Chapter 11
Organizational Symbolism: An Overview of the Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT
This chapter discusses the issue of organizational symbolism, which is frequently encountered in business life, and its meaning in the tourism industry. Symbols are the most apparent and observable aspects of organizational life; simultaneously, symbolic elements are the most subtle and comprehensive. Due to the nature of the hospitality sector, the workflow takes place instantaneously. Therefore, employees, managers, and tourists search for some of the generally accepted symbols used in the organization during this rapid workflow. If symbols are removed from this relationship, communication suffers and as a result harms the overall functioning of the organization. This chapter proposes that it is important to look at the origins of the organizational symbolism and to comprehend the role of symbols in the tourism industry. In this sense, this chapter should be seen primarily as an effort to review and systematize the overall understanding of organizational symbols in the tourism industry.

INTRODUCTION
The symbols in the eyes of people have a language. Ordinary objects such as spoons and tables in a business have symbolic meanings. Scientists from different disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and humanities have been working for a long time on symbols. Organizational symbolism today constitutes a distinct, densely populated and institutionalized field of the research area. As in other fields of social sciences, the link between form and content in the relations between objects and human beings is also reflected in organizational studies. Symbols are the most apparent and observable aspects

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of organizational life; simultaneously, symbolic elements are the most subtle and comprehensive. Due to the nature of the tourism industry, the workflow and service take place instantaneously (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). Therefore, employees, managers, and tourists search for some of the generally accepted symbols used in the organisation during this rapid workflow. If symbols are removed from this relationship, communication suffers and as a result harms the overall functioning of the organization. Although the meanings, effects, and the relationships that make up the objects around people are perceivable and perceptible, they are not always specific, clear and easily observable.

Symbolism refers to the use of various symbols, which in the most general sense symbolize different elements and have different meanings. The Word ‘symbol’ originally meant a token of remembrance (Turner, 2014) which remind people of what they have encountered or recall with short and simple icons. In terms of tourism industry, symbols reduce uncertainty in the organizational environment, facilitate interaction and communication and clarify relationships. Symbols in businesses emerge and become operational through organizational experiences. Accordingly, organizational symbolism has been considered as an important research area by academicians especially in the fields of management and organization since the 1980s (Pondy et al., 1983).

This chapter proposes that it is important to look at the origins of the organizational symbolism and to comprehend the role of symbols in the tourism industry. In this sense, this chapter should be seen primarily as an effort to review and systematize the overall understanding of organizational symbols in the tourism industry. The field of organizational symbolism can give the administrators a real possibility of ‘operationalizing’ and ‘conceptualizing’ the tested and accepted figures and elements as symbols in organizations. In this context, this chapter is divided into five main parts that can be used by everyone who wants to increase their knowledge, expand their perspective on the organizational symbolism issues and analyze and develop their practices. Following the introduction section, the study is focused on the background of the organizational symbolism and the relations of symbols with norms and values. Second part includes physical and non-physical symbols in tourism organizations as meaning carriers. The next part of the study is about the solution to the outstanding problems and some suggested recommendations. Besides that the developments in the literature and the subject of this chapter are related and the direction of future studies is discussed. In the fifth and conclusion section, the subjects are summarized and supported by related studies conducted in the tourism industry.

BACKGROUND ON ORGANIZATIONAL SYMBOLISM

From a historical point of view, the evolution observed in the tourism business world in the last century has shifted the existing cultural structures and thus the symbols used in organizations and labor markets. The term “organizational symbolism” conjures up a wide variety of meanings within the organizational community. A review of the organizational symbolism literature indicates that several conceptual views have emerged (Fuller, 2008). Some researchers have addressed organizational symbolism as it relates to organizational culture (Louis, 1983; Alvesson & Berg, 2011). A second popular approach to organizational symbolism follows logically from the first. According to Peters (1978) symbols could be used as tools to affect change in organizations; he asserted that managers should manipulate symbols to create their preferred interpretations. Symbols are mechanisms organizations can use to signal their management philosophy to workers.
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