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Book Review

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Introduction

This first edition of *Dark Sides of Organization Life: Hostility, Rivalry, Gossip, Envy, and Other Difficult Behaviors* is published at a pivotal moment when the focus on workplace well-being is gaining popularity in organisational management. This book aims to provoke new insights that can help in curbing negative behaviours in organisations. Written by seasoned scholars in business management, the book explores nine detrimental behaviours that plague and frustrate the growth of organisations. It carries a tone that is focused on promoting the principles of the humanistic relations school of thought in management. This book is important for managers and executives looking to improve team relationships.

Chapter 1 – Nepotism

This is the first chapter of this book written by Mehmet Ali Ekemen and it explores nepotism as a negative behaviour in organisations. Nepotism is regarded as a form of favouritism, where people of the same family are employed in the same business. Although the chapter briefly addresses the pros and downsides of nepotism, its main focus is on the several factors that have an impact on whether or not nepotism will be practiced, especially in family businesses. It investigates how family goals, financial situation, and socioeconomic variables affect the process of engaging in nepotism. The chapter also offers perspectives on the historical background of nepotism, as well as conventional factors such as primogeniture and its effects on family dynamics in the workplace. Overall, the chapter provides a thorough examination of the issues underlying nepotism in family-owned businesses, illuminating the various elements that influence the atmosphere in which this practice is adopted in these settings.

Chapter 2 – Mobbing

Authored by Tahir Yeşilada, the second chapter of the book looks at mobbing as an organisational vice that requires attention. Mobbing refers to the psychological or physical attack on employees. Victims of mobbing are not motivated to work to their best, usually leading to a lack of job satisfaction, depression, and psychosomatic disorders. The concept of mobbing appeared in the 1960s when Konrad Lorenz carried out research on bullying and rowdyism among children and published a book titled *Mobbing: Group violence among children* in 1972 (Lagerspetz et al., 1982).

This chapter addresses the negative effects of repeated and systematic psychological attacks on individuals in organisational contexts. First, it clarifies the term by contrasting it with other similar and overlapping notions. It also includes distinct sections on the causes and implications of mobbing. It presents different negative consequences experienced by victims of mobbing, such as disease, job loss, psychosomatic problems, severe despair, and suicidal ideation. The chapter also discusses different kinds of people that may be targeted for mobbing. It emphasises the necessity of individuals identifying and responding to mobbing, as well as providing employees with skills for coping with and avoiding such conduct. Furthermore, the chapter emphasises employers' responsibility to promote workplace wellness by implementing preventative strategies and offering support to victims. It also highlights the importance of raising awareness, taking proactive actions, and fostering an environment that is supportive to effectively avoid and resolve mobbing.

Chapter 3 – Dysfunctional Conflict: Antecedents and Outcomes

This chapter written by Hakan Karabacak, Ünsal Sığrı, and Abülkadir Varoğlu, looks at conflict as an outcome of incompatible behaviours or goals that exist in a group of people. Conflict manifests itself through competition, rivalry, or verbal abuse, often arising as a result of people not agreeing with each other. The chapter examines the complexity of conflicts in organisations, recognising that it is inevitable and looking at several definitions in detail. It presents two opposing schools of thought: the interactionist viewpoint, which acknowledges the potential functional sides of conflict, and the traditional view, which presents conflict as essentially detrimental. In order to reduce dysfunctional consequences while acknowledging the possibility of functional outcomes, the chapter highlights the significance of managing organisational conflict. In reaching this balance, it emphasises the importance of communication, negotiating techniques, and dispute resolution approaches. The modern perspective recognises that affective conflicts are typically dysfunctional, but it also recognises that there is a complicated and context-dependent relationship between substantive conflict and its results (Barki & Hartwick, 2004).

Chapter 4 – Burnout Syndrome

Chapter 4 is written by Ufuk Başar and explores burnout syndrome as a psychological syndrome in which people feel mentally worn out, alienated from their jobs, and unable to perform as a result of continual exposure to stressful situations. This often arises when employees encounter occupational difficulties, usually referred to as stress factors. This chapter looks at burnout syndrome in the contemporary workplace and the growing difficulties that workers encounter, especially as a result of stress. The chapter also explores theoretical frameworks that elucidate the mechanisms and situational elements that lead to burnout. It further provides resources for academics and professionals, describing methods for comprehending, dealing with, and possibly preventing burnout, as well as offering recommendations for further study and application. In addition, there is a thorough analysis of burnout syndrome from three perspectives: individual, contextual/organisational, and regulatory. The chapter concludes with an overview of several coping mechanisms, emphasising the superiority of problem-focused solutions over emotion-focused ones.

