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CORPORATE CULTURE IN SLOVAK ENTERPRISES AS A FACTOR OF HRM QUALITY – CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *Corporate culture as a unique set of opinions, value systems and standards of behaviour is specific for each organisation. It can be observed in behaviour, mutual interaction, self-actualisation. It is necessary to familiarize with its principles and individual levels in order to understand this multilateral phenomenon. We want to mention the differences in corporate culture in medium-sized enterprises (up to 250 employees) and large businesses (more than 250 employees) in Slovakia in the year 2016 using the methodology OCAI. Following the results we define the level of corporate culture as a part of human resource management. Pursuant to the analysis of the sampling unit consisting of 108 medium-sized enterprises we found out that the dominant corporate culture in enterprises nowadays is the clan culture. On the other hand, hierarchical corporate culture is the most common corporate culture in large businesses (41 businesses with the number of employees over 250).*

Keywords: *corporate culture, quality of HRM, Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument, competitive advantage, values*

1. Introduction

The changes in economy, new technology, innovation as well as other factors such as globalization and sustainability influence the whole society. These circumstances push the human resources in some completely new directions (Stone and Deadrick, 2015; Boudreau *et al.*, 2014; Roehling *et al.*, 2005). Moreover according to Kampf and Ližbetinová (2015) and Sudzina *et al.* (2014) thanks to globalization, the requirements on company competitiveness but also on the quality of human resources are increasing. Whereas in 1999 the emphasis was laid upon the productivity growth, the development of senior management took priority in 2004 and employee satisfaction and motivation have been the centre of interest of personnel professionals since 2004 (Olšovská *et al.*, 2016; Zámečník, 2007; Lucas *et al.*, 2004). The vast majority of research and literature in the area of human resource management (HRM) focus on the positive impact of HRM systems and practices. Outcomes such as employee well-being, organizational effectiveness and wider societal contributions have long been the focus to argue that HRM

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can make a positive contribution to the organization and broader society (Becker and Smidt, 2016; Beer *et al.*, 1984). Indeed, the argument continues to be made that effective HRM has the potential to have significant impact both within the organization and in the broader societal context (Jackson *et al.*, 2014). Therefore according to the opinions of Voegthlin and Geenwood (2016) HRM plays a significant role nowadays. At the present time the importance of information and further knowledge increases because they are the source of permanent competitive advantage. The enterprise competition ability Vaňová and Gyurák Babeľová (2014) consider as its potential to be successful in the competition in business. This is the condition under which the firm is successful (Myšková, 2001). In recent years economic aspect of quality has been getting into the forefront on the larger scale (Šatanová *et al.*, 2015). Quality improvement is one of the most popular strategy of the contemporary enterprises (Czajkowska and Stasiak-Betlejewska, 2015). The meaning of the word "quality" is used like a mark of excellence of service and goods (Stopka *et al.*, 2015). As well as Santos and Millán (2013) who suppose the strong competitiveness of the world market causes the quality to become a growing demand of markets and customers.

Market competition accelerates technological progress and innovation in all areas (Olšiaková *et al.*, 2016). In turbulent changing business environment only those companies that understand the current trends in global economy may survive (Mura and Gašparíková, 2010). Business cannot be regarded as a closed and an isolated system (Marková and Lesníková, 2015; Rajic *et al.*, 2013). Managers strive to build in their enterprises a functioning process (Vodák *et al.*, 2015). Companies must invest great effort in development of management system that will ensure their survival on the market (Klarić *et al.*, 2015). Base on Urbancová and Hudáková (2015) to keep economic prosperity, continuous development is essential. Constant gathering and development of human potential is a basic precondition for organisations intending to ensure sustainable development. Human resources present strengths and competitive advantages of companies (Stacho and Stachová, 2013). Human capital is one of the enterprise inputs. People are the sources of new ideas. They are the persons who dispose of skills and experience. They support the overall performance of the company. Human capital management helps enterprises achieve enterprise goals just by using the human capital efficiently (Kucharčíková *et al.*, 2016; Gražulis and Baziene, 2009). HRM is one of the most important parts of the business. Success of the whole enterprise depends on HRM (Vaníčková, 2015).

There are several views on performance (Závadský and Hiadlovský, 2014) and there have been many recent studies investigating the relationship between firm performance and quality management (Terziovski *et al.*, 1997; Adam *et al.*, 1994) moreover firm performance and HRM have received considerable attention indicating that there is a connection between HRM practices and the performance of organizations (Georgiadis and Pitelis, 2012; Lawler *et al.*, 2011; Bjőrkman and Lervik, 2007; Price, 2004; Singh, 2004; Becker and Gerhart, 1996; Arthur, 1994) moreover according to Závadská *et al.* (2015) moreover the effectiveness of management systems can be achieved if the suitable set of attributes of performance indicator are used.

