



# An Inquiry on The Changing Face of Organizational Culture in The Days of The Pandemic

*Pandemi Günlerinde Örgüt Kültürünün Değişen Yüzü Üzerine Bir Araştırma*

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### Abstract

Organizational culture tries to understand human behavior by analyzing thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. The main purpose of research on organizational culture is to understand organizational functioning and organizational behavior better. The main purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of faculty members working at a state university regarding the changes in organizational culture during the pandemic process. It is qualitative research in terms of research method, and the case study design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the research. The research was carried out with a study group of 16 academics and administrative staff working in different units of universities. Observation and semi-structured interview techniques were used as data collection tools in the research. The collected data were analyzed with the transfer of observations and qualitative content analysis. According to the analysis findings, the participants' opinions on the change in organizational ethnography during the pandemic process indicate a significant change in this process's organizational attitudes and behaviors. Analysis findings reveal that a traumatic change such as a pandemic causes various uncertainties and resistances in the organizational field. It is understood that organizational support is essential for constructing a flexible organizational culture suitable for the conditions of this process to eliminate job dissatisfaction and loss of motivation caused by the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Organizational culture, Pandemic, Organizational Change, Organizational Support

## Pandemi Günlerinde Örgüt Kültürünün Değişen Yüzü Üzerine Bir Araştırma

### Öz

Örgüt kültürü, örgüt çalışanlarının düşünce, tutum ve davranışlarını analiz ederek örgütteki insan davranışlarını anlamaya çalışır. Örgüt kültürü araştırmalarının temel amacı, örgütsel işleyiş ve davranışı daha iyi anlamaktır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, bir devlet üniversitesinde görev yapan öğretim üyelerinin pandemi sürecinde örgüt kültüründe yaşanan değişimlere ilişkin deneyimlerini incelemektir. Araştırma, yöntemi açısından nitel bir araştırma olup, araştırmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden biri olan durum çalışması deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırma, üniversitelerin farklı birimlerinde görev yapan 16 akademisyen ve idari personelden oluşan bir çalışma grubu ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak gözlem ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Toplanan veriler, gözlem aktarımı ve nitel içerik analizi ile çözümlenmiştir. Analiz bulgularına göre, katılımcıların pandemi sürecinde örgütsel etnografyadaki değişime ilişkin görüşleri, bu sürecin örgütsel tutum ve davranışlarda önemli bir değişim ortaya çıkardığına işaret etmektedir. Analiz bulguları, pandemi gibi travmatik bir değişimin örgütsel alanda çeşitli belirsizliklere ve dirençlere neden olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Salgının neden olduğu iş tatminsizliği ve motivasyon kaybını ortadan kaldırmak için bu sürecin koşullarına uygun esnek bir örgüt kültürü inşa etmede örgütsel desteğin şart olduğu anlaşılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Örgüt kültürü, Salgın, Örgütsel Değişim, Örgütsel Destek

## **Introduction**

Many internal and external factors play an influential role in organizational change. These factors are; political, technological, cultural, demographic, economic, and market conditions (Child, 2005). Technological factors that emerged from these factors, such as working from home or remotely, were decisive in the days of the pandemic. Digital communication, which has become mandatory during the pandemic process, has caused a radical change in the business habits of employees. Here, besides the ability to use technology, the sudden change in the gains obtained from years of experience causes significant changes in work and organizational culture and business habits. Another point is that the workplace is not only a working environment but also a living environment. Losing situations such as workplace friendship and workplace happiness due to the pandemic causes significant changes in the organizational culture.

The increasing weight of digital communication and social isolation with the pandemic causes significant changes in organizational culture. Another problem experienced here is that the organizational change experienced is revolutionary rather than gradual, which causes various adaptation problems. The fact that crises cause chronic anxiety in employees and various uncertainties negatively affects the well-being of employees. Employees have difficulty in deciding how to act in crises (Meyerson & Martin, 1987). In this context, being deprived of organizational culture while working at home or away from the workplace causes adaptation problems (Howard-Grenville, 2020; Spicer, 2020).

The result of the pandemic in terms of human behavior is that the change experienced is not a choice but a necessity. The fact that the behavior is not a choice makes it difficult to adopt and internalize. When the behavior change is in question in areas such as organizational culture, this can cause various adaptation problems and even conflicts. With the prolongation of the pandemic process, various adaptation problems arise in organizational culture, as in many other fields. At the beginning of these problems is the constant anxiety that arises due to the social isolation experienced. The state of trait anxiety causes people to separate and distance themselves from each other in the organizational environment. Distance and distance from each other cause various changes in organizational culture as well as organizational behavior patterns. Practices such as social distance, working at home and working remotely cause significant changes in organizational rules, norms, behavior patterns, and thus in organizational culture. The pandemic, which causes significant changes in individual, organizational and social life, inevitably causes significant changes in organizational culture. This process necessitates new behavior patterns suitable for the characteristics and requirements of the pandemic process (Özdemir, 2019; Spice, 2020). The problem of how to live and protect organizational culture at home or in another place outside the organization constitutes the problem areas of organizational culture. In this framework, the primary purpose of the research is to answer the question, "What is the effect of the pandemic on organizational culture?" Accordingly, the research aims to answer the following sub-questions:

- What kind of changes does the pandemic process cause in organizational culture?
- What kind of changes does teleworking cause in the routines of corporate life?
- How is it possible to create and maintain a collective culture in a working system where people are physically disconnected from each other?

