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«Corporate culture as a means of maintaining productivity in terms of pandemic»

specialty Business Psychology - «20030057»

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the research topic lies in the fact that the lack of corporate culture (or its weak development) in companies, as a rule, causes the appearance of depressive moods, feelings of helplessness and even meaninglessness of the existence of personnel, a low assessment of professional competence, which ultimately affects productivity ... In a stable market economy, at the stages of economic growth, the negative impact of a weak corporate culture on productivity is difficult to identify, since general favorable factors for entrepreneurship neutralize this impact. In a pandemic, many of the hidden management system problems in companies become apparent and easier to diagnose. This study will search for clear and consistent relationships between the strength of corporate culture and its impact on performance indicators.

Purpose of the study: to determine the degree and nature of the influence of corporate culture on productivity in a pandemic in the Republic of Kazakhstan

Object of research: the level of corporate culture in Kazakhstani companies, the nature and indicators of its impact on productivity in a pandemic.

Statement of the problem: in a pandemic, companies are looking for methods to minimize the negative impact of an unfavorable external environment. One of the tools, according to the author, is the developed corporate culture of the company, which allows, in the conditions of unstable markets, depending on various factors: to slow down the decline in the company's productivity; maintain the achieved performance indicators; improve the productivity of the company. Most of Kazakhstani entrepreneurs are not very familiar with the essence and significance of the development of corporate culture. An evidence base is needed to understand the value of a productivity enhancement tool and make management decisions for the development of corporate culture in companies.

Research questions:

- What approaches exist to define the concept of "corporate culture"?
- What are the functions of the elements of the corporate culture of the organization?
- What are the differences between modern methods of assessing the effectiveness of corporate culture?
  - Which sectors of the economy are the most sensitive to changes in environmental factors during a pandemic?
  - Does corporate culture affect the company's performance in a pandemic?
  - What is the nature of the influence of corporate culture on the company's performance in a pandemic?
  - What measures need to be taken to improve the company's productivity in a pandemic?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The essence and significance of the corporate culture of the organization

Corporate culture is a set of behavioral models that are acquired by an organization in the process of adaptation to the external environment and internal integration, which have shown their effectiveness and are shared by the majority of members of the organization [1]. The components of the corporate culture are:

- the adopted leadership system;
- styles of conflict resolution;
- the current communication system;
- the position of the individual in the organization;
- accepted symbolism (slogans, organizational taboos, rituals) [1].

The term "corporate culture" appeared in the 19th century. It was formulated and applied by the German field marshal Moltke, who applied it, characterizing the relationship in the officer environment. At that time, relations were regulated not only by charters, courts of honor, but also by duels: the saber scar was an obligatory attribute of belonging to an officer's "corporation". The rules of conduct, both written and unwritten, were formed within professional communities even in medieval guilds, and violations of these rules could lead to the exclusion of their members from the communities [2].

Typically, the corporate culture that exists in organizations is a complex set of assumptions, unprovenly accepted by all team members and setting a general framework for behavior.

Today's leaders and managers see their organization's culture as a powerful strategic tool to align all departments and individuals with shared goals, mobilize employee initiative, and facilitate productive communication between them. They strive to create their own culture for each organization so that all employees understand and adhere to it. Modern organizations, as a rule, are multicultural entities.

Corporate culture is understood as a system of historically established common traditions, values, symbols, beliefs, formal and informal rules of conduct for administration and personnel that have stood the test of time. This is a way of life and activity of a group of persons, which is consciously or unconsciously perceived by it and transmitted from generation to generation.

Initially, the culture was formed under the influence of geographical, natural and climatic factors. Then political, economic, religious, social and other determinants came into play.

The first mentions of culture date back to antiquity, where it was identified with education. In the Renaissance, culture (soul, mind, etc.) was understood as an active creative principle in a person, which served as the basis for his harmonious sublime development. In the modern sense, this term was first used by the German lawyer and historiographer S. Pufendorf (1632-1694) [3].

For the first time, Charles Barnard spoke about the factor of corporate culture in 1938, but it was not until the 1980s that they took up it on purpose. in the United States under the influence of research in the field of organization theory, strategic management and individual behavior [4].

Today, the culture of an organization is considered the main factor in its competitiveness, especially when it is aligned with the strategy.

Culture is usually developed both in the process of interaction between members of the organization and under the influence of the social and business environment, national-state and ethnic factors, mentality. Today, people often form their own culture, norms and rules, rather than passively perceive them.

In the literature, there is no single definition of the concept of "corporate culture". Different authors offer their own definitions.

Corporate culture is a complex heterogeneous concept that does not have clearly expressed material criteria, which is why it is difficult to study and manage, and its influence is undeniably great.

With all the variety of approaches to defining the concept of "corporate culture", several can be distinguished.

In the first approach, corporate culture is viewed as a very broad category, a background factor, as a synonym for the concept of a country. This approach views the organization as a context of national cultures, while the organization itself is only passively influenced by the pre-formed perceptions and values of its employees.

The second approach (more common) is based on the belief that organizations create their own cultures. Representatives of this approach focus their attention on a system of unique rituals, legends, ceremonies created and established by the management of companies in the form of rules, norms, structures and goals.

The third approach considers corporate culture as the main distinguishing feature of the organization, as its essence: the organization is culture. The culture is not identified by the researchers of this scientific school as a component of the organization, since the organization itself is culture.

Today, management focuses on the values of labor behavior and the quality of labor resources, the change of which should ensure the adoption of market business values in the future. A prerequisite for this is the dissatisfaction of new managers with the quality of the workforce, and not with the level of professionalism, but with social immaturity, unpreparedness to work in new conditions. Today, new managers lament the total lack of independence, lack of initiative and laziness of employees. The demands of the market are forcing managers to actively engage in changing this situation. The consequence of this is the formulation and implementation of values such as individual responsibility, discipline, initiative into the work environment. The purpose of the new corporate culture is the formation of market economic thinking of employees of all levels.

## **2.2 Goals and objectives of the corporate culture of the organization**

The main goal of corporate culture is to ensure external adaptation and internal integration of the organization by improving personnel management.

Depending on the development of the organization, the characteristics of the competitive environment, the specifics of the organization's products and other factors, the significance and priority of various functions performed by the organizational culture may change. Nevertheless, the very set of its most important functions remains unchanged.

The first group of functions performs the tasks of internal integration of members of the organization, ensures its integrity and internal unity.

The second group of functions has an external orientation and ensures the adaptation of the organization to the conditions of the external environment and survival in it.

Recently all over the world there has been an interest in the study of corporate culture. Both academics and business consultants have found that it has a direct impact on all of the company's performance indicators.

The influence of culture on decision-making is carried out through shared beliefs and values that form a stable set of basic assumptions and preferences among members of the organization. Because organizational culture can help minimize disagreement, decision making becomes more efficient.

