112 - PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS AND BODY CARE: A STUDY OF GYMS IN RIO DE JANEIRO

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INTRODUCTION:

Gyms and health clubs are the center of attention for Phys Ed professionals. The spreading and popularity of these centers can be analyzed not only quantitatively, as evidenced by a notable increase in their number since the 90s (DANTAS, 1994) and by the constant media attention they get (BRISOLLA, 2003), but, also qualitatively, from the viewpoint of the "essence" of these establishments (COELHO FILHO, 1997). Far from being a mere "gymnasium" for bodybuilding, swimming or gymnastics, aimed at a very specific type of public, this social phenomenon (NOVAES, 2001) has been incorporating a wide range of innovations, as, for example: the great diversity of options offered; expanding facilities, including beauty salons, aesthetic and physiotherapy clinics, banks etc, not to mention the frequent location, especially of the larger clubs, in shopping centers (LÜDORF, 2000).

There are also other factors worthy of attention and which are of great interest in the field of Physical Education. The first relates to the large group of graduate Phys Ed students who steer themselves, either as interns or after graduation, toward this employment market. The second factor is related to aiming gyms activities at the most diverse target groups, from children to the elderly, including special groups such as pregnant women etc., which, in a certain way, expands the field for professionals. The third factor, precisely one which is more specifically covered in this paper, is the manner in which a gym can be associated with the intense "cult to the body" experienced in all its different facets (aesthetics, health, life quality, etc.), one of the marks of contemporariness (LÜDORF, 2004a; SASSATELLI, 2000), and which can be exemplified by the significant demand for personal trainers in recent years (MALYSSE, 2002).

The valuing of the external aspects of the body, characteristic to modern society, has been the target of studies of the most diverse offshoots. The "sculpted" body, where style, form, appearance and youthfulness are the most important attributes (LÜDORF, 2004a), can be forged in many ways, from aesthetic interventions, such as surgery and specific treatments, to the consumption of chemical substances such as steroids (SABINO, 2002). One possible interpretation of this reality is offered by Le Breton (1999; 2001), when he says that the body has become treated as if it were a "rough sketch", that is, as a kind of "kit" of parts that can be interchanged or modified according to a person's taste, and which rarely reach perfection because new standards are always introduced by the media and by our consumer society.

Novaes (2001) identified aesthetics as the main interest of people when seeking gyms, i.e., the attempt to modify the body, modeling it to imposed standards. In this sense, the gym comes to be considered as the preferred place for forging bodies, or even as a "body factory" (COURTINE, 1995; MALYSSE, 2002).

The body, however, consists not only of the external body (aesthetic aspect), but also of the internal body, which relates to health and to the body's optimum functioning (FEATHERSTONE, 1999). Obviously, one should not depreciate the role of gyms, mainly because, in recent years, they have demonstrated great interest in promoting new dimensions of body care, life quality and health, crystallized into alternative activities which aim at physical and mental balance, consciousness and body control, relief of tension and stress, etc.

Facing this panorama is an important question as to how the gym Phys Ed professionals have been training the bodies of their students. Would such intervention encompass a pedagogical tangent, independent of the workplace (LIBÂNEO, 2001) or the technique, as normally occurs in our field (SILVA, 2001)? Knowing and reflecting upon the nature of this intervention can be an important step toward understanding this social space, the fitness center, which has been getting so much exposure. Such information can help to delineate the profile of the Phys Ed professional, as well as to better know his/her role within the contemporary context.

The objectives of the present study are: a) to detect and analyze which factors have become favored by the Phys Ed instructor in the way he/she trains the fitness center's students' bodies; b) to verify and discuss whether instructors believe in interfering (and in what way) with their students' notions of the body.

Following is an explanation of adopted methodological proceedures and, following that, the results will be presented and discussed.

METHODOLOGY:

This research work, of a qualitative nature, was conducted in the city of Rio de Janeiro, specifically in the West Zone (*Zona Oeste*), at the four main gyms in that region. The research subjects were selected based on the following criteria: a). they had been working at gyms for at least three years; b). were active instructors at major gyms in the specified region; c). were working in the field of fitness (bodybuilding, varieties of gymnastics, etc.).

Participating in the study were 17 (seventeen) instructors who fit the proposed criteria. Coherent with the qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews (LÜDORF, 2004b) were given by the research subjects using a previously validated list of questions, with the objective of interpreting the fitness center reality (THOMAS E NELSON, 2002). Analysis of the data was done using criteria pertinent to content analysis, working with the main categories that came to light in the discourses (LÜDORF, 2004a).

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS:

1. Profile of interviewees:

The profile of the instructors interviewed can be broken down as follows:

a) Of the 17 interviewees, 5 were females and 12 were males;

b) Average age = 32.4 years;

c) The majority had taken specialization courses and have worked in the fitness market for an average of around 10 years (3-year minimum and 24-year maximum);

d) The majority (13 instructors) work specifically with musclebuilding, while 5 deal with varieties of gymnastics. Most of them also work as personal trainers.