## 1. The Impact of the Pandemic on Organizational Culture

Culture is the whole of human behavior that can be perceived abstractly and observed concretely (Nar, 2012). Culture consists of various factors, and these are; At the beginning, factors such as attitudes, behaviors, ceremonies, rituals, behavior patterns, artifacts, and assumptions. Experiencing these factors in the organizational environment creates organizational culture. According to Schein, elements make it possible for an organizational culture to remain stable and deep for generations and consistently link values and behaviors. These elements are; structural stability, depth, breadth, and integration. Schein's definition of organizational culture reflects these four elements; the system of beliefs and values shared by the members of a group, the learned results of group life, the values and behaviors learned in order to solve the problems of internal integration and external harmony of any group (Donnithorne-Colonel, 2013). Organizational culture is a powerful lever that directs organizational members' perceptions of events and symbols, thus guiding their behavior and a driving force that guides actions (Howard-Grenville, 2020).

In cultural analysis, many elements (beliefs, values, assumptions, rules, etc.) that make up its nature and meaning are actively used. In doing so, a link is established between the characteristics of the culture and the members' values. Beliefs, behaviors, values, and attitudes that have become stereotyped bond the organization and the employee. Members who show common thought and behavior characteristics are separated from the others. Culture also contributes to social integration in the workplace. With social integration tools, individuals come together around a common identity, values, and ideals in the process, directing and changing the organization (Nar, 2012).

The individual's social being in the organization is directly related to using the cultural toolkit. The Covid-19 pandemic is causing new cultural toolkits to enter the workplace. Practices such as masks, distance, and isolation lead to new organizational cultural patterns (Howard-Grenville, 2020). Personal precautions such as cleaning, mask use, individual quarantine; Measures such as switching to distance education, canceling collective events, and reducing business mobility lead to the emergence of a new organizational culture (Arslan-Durgun, 2020). These measures require a new lifestyle and work habits. This change becomes permanent and even turns into a culture depending on the duration of the epidemic. In the stated framework, the pandemic reveals several different situations in terms of culture. First, in parallel with the slowdown in the rate of globalization, cultures are closing in. The second is the damage that social isolation will cause to identity. The

third is the effect that the new habits will have on people's lives in the future and the new cultural values that they will create (Güven, 2020).

Pandemic days radically change people's working habits, how they communicate with each other, organizational communication, and how they interact. Personal precautions such as cleaning, mask use, individual quarantine, cancellation of collective events, meetings held in virtual environments cause significant changes in organizational ethnography (Güven, 2020). What makes the workplace meaningful for many employees is the organizational culture that provides employees with job satisfaction. IBM, which previously employed 40% of its workforce remotely, felt the need to call its employees to the office because remote work does not create job satisfaction and harms the organizational culture. This change in IBM has revealed that the benefit of face-to-face interaction in terms of job satisfaction and corporate culture cannot be achieved in remote work (Rond et al., 2019; Strand-Lizardo, 2017; Spicer, 2020). Events that cause sudden culture change, such as a pandemic, make employees a part of the problem (Boyce et al., 2015; Roy & Perrin, 2021). The importance of organizational culture with high organizational trust and representativeness increases in the face of changes in organizational ethnography due to sudden changes (Elsbach-Stigliani, 2018; Grenville, 2020; Spicer, 2020).

One of the important reasons for the change in organizational culture is the changing structure of the working environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has moved office work into a remote work environment in just a few weeks in early 2020. What makes office life meaningful to many employees is that widely accepted beliefs and practices that support the way people work together help perpetuate the organizational culture. Essential factors such as the pandemic change an organization's culture to suit new conditions (Meyer, 1982). However, change in line with the new working model is becoming incompatible with cultures at the broader societal level. For example, turning the house into a branch of the workplace harms the cultural life of the family (Strand & Lizardo, 2017). When employees find the change threatening, this may cause a new organizational conflict (Elliott & Smith, 2006; Reinecke, 2018).

The desired culture is different, causing employees to see themselves as a part of the problem instead of seeing themselves as a source of conflict (Boyce et al., 2015). A sudden effect of changes in organizational culture can harm employees' motivation and create a disruptive effect on the organizational climate (Johnson, 1990; Armenakis et al., 2011). Cultural change in the organization requires several factors to be taken into account. When these are taken into account, adaptation to cultural change can be more accessible. These factors are; Top managers' commitment to change, the competence of change agents, support in emergencies, good change communication, and positive business impact. An adaptation problem experienced in any of these factors can put the entire change process at risk (Cinite et al., 2009; Roy & Perrin, 2021). Otherwise, a maladaptive transition process often leads to unsuccessful cultural change (Elsbach-Stigliani, 2018). For this reason, organizations should do all kinds of work on psychological support and organizational trust to eliminate cultural incompatibility in the process of radical change such as the pandemic. Organizational employees should be supported to

reflect on the previous culture and adapt more quickly to new environmental challenges (Howard-Grenville, 2020; Canato et al., 2013; Giorgi, 2017).

A radical change initiative in the organization requires focusing on the behaviors, values, and beliefs of the organization's employees, in short, the organization's culture (Lawson-Ventriss, 1992). Organizational change is values-based, and where change occurs, it is naturally influenced by the cultural patterns it creates in thoughts and behaviors. When the new values and practices that come with the change do not match the old ones, behaviors such as advocacy, withdrawal, and hiding information can be seen in the employees. Therefore, the effect of organizational culture in a systematic and successful change should not be ignored (Nar, 2012). The pressure of change in organizational activities brought by COVID-19 necessitates a significant change in organizational culture. More flexible with highly institutionalized organizations with deep-rooted cultures. The cultural change process of organizations with different cultures can be different (Spicer, 2020).