Culture helps people in an organization act meaningfully by providing justification for their behavior. In companies where risk is valued and the person takes it, knowing that if he fails, he will not be punished and that lessons for the future will be learned from failure. Actions that are justified in this way reinforce existing behavior, especially when it fits into the situation. This process is a source of funds for changing the culture itself. Since people use culture to justify behavior, it is possible to change culture through behavior change. However, for this process to succeed, it is necessary to ensure that people cannot justify their new behavior with the "old" culture.

Although corporate culture is not the only component of business success, it is undoubtedly an important step towards prosperity and success, and its practical importance in this sense can hardly be overestimated. Corporate events are different and very different from each other. But they serve the same purpose, they change people's behavior. Events perform various functions - they increase motivation and loyalty, help convey the necessary ideas to the audience in an informal but most thoughtful environment.

Forms of corporate culture management allow the formation of the cultural skills of employees,

considered as a continuous, ongoing process. The main forms of education and development of cultural skills are socialization and individualization.

Socialization in the context of corporate culture is seen as the adaptation of a new employee to the human environment, the norms of group behavior, and the team. The socialization process can be carried out using formal methods or in parallel with formal methods, for example, in vocational training of new employees.

As noted above, the formation of a corporate culture is carried out on the basis of values and organizational norms. Norms are generalized rules governing the behavior of employees that lead to the achievement of the goals of the organization. Roles determine the contribution of each to joint activities, depending on his formal or informal position in the organization, as well as mutual expectations and mutual control of employees. From the point of view of sociology, personnel is a group of employees, each of whom accepts and shares the common goals, values and norms of the organization, has certain personal value orientations, has the necessary set of qualities and skills that allow him to take a certain position in the social structure of the organization and play appropriate social role.

Values must meet the needs of people to be reaffirmed that the business they are doing has a meaning that goes beyond a particular business, a particular position, specific work colleagues, and a specific salary. In other words, the strength of a corporate culture is determined by at least two important factors: the degree to which members of the organization accept the company's core values and the degree of their commitment to these values.

Corporate culture as a complex phenomenon has its own structure and includes, first of all, worldview, organizational values, behavioral styles, norms and psychological climate.

The following functions characterize the corporate culture most fully: security, integrating, regulating, replacing, adaptive, educational and developing, quality management, regulating relationships with partners, adjusting the organization to the needs of society.

The corporate culture has a direct impact on all production indicators of the company. It acts as one of the main factors that determine the process of the organization's activities and the behavior of its employees; it can both have a positive impact on the development of the organization and slow it down. The positive or negative role of corporate culture is determined not so much by its characteristics as by the situation and goals in the context of which it manifests itself. Although corporate culture is not the only component of business success, it is undoubtedly an important step towards prosperity and success, and its practical importance in this sense can hardly be overestimated.

In conclusion of the subsection, the following conclusions can be drawn: the corporate culture of an organization is made up of its elements, which, like "bricks", being correctly fitted to each other, create a solid foundation on which the entire building rests. If each of the elements is not coordinated with the others, then the principle of consistency is violated and corporate culture will not work, but a simple set of activities that do not have a common goal comes out. In addition, for each company, the set of elements of corporate culture should be individualized.

### **2.3 Methods for diagnosing the level of corporate culture in a company**

Currently, there are a large number of methods for assessing such a phenomenon as corporate culture. In the opinion of V.D. Abroskina, a comprehensive assessment should consist of four stages:

- drawing up a typological characterization of culture;
- determination of the level of cultural development;
- identification of the main features of the culture;
- calculation of the culture index [5].

Experts use numerous formalized (quantitative) and non-formalized (qualitative) methods for assessing corporate culture. Among them, the most popular are:

- in-depth interview;
- study of rituals and traditions of corporate culture;
- observation (monographic research);
- study of the established management practice in the organization;

- document analysis;
- observing the interaction of employees at general meetings, meetings, and so on;
- sociological research (questioning, sociometry, tests, role-playing games);
- modeling (according to E. Shein, G. Hofstede and so on) [6].

A group of researchers (A. Pettigrew, S. Davis, K. Cameron, R. Quinn, R. Kilman and others) suggested that it is enough to correctly formulate a system of questions to “decipher” corporate culture. It was also found that if deepening corporate culture is required, it becomes almost impossible to explore and compare a large number of organizational cultures. Therefore, they have developed a universal test OCAI, which allows you to study the selected corporate culture [7, p. 46].

OCAI is a six-question test with four alternatives for each. The test taker needs to distribute the scores of the 100-point assessment among the four answers in the weight ratio that is more appropriate for the organization chosen for the analysis. The highest number of points should be given to the alternative that more closely resembles the studied organization. The score column is divided into two subsections - "Now" and "Preferred". This means that first you need to evaluate the company as it is at present, and then - what it should be in the respondent's opinion in order to be at the pinnacle of success.

“The OCAI tool is designed to assess six key dimensions of organizational culture. By performing an assessment with this tool, you can get a picture of how the organization works and what values it is characterized by. The answers to the proposed alternatives are neither right nor wrong, because there is no true or wrong culture. Each company will have its own unique set of answers to each of the alternatives that is specific to it. Therefore, in order for the diagnosis of corporate culture to be as accurate as possible, you need to answer the questions extremely honestly, carefully and as objectively as possible, "- this is how researchers R. Quinn and K. Cameron describe their methodology [7, p. 52].

Conducting an OCAI assessment requires the following calculation. At the first step, you need to add the scores of all answers A in the "Now" column, and then divide the total by 6, that is, calculate the average score for alternative A. The same calculations are repeated for alternatives B, C and D.

The second step is to add the scores of all answers A in the "Preferred" column and divide the total by 6, that is, the average score for alternative A is again calculated, but for the "Preferred" column. Next, add up the scores of all answers B and divide the sum by 6. Repeat these calculations for alternatives C and D [7, p. 52].

The OCAI Assessment Tool is based on a theoretical model called the Competing Values Framework.

It is based on two scales reflecting the criteria of the organization's effectiveness (stability and integrity / flexibility and discretion, as well as internal orientation / external orientation). Based on the diagnosis of the degree of dominance of certain perceived values of the company's employees, a graphical profile of the organizational culture is determined and depicted.

Another technique that allows you to determine and evaluate the content of corporate culture is the model of F. Harris and R. Moran. In accordance with this model, researchers propose to single out the following 9 criteria, which are designed to give a clear description of the culture of a particular organization [8].

- awareness of oneself and one's place in the organization;
- system of internal communications;
- appearance, clothing and presentation of oneself at work;
- what and how people eat, habits, traditions in this area;
- awareness of time, attitude towards it and its use;
- relationships between people: by age and sex, status and power, wisdom and intellect, experience and knowledge, rank and protocol, religion and citizenship, etc .; the degree of formalization of relations, support received, ways of resolving conflicts.
- values and norms - what people value in their corporate life;
- faith: in leadership, success, one's own strengths, in mutual assistance, in ethical behavior, in justice, etc .;
- the process of training and development of the employee [8, p. 336].

