Chapter 3

Separate Works, Same Behaviors: Organizational Cynicism in Tourism Businesses

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ABSTRACT

Tourism industry consists of businesses that complement each other but show different characteristics. However, no matter how many different characteristics they have, the success of tourism businesses in an intense competitive environment is based on the employees they have. The attitudes and behaviors that employees develop towards their organizations, one of the basic determining factors of service quality, have the power to influence both organizations, customers, and other employees in a wide range. In organizational cynicism, employees exhibit negative attitudes and behaviors such as resentment, anger, and disbelief towards their organizations. In this context, this study focuses on studying cynicism, which is considered a negative employee behavior, in terms of tourism businesses.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of cynicism is one of the topics that has often been focused on in the field of organizational behavior in recent years. The concept of cynicism which first emerged in Ancient Greece as a way of thinking and a way of life (Brandes, 1997: 7; Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar, 1998: 342), is seen as a personality trait describing strong negative feelings and attitudes towards others, such as contempt, anger, sadness and shame (Brandes, 1997: 9-11; Abrahám, 2000: 269). Organizational cynicism, on the other hand, is defined as the negative attitudes that people develop towards the organization they work
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for. These negative attitudes developed by employees include belief that the organization is not honest, negative feelings, and contemptuous and critical behaviors (Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar, 1998: 345).

In cynicism, which can be seen in all levels of management of an organization, it is faced with the existence of skeptical, cynical and other negative behaviors of the employees against the objectives, activities and efforts of the organization. This may allow other employees to focus more on success, in an effort to do error-free work, since the presence of dissenting eyes that display cynical behavior within organizations is known. In contrast, it can often lead to a decline in trust in the organization, loss of desire to work, increased staff turnover rate, and it can also affect other employees, like an infectious disease, causing them to exhibit the same negative attitudes and behaviors. Cynicism is an undesirable phenomenon for organizations because it is seen that studies on organizational cynicism focus on the harms rather than the benefits of organizational cynicism. However, studies reveal the existence of organizational cynicism in almost every industry. Moreover, the situation deepens in the service industries and leads to the formation of occupational cynicism.

With tourism, services are provided to individuals in different regions, areas and centers, through units with very different characteristics. Despite all these differences, negative attitudes and behaviors such as skepticism, cynicism and mistrust are encountered among employees. At this point, the way to avoid the undesirable effects of organizational cynicism will be through understanding the existence and causes of the situation in tourism organizations. Therefore, in this part of the book, cynicism and organizational cynicism will be mentioned as concepts, and their causes, dimensions and types will be discussed. Then, the existence and causes of organizational cynicism in tourism industry will be examined in more detail, and what measures can be taken will be discussed.

BACKGROUND

The concept of cynicism, as a way of thinking and a way of life emerged for the first time in Ancient Greece in the 4th century BC (Brandes, 1997: 7; Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar, 1998: 342; Thomas and Gupta, 2018). It is thought to have originated from the Greek word “kynikos” which means dog-like (Magee, 2004: 41; Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar, 1998: 342). Diogenes, one of the cynical philosophers who had no property other than a bowl and a barrel he used for shelter and believed in the worthlessness of the world’s property, explained this word by saying “I am called a dog because I fawn on those who give me anything, I yelp at those who refuse, and I set my teeth in rascals” (Magee, 2004: 40). At that period, cynicism referred to a word that expressed criticizing the order and bringing the individual to the forefront. In this respect, cynics have shown that they are not a part of this life they are criticizing while criticizing the selfishness and political order of the people vehemently (Helvaci, 2013: 384).

According to dictionaries, cynicism is defined as “The doctrine advocating that one can attain virtue and happiness by himself/herself without being bound to any value by freeing himself/herself from all necessities” and “An inclination to question whether something will happen or whether it is worthwhile; pessimism” (TDK, 2019; Lexico, 2019). These people, who have cynical ideas that we can describe as “contrarian” even today, have rejected the established social phenomena such as government, property, marriage and religion. They said that the only important distinction was to distinguish between the right and the wrong values, and that all distinctions such as wealth-poverty, bareness-dressedness, public-private, local-stranger etc., which caused inequality by creating hierarchy and domination in the social
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