It is expected that those who are not aware of the change in organizational culture experienced due to external factors such as pandemics will show more resistance to the change. In addition, explaining that there is no new alternative to change can contribute to the voluntary participation of employees in cultural change (Fitzgerald, 1988). Resistance to change in organizations is generally; arises for reasons such as the emergence of competence and skill gaps, economic security, job loss, disruption of work order, and redefinition of working relations (Dawson, 2003). In order to reduce resistance to change, it is essential to ensure that employees participate in the planning of change to reduce uncertainty by informing and persuading them to change. Uncertainties, worries, and feelings of inadequacy in the change process are other factors that make it challenging to adapt to change. For this reason, the successful management of critical change situations such as pandemics requires special competence in change management (Alvesson-Sveningsson, 2016).

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This research was designed as qualitative research because it is more suitable for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena with their context. In order to see how the research problem is understood and how the participants construct the social reality in the research, the research was designed as a case study from qualitative research designs (Tutar and Erdem, 2020; Alvesson-Sandberg, 2013). The case study design was preferred in the research is that this design is suitable for examining current situations based on the opinions of people who have in-depth knowledge. In addition, the case study design was preferred because it is convenient to reveal the essence of the researched subject and to reflect the event as it is (Storey, 2007; Özdemir, 2010). In the case of studies, it is possible to reveal hidden or implied information in the situation examined. The fact that the situation is up-to-date in this design is another reason for choosing the case study pattern (Yin, 2014; Merriam, 2009).

### 2.3. Working group

In cultural studies, the working group should consist of individuals and groups who have "experience" on the research subject and reflect their experiences (Smith-Eatough, 2007: 35; Creswell, 2012). The study group of this research consists of 16 people working as academic and administrative staff at a state university. It is necessary to work with a group with a well-defined common culture in determining the working group. Since the researcher cannot observe everything in cultural studies, the criterion sampling technique, which is frequently used in qualitative research, was used to determine the study group of the research. In this preference, it is convenient for the researcher to act from his observations, be suitable for the research problem, and collect in-depth information from data sources (Maxwell, 1996: 43; Patton, 1990; Charmaz, 2011: 359). In determining the criteria, attention was paid to the fact that he had experienced the researched subject (Miles-Huberman, 2015: 11). Participants in the study are shown in Table 1 by being coded as P11, P12, P13, .....Pn.

**Tablo 1:** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Participant code	Education	Age	Gender	Tenure (years)
P11	Doctoral degree	46	Female	23
P12	Masters degree	43	Female	19
P13	Masters degree	34	Male	12
P14	Masters degree	56	Female	35
P15	Doctoral degree	51	Female	26
P16	Doctoral degree	34	Male	10
P17	Masters degree	37	Male	14
P18	Doctoral degree	46	Female	28
P19	Doctoral degree	53	Male	33
P20	Doctoral degree	53	Male	31
P21	Doctoral degree	40	Female	15
P22	Masters degree	37	Male	14
P23	Doctoral degree	62	Female	39
P24	Doctoral degree	31	Male	6
P25	Masters degree	33	Female	10
P26	Doctoral degree	36	Female	10

### 2.4. Data Collection Tool and Data Collection

Because culture is inherently uncertain, it cannot be measured with standard tools. Culture; It also requires on-site examination through observation, experience, and feeling, and in order for the researcher to understand the culture in which he works and its effect on individuals in detail and in-depth. For this reason, the observations of the researchers were used to interpret the research findings. For this purpose, the data obtained from the participants in the research were collected with a semi-structured interview form. In this way, care was taken to enable the participants to convey their experiences from their perspectives (Merriam, 2009; Bryman, 2004;

Cohen, Manion-Morrison, 2007). The semi-structured interview technique was preferred in the study because it is suitable for determining how participants attribute meaning to the reality they live (Greasley-Ashworth, 2007: 821; Smith-Eatough, 2007: 35).

## **2.5. Validity and Reliability**

Although qualitative research requires the active participation of the researcher's assumptions, validity and reliability can be achieved with multiple different techniques. In order to ensure the credibility (validity), consistency (reliability), and portability (generalizability) of this research, firstly, the consensus among experts was sought. The draft interview form, which was prepared to increase the reliability of this research, was provided by taking the opinions of three experts. This level of agreement between the views was tried to be determined by coding the questions prepared in the draft interview form as "appropriate," "not suitable," and "your suggestion for correction." It was observed that the level of agreement coefficient regarding the reliability of the questions was 0.94. In addition, it is aimed to achieve high validity and reliability by using direct quotations (Kumar, 2011; Merriam, 2009; McMillan-Schumacher, 2006). Apart from the general approach, the research data were interpreted and reported with an analysis plan following the research purpose.

## **2.6. Analysis of Data**

In the research, the data were analyzed following the cultural research while preserving the rich textual structure. In the analysis of data; A process consisting of defining the phenomenon, arranging the data collection tool, collecting the data, coding and classifying the interviews, formatting the data, and reflecting it on the report was followed. In the data analysis phase of this study, the content analysis method was used. Content analysis is the process of gathering similar data around certain concepts and themes and understandably organizing them. In this respect, since the pandemic process's effect on the organizational culture change is emphasized in the research, it is desired to reveal the connection of the data obtained with the concepts in the context of the study (Merriam, 2009). In the content analysis process of the research, coding was done in the first stage, and groupings were made between codes and subcodes.