The ambition of most executives is to perform managerial work which will result in the added value and sustainable competitive advantage associated with the strategic development of the organization. Therefore, managers and human resource professionals are constantly looking for the ways how to improve the process and effectively manage the work of people so that their effort will result in staff satisfaction and successful progress of the organization (Vetráková *et al.*, 2015). According to Nyameh (2013), the relationship between HRM and organizational culture is significant because if

employees understand and accept the organizational culture as their own, it will allow them to choose a strategy and behaviour that reflects their personality and also corresponds with the main direction of the organization.

Based on Maull *et al.* (2001) Total Quality is somehow linked to organisational culture but there still exists a disagreement on whether TQM involves changing a culture to achieve total quality or whether it means using the existing culture. Authors further state that many companies undertaking TQM programmes have, in recent times, switched their attention from applying the tools and techniques of TQM to attempting to align their TQM programme with their prevailing organisational culture. Advocates of organisational excellence eschew the problems associated with achieving a flexible, adaptable and committed workforce in organisations (Reeves and Bednar, 1994). Irani *et al.* (2004) claim that this is because they lack a dominant and coherent culture, in which values, commitments and approaches are likely to diverge, which can present a barrier to co-operation, joint action and problem solving across the organisation. Thus, managers should periodically analyse the relevance of corporate values to the evolving organisational environment. As a result, enabling managers to adapt and nurture the constructs that support the development of an aspired organisational culture. Peters and Waterman (1982) were possibly the first authors telling managers that having a strong culture was a key to organizational success. Though organizational culture undoubtedly existed before Peters and Waterman´s book, it was more of interest to academics. By linking it to corporate performance, managers began to take it much more seriously. According to Beer and Walton (1987) the literature on organizational culture began in the traditional organizational development model of slow, planned change. It later converged with the field of total quality management in the belief that either culture change or at least culture awareness was a necessary prerequisite for "excellence" and "quality" (Lewis, 1998). Excellence is not located in one business function. Based on Nikolić and Nastasić (2010) business excellence is the result of synchronous operation in all parts of the business system, in accordance with precisely defined goals, and desired organizational culture, which implies acceptance by employees. Excellence reflects the business performance of organizations by creating new value for all interested parties.

2. Methodology

The objective of the paper is to mention the differences in corporate culture following the methodology OCAI about medium-sized enterprises (up to 250 employees) and large businesses (over 250 employees) in Slovakia in the year 2016.

The methodology OCAI is used to diagnose the dominant corporate culture through a questionnaire. The questionnaire covers six areas with four subareas – alternatives A, B, C and D (Table 1). Respondents divide 100 points in each area among individual alternatives according to the fact, which of them mirrors state-of-the-art most. Subsequently respondents divide 100 points in statements forecasting the company future over the next five years. The questionnaire was evaluated using the statistical method through the average according to the equation (Schmidtová and Vacek, 2013):

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i}{n} \tag{1}$$

Where $\bar{x}$ – average, x_i – individual values, n – total size of sampling unit.

Table 1. The questionnaire based on methodology of Cameron and Quinn

1. Dominant Characteristics	
A	The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of personal information and features.
B	The organization is a very dynamic entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick out their necks and take risks.
C	The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.
D	The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.
2. Organizational Leadership	
A	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.
B	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.
C	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.
D	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.
3. Management of Employees	
A	The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.
B	The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.
C	The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.
D	The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.
4. Organization Glue	
A	The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.
B	The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.
C	The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.
D	The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.
5. Strategic Emphases	
A	The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.
B	The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.
C	The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.
D	The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.
6. Criteria of Success	
A	The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.
B	The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.
C	The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is a key.
D	The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.

Subsequently, all averages of individual alternatives from all areas were summed up in order to determine the profile of corporate culture and the results were recorded in a table. The methodology OCAI is based on the assumption that data gathered can be understood more easily illustrated in the graph than elaborated using statistical methods. Radar chart was used to illustrate the results more clearly. Individual chart axes represent values expressing alternatives of corporate culture (clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy) as well as they define present and future corporate culture preferences. The research was carried out using the questionnaires and the sampling unit consisted of employees working in Slovak businesses. 6,000 questionnaires were distributed in total. Questionnaire response rate was 29.57%. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Socio-demographic characteristics of employees were searched in the first part. Basic data about respondents relating to their age, sex and completed education were obtained in this part. 1,774 respondents were involved in the research. The first group was made up of 1,280 employees of medium-sized enterprises (up to 250 employees), hereof 330 female and 950 male employees. In term of age most employees (403) were aged between 31 and 40. Employees aged 41 to 50 (399 respondents) formed the second largest group of employees. In term of education almost 60% of employees completed upper secondary education with school leaving exam (56.25%), almost 25% of employees completed lower secondary education (24.92%) and almost 15% had higher education (14.14%). The comparison group consisted of employees of large businesses running in Slovakia in the year 2016 with the number of employees over 250. 494 respondents from large businesses were involved in the sampling unit, hereof 166 female and 328 male employees. In term of age most respondents were aged between 31 and 40 or 40 and 50. 297 employees completed upper secondary education with school leaving exam, 102 respondents completed higher education.

