115 - FREE TIME AND LIFE QUALITY: A METALLURGICAL COMPANY CASE

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1. Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, social responsibility, sustainable development and the raise of population life expectancy were conditions for the appearing of new paradigms about Life Quality (LQ) and Life Quality at Work (LQW).

The human condition at work becomes a concern for the new managers and the life quality at work start having a better treatment in the organizations. Limongi-França (2004, p. 42) states that there is a "close correlation between Life Quality improvement and Life Style inside and outside of the organization". Issues like entailment and personal life structure, family, leisure and sports activities, habits, life expectancy, health cares, food, actions against sedentary life, affinity and support groups, become to be the trigger of LQW. These elements are present in the free time of the people.

Based on that, this research aimed to survey and discuss the workers' free time of a metallurgical company in the city of Castro, Paraná State, Brazil. It also aimed to consider the relation between free time activities and Life Quality at Work. The theoretical referential for the discussions about free time was based on Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning theory; and for discussions about Life Quality at Work were used the Limongi-França proposals and the theoretical model proposed by Walton.

2. LQW

The subject LQW, like LQ, is treated under several aspects. LQW definitions vary from the cares established by medical legislation and work safety until voluntary activities involving workers and employers in areas like: leisure, motivation, and so on. Most of them are related about work conditions, individual and groups welfare. (Limongi-França, 2004).

For Limongi-França (2004, p. 24), "the basis for the discussion about LQ has welfare choices and perception of what can be done in order to reach the expectations created by managers or by LQ actions performers in the company". Considering the great amount of indications and the ways of discussion diversity, the author recommends to group the dimensions about the LQW theme in Thought Schools. The proposed Thought Schools are: Socioeconomic, Organizational and Human Condition at Work (2004, p. 21-30).

With regard to Socioeconomic School it is worthwhile to point out the work relations analysis in a globalized world and its paradoxes. Citizenship, social responsibility, equality, environment preservation and sustainable development are constituent of the company and its relation with work.

Organizational School is composed of a large set of contributions under an organizational view referring to competence, strategy, culture and talent. From this set we can point out the following characteristics: quality and productivity process expansion to personal quality; person management policy valorization and capacitate; marketing corporative image; free time cultural development, leisure habits and sport; risk and challenge as motivation and commitment factors.

Finally, the Human Condition at Work School shows that the person is a bio-psychosocial being, who has biological, psychological and social potentialities and that these factors "are fundamental for modern society health and illness explanation" (Limongi-França, 2004, p. 28).

The biopsychosocial view is based on this way:

· Biological dimension: related to physical characteristics that a person heir or acquire at birth and the whole life. It comprehends metabolism, resistance and vulnerability of organs and systems.

· Psychological dimension: "related to affective, emotional or reasoning processes, conscious or not, that make the personality of each one and the way of view and assume a position toward the others and the circumstances", and

· Social dimension: "reveals the socio-economics values, culture and beliefs, family role and other ways of social organization, at work or outside, representation systems and the organization of the community to each person belongs and participates. Environment and geographical localization also compose the social dimension".

Limongi-França considers that the idea of creating Thought Schools in LQW, which integrate and place the LQ demands inside the companies, can be an important advance toward the consolidation of a new management competence identified in LQW (2004). The socioeconomic, organizational and human condition at work dimensions can enable criteria definitions, methodological procedures and new efforts and organizational practices to make possible the LQW at companies.

It is also worthwhile to point out the reading about LQW done by Walton, the first American author to establish a criteria set "under organizational view, starting an important research line of satisfaction in LQ at work" (Limongi-França, 2004, p. 32).

Pillati and Bejarano (2005, p. 97) consider Walton "as an obligatory reference in LQW studies" and comment:

The author thinks that the idea of LQW is based on humanization at work and social responsibility of the company, involving the understanding of the individual needs and objectives, through restructure of posts and new ways of organizing the work, along with higher autonomy teamwork formation and an organizational environment improvement. The theoretical model proposed by Walton allows the delimitation of the LQW level from eight conceptual categories, that include: fair and adequate compensation; safe and healthy work conditions; immediate opportunities to develop and use human capacities; future opportunities of growing and job guarantee; social integration and constitutionalism at the organization, work and total space in the life of the individual; and social relevance at work.

3. Free time activities

In the two first chapters of the book "A busca da excitação", by Elias and Dunning (1992), is possible to understand the relation between the differences of several free time activities. In order to better understand these differences it is proposed a greater and deeper distinction of free time relationships and a clearer definition of them.