Thus, the described tools for diagnostics and analysis of corporate culture have significant

differences among themselves. The Cameron - Quinn test serves to determine the type of corporate culture, as well as a source of information for constructing a predictive assessment of its further development. While the model of F. Harris and R. Moran helps to determine the specific features of the chosen organization, assess its state, describe the culture of the organization in the present tense. Nine criteria help to consider the culture of the organization from different angles, including the external design of offices and buildings, relationships with employees, etc. The author's methodology will collect some elements and criteria of various methods, as well as its own assessment parameters, taking into account the peculiarities of the Kazakhstani business environment.

This section examines the approaches of various authors to the definition of the essence and significance of the corporate culture of an organization. Also researched the issues in the field of tasks facing the corporate culture of the organization. The basics of methods of diagnostics and assessment of the corporate culture of the organization have been studied. The literature review made it possible to more systematically approach the study of the potential of corporate culture as a business tool in the practice of Kazakhstani companies. This, in turn, laid the foundation for the development of the author's universalized methodology for diagnosing and modifying corporate cultures of Kazakhstani companies to enhance their competitiveness and sustainable development of their business in modern economic conditions.



### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The author's method of conducting the research consists in a combination of tools of the following methods: questioning with elements of interviewing, comparative and analytical methods.

The main source of information on the topic under study will be the results of questioning and interviewing respondents. Based on a questionnaire composed of 10 questions (48 items that are proposed to be assessed or to choose a variant of the answer) related to the peculiarities of the influence of corporate culture on maintaining productivity in a pandemic, it is planned to interview 150 respondents, randomly selected from various sectors of the economy.

The purpose of the survey is: to determine the nature of the influence of corporate culture on labor productivity in Kazakhstani companies in a pandemic in various sectors of the economy.

As part of the study, I highlight the following sectors:

First approach to classification:

- the real sector of the economy;
- the financial services sector.

Second approach to classification:

- primary sector: agriculture, fishing, forestry, hunting (agro-industrial sector) and extraction of natural raw materials (coal, oil, metal ores, etc.);
- secondary sector: manufacturing industry and construction;
- tertiary sector: culture, education, health care, consumer services and trade;
- Quaternary sector: information technology, education, research, global marketing, banking and financial services.

This approach will allow avoiding excessive generalization of the results, achieving a deeper understanding of the area under study.

I have formulated the following research hypotheses:

1. Corporate culture has a positive impact on productivity in a pandemic. To confirm or refute this hypothesis, the questions of the questionnaire were formulated to obtain and further analyze the qualitative indicators of productivity in companies.

2. Most of the owners and managers of Kazakhstani companies do not associate the deterioration in productivity with the effectiveness of the management system, namely the level of corporate culture in the organization. To confirm this hypothesis, it is necessary to find the relationship between the level of corporate culture in the studied companies and the deterioration in performance indicators.

The 10-question questionnaire was divided into 3 question blocks (see Appendix).

- 1 question block "Information about the company" was aimed at identifying the industry in which the company operates and the nature of the changes that have occurred in the context of the pandemic;

- 2 question block "The state of corporate culture in the company" will allow me to assess the degree of development of corporate culture in the company, its absence or presence;

- 3 question block "Changes in the pandemic" was aimed at identifying productivity problems and the nature of the impact of the pandemic on it.

Questions represent certain statements to which an answer must be given, how much I agree or disagree with the proposed statements. The answer to each question should take only 20-30 seconds, but it took up to 10 minutes to fill out one questionnaire.

Also, respondents who participated in the survey will be asked to comment on the answers or give a more detailed answer, an example from practice, if a monosyllabic answer is not enough to convey information that is important, in their opinion.

The process of collecting information and filling out the questionnaire will take place through a telephone survey of respondents, e-mails with a request to fill out the questionnaire. I believe that Kazakhstani entrepreneurs will willingly answer questions and during the collection process, certain problems or difficulties will not arise, since the survey will be conducted anonymously. It shouldn't be

difficult to find respondents.

The received data will be summarized in a spreadsheet for further processing and creation of graphic material.

Also, when choosing respondents, I will strive to cover as many sectors of the economy as possible, companies of various sizes. The corporate culture in the Kazakh business environment is predominantly present in large companies. But if the respondents represented only large companies, then the analysis would not be complete and would reflect the current situation on the issue under study.

Problems with the collection of official statistical indicators of the development of corporate culture in Kazakhstan are possible. Officially, no organization in Kazakhstan keeps statistics on corporate culture. In this regard, the results of the survey will be the main source of information.

Other methods will also be used during the study. So, in the theoretical and analytical parts of the work, the comparative method will be used. The comparative method means work on comparing two or more objects, highlighting the common and the different in them. In this study, the objects are approaches to the definition of the terminology of the sphere of corporate culture; results of a survey of employees of companies in various sectors of the economy.

Analytical method. It will consist in the search for regulatory information in the field of regulation of corporate culture in the Republic of Kazakhstan, a separate analysis of the internal documentation of commercial and state companies.

So, the main sources of data for the study will be:

- results of a structured questionnaire survey;
- statistical official data: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, reporting of state and commercial organizations;
- legal acts: legislation, internal documents of companies, etc.

The research process by the author is divided into the following main stages:

Stage 1. Formulation of a hypothesis, research questions and target audience for the survey;

Stage 2. Drawing up a questionnaire for interviewing respondents;

Stage 3. Conducting a survey using Internet resources

Stage 4. Collection and consolidation of the results of the questionnaire.

Stage 5. Allocation of 10 companies with a developed culture and 10 companies with a low level of corporate culture development.

Stage 6. Collection and consolidation of financial, economic and personnel and legal reports for 20 companies for comparative analysis.

Stage 7. Analysis of data for the 4th stage of the study.

Stage 8. Comparative analysis for the 6th stage of the study.

Stage 9. Formulation of conclusions on the research work: answers to research questions.

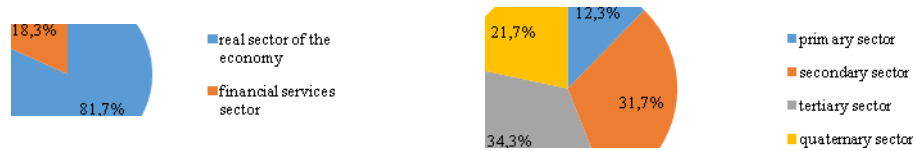
Stage 10. Highlighting promising directions for the development of corporate culture in Kazakhstani companies in a pandemic.