3. Results and discussion

The second part of the questionnaire dealt with the perception of corporate culture through current and future status. Values relating to dominant characteristics in medium-sized enterprises and large businesses in Slovakia are compared in Table 2. Employee responses from medium-sized enterprises are illustrated in Figure 1. Responses of employees of large businesses with the number of employees 250+ are presented in Figure 2.

Table 2. Dominant characteristics in enterprises with the number of employees up to 250 and over 250

	Up to 250 employees				**Over 250 employees**			
Alternatives	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**
Now	**29.13**	18.70	27.60	24.57	24.14	19.41	**30.22**	26.22
Preferentially	**37.17**	19.36	26.40	17.07	**33.28**	20.00	29.70	17.03

As Table 2 and Figure 1 show the employees in medium-sized enterprises with the number of employees up to 250 preferred the alternative A most at the present time. We can state following the opinion of respondents, **friendly atmosphere in the workplace similar to extended family dominates medium-sized enterprises. People have a lot in common.**

However, Figure 2 shows the difference as **focus on the enterprise results, stability and control dominate in large businesses. People are goal-oriented through competitiveness.** Employees in large

businesses preferred the alternative C. All respondents agreed on the alternative A in the future, defining the workplace as a friendly place for work with family atmosphere that people share.

Table 3. Organisational leadership in enterprises with the number of employees up to 250 and over 250

	Up to 250 employees				Over 250 employees			
Alternatives	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**
Now	25.84	24.55	22.49	**27.10**	24.34	26.74	22.08	**26.86**
Preferentially	**29.40**	25.60	16.92	28.09	25.59	**30.63**	14.16	29.62

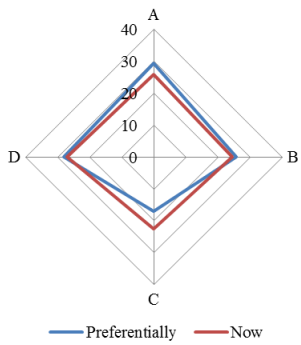

Figure 3. Organisational leadership in enterprises with less than 250 employees

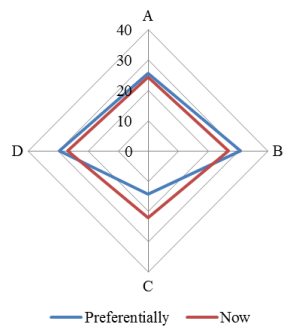

Figure 4. Organisational leadership in enterprises with more than 250 employees

At the present time employees in medium-sized as well as large businesses prefer the alternative D in term of organisational leadership (Figure 3, Figure 4). Management tries to provide a continuous enterprise operation and values such as timeliness, coherence and unity are considered important. Attitudes towards the tendency in corporate culture in medium-sized enterprises and large businesses in Slovakia in the future vary. **Employees of medium-sized enterprises preferred the alternative A as the most suitable for the future. It means they choose mentoring and taking charge of business in term of organisational leadership. On the other hand, employees of large businesses preferred the alternative B for the future with innovation, risk acceptance** (Figure 4).

Table 4. Human resource management in enterprises with the number of employees up to 250 and over 250

	Up to 250 employees				Over 250 employees			
Alternatives	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**
Now	**30.66**	19.75	23.01	26.59	**27.71**	20.43	24.52	27.34
Preferentially	**37.92**	18.69	16.17	27.22	**36.34**	20.95	11.97	30.74

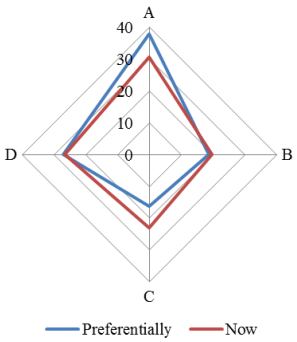

Figure 5. Human resource management in enterprises with less than 250 employees

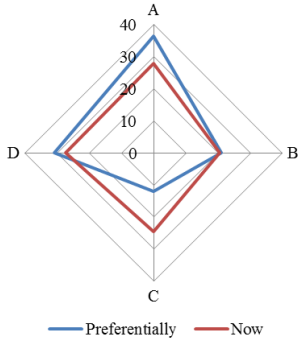

Figure 6. Human resource management in enterprises with more than 250 employees

Within the scope of HRM the opinions of respondents were almost the same. Employees of medium-sized enterprises and large businesses agree on the fact that the alternative A, it means organisation preferring team work, harmony and cooperation, should be applied at the present time as well as in the future (Figure 5, Figure 6).