2. Work methods

Category	Methods	Incidence
TECHNIQUE	Aiming at the student's safety; avoiding injuries;	7
	Scientifically explaining the benefits of physical activity (beyond the aesthetic);	6
	Paying attention to correct technique and posture;	3
HEALTH	Respecting individuality and limitations, based on *anamnese* and physical evaluation;	4
	Joining weightlifting with aerobic conditioning;	2
	Preserving physical integrity;	2
AESTHETICS	Aiming at reaching the student's aesthetic goal;	6
LIFE QUALITY	Providing nutritional guidance;	3
	Providing well being;	2
OTHER	Motivating the student;	3

Table 1. Method of working with the students.

From Table 1, it can be seen that the **technique category** surpassed the others as the main category, having been mentioned 16 times and making it, therefore, the most favored one as to how the instructors work their students' bodies. Various meanings attributed to technique came to light, among them: cautions as to safety, posture and techno-scientific explanations.

Health is the instructors' second major area of concern, with 8 mentions related to physical integrity, physical conditioning and attention to the individuality and limitations of each student.

Curiously, the category related to **aesthetics** was mentioned only 6 times, however always with the comment that it is the students' major concern, leaving it to the instructor to orient them as to the best way to obtain aesthetic results.

3. Instructors' interference with students' notions of the body
Yes, interferes

Yes, interferes	- in an informative way, questioning aesthetic standards promoted by society;	7 interviewees (41.1%)
	- orienting training in the correct way, focusing on health;	4 interviewees (23.5%)
Tries to, but encounters resistance	- of students who only aim at aesthetics; - of teens;	4 interviewees (23.5%)
Doesn't interfere	- can't interfere with a preconceived notion;	2 interviewees (11.7%)

Table 2. Interference with students' notions of the body.

As shown in Table 2, the majority (11) of the those interviewed claimed **to interfere in their students' notions of the body**, mainly because they believe they have sufficient arguments, based on scientific information and technical orientation, to convince the students to modify their initial goal. Nevertheless, an interesting fact is that some said they encountered resistance on the part of students who have clear, preconceived goals, usually linked to aesthetics, and hardly influenced by the instructor's lectures.

CONCLUSION:

The results indicate that gym instructors are mainly concerned with the technical and health aspects of their professional intervention. Although it has been repeated here that most students seek to improve their body's aesthetics, as pointed out in the literature, there is an attempt to show that gym training does not merely limit itself to aesthetics and that it can provide a series of health benefits. As to the instructors' interference with students' notions of the body, it was observed that the majority believes it can modify or influence the way in which the students deal with the body.

In conclusion, the character of the instructors' intervention mainly approaches the prepondered, techno-biological paradigm in the area of Physical Education, especially when the pedagogical offshoot was not even brought up in the discourses. The commercial aspect of the relationship between gym instructor and student, seen more as a client, might elucidate the interpretation of such data. One possible explanation for the concern about technical information versus respecting (and, at times, submission to) the students' goals is that, in this specific context, there is a concern to not oppose students' interests. It is worth repeating what was inferred in the discourses, i.e., that, for the professional's own survival, it is fundamental that the student continues to attend the health club. It is suggested that this discussion be expanded by making comparisons with smaller centers and, also, other localities.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS AND BODY CARE: A STUDY OF GYMS IN RIO DE JANEIRO

ABSTRACT
Gyms are extremely visible places in the field of Physical Education. They not only concentrate many professionals and offer great diversity of physical activities, but also represent a well-recognized space associated with the cult to the body from multiple perspectives. The objectives of this research are: a) to identify and analyze which aspects have been privileged in the work developed by the Physical Education teachers in fitness centers; b) verify and discuss whether the teachers interfere in their students' body vision. This qualitatively oriented research was carried out in Rio de Janeiro, in the four main fitness centers in the city's west zone. Seventeen (17) teachers were selected through pre-established criteria, and semi-structures interviews were applied to them. The results have demonstrated that: a) the gym teachers who work in the field of fitness prioritize the technical and health aspects in their professional intervention: b) the aesthetical objectives seem to be the students' but not the teachers' main concern; c) most teachers believe they interfere in their students' body vision, changing or influencing the way their students deal with their bodies. It was concluded that the nature of the teachers' intervention is closer to the technical-biological paradigm prevalent in the Physical Education field since the pedagogical aspects did not emerge in their speeches. Besides, the relationship between teacher and student has a commercial aspect that may influence the Physical Education teachers' action.
Key words: Physical Education, Body, Gyms.