Thus, the selected list of methods forms the author's approach to researching the impact of corporate culture on productivity in a pandemic in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

During the study, 150 respondents were interviewed. Data collection was carried out both through an online survey using various sociological platforms (75%), and through direct collection of information (or conversations) and filling out a tabular form (25%).

The following results were obtained.



**Figure 1 - The structure of respondents and companies that took part in the study**

As Figure 1 shows, the study covered companies in various sectors of the economy, which increases the level of reliability of the results obtained and reduces the risks of errors associated with the peculiarities of the functioning of a company in a particular industry in a pandemic. For example, in the context of the economic crisis and pandemic, the financial performance of pharmaceutical companies has improved significantly. And if only pharmaceutical companies were surveyed within the framework of the study, then the results would be distorted and would not reflect the general situation in terms of assessing the impact of corporate culture on productivity in a pandemic.

The group of questions on assessing the state of corporate culture in the company was asked to fill in two tables with their assessments. The questions of item 3 “Please note how applicable the above statements are to your company” the following results were obtained (table 1).

**Table 1 - Assessment of the development of corporate culture features**

Assertions	Strongly agree	Rather agree	Neither yes nor no	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree
You are aware of your place in the company	79,0%	9,0%	5,0%	3,0%	4,0%
The success of the assigned tasks depends on teamwork in a team	16,7%	40,7%	32,3%	6,3%	4,0%
The company has certain norms (rules) of behavior	31,3%	32,0%	9,7%	14,0%	13,0%
The company adheres to a high culture of communication	13,7%	32,3%	22,3%	16,0%	15,7%
The communication system in the company is well established: between employees and managers, between employees	28,7%	32,3%	9,7%	12,3%	17,0%
The company has a certain business etiquette	20,3%	9,7%	38,3%	19,3%	12,3%

The company has a long tradition	12,3%	29,0%	32,7%	13,7%	12,3%
The company has a work ethic	22,0%	16,3%	28,3%	17,0%	16,3%

On the fourth question "Please mark the correct statements given in the following table" the following results were obtained (table 2). An assessment of the level of remuneration and professionalism of personnel, the development of communications, the effectiveness of management style, the development of a motivation system, as well as the presence of traditions and the nature of leisure activities in companies was carried out.

**Table 2 - Assessment of the development of the main elements of corporate culture**

	Strongly agree	Rather agree	Neither yes nor no	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree
The level of remuneration and professionalism of personnel					
The company invests in the development of its employees	21,0%	25,0%	35,7%	17,7%	0,7%
Company employees improve their: professionalism and competence	25,3%	39,3%	17,7%	14,7%	3,0%
Conflict situations are extremely rare in our company	61,3%	25,0%	10,7%	1,7%	1,3%
Communications					
All employees of the company have a common view of the future development of the company	25,7%	43,0%	21,3%	5,7%	4,3%
Working with employees of another department is more effective than working with personnel of other companies	50,7%	8,3%	21,7%	18,0%	1,3%
We rarely have cases of misunderstanding when solving certain operational tasks.	54,0%	14,7%	9,3%	14,7%	7,3%
Effectiveness of management style					
All employees of the company are busy	65,0%	25,3%	1,7%	7,3%	0,7%
An employee, if necessary, can independently make a decision	24,7%	25,0%	28,3%	21,7%	0,3%
Employees are satisfied with the management style of the company	32,7%	31,3%	25,0%	6,0%	5,0%
We have a low level of violation of labor discipline	35,7%	35,7%	8,0%	14,3%	6,3%
Indicators of the comfort of the working environment	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
We have good, friendly and working relationships in the team	71,7%	21,7%	2,0%	2,7%	2,0%
Conflict situations are resolved constructively and without emotion	39,3%	39,3%	3,3%	17,7%	0,3%

In our company, all employees treat each other with respect	64,7%	21,7%	5,7%	6,3%	1,7%
The company has no legal or other disputes with former employees of the company	67,7%	28,3%	0,0%	0,0%	4,0%
Motivation issues					
Wages suit most employees	32,0%	21,3%	14,7%	21,3%	10,7%
There is an internal rule for assessing the effectiveness of employees with reference to the amount of remuneration	43,0%	36,0%	6,3%	10,7%	4,0%
You can grow up the career ladder in our company	14,0%	28,3%	28,3%	25,0%	4,3%
Our company has a good social package	39,0%	21,3%	14,7%	17,7%	7,3%
Tradition and leisure					
All information about the history and development of the company is available to me.	32,3%	53,7%	6,7%	7,3%	0,0%
We jointly celebrate public holidays, birthdays of colleagues	35,3%	32,3%	25,0%	7,3%	0,0%
The company organizes and conducts various events: contests, sports competitions, outdoor trips, etc.	2,7%	43,0%	32,3%	14,7%	7,3%

The third block of questions was devoted to the changes that have taken place in companies in the context of the pandemic. So, on the fifth question “Have there been any changes in the company's activities in the context of a pandemic?” The following results were obtained (Figure 2).

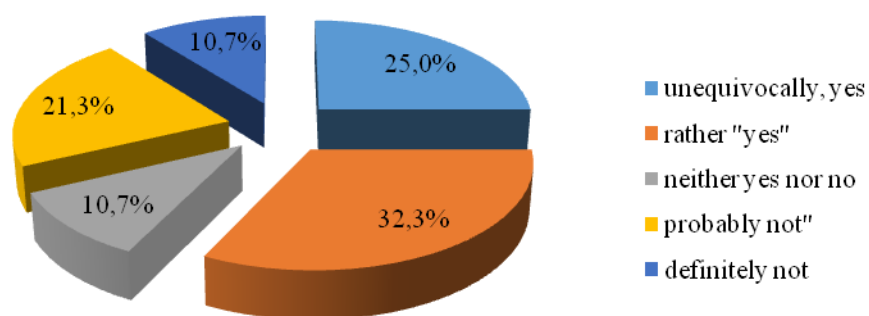


Figure 2 - Assessment of changes in companies in a pandemic

On the sixth question about the nature of the changes that occurred, the following results were obtained (Figure 3).