In order to create codes in the study, a qualitative data set was read three times by the researchers before the analysis. During these readings, codes were thought to stand out and compared to both researchers, and the preliminary codes were determined and named. In addition, since the basis of this research is the organizational culture literature and the facts in the context of change related to this literature, the pre-coding list, and themes based on the literature were previously created by the researchers. The codes noted after the readings made before starting the analysis were added to the pre-coding list and themes. As a result of the sequential readings required for new codes and themes were reached. In addition, codes and themes were discussed with two academics who are experts in the field of organizational culture in order to be sure of the codes and themes created in the study (Maxwell, 1996: 43; Charmaz, 2011; Miles-Huberman, 2015). In qualitative content analysis, some preliminary codes and themes emerged due to conceptual

tools. At the same time, an induction strategy was used while creating new codes and themes in the analysis process, thanks to the open coding method (in vivo coding). These new themes and codes created within Vivo codes are as follows: Health anxiety and precaution, the necessity of online communication, digital sharing of emotions, fear of contamination and protection, a home transformation into an office, remote working, language that organizes online actions.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Findings of the Research and Analysis of Data

The research aims to determine the experiences and observations of the lecturers working in different positions and titles in various departments of different universities on organizational culture before and after the pandemic process. As a primary research question, an answer was sought to the question "What is the effect of the pandemic on organizational culture." The analysis results were evaluated in two parts as descriptive and relational findings.

#### 3.2. Descriptive Findings

As a result of examining the changing face of organizational culture, the themes related to health concern and prevention, the quality of organizational communication and work, task, and role change. The most frequently assigned codes resulting from the content analysis made according to the obtained data and expressions are given in the code cloud in Figure 1. As can be seen from the code cloud in Figure 1, the prominent and frequently repeated codes in the change in organizational culture; inability to communicate physically, perceiving the epidemic as a milestone, transformation of the house into an office, organizational activities that are not carried out, fear of contamination and protection codes. The code that stands out most frequently in the coding process is not being able to communicate physically.

Figure 1: Code Cloud



According to interviewees, the code system emerged after coding and determining the themes and distribution in Figure 3. In Figure 3, the relatively high assigned codes are seen as larger circles. Within the research framework, the results of the observations, the documents of the interviews, and the institutional documents were analyzed in the MAXQDA program using the qualitative content analysis method. As a result of the analysis, sample expressions included a supporting table created above and graphics below the dimensions in this table. Since the qualitative content analysis is based on semantic meaning and no frequency analysis is based on words, numerical expressions are not included.

Figure 2. Code System

Code System	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	P16	P17	P18	P19	P20	P21	P22	P23	P24	P25	P26
Communication Quality																
Physical interaction inability																
Online Communication Obligation																
Position																
Frequency and Duration of Communication																
Gift Giving and Treat Culture																
Removal/Differentiation of gift giving and treat																
Instant treat																
Online gift giving																
Health Anxiety and Precaution																
Consciousness and Awareness																
Fear of contagion and protection																
Hygiene																
Prohibitions and rules																
Distance and isolation in office designation																
Social distance																
Emotional Factors																
Digital sharing of emotions																
Morale and motivation																
Socializing																
Loneliness and burnout																
Quality of Ceremony and Ritual Factors																
Unperformed activities																
Online etkinliklerin ağrılığı																
Eviscerated rituals																
Differentiation in Tradition of Greeting and Handshaking																
Differentiation in form of greeting																
Tradition of contactless greeting																
Quantity And Quality of The Meetings																
Increasing online meetings																
Decreasing face-to-face meetings																
Cancelled meetings																
Formality of online meetings																
Obligatory face to face meetings																
Work Environment																
Transformation of house to office																
Disused-closed space																
Alternately use of office																
Narrowing the space of freedom																
Organizational Language																
Language that organizes online actions																
Building a health and physical based language																
Technological jargon																
Work, Task, and Role Change																
Competence in use of information technologies																
Flexible and rotate working																
Task differentiation and radical change																
Tasks turning into online performances																
Differentiation/flexibility during workhours																
Role differentiation																
Remote working																
Intensive use of computer and growing workload																
Leaving extra time																
Organizational Goal and Performance																
Increase in academic performance																
Changing goal and performance expectancy																
Not prioritised goal and performance																
Increase in the control of performance and online followup																
Inability to follow the performance in applied education																
Changing																
Milestone																
Decreasing organizational loyalty																
Resistance																
Not having knowledge on others																
Harmony																
Corporate identity																
Fail to perceive the culture																
Flattening of organizational culture																

**Figure 3:** Communication Attribute Theme Code Distribution



The participants' sample statements regarding the codes stand out in the context of the quality of organizational communication are given below.

"Fear of contagion has raised the need for further action. Communication began to be carried out mostly via email and telephone. This naturally weakened the strong face-to-face communication that existed between individuals. In addition, times have shortened, and distances have extended in face-to-face communications."(P12)