The authors say that "free time, according to modern linguistic uses, is any time free of work occupations", and also show that is possible differentiate "five different spheres in the people free time; these spheres are mixed or superimposed at several ways, but stand for different affectivity categories, that raise different problems" (1992, p. 107-108).

For this, in a preliminary arrangement, free time activities are divided in five classes represented by:

· private work and familiar administration: to this class belong the activities related to family care and also attitudes toward home provision;

· rest: activities like sleep, knick, housework and nothing to do;

· physiological needs: eating, drink, sleep, as well as to defecate and make love;

· sociability: activities like going to a club, a bar, a restaurant, chat with neighbors, or even be with other people doing nothing at all, as an end in itself;

· mimetic activities or game: free time activities with leisure characteristics, no matter if is undertaken as an actor or expectant. Those activities are rightly related to routine destruction, which is a mimetic characteristic.

In order to understand and perceive the differences among the several free time activities, including leisure, Elias and Dunning use "free time spectrum" concept (1992, p. 145), where they identify other activities, besides work, that are performed in a routine way.

Activities realized during the free time are varied. We can cite social activities, family life and even personal cares. So, it is necessary a better conception of free time. Elias and Dunning consider that these activities were classified according to what they call "routine degree" and were divided in three distinct groups:

· routine activities: caring about hygiene and food, housework, family attention, and so for;

· learning and self-development activities: voluntary social work, not-school study, hobbies, religious activities, associations engagement, knowledge update, and so for; and

· leisure activities: social or informal meetings, games and mimetic activities as a player or expectant; several pleasurable and multifunctional isolated activities like: travels, restaurant dinners, walking, and so on;

The word "mimetic" is not used in its literary meaning "imitative". Elias and Dunning (1992, p. 124-125) comment, "at ancient times it was used in a larger and figurative sense. It referred to all kind of artistic forms in their relation to 'reality', either with a representation character or not". In effect, in Elias theory, the word must be understood as a "relation between the mimetic feelings and the life real situations" (1992, p. 125-126). In real situations of life, people can loose control and thus become a danger for themselves and for others. The mimetic excitation, in social and individual perspective, is out of danger, giving strong emotion to the participants; a kind of excitation that does not put in risk the social life as happens in life real situations.

4. Methodology

For this work was used a qualitative approach and, considering the research objectives, can be classified as descriptive. Commenting on descriptive research, Gil (1999, p. 44) says that "its main purpose is to describe certain characteristics of a specific population or phenomenon" and points out that the standard techniques use for data collect is one of its more remarkable characteristic.

The research was undertaken in "survey" type and was used a question form with two procedures in order to collect data. One of the procedures was based on Likert Scale and other a question form with open and closed questions. This form was validated and applied in the company during work time.

Workers of a metallurgical company in Castro, Paraná State, Brazil, formed the universe. It was used simple aleatoric sampling procedure with aleatoric numbers tables. From a population of 56 workers, was used a sample with 26 people, a standard deviation of 2.31, which is considerable in a sample of 55% of population and whose measuring error is 0.41.

Most of people of the sample were males, with medium age of 27, married, living in the city and with mean revenue of four minimum salaries (about U$ 600.00).

The data description was done using descriptive statistic. The information analysis was undertaken using the content analysis method. The surveyed answers were put in the table, analyzed and compared to the research theoretical mark, considering the research objective.

5. Results presentation

In order to know the free time reality were asked questions based on Likert Scale, where the workers should mark the frequency for each enunciation according to the following graduation: "always" (5), "often" (4), "sometimes" (3), "seldom" (2), "never" (1). The results will be presented by percentage and mean was taken through mean weighed calculation.

Aiming to know the most frequent activities in the this workers free time, next question was divided in five groups related to free time classes proposed by Elias and Dunning.

In the first group there were activities related to private work and family administration. The mean of this group was 3.9, meaning that frequently these tasks is found in the researched group free time. Using percent terms, 48% answered "always", 23% "often"; only 6% chose "sometimes", 19% answered "seldom" and just 3% "never".

The second group was formed by rest activities. For this group the mean was 3.4, what shows that these activities are not done so often, but just sometimes. The results were: 23% "always", 29% "often", 23% "sometimes", 23% "seldom" and 2% for "never".

The third was the physiological needs group, whose mean got 4.4; what shows that these activities always make part of workers free time. "Always" and "often" sum was 87%, while just 10% for "sometimes" and 3% "seldom".

Finally, there were questions about mimetic activities or game. Its mean was 3.3; this shows that only sometimes workers do activities of this group. Related to these activities just 2% answered "often"; 26% "frequently"; 39% "sometimes"; 23% "seldom" and 6% answered "never".

