

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES IN MEXICO
The Case of the University Centre UAEM of Texcoco

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The present study started with the premise that those students who have as a social representation the idea that studies at university level constitute a solid option for the upward social mobility, enter, complete a program and get a degree. So this research was carried out with students of the tourism program at Centro Universitario UAEM Texcoco and the objective was to identify the social representations about the studies at university level. The methodological process was divided into three stages. In the first one, by means of quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques the socioeconomic level of the students on which this research was focused was characterized. Then the identification of the social representations through evocative questions was started. During the second stage, using associative letters and through successive hierarchies tries the presence of the social representation was confirmed. In a third stage the students were asked to write the meaning of the terms which they associated to the evocative ones, from this a discourse analysis was carried out. The results indicate that the students that enroll in the BA tourism program at Centro universitario UAEM Texcoco belong to the middle or low-middle class, those students are the first generation in their family to attends studies at an university level and their social representation reflects the idea that having a degree will favor them when getting a job, will allow them to get higher salaries and their social status will improve. However in their social representations social compromise, environmental and citizen consciousness were absent.

KEY WORDS: *social representations, university studies, terminal efficiency*