Chapter 5 – Psychological Harassment

Psychological harassment is another negative behaviour that is discussed in the book. This crucial chapter on psychological harassment is written by Harun Şeşen,

Ahmet Maşlakçi, and Lütfi Sürücü. Psychological harassment at work is a global phenomenon that began in Sweden in the early 1980s and has been studied for more than three decades. It has resulted in the passage of legislation in some nations, demonstrating a growing interest in preventing and resolving this issue.

The authors analyse the many reasons for psychological harassment at work, focusing on personal aspects such as gender, age, education, and professional seniority, underlining the intricate connection between character traits and harassment. They study the effects of the work environment, organisational structure, and culture, noting variables such as competition, leadership style, and reward systems. Furthermore, the authors explore the impact of social values, norms, modernisation, and the evolving terrain of working life in contributing to psychological harassment, focusing on the interplay between individuals, society, and organisational frameworks. Discussing harassers, the authors point out that 71% of abusers are supervisors. They explain common harasser attributes, such as hostility, as well as victim characteristics, such as job excellence but psychological tiredness. Age, gender, and professional standing are all identified as factors that influence victimisation. It further points out that models developed by Björqvist, Leymann, and Schlaugat demonstrate the changing nature of harassment. Psychological harassment has a negative impact on organisations, culminating in economic and psychological costs, lower productivity, and tarnished reputations.

Chapter 6 – Glass Ceiling

In this chapter, Gözde İnal-Cavlan and Şenay Sahil Ertan discuss the 'glass ceiling' as another dysfunctional behaviour in organisations. The term glass ceiling refers to obstacles that prevent women and members of minority groups from rising to prominent positions in organisations. Despite global efforts to promote gender equality, women are still underrepresented in boardrooms globally, accounting for only 15% of all board seats. European countries such as Iceland, Norway, and France top in gender equality, with Iceland having the highest representation at 44%. East Asian countries, particularly South Korea and Japan, suffer major glass ceiling restrictions, with women accounting for only 2.5% and 4.1% of board seats, respectively. Stereotyping and gender discrimination remain, impeding women's advancement to leadership positions, and men are frequently preferred over women in boardroom hiring procedures (Carli & Eagly, 2016).

The authors highlight glass ceiling challenges, which inhibit qualified individuals' growth and are caused by societal, organisational, and personal

circumstances. Stereotypes, tokenism, and gender misconceptions all contribute to social hurdles, while casual hiring, corporate culture, and Queen-Bee Syndrome create difficulties in organisations. Personal obstacles include women's preferences and the 'glass cage', which refers to self-imposed limits that hinder work-life balance. The struggle for women's advancement continues beyond early workforce acceptance, with subtle obstacles impeding their rise to high leadership positions.

The authors note that despite growing female workforce presence, the glass ceiling continues to impede women's advancement in companies and leadership roles in the 21st century, posing obstacles on societal, organisational, and interpersonal levels. To break the glass ceiling, organisations must create a supportive culture, execute comprehensive organisational programmes, and advocate for government regulations that tackle gender discrimination. Furthermore, they highlight that encouraging women's leadership development, enabling work-life balance, and initiating political changes are critical steps toward cracking down barriers and moving women to top positions.

Chapter 7 – Organisational Silence

In this chapter, Murat Güler and Metin Ocak uncover the concept of organisational silence. The authors demystify the general thinking that 'no news is good news', arguing that there are many scenarios where organisational systems and many managers intentionally or unintentionally create communication barriers between employees and management. They also unpack Hirschman's Exit-Voice-Loyalty model, introduced in 1970, that defined organisational silence as a response to dissatisfaction. Subsequent theories investigated loyalty forms and motivations, questioning the dissatisfaction-centric viewpoint. The concept of organisational silence, which is separate from employee silence, has emerged, covering diverse forms such as deviant, defensive, and relational quiet. The causes of silence discussed in the chapter include societal, organisational, management, and individual elements, with a focus on culture, climate, trust, leadership, and personal characteristics.