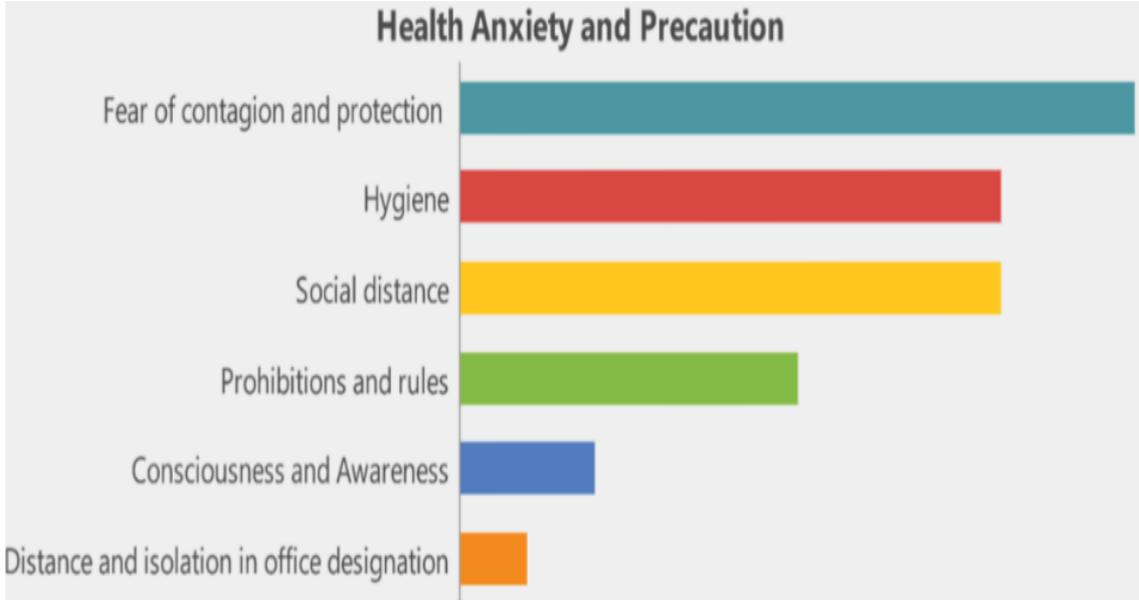
"I rarely meet face-to-face. I am on Zoom or the phone. I do not accept the demands of the other party in this regard as much as possible." (P16)

"In order not to get a virus, if any, not to pass it on to others, I tried to communicate by phone and email as much as possible." (P21)

"While we could meet face-to-face almost every day and chat about school work and social issues before, after the pandemic, the frequency of our meetings has decreased considerably and has started to be over the phone." (P24)

Another theme that stands out with the quality of organizational communication is health concern and precaution. Since the primary need during the epidemic is survival, the behaviors that develop around this emotion precede all other behaviors. It can be increased by many substantial changes in social life, such as postponing the meetings and activities held in the past or making them without rituals, and the disappearance of traditional gatherings. Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the individual is faced with a new lifestyle and culture. One of the main factors of this change is fear of contagion and the need to protect from the epidemic. The authority has determined maintaining social distance as one of the most critical weapons in preventing contamination. In this respect, the individual, the subject of isolation and whose behavior is shaped by this isolation presupposition, expresses that his freedom is restricted at the organizational level.

**Figure 4:** Code Distribution for Health Anxiety Theme



The sample statements of the participants regarding the codes stand out in the context of health concerns and precautions are given below.

"Institutional rituals were terminated for protection from contagious diseases for reasons such as health, hygiene, and distance." (P11)

"Regular meetings have been banned since the beginning of the pandemic process. The relevant ministry and public administrations take decisions in this regard." (P17)

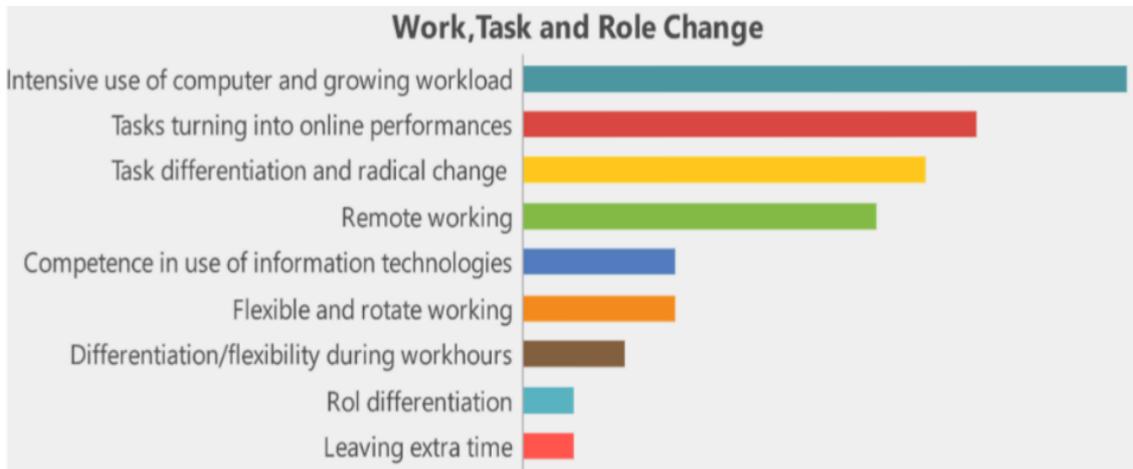
"Pre-pandemic, it was both etiquette and cultural pattern to offer drinks or food to people visiting our office. Living this culture during the pandemic period has become unthinkable due to hygiene." (P23)

"We started to greet our colleagues, with whom we are more sincere, by following social distance and without making physical contact." (P26)

As a result of the analysis, it is understood that the theme of differentiation in the perception of work, task, and role-plays is as essential a role as the other two themes in explaining the organizational change. The pandemic has moved office work to a remote working environment, which will change for a long time. Working in an office environment plays an essential role in organizational culture and values, beliefs, and norms based on working together and sharing. The necessity of working remotely outside the office environment and the design of workplaces to support physical distance can negatively affect individuals' mental and physical health. In addition, factors such as flexible and rotating work, remote working, intensive computer use, and increased workload create organizational dynamics. In particular, the workload of female employees increases as a result of housework, child care, and working from home. Keeping employees away from social environments and opportunities causes loneliness and the weakening of social skills. In addition, situations such as inability to maintain a work-life balance, technical support, malfunctions, and inability to work in order can create various

problems. Employees are constantly in the home environment during the epidemic causes work-family conflicts and increased stress levels.