6. Analysis and discussion

Reviewing some concepts presented before, free time, according modern linguistic terms, is any time free of work occupation. Elias and Dunning consider that free time activities are distributed in five spheres and, for this discussion, these categories were not ordered as before.

· Private work and family administration form the first category: according to the answers this activities group "often" appears in the workers free time.

· The fourth category is related to social activities: these activities can vary in a sociability scale from informal to formal. The workers answered that these activities are jus "sometimes" present in their free time.

In the showed theoretical board of LQW, it is possible to state that these two groups have close relation to the seventh conceptual category of Walton, named "Work and total space of life", being this one of the LQW factors. In this category two elements stand out: 1) importance of balanced role at work: equilibrium between working times, career demands and family life; 2) stability of schedules: foreseeable work schedules, leisure, family, social activity and community engagement (Pilatti; Bejarano, 2005; Rechziegel, 2001; Rodrigues, 2002).

These two categories are linked with "Biopsychosocial View" of Limongi-França, and the activities are at Social Sphere (Pilatti, Bejarano, 2005), in which are grouped elements like: personal and familiar life conditions improvement and the interaction between individual and environment.

At the second category are rest activities: sleep, workmanship, non-significant workhouse and doing nothing at all. For this group mean was 3.4, what shows that these activities are not realized so often, but sometimes.

The third category is formed by biological needs activities: needs like eating, drinking, sleep, as well as defecate and making love. Activities related to this group are always present in workers free time. This group had mean of 4.4, what indicates that these activities always take part in workers free time.

These two categories are also related to "Biopsychosocial View"; these activities refer to "biological sphere" (Pilatti; Bejarano, 2005), where are grouped elements like: slumber, food, physical activity; clinical interventions; medications and

vitamins; distension and rest techniques, and life style adaptation to individual needs.

This last category is formed by mimetic or games activities. These are kind of free time activities with leisure characteristic, whether for players or for expectants. These activities are closely related to routine destruction, a mimetic excitation characteristic. Its mean was 3.3, what showed that these group activities just sometimes take part in workers free time.

These activities are some of Organizational School contributions, which refer free time having as elements cultural development and formation of leisure and sports habits. Incentive actions can be seen in a research result in which 60 executives from a MBA course answered questions about LQW. The answers to the question where "the students should inform what activities were undertaken at company as LQW" are remarkable (Limongi-França 2004, p.136). The actions exposed were related to Psychological and Organizational dimensions. In the Psychological Dimension were actions referring to external leisure: ecological walks, bike tour; engagement in social activities by selling tickets for theater, shows, and others. In Organizational Dimension the internal leisure: leisure space with TV, newspaper, magazines; happy hour; choral, theater, library; internal soccer match.

It is important to point out that "free time" is considered as synonym to leisure. As an example, the results obtained by the LQW Management Study Net, in its 20th meeting, where "free time" was one of the subjects. The main terms used to describe "free time" were: "do whatever you want" (64%); pleasure (20%); leisure (7%); creativity (3%) and rest (3%) (Limongi-França, 2004).

Elias and Dunning consider that just part of free time can be directed to leisure, as it is shown in the three "routine degree" groups: routine activities, formation and self-development activities and leisure activities. Routine activities are considered by Elias and Dunning as too routine and little pleasurable. These tasks hardly can be named leisure.

Formation and self-development activities can be less routine than the first ones and even gratifier, "but demand discipline and, mainly, civility actions that repress spontaneous manifestations", what make them different from mimetic activities like sport (Proni, 2001, p. 123).

Finally, typical leisure activities related to routine break and characterized by "controlled uncontrol" face to impulse and emotions restrictions. These activities bring to the people opportunities to live experiences that are usually out of highly routine social sections. In order to be socially approved this kind of experiences usually need a proper environment or special situations.

7. Conclusions

Considering the survey result, it is possible to infer that during the asked workers free time prevail routine activities. These activities can be found in the first two "routine degree" classification groups of Elias and Dunning. Typical leisure activities, from the third group, had the less percent rate in relation to free time frequency of the surveyed group. This typology is useful to show that is not true the use of the term "free time" as synonym to "leisure"; and it shows clearly that a considerable part of the surveyed workers free time can not be considered leisure.

Based on LQ Thought Schools Limongi-França work and on Walton categories, it came to conclusion that, among the searching LQW actions, several attitudes are closely related to workers free time. So, managers who worry about LQW must pay attention to their workers LQ not only during the working time, but also outside of the company.