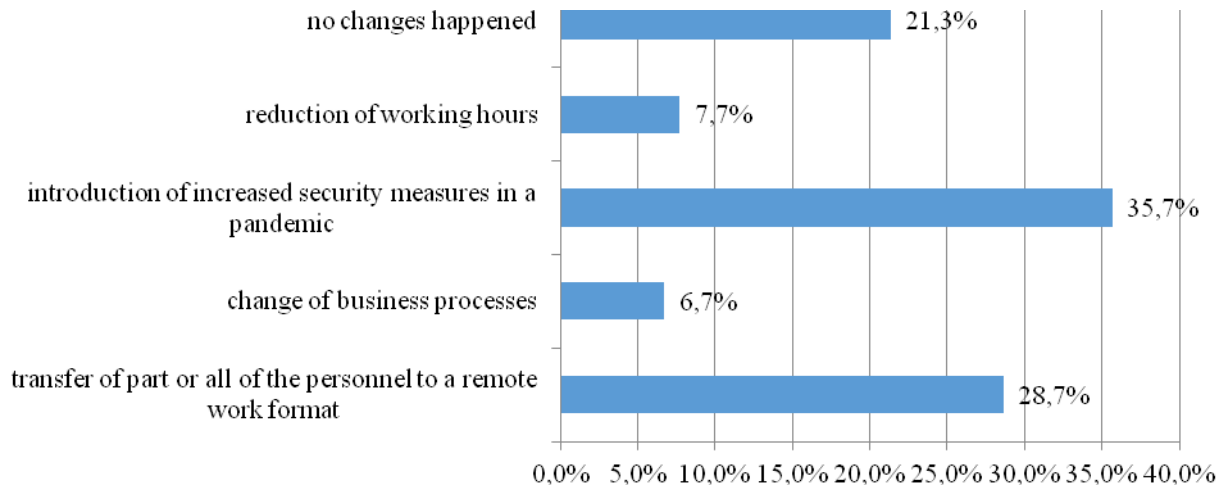


Figure 3 - The nature of changes under the influence of the pandemic

On the seventh question about changes in the efficiency of companies, the following results were obtained (Figure 4).

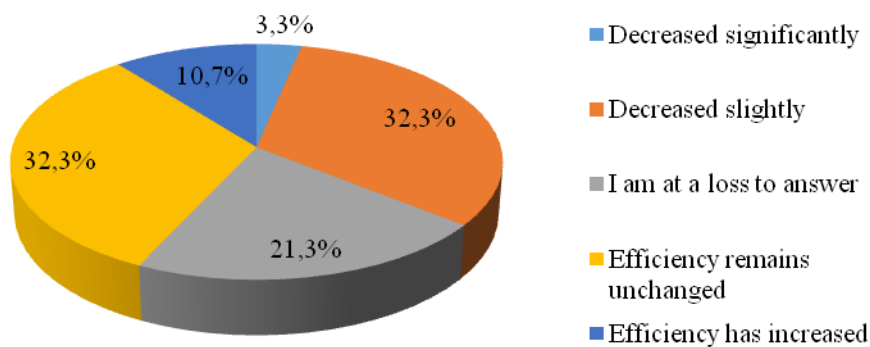


Figure 4 - Answers to the question "Has the efficiency of your company decreased in the context of a pandemic?"

There was also a request to evaluate the statements on the impact of the pandemic on the company's activities (on labor discipline, on labor relations, on the vision of the company's employees) against a number of the above statements (Table 3).

Table 4 - Impact of the pandemic on labor discipline, labor relations and employee vision

	Strongly agree	Rather agree	Neither yes nor no	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree
Labor discipline					
Employees perform their job duties without deadlines	0,3%	17,7%	21,3%	43,0%	17,7%
Difficulties arise with maintaining effective work	3,7%	21,3%	32,3%	17,7%	25,0%

The number of conflict situations in the company has grown	0,3%	10,7%	10,7%	21,3%	57,0%
The number of clients and partners who are dissatisfied with the quality of our work has increased	0,0%	17,7%	25,0%	28,7%	28,7%
Being late for work has become the norm	0,3%	7,0%	10,7%	35,7%	46,3%
Employees find it difficult to perceive the new work format	7,7%	17,7%	35,7%	21,3%	17,7%
Management does not respond to labor management problems	0,0%	7,0%	3,7%	28,7%	60,7%
Labor Relations					
Employees quit with a transfer to other companies	2,3%	23,3%	19,7%	35,0%	19,7%
Employees are laid off due to staff cuts	0,0%	3,7%	17,7%	32,3%	46,3%
Employees are fired due to violation of labor discipline	0,0%	17,7%	25,0%	28,7%	28,7%
Collaboration with colleagues has become much more difficult	0,0%	10,7%	3,7%	35,7%	50,0%
The level of wages has decreased	3,7%	0,0%	28,7%	17,7%	50,0%
Vision					
There is no understanding of the future development of the company in a pandemic	3,7%	0,0%	17,7%	32,3%	46,3%
The strategic goals and mission of the company have not been changed	3,7%	28,7%	25,0%	21,3%	21,3%
Difficulties arise with understanding your place in the company	3,7%	0,0%	35,7%	21,3%	39,3%

The above statements, in the author's opinion, reveal changes in a number of factors of companies' productivity.

On the eighth question "What measures for the development of corporate culture do you consider the most appropriate in a pandemic?" the following responses were received

- adjustment of the development strategy: mission, goals, objectives - 37%;
- changes in the organizational structure, business processes - 27%;
- preservation of wages regardless of the company's performance indicators - 24%;
- an increase in expenses for the development of human resources in the company - 12%.

On the ninth question "Do you plan to change your job?" 64.3% of respondents answered in the negative, 21.4% doubted and 14.3% in the affirmative. In general, 35.7% of respondents can be considered ready to change their place of work.

In the last question, it was proposed to evaluate the company's performance in a pandemic on a five-point scale. Four points were given by 35.7%, five points were given by 57.1% and three points were scored by only 7.2% of companies. In our opinion, the situation in the economy is much worse. The high scores are due to the fact that employees of companies that went bankrupt during 2020 did not participate in the survey. That is, the companies in which the respondents worked passed 2020 and functioned in 2021. The very preservation of the functioning of companies already suggests that, on the whole, they are efficient and sustainable.

Then, 10 companies with low results in assessing corporate culture (group B) and 10 companies with the highest ratings (group A) were selected (table 5).

Table 5 - The results of calculating performance indicators in a pandemic for two groups of companies

	Group of companies A	Group of companies B
Average growth rate of the balance sheet currency for 2020 to 2019,%	123,1	104,3
Average growth rate of total net profit for 2020 to 2019,%	107,4	-18,8
Average growth in labor productivity in 2020 to 2019,%	102,3	-11,2
Average employee turnover rate for 2020,%	8,9	18,2
Average profitability at the end of 2020,%	9,20%	2,10%

For a number of companies, access to financial statements (corporate financial statements) was either not published for 2020, or this information was not published on the company's website. By the author, these companies were replaced by the next ones in terms of the number of positive or negative assessments of the level of development of corporate culture.

In the next subsection, we will describe the research process.



## 5. MODEL DESCRIPTION

After receiving the results of the survey, the data were entered into a summary table. Further, the answers were ranked on a five-point scale, where "1" is an indicator of a low level of development of corporate culture in the company, and "5" is the maximum indicators of the level of development of corporate culture.