**Figure 5:** Code Distribution for the Theme of Work, Task, and Role Change



The sample statements of the participants regarding codes that stand out in the context of the theme of work, task, and role change are given below:

"Since I work from home, I cannot explain how the organizational climate is right now." (P12)

"I became a full-time computer slave. I do a minimum of 3 hours of preparation for 1 hour of lecture. My study has become the place where I spend all my time, except for sleeping. I am officially exhausted now." (P17)

"I carried these tools from the office to the house. This caused a part of the house to be arranged as an office. Home has not become an office, but it has ceased to be home." (P19)

"The job description has not changed, but the responsibilities have increased and moved to the house. In addition, the range of working hours has expanded." (P22)

"Each week, the syllabus, the uploading of the course presentation to the system, online courses, and frequent emails from students increased my workload." (P25)

### **3.3. Relational Findings**

#### **Analysis of Relationship and Effects Between Code and Themes**

In this part of the analysis, prominent factors (codes) in the change and their relationships were evaluated to explain an organizational culture is changing face during the pandemic. The fundamental question of the research, "what is the effect of the pandemic on the organizational culture" and the related sub-research question were answered. This framework determined the relations between the expressions, codes, and themes related to the influential factors in the change process. In analyzing relationships, comments were strengthened by quoting from the interviews to reveal a cause-effect connection between the code and the themes.

All codes that impact organizational culture during the pandemic are given in the Single Case model in Figure 10. Accordingly, in the coding, the codes of not being able to establish physical communication, activities that are not carried out, increasing online meetings, increase in workload and transformation of the home into an office, which is more prominent at the level of frequency, are shown with thicker lines. In addition, the most intense relations are seen in the area where the milestone, remote work, the abolition of gifts and treats, the fear of contamination, and protection codes. These codes were considered effective in changing organizational culture in the research and examined the intensity of the interviews' relations, quotations, and visuals.

Organizations have understood that in order to survive during the pandemic process, it is possible to adapt to the digital age and fulfill its requirements. As a result, organizational structures and ways of doing business have changed drastically. However, this change brings with it uncertainty. Individuals tend to interpret change differently according to their cultural understanding. For this reason, how the change was interpreted and which emotions emerged were reflected in their statements. How people relate to the change initiative regarding their identity positioning, how they understand themselves, and their interests concerning the change program. In this respect, the Milat code shows that the change in the institution started with the pandemic. The fact that participants emphasized the concept of "leftover" in most of their statements during the coding shows a differentiation in the organizational process, relationship, and culture with the pandemic. One of the prominent factors in the change is the change in the language of information technologies with the pandemic. Organizational change manifests itself through language, which is an essential element of culture. The expressions of the participants related to the milestone code within the theme of change are given below:

"There are no more ceremonies, which are the most important part of organizational culture." (P14)

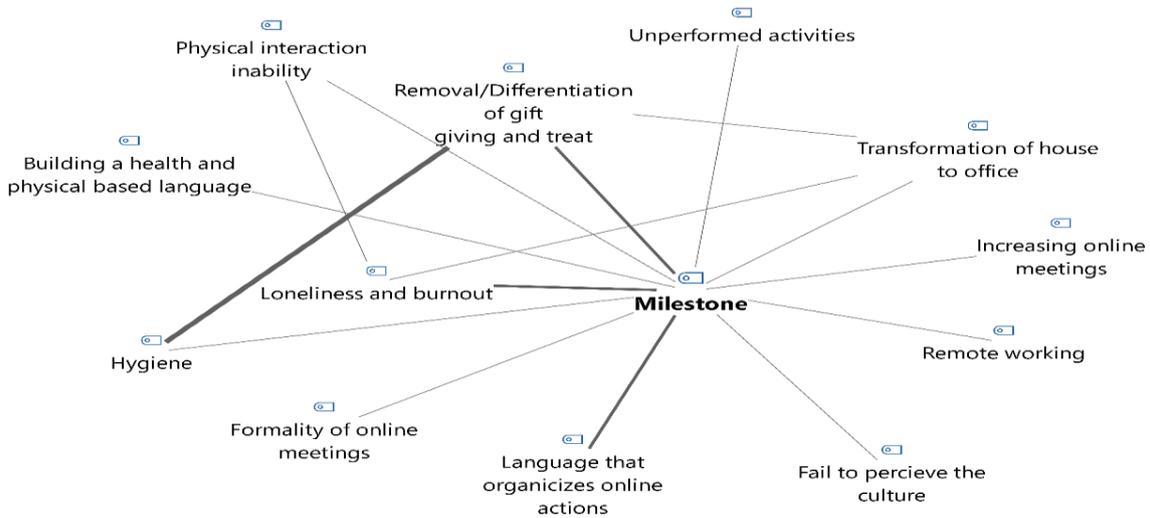
"Now the handshake has completely changed naturally. First of all, a traditional greeting from a distance, at a distance, with a mask, without contact, was established." (P15)

"Departmental meetings, which used to be in the form of tea and coffee conversations, are now on a more formal basis." (P19)

"Some new applications that have entered our lives with online training have added new concepts to the organizational language. The classes we held in the classroom before the pandemic was now called live lessons, and the assignments students presented in the classroom became live assignments." (P24)

"Pre-pandemic, serving drinks or food to people who came to visit us in our office was perceived as both a necessary etiquette and a socially friendly behavior, but now offering such a treat has become unthinkable due to hygiene reasons." (P25)