LES PROFESSEURS D'ÉDUCATION PHYSIQUE ET LE TRAIT AVEC LE CORPS : UNE ÉTUDE DANS LES SALLES DE GYMNASTIQUE

RESUMÉ
Les salles de gymnastique sont des pièces très importantes dans le domaine de l´éducation physique. Elles se constituent comme un lieu de travail représentatif du travail de ces professionels et offrent une grande diversité d´activités physiques. C´est un space dûment reconnu associé au differentes perspectives du culte du corps. Les objectifs de la recherche présente sont: a)détecter et analyser quels aspects sont privilégiés dans l´effectif travail du professeur d´éducation physique dans les salles de gymnastique ; b)vérifier et discuter si les professeurs croient pouvoir interférer dans l´image du corps de ses élèves. La présente recherche a été conduite dans les quatre plus importantes salles de gymnastique de la région ouest de la ville de Rio de Janeiro. Les sujets sont 17 professeurs qui ont été choisis selon des critères pré-déterminés et qui ont participé d´une entrevue semi-structurée. Les principaux résultats sont: a) les professeurs des salles de gymnastique qui travaillent dans le secteur de fitness, ont comme priorité, dans leur intervention professionelle, les aspects techniques et de santé ; b) les objectifs esthétiques semblent être la plus grande préoccupation des élèves et pas des professeurs ; c) la plupart des professeurs croient qu´ils interfèrent dans la vision que les élèves ont de leur propre corps quand ils modifient ou influencent sur leur manière de les travailler. Conclusions: L´intervention des professeurs s´approche plus du modèle technico-biologique qui est prédominant en Éducation Physique. Le côté pédagogique ne s´est pas manifesté dans les discours des sujets. La relation professeur-élève présente un caractère commercial qui peut influencer la nature du travail du professeur d´éducation physique.
Mots clés : Éducation Physique, Corps, Salle de gymnastique.

LOS PROFESORES DE EDUCACIÓN FISICA Y EL TRATO CON EL CUERPO : UN ESTUDIO EN ACADEMIAS DE GINASTICA

RESUMEN
Las academias de ginástica son áreas muy reconocidas en Educación Física. Son significativas áreas de actuación de eses profesionales y en gran diversidad de atividades físicas. És reconocidamente um espacio asociado al culto del cuerpo en sus diversas perspectivas. Los objetivos de esta encuesta son: a)detectar y analisar cuales aspectos son privilegiados en la actuación del profesor de educación física de las academias de ginástica; b) verificar y discutir si los profesores creen interferir em la visión del cuerpos de sus alumnos. Esta encuesta de naturaleza calitativa fué realizada em la ciudad de Rio de Janeiro en las cuatro mas importantes academias de la Zona Oeste. Sujetos: 17 profesores que se encadraran en critérios pré-establecidos y a los cuales fué aplicada entrevista semiestructurada. Resultados: a) Los profesores de academias de ginástica, que trabajan em la área de fitness, priorizan los aspectos técnicos y de salud en su intervención profisional; b) os objetivos estéticos parecen ser la preocupación mayor de los alumnos y non de los profesores; c) la mayor parte de los profesores creen que ellos interferen en la visión del cuerpo de los alumnos, modificando o influenciando el modo como los mismos actuan con sus cuerpos. Conclusiones: El caracter de la intervención de los profesores es mas prossima del paradigma técnico-biologico que es dominante en el área de Educación Física. El lado pedagógico no se hiso manifiesto en los discursos de las entrevistas. La relación profesor-alumno presenta um caracter comercial lo que puede influenciar la forma de actuación del profesor de educación física.
Palabras-llaves: Educación física, Cuerpo, academia de ginastica.

OS PROFESSORES DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA E O TRATO COM O CORPO: UM ESTUDO NAS ACADEMIAS DE GINÁSTICA DO RIO DE JANEIRO

RESUMO

As academias de ginástica são locais de extrema visibilidade na área de Educação Física. Além de concentrar muitos profissionais e oferecer grande diversidade de atividades físicas, é reconhecidamente um espaço associado ao culto ao corpo em diferentes perspectivas. Os objetivos dessa pesquisa são: a) detectar e analisar quais aspectos vêm sendo privilegiados no trabalho do professor de Educação Física de academias de ginástica; b) verificar e discutir se os professores interferem na visão de corpo de seus alunos. Esta pesquisa, de natureza qualitativa, foi realizada no Rio de Janeiro, nas quatro principais academias da Zona Oeste. Foram selecionados 17 (dezessete) professores mediante critérios pré-estabelecidos, aos quais foram aplicadas entrevistas semi-estruturadas. Os resultados mostraram que: a) os professores de academias de ginástica, que trabalham na área de *fitness*, priorizam os aspectos técnicos e de saúde em sua intervenção profissional; b) os objetivos estéticos parecem ser a preocupação maior dos alunos, e não dos professores; c) a maioria dos professores acredita que interfere na visão de corpo dos alunos, modificando ou influenciando a maneira como os mesmos lidam com o corpo. Conclui-se que o caráter da intervenção dos professores aproxima-se mais do paradigma técnico-biológico preponderante na área de Educação Física, uma vez que a vertente pedagógica não emergiu nos discursos. Além disso, a relação entre professor e aluno apresenta um caráter comercial que pode influenciar a forma de atuação do professor de Educação Física.

Palavras-chave: Educação Física, Corpo, Academia de ginástica.