Each item on the questionnaire from 3 to 9 was rated according to this approach. For example, on question No. 3 "Please note how the above statements are applicable to your company" - and the statement "You are aware of your place in the company":

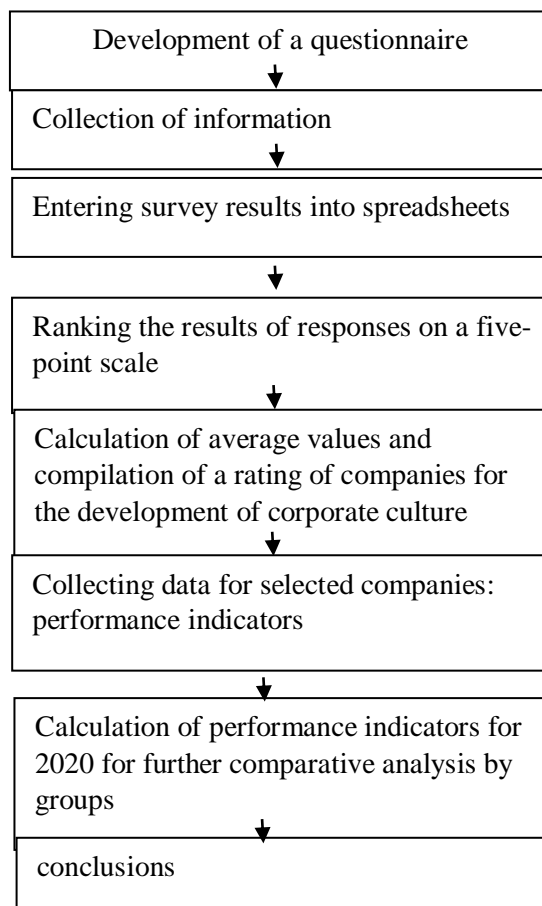
- I completely agree - 5 points;
- Rather, I agree - 4 points;
- Neither "yes" nor "no" - 3 points;
- Rather disagree - 2 points;
- I completely disagree - 1 point.

All the results obtained were summed up by 1 questionnaire to identify companies, leaders and outsiders in terms of the development of corporate culture. And for a generalized assessment of the development of corporate culture in Kazakhstani organizations from various sectors of the economy in a pandemic.

In this case, the maximum possible score is 255 points (where the answer scores 5 points), and the minimum is 51 points (where the answer scores 1 point).

The last 10 question was asked to compare the results obtained throughout the questionnaire with the general subjective assessment of the respondents.

Thus, the average score for all companies was 4.1 points, where the cumulative average number of points (212.3) is divided by the number of choices (51). In general, this result is confirmed by the received and the results of the answer to question no. 10.



### **Figure 5 - Logic of the research model**

This work gave us the opportunity to make a rating of companies (by the number of points scored) where the higher the score, the more developed the corporate culture of the company, the lower the score (at least 51 points), the less developed the corporate culture. Further, focusing on this rating, I have selected companies to assess the impact of corporate culture on the company's performance in a crisis. All the logic of the work done can be presented in the following figure 5.

For the calculation of production indicators, the following primary sources were used:

- corporate financial and accounting reporting;
- report on labor, presentations and management reports on personnel management.

The following indicators were calculated:

- the average growth rate of the balance sheet currency for 2020 to 2019 in percent;
- the average indicator of the growth rate of the total net profit for 2020 to 2019 in percent;
- the average growth rate of labor productivity for 2020 to 2019 in percent;
- the average rate of employee turnover for 2020 in percent;
- the average profitability indicator at the end of 2020 in percent.

The formulas were used quite simple and widespread in the field of financial and economic analysis of the company. So, for example, the average growth rate of the balance sheet currency for 2020 to 2019 was calculated as follows: the value of the balance sheet currency in 2020 divided by the value of the balance sheet currency for 2019 and multiplied by 100%. I got results for 10 companies with a low level of corporate and culture development and for 10 companies with a high level of corporate and culture development. Further, the average values were calculated: the sum of the indicators of production activity was divided by 10 (the number of companies). And so on in 2 groups.

The above model gave me the opportunity to prove the link between a high level of corporate culture in a company and good performance in a pandemic. In this study, we could not take into account other factors affecting the development of production indicators, such as measures of state support for business, the national scale of the company, the specifics of the company's industry, etc. Despite this, I can speak of a fairly high level of reliability of the results obtained, since all these processes are also associated with the corporate culture of Kazakhstani companies.

## 6. MAIN RESULTS AND TESTS

In the course of fulfilling the set goal and confirming or refuting the hypothesis, a large amount of multi-stage research work was carried out. The study covered 150 employees of various Kazakhstani companies working in 15 companies in various sectors of the economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and located (central offices) in various cities of the country. The survey was attended by both employees of large and medium-sized companies and small and micro businesses. Such coverage, in my opinion, increases the level of reliability of the data obtained.

The results of the research were published in the 4th chapter of the thesis.

To the research question "Which sectors of the economy are the most sensitive to changes in environmental factors in a pandemic?" a fairly clear answer was received. Lower indicators of the impact of the pandemic on the elements of corporate culture were identified based on the results of the third block of questions "Changes in a pandemic".

The biggest negative changes took place in companies in the tertiary sector, namely in companies in the field of education, consumer services and trade. In the affirmative to the question "Has the efficiency of your company decreased in the context of a pandemic?" answered 30.3% (in the structure of all companies) and 85% (in the structure of their own sector of the economy). Also, partly negative consequences manifested themselves in the companies of the secondary sector. The respondents working in these companies answered affirmatively to the question about the negative impact on the company's efficiency: 5% in the structure of all companies and 26% in the structure of their sector.

The respondents of the primary and quaternary sectors did not confirm (or found it difficult to answer) the negative impact on the effectiveness of the organization of the economic crisis and pandemic. So, for example, the minimum impact of the pandemic and the economic crisis was on banking, insurance, marketing and research organizations. It can be noted that it is these types of entrepreneurial activities that can be transferred to a remote work format.

To answer the research question "What is the nature of the influence of corporate culture on the company's performance in a pandemic?" both a questionnaire survey was conducted to assess the current state of corporate culture development, and to identify relationships with the performance of companies in a pandemic.

The second group of questions "The state of corporate culture in a company" was devoted to assessing the level of development of corporate culture in organizations in a pandemic. The average percentage of answers characterizing the low level of development of corporate culture in companies was 24.5% ("rather, disagree" and "disagree").

The main problematic elements of corporate culture in the respondents' companies are:

- non-compliance with work ethics in 33.3% of companies;
- insufficiently high culture of communication between employees - 31.7%;
- lack of clear business etiquette - 31.7%;
- poor level of development of the communication system between employees and management - 29.3%.

The best scores for the following elements (strongly agree + rather agree):

- understanding of the respondent's place in their company - 88%;
- effective implementation of the assigned tasks when working together - 57.3%.

