dans le paradigme de la recherche qualitative, et la lecture et l'interprétation de données est faite à travers la phénoménologie. Le groupe examiné a été constitué de 8 (huit) collaboratrices du secteur d'Hygiénisation et les instruments employés dans la collecte de données ont été l'entrevue semi-structurée, le groupe focal et l'observation participante. Le référentiel théorique a abordé les Représentations Sociales, où nous avons essayé d'élucider un peu de cette encore récente théorie et la Gymnastique du Travail. Nous avons constaté que la Gymnastique du Travail est très bien reçue par les collaboratrices qui pontifient tous ses bénéfices. Il faut encore détacher sa contribution comme éducation pour la santé et qualité de vie, par l'importance de son rôle. Nous espérons que cette recherche puisse servir comme source de consultation aux autres chercheurs, et comme encouragement pour rendre plus grande l'approximation entre l'Éducation Physique et les Sciences Sociales Appliquées.

Mots-Clés: Gymnastique du Travail - Représentations Sociales - Sociologie Compréhensive.

LAS REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES DE LA GIMNASIA LABORAL ENTRE UN GRUPO DE PRACTICANTES DEL SETOR DE HIGIENIZACIÓN DEL CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO FEEVALE

RESUMEN

El estudio investiga las Representaciones Sociales de la Gimnasia Laboral entre un grupo de practicantes del Sector de Higienización del Centro Universitario Feevale, con el objetivo de identificar como esas se manifiestan, caracterizándose como un estudio del caso. La metodología adoptada utiliza la Sociología Comprensiva, dentro del paradigma de la pesquisa cualitativa, y la lectura e interpretación de los dados es hecha a través de la fenomenología. El grupo pesquisado fue constituido por 8 (ocho) colaboradoras del Sector del Higienización y los instrumentos utilizados fueron la entrevista casi-estructurada, el grupo focal y la observación participante. El referencial teórico abordó: las Representaciones Sociales, donde procuramos esclarecer un poco de esa aún reciente teoría; y la Gimnasia Laboral. Evidenciamos que la Gimnasia Laboral es muy bien recibida por las colaboradoras, que enfatizan todos sus beneficios. No podemos dejar de destacar su contribución como educación para la salud y cualidad de vida, por el importante papel que representa. Esperamos que esta investigación pueda servir como fuente de consulta a los demás investigadores, bien como estimulo para que ocurra una mayor aproximación entre la Educación Física y las Ciencias Sociales Aplicadas.

Palabras-llave: Gimnasia Laboral - Representaciones Sociales - Sociología Comprensiva.

AS REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS DA GINÁSTICA LABORAL ENTRE UM GRUPO DE PRATICANTES DO SETOR DE HIGIENIZAÇÃO DO CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO FEEVALE

RESUMO

O estudo investiga as Representações Sociais da Ginástica Laboral entre um grupo de praticantes do Setor de Higienização do Centro Universitário Feevale, com o objetivo de identificar como estas se manifestam, caracterizando-se como um estudo de caso. A metodologia adotada utiliza a Sociologia Compreensiva, dentro do paradigma da pesquisa qualitativa, e a leitura e interpretação dos dados é feita através da fenomenologia. O grupo pesquisado foi constituído por 8 (oito) colaboradoras do Setor de Higienização e os instrumentos utilizados na coleta de dados foram a entrevista semi-estruturada, o grupo focal e a observação participante. O referencial teórico abordou: as Representações Sociais, onde procuramos esclarecer um pouco desta ainda recente teoria; e a Ginástica Laboral. Constatamos que a Ginástica Laboral é muito bem recebida pelas colaboradoras, que enfatizam todos os seus benefícios. Não podemos deixar de destacar a sua contribuição como educação para a saúde e qualidade de vida, pelo importante papel que representa. Esperamos que esta pesquisa possa servir como fonte de consulta aos demais pesquisadores, bem como estímulo para que ocorra uma maior aproximação entre a Educação Física e as Ciências Sociais Aplicadas.

Palavras-chave: Ginástica Laboral - Representações Sociais - Sociologia Compreensiva.