**Figure 6: Co-occurrence Model of Milat Code and Related Codes**



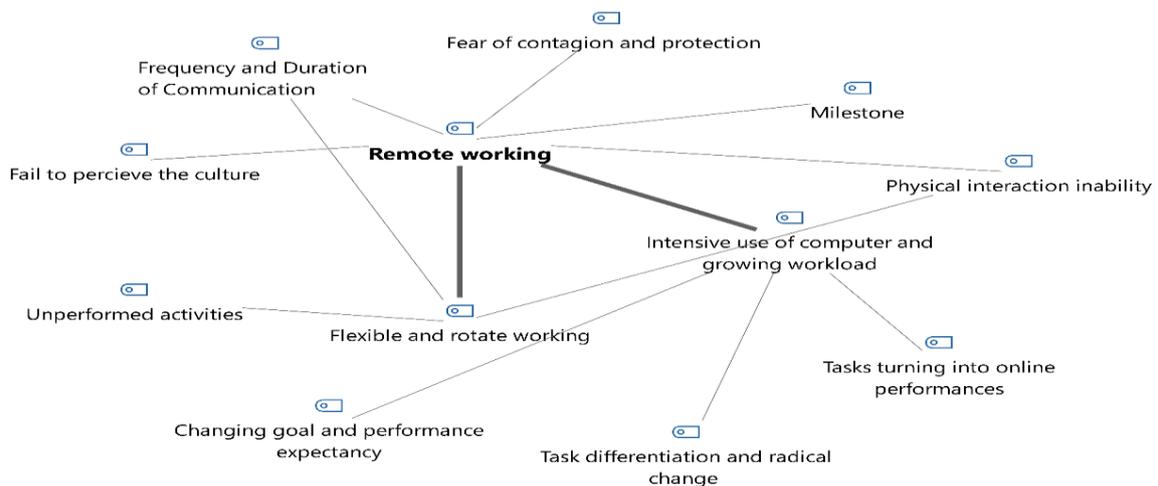
With developments in information and communication technologies, many institutions do their work remotely, changing organizational culture. High-speed mobility can cause a new work culture. Moving the entire process to the virtual environment without evaluating the information technology usage competence of the employees can cause various problems. However, there may be interruptions because there is more than one job (multitasking) at home. Sample participant statements regarding the codes of remote work, flexible and rotational work and intensive computer use are given below.

"I think burnout among employees is very high. I am unable to leave my house. The computer is always on, and I lead a life alone with my computer." (P16)

"Flexible working hours and working from home increase our need for face-to-face communication." (P21)

"I think the corporate culture has changed due to the pandemic. The concept of overtime has changed, and my job satisfaction level has decreased." (P23)

**Figure 7: Co-occurrence Model of Teleworking Code and Associated Codes**



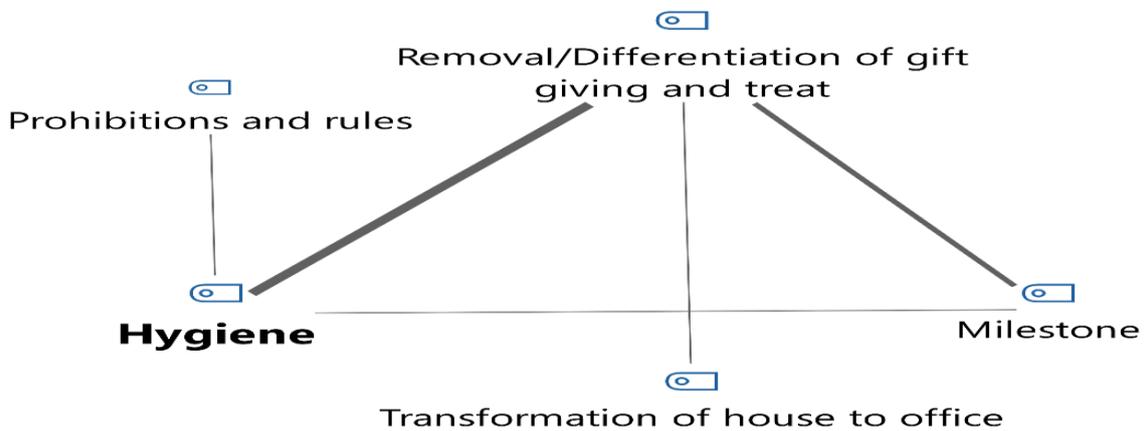
The primary need during the pandemic is for the individual to maintain his/her life healthily. For this, all behaviors must be organized according to this need. The importance of maintaining hygiene and health pushes organizational meetings, rituals, and socialization into the background. Gifts and treats represent sharing and have been moved to the online platform as many processes during the pandemic. The fact that gifts are delivered online without seeing each other or that the treats are not made due to the fear of contamination prevents socialization. Group members gathered for a common purpose at work is a necessity of socialization. Meeting places, tea conversations, lunches, and various sharings used in organizations for various reasons caused cultural interaction. Gestures, facial expressions, and various social interactions in communication contribute to the sharing of organizational culture. However, the organizational culture that has changed with the pandemic prevents social behaviors in the business environment. The continuation of the pandemic will cause the change in business culture to continue. Participants' opinions on this theme are given below from their statements:

"Before the pandemic, there was the culture of catering; this has disappeared. Now offering such a treat become unthinkable due to hygiene." (P11)

"Now, the culture of bringing a cake, fruit, filter coffee from home and sharing, or bringing gifts when returning from the city or abroad, gift-giving and catering when returning from home has disappeared." (P18)

"Our culture required to stop by and chat for tea while passing by the office. Today everyone sees the other as a suspect and is overly cautious about intimacy."(P25)

**Figure 8:** Co-occurrence Model of Hygiene Code and Associated Codes



The most critical resistance point encountered in organizational culture change is the organization's inability to fully demonstrate the competence it expects from the employee. Although it makes cultural adaptation difficult due to the differentiation in working conditions and working relations, this rapid adaptation is the expectation of organizations. Otherwise, it is not desired to add organizational culture to the uncertainty experienced during the pandemic days. Clear role and job descriptions are an essential aspect that reduces this uncertainty. With the