When assessing the elements of corporate culture in the field of human resources management, in general, results were obtained that positively characterize the company. At the same time, problem areas were identified. So, for example, high scores were scored for the following elements:

- the size of wages does not suit workers - 32%;
- lack of career opportunities, that is, ignoring the principles of meritocracy - 29.3%;
- lack of social package or its insignificance - 25%;
- communication problems in solving operational problems and an excessively high level of centralization of power - 22% each.

Positive marks were scored for the following elements:

- low level of conflict in the company's team - 86.3%;
- high level of employment of workers - 90.3%;
- knowledge of the history, mission and objectives of the company by employees - 86%.

The results of the third block of questions were devoted to the changes that have occurred in companies in the context of the pandemic. Earlier, I reviewed the results of the answers in the context of the economic sectors.

In general, answering the fifth question "Have there been any changes in the company's activities in the context of a pandemic?" Respondents answered positively in 57.3% of cases. That is, the pandemic has had a certain impact on the functioning of companies. In 32% of cases, no changes were recorded, and 10.7% found it difficult to answer this question.

The changes affected the following areas:

- transfer of part or all of the personnel to a remote work format - 28.7%;
- introduction of increased security measures in a pandemic - 35.7%.

The minimum changes were in:

- business processes - 6.7%
- reduction of working hours - 7.7%

In 21.3% of respondents answered that either the changes did not take place, or were insignificant.

As for the impact of the pandemic on the efficiency of companies (as a whole), 35.7% responded that it has decreased or decreased slightly. 32.3% of respondents did not notice any changes in the efficiency of companies, and 10.7% noted an increase in the efficiency of companies. I noted that pharmaceutical companies, Internet companies and financial services companies have shown effectiveness.

The direct impact of the pandemic on the performance of workforce management (on which productivity depends) has been quite clear. Thus, the negative impact was confirmed by the respondents on the following points:

- difficulties arise with maintaining effective work - 25%;
- in some cases, employees find it difficult to perceive the new format of work - 25.3%;
- more frequent cases of dismissal of employees with a transfer to other companies - 25.7%;
- there are no management actions to change the company's development strategy in a pandemic - 32.3%.
- breakdowns of deadlines are allowed when fulfilling orders - 18%;
- the company allows an increase in the number of clients, partners who are dissatisfied with the quality of work - 17.7%;
- the number of cases when employees are dismissed due to violation of labor discipline increased - 17.7%.

According to the respondents, the most effective measures for the development of corporate culture in a pandemic are:

- adjusting the development strategy: mission, goals, objectives of the company - 37%;
- changes in the organizational structure, business processes - 27%.

On the penultimate question of the questionnaire about plans to change jobs, 64.3% received a negative answer. Only 14.3% gave a positive answer. In my opinion, this result is due to the fear of losing a job in a pandemic.

In general, 57.1% of respondents noted the effectiveness of overcoming the problems with the pandemic by 5 points.

Further, a comparative analysis of performance indicators of group of companies A (maximum estimates for the level of development of corporate culture and minimum for the negative impact of the pandemic) and group of companies B (minimum estimates for the level of development of corporate culture and maximum for the negative impact of the pandemic) was carried out (see Table 5) ...

The following conclusions can be drawn:

- indicators of growth of the balance sheet currency, growth rates of net profit, labor productivity,

staff turnover and profitability in Group A companies with a high level of corporate culture are better than in Group B companies;

- in a pandemic, a developed corporate culture counteracts the decrease in the efficiency of the functioning of companies, neutralizes the negative effect of the impact of an aggressive and unfavorable external environment;

- in a pandemic, companies with a corporate culture only slow down their development, while in companies with a low level of corporate culture, entrepreneurial risks increase and efficiency decreases.

To answer the final research question "What steps need to be taken to improve company productivity in a pandemic?" a number of recommendations were developed, based on the results of the study.

Thus, for the accelerated development of corporate culture and its elements, in Kazakhstani organizations, it is necessary:

- to include in the state strategy of socio-economic development the need to implement measures for the development of industrial democracy (as one of the forms of corporate culture) in Kazakhstani organizations: informing, consulting, methodological support, improving legislation;

- to allocate grants for research and monitoring of the development of corporate culture in Kazakhstani organizations, as well as assessing its impact on various aspects of the functioning of companies, including productivity;

- to develop a standard form of an intra-company document approving the rights and regulating the procedure for the participation of employees in the management of elements of corporate culture. This internal document can be either a part of the "Personnel policy of the company", or it can be separated into a separate internal corporate norm.

## 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The following answers were received to the posed research questions.

- What approaches exist to define the concept of "corporate culture"? In the course of writing the dissertation, various approaches to the definition of the concept of "corporate culture" were analyzed. There are three main approaches: corporate culture as a broad category covering a wide range of issues; corporate culture as the environment of the organization, created by itself; corporate culture as a distinctive feature of the organization.

- What are the functions of the elements of the corporate culture of the organization? It was determined that the main goal of corporate culture is to ensure external adaptation and internal integration of the organization by improving personnel management. It is concluded that the corporate culture of an organization is made up of its elements, being correctly adjusted to each other, create a solid foundation on which the entire building rests. If each of the elements is not coordinated with the others, then the principle of consistency is violated and corporate culture will not work, but a simple set of activities that do not have a common goal comes out. In addition, for each company, the set of elements of corporate culture should be individualized.

- What are the differences between modern methods of assessing the effectiveness of corporate culture? A list of methods for assessing corporate culture was given: in-depth interview; study of rituals and traditions of corporate culture; observation (monographic research); study of the established management practice in the organization; analysis of documents; observing the interaction of employees at general meetings, meetings and so on; sociological research (questioning, sociometry, tests, role-playing games); modeling. The differences lie in the choice of criteria and indicators of the effectiveness of corporate culture.

The author's method of conducting the research was developed, which consists in a combination of tools of the following methods: questioning with elements of interviewing, comparative and analytical methods. This technique made it possible to obtain answers to the following research questions:

- Which sectors of the economy are the most sensitive to changes in environmental factors during a pandemic? It was determined that the negative factors affected the companies of the tertiary and quaternary sectors to the greatest extent. But, to a greater extent, the negative consequences affected those companies that could not adapt to the new conditions, make changes to the organizational structure and business processes.

- Does corporate culture affect the company's performance in a pandemic? It was determined that elements of corporate culture, if present and developed, have a positive impact on the performance indicators of Kazakhstani companies in a pandemic.

- What is the nature of the influence of corporate culture on the company's performance in a pandemic? The high level of corporate culture development does not allow the company's performance indicators to deteriorate sharply. Depending on the type of company, its size and the markets in which it operates, a high level of corporate culture either slows down the decline in performance indicators, or makes it possible to maintain a previously achieved position or allows it to improve even in a pandemic.