The authors point out that organisational silence reduces productivity, promotes corporate cynicism, and stifles learning and decision-making processes. Silence exacerbates internal disagreements, jeopardises decision-making quality, and reduces employee commitment. Additionally, it has a detrimental impact on the communication atmosphere, resulting in lower employee satisfaction and engagement. Creativity and job motivation decline, while work-related stress and psychological stress worsen general well-being.

According to the authors, research on organisational silence has mostly focused on its causes and consequences, leaving a gap in knowing how to establish an environment conducive to open communication. They propose that future research should look into how management influences employee expression and identify ways to improve organizational communication.

Chapter 8 – Alienation

In this chapter, Meral Kızrak, Hakan Turgut, and İsmail Tokmak address the topic of employee alienation in the workplace, highlighting its importance in the success or failure of businesses. Organisational alienation, which includes occupation and occupational alienation, is a major issue in today's business environment. The authors explore historical and philosophical viewpoints, focusing on key thinkers such as Hegel, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Feuerbach, and others. The authors address alienation through various facets, including impotence, meaninglessness, normlessness, solitude, and self-estrangement. The chapter also discusses related ideas such as anomie and reification, providing a thorough account of the historical evolution, theoretical foundations, and empirical research on employee alienation.

The authors note that alienation results from tensions between employees and organisations, which leads to lower commitment, performance, and satisfaction. Poor working conditions, unresolved complaints, and bad views all contribute to alienation. It has a wide range of implications, including behavioural difficulties and organisational inefficiencies. The authors emphasise that organisations must prioritise preventive steps and interventions to combat alienation, as well as build a healthy work environment, in order to achieve optimal worker performance and success.

Chapter 9 – Counterproductive Aspects of Teamwork

The book concludes with a chapter on counterproductive aspects of teamwork by Meral Kızrak and Alperen Öztürk. The central focus of this chapter is an examination of both the positive and negative aspects of collaboration in organisational contexts. The chapter discusses that although working together has been found to improve performance and productivity across industries and sectors, there are possible drawbacks of group dynamics. It emphasises the phenomena of 'groupthink', in which employees become narrow-minded, intolerant of opposing viewpoints, and subject to pressures to conform, all of which impede critical thinking and problem

solving. Furthermore, the chapter emphasises the significance of being open to fresh viewpoints and criticism, as well as the potential difficulties of adopting good cooperation, such as reluctance to disagree with leaders and the formation of unfavourable preconceptions about out-groups.

Some Broad Observations

"Dark Sides of Organizational Life: Hostility, Rivalry, Gossip, Envy, and Other Difficult Behaviors" is a timely publication. It is like a flashlight, exposing the often-overlooked dark corners of our workspaces. Not only must these harmful habits be identified, but they must also be understood and addressed. The book does not only point out problems but also helps one think about the solution. This book may be the ideal companion for individuals willing to challenge the status quo and influence positive change in their workplace.

While the book has many merits, there are some improvements that could have made it more appealing to its readers. For instance, the chapter about nepotism lacks focus. It frequently flips between discussing family-owned and non-family-owned firms without clearly distinguishing between the two. It is important to note that nepotism can vary greatly across family-owned enterprises and others; therefore, this lack of difference can confuse readers. The book also lacks specific examples to make its content clear to readers. For instance, Chapter 4 lacks particular examples or evidence to support the effectiveness of the coping methods and interventions discussed. Furthermore, there is little discussion regarding possible cultural or industry-specific differences in burnout situations, which could improve the chapter's relevance and application. Finally, while the book is very rich in its content, it lacks connections to recent research in some instances. For instance, in Chapter 5, the authors could have improved its relevance by incorporating contemporary research or case studies to offer a broader understanding of psychological harassment, considering that workplace harassment is increasingly becoming a serious topic. Additionally, Chapter 8, could have included practical insights or ways for organisations to address and minimise alienation to make it more useful to both academics and practitioners.

Despite these drawbacks, this book brings a fresh perspective to the field of organisational management literature. It sheds light on the frequently overlooked harmful habits in our workplaces. Overall, this is a must-read for anyone looking to effect positive change in their workplace.

About the Editors

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