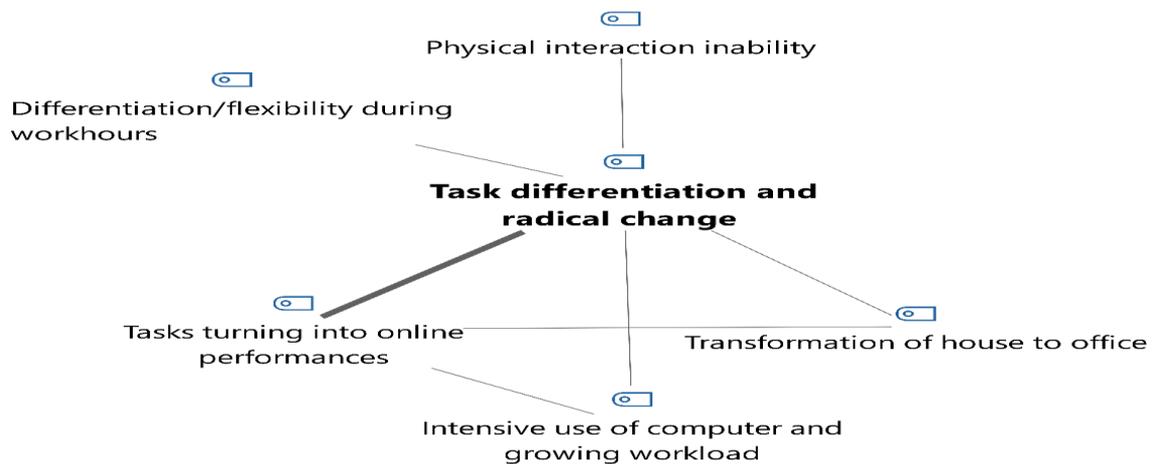
pandemic process, doing business online requires new competencies. For this, the expectations of the organization are increasing. Sample participant statements related to the differentiation and change in business habits are as follows:

"Our courses and exams, which should be face-to-face, have started to be held online. As a result, there have been changes in the educational methods and approaches that I prefer. It also changes the culture of education. As before the pandemic, all our cooperation opportunities have disappeared." (P14)

"Instead of the physical environment, a remote access system was used. We started to apply different techniques as online, synchronous, and asynchronous. Sometimes I have problems due to the inability to use digital technology. My duties may be left unfinished." (P16)

"Face-to-face lectures and meetings have been moved to the internet. We used keyboards more than pens." (P23)

**Figure 9:** Task Differentiation and Radical Change and Co-occurrence of Associated Codes Model



## Conclusion

The emergence of new business models of global and traumatic development such as a pandemic inevitably causes organizational culture change. In this research, which examines the organizational culture change experienced during the pandemic days, the organizational culture change; is understood that it emerges depending on the quality of communication in the organization, health anxiety, the precautions taken, and the differentiation factors in the work, duties, and roles of the individuals. It has been understood that organizational communication characteristics are the main influencing factor in organizational culture change. In a study conducted by Glassdoor online and conducted over 1.4 million comments, it was understood that the pandemic affected organizational culture change. It has been understood that the prominent theme of the study is the quality of institutions' communication.

During the pandemic period, the desire of the individual to continue his life healthily is getting stronger. This situation causes the behaviors that focus on health to be determinative of other behaviors. It shows that high-quality social interactions,

including informal conversations between coworkers, are essential for mental and physical health (Mogilner, Whillans, & Norton, 2018). The greeting, which is essential in social life, has started to be neglected with the pandemic. However, the necessity of working remotely and the encouragement of physical distance in workplaces harm the socialization process of employees (Brooks et al., 2020; Schroeder et al., 2019). The participants stated that their perception of loneliness became stronger (Cacioppo et al., 2006; Murthy, 2017). Workplace loneliness causes a weakening of employees' emotional commitment to the organization (Özçelik & Barsade, 2018). Compulsory virtual communication cannot be established within a broad reference framework such as face-to-face communication. This situation may cause incomplete communication and communication conflicts (Cacioppo et al., 2006). Studies have stated that when there is rapid cultural change, employees cannot find enough job satisfaction. With the end of the pandemic, the participants stated that everything should be restored (Gelfand, 2019).

Working culture during the pandemic period has a significant impact on all sectors and their cultures, including the health sector. In this process, many areas outside the health sector have switched to the remote working system. The full-time working rule defined as desk work was disabled in both public and private institutions, and working hours were stretched, and work started to be done at home. This process has started to be discussed whether it is necessary to do business by gathering people at their workplaces, and the meaning of the workplace concept has been questioned. If the cost of the added value created by the person who does the same job at the office and the person who does the same job at home is lower, it is naturally questioned whether a workplace is necessary. Continuing the traditional workplace practice is seen as strict conservatism. If the working culture is no longer the same as before, preserving old cultural habits means nothing but resistance to change.

If culture is a socially and situationally constructed reality, then the change caused by the pandemic inevitably leads to cultural change. Non-interactive communication, especially in virtual environments, has a significant impact on the change of organizational culture. Working remotely causes people to be closed to their home environment. This situation can also be expected to significantly affect the modernization process of employees in the long run. This research is qualitative and was conducted with a limited number of participants. Therefore, the research findings are not suitable for statistical generalization. For statistical generalization, the research should be supported by quantitative and mixed studies on a larger sample.

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Appendix:

Figure 10: Single-Case Model with Code Hierarchy