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FREE TIME AND LIFE QUALITY: A METALLURGICAL COMPANY CASE

Abstract

This research aimed to discuss the workers' free time of a in the city of Castro, Paraná State, Brazil. It also aimed to establish a relation between the activities performed during this period and Life Quality at Work. It is an applied research under a firstly qualitative approach and descriptive, for its objectives. It was undertaken as a survey and it was used questions form to gather the data. Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning theory oriented the discussions about free time. Discussions about Life Quality at Work were based on proposals from Limongi-França Thought Schools and on the theoretical model proposed by Walton. It was observed that during the workers' free time there are predominantly routine activities that are less pleasurable than typical leisure activities. It was brought to a conclusion that, among actions searching Life Quality at Work, several activities have close relation with the workers' free time.

Keywords: life quality; life quality at work; free time.

TEMPS LIBRE ET QUALITE DE VIE : L'EXEMPLE D'UNE INDUSTRIE METALURGIQUE

Résumé

Cette étude discute des loisirs des ouvriers d´une industrie métallurgique de la ville de Castro située dans la région sud du Parana au Brésil. Elle établit une relation entre les loisirs développés et la qualité de vie au travail. Il s´agit d´une étude appliquée dont l´approche est prioritairement qualitative et descriptive. Un questionnaire a été réalisé. L´état de l´art sur les loisirs est basé sur la théorie de Norbet Elias et Eric Dunning. Pour discourir sur la qualité de vie au travail nous avons utilisé

les propositions “ Escolas de Pensamentos” de Limongi-França ainsi que le modèle théorique proposé par Walton. Nous avons constaté que dans les loisirs des ouvriers prédominent des activités routinières et ennuyeuses surtout si nous les comparons à des activités typiques de loisirs. Nous avons conclu qu´il existe une étroite relation entre la qualité de vie au travail et les loisirs des travailleurs.

Mots-clefs: Qualité de Vie; Qualité de Vie au Travail; Temps Libre.

TIEMPO LIBRE Y CALIDAD DE VIDA: EL CASO DE UNA INDUSTRIA METALÚRGICA

Resumen

La presente pesquisa tuvo como objetivo discutir el tiempo libre de los trabajadores de una industria metalúrgica de la Ciudad de Castro, en la región centro sur de Paraná (Brasil), bien como, establecer una relación entre las actividades a ser desarrolladas en ese espacio de tiempo con la Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo. Se trata de una pesquisa aplicada bajo un abordaje prioritariamente cualitativo y, en función de sus objetivos, descriptivo. Fue realizada en la forma de levantamiento y el instrumento utilizado para la búsqueda de datos fue el cuestionario. El referencial teórico que orientó las discusiones sobre el tiempo libre se basó en la teoría de Norbert Elias y Eric Dunning. Para Discutir la Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo fueron utilizadas propuestas de las Escuelas de Pensamiento de Limongi-França y el modelo teórico propuesto por Walton. Se constató que en el tiempo libre de los referidos trabajadores, ocurre un predominio de las actividades rutineras que poco agradan comparadas a las típicas actividades de ocio. Se concluye que entre acciones que buscan la Cualidad de Vida en el Trabajo, varias actividades tienen estrecha relación con el tiempo libre de los trabajadores.

Palabras llave: Calidad de Vida, Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo, Tiempo Libre

TEMPO LIVRE E QUALIDADE DE VIDA: O CASO DE UMA INDÚSTRIA METALGICA

Resumo

A presente pesquisa teve como objetivo discutir o tempo livre dos trabalhadores de uma indústria metalúrgica da Cidade de Castro, na região centro sul do Paraná (Brasil), bem como, estabelecer uma relação entre as atividades a serem desenvolvidas nesse espaço de tempo com a Qualidade de Vida no Trabalho. Trata-se de uma pesquisa aplicada sob uma abordagem prioritariamente qualitativa e, em função dos seus objetivos, descritiva. Foi realizada na forma de levantamento e o instrumento utilizado para coleta de dados foi o questionário. O referencial teórico que norteou as discussões sobre o tempo livre baseou-se na teoria de Norbert Elias e Eric Dunning. Para discutir a Qualidade de Vida no Trabalho foram utilizados as proposta das Escolas de Pensamento de Limongi-França e o modelo teórico proposto por Walton. Constatou-se que no tempo livre dos referidos trabalhadores, ocorre um predomínio das atividades rotineiras pouco prazerosas em relação às típicas atividades de lazer. Conclui-se que entre as ações que buscam a Qualidade de Vida no Trabalho, várias atividades têm estreita relação com o tempo livre dos trabalhadores.

Palavras-chave: Qualidade de Vida; Qualidade de Vida no Trabalho; Tempo Livre.