- What measures need to be taken to improve the company's productivity in a pandemic? Based on the results obtained, recommendations were developed for the development of corporate culture in Kazakhstani companies as a method of improving management in a pandemic and increasing productivity indicators. So, for the accelerated development of corporate culture and its elements, in Kazakhstani organizations, it is necessary: to include in the state strategy of socio-economic development the need to implement measures for the development of industrial democracy in Kazakhstani organizations; to allocate grants for research and monitoring of the development of corporate culture in Kazakhstani organizations, as well as assessing its impact on various aspects of the functioning of companies, including productivity; to develop a standard form of an intra-company document approving the rights and regulating the procedure for the participation of employees in the management of elements of corporate culture.

In the course of the study, the hypotheses put forward were confirmed. Corporate culture has been proven to have a positive impact on performance in a pandemic. To confirm this hypothesis, the questions of the questionnaire were formulated, a questionnaire was conducted, two groups of companies were identified, and a comparative analysis of the production indicators of these companies was carried out. It was also determined that most of the employees of Kazakhstani companies do not as

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## 9. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX: THE LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondents,

This survey is conducted as part of a study of the impact of corporate culture on employee performance in a pandemic.

For us, the opinion of each participant is important.

#### *Read the rules for filling out this form*

- The questionnaire must be filled in completely.
- The total number of questions is 10 (52 positions that need to be answered). Questions can represent certain statements, to which we ask you to answer how much you agree or disagree with the proposed statements. The answer to each question should take only 20-30 seconds; it will take you about 5-10 minutes to fill out one questionnaire.
- We recommend that you read each question to the end before choosing an answer option. We also recommend that you familiarize yourself with all the proposed options before choosing an answer.
- Some questions have a limit on the number of answers. Please follow this rule to increase the reliability of the results.

**Corporate culture** - "a set of behaviors that are acquired by an organization in the process of adaptation to the external environment and internal integration, which have shown their effectiveness and are shared by the majority of members of the organization."

Operation of a company in a **pandemic** is the company's activity in an epidemic that has affected the population of a significant part of the state or a number of states. The following changes in the work of companies are highlighted: transition of some or all employees to a remote work model; reduction of working hours; the need to implement measures of epidemiological safety; restriction of the possibility of movement within the country and border crossing.

#### **Group of questions I "Information about the company"**

Company name \_\_\_\_\_

Question 1. In which sector of the economy does your company operate (by type of economic activity)?

- the real sector of the economy;
- the financial services sector.

Question 2. In which sector of the economy does your company operate (by type of products / services provided)?

- primary sector: agriculture, fishing, forestry, hunting (agro-industrial sector) and extraction of natural raw materials (coal, oil, metal ores, etc.);

- secondary sector: manufacturing industry and construction;
- tertiary sector: culture, education, health care, consumer services and trade;
- Quaternary sector: information technology, education, research, global marketing, banking and financial services.

**Group of questions II "The state of corporate culture in the company"**

Question 3. Note how the above statements apply to your company

Assertions	I completely agree	Rather agree	Neither yes nor no	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree
You are aware of your place in the company					
The success of the assigned tasks depends on teamwork in a team					
The company has certain norms (rules) of behavior					
The company adheres to a high culture of communication					
The communication system in the company is well established: between employees and managers, between employees					
The company has a certain business etiquette					
The company has a long tradition					
The company has a work ethic					

Question 4. Please give the estimates given in the following table

(give a rating on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest rating for the elements of corporate culture in the company, 1 is the lowest rating)

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>The level of remuneration and professionalism of personnel</b>					
The company invests in the development of its employees					
Company employees improve their: professionalism and competence					
Conflict situations are extremely rare in our company					
<b>Communications</b>					
All employees of the company have a common view of the future development of the company					
Working with employees of another department is more effective than working with personnel of other companies					
We rarely have cases of misunderstanding when solving certain operational tasks					
<b>Effectiveness of management style</b>					
All employees of the company are busy					

An employee, if necessary, can independently make a decision					
Employees are satisfied with the management style of the company					
We have a low level of violation of labor discipline					
<b>Work environment comfort indicators</b>					
We have good, friendly and working relationships in the team					
Conflict situations are resolved constructively and without emotion					
In our company, all employees treat each other with respect					
The company has no litigation or other disputes with former employees of the company					
<b>Motivation issues</b>					
Wages suit most employees					
There is an internal rule for assessing the effectiveness of employees with reference to the amount of remuneration					
You can grow up the career ladder in our company					
Our company has a good social package					
<b>Tradition and Leisure</b>					
All information about the history and development of the company is available to me.					
We jointly celebrate public holidays, birthdays of colleagues					
The company organizes and conducts various events: contests, sports competitions, outdoor trips, etc.					

**Group of questions "Changes in a pandemic"**

Question 5. Have there been any changes in the company's activities in the context of a pandemic?

- definitely, "yes";
- rather "yes";
- neither "yes" nor "no";
- probably not";
- definitely not.

Question 6. Highlight the changes in the company's activities that have occurred in a pandemic.

- transfer of part or all of the personnel to a remote work format;
- changes in business processes;
- the introduction of increased security measures in a pandemic;
- reduction of working time;

- no changes have occurred;
- your own answer \_\_\_\_\_.

Question 7. Has the efficiency of your company decreased in the context of the pandemic?

- Decreased significantly;
- Decreased slightly;
- I am at a loss to answer;
- Efficiency remained unchanged;
- The efficiency has increased.

Question 8. Please give the estimates given in the following table

(give an assessment on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 - you completely agree with the impact of changes in the pandemic, 1 - completely disagree)

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Labor discipline</b>					
Employees perform their job duties outside of deadlines					
Difficulties arise with maintaining effective work					
The number of conflict situations in the company has grown					
The number of clients and partners who are dissatisfied with the quality of our work has increased					
Being late for work has become the norm					
Employees find it difficult to perceive the new work format					
Management does not respond to work organization problems					
<b>Labor Relations</b>					
Employees quit with a transfer to other companies					
Employees are laid off due to staff cuts					
Employees are fired due to violation of labor discipline					
Collaboration with colleagues has become much more difficult					
The level of wages has decreased					
<b>Vision</b>					
There is no understanding of the future development of the company in a pandemic					
The strategic goals and mission of the company have not been changed					
Difficulties arise in understanding your place in the company					

Question 8. What measures for the development of corporate culture do you consider the most appropriate in a pandemic?

(no more than 2 answer options with the possibility of your own answer option)

- adjustment of the development strategy: mission, goals, objectives;
- changes in the organizational structure, business processes;
- keeping wages regardless of the company's performance indicators;
- an increase in expenses for the development of human resources in the company;
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 9. Do you have any plans to change jobs?

- definitely, "yes";
- rather "yes";
- neither "yes" nor "no";
- probably not";
- definitely "no".

Question 10. Summing up the questionnaire, how would you describe the functioning of your company in a pandemic on a five-point scale?

Where "5" means that the company is successfully operating in a pandemic, and "1", on the contrary, means a significant decrease in the efficiency of both the company and its employees.