Organization glue was the fourth analysed area. Data gained in medium-sized enterprises with less than 250 employees are shown in Figure 7. Data gained from employees working in large businesses in Slovakia are summarised in Figure 8.

Table 5. Organization glue in enterprises with the number of employees up to 250 and over 250

	Up to 250 employees				**Over 250 employees**			
Alternatives	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**
Now	27.41	22.24	22.27	**28.09**	26.45	20.34	24.57	**28.64**
Preferentially	**34.40**	22.27	19.72	23.60	**35.55**	24.18	20.18	20.10

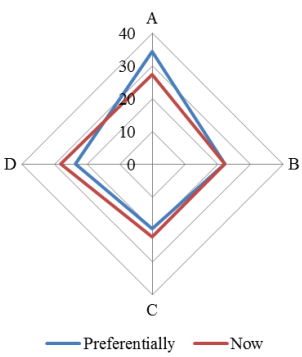

Figure 7. Organization glue in enterprises with less than 250 employees

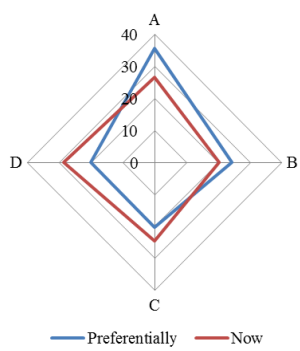

Figure 8. Organization glue in enterprises with more than 250 employees

Following the results we can state that respondents' opinions in the area of organization glue are the same. According to the respondents' opinions the alternative D

dominates medium-sized enterprises as well as large businesses at the present time; it means the attention is given to formal rules and policy necessary for trouble free running of an enterprise.

Respondents in medium-sized enterprises and in large businesses agreed on the alternative A based on loyalty and mutual trust that are necessary for trouble free running of an enterprise, as the most suitable over the next five years.

Table 6. Strategic emphases in enterprises with the number of employees up to 250 and over 250

	Up to 250 employees				**Over 250 employees**			
Alternatives	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**
Now	26.49	22.20	24.56	**26.75**	24.33	20.14	25.33	**30.19**
Preferentially	**34.57**	21.41	21.76	22.26	**30.71**	23.20	22.52	23.54

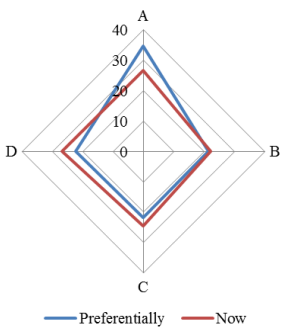

Figure 9. Strategic emphases in enterprises with less than 250 employees

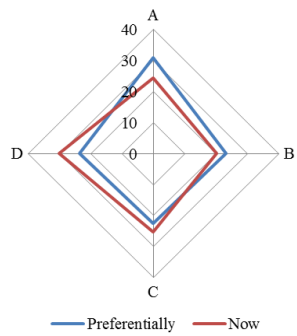

Figure 10. Strategic emphases in enterprises with more than 250 employees

In the area of strategic emphases the alternative D dominates the medium-sized enterprises as well as large businesses at the present time, it means the attention is given to stability and running of an enterprise. Performance, control and operative decisions are key factors for achieving strategic goal. Employees in medium-sized and large businesses ask for greater emphases on human development, trust, openness corresponding with the alternative A.

Table 7. Criteria of success in enterprises with the number of employees up to 250 and over 250

	Up to 250 employees				**Over 250 employees**			
Alternatives	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**
Now	26.32	19.43	22.99	**31.26**	25.33	17.71	23.62	**33.34**
Preferentially	**33.88**	19.00	19.99	27.14	**33.12**	20.06	18.39	28.44

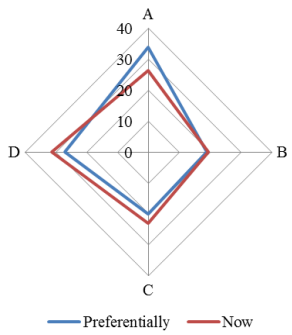

Figure 11. Criteria of success in enterprises with less than 250 employees

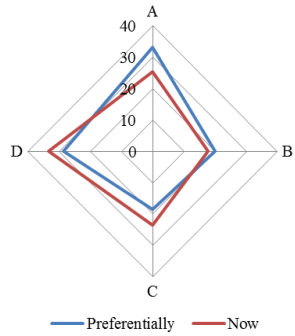

Figure 12. Criteria of success in enterprises with more than 250 employees

At the present time the emphasis in medium-sized enterprises and large businesses is put especially on performance, supply reliability, functioning logistic stream and low-cost production – the alternative D. Respondents in medium-sized enterprises and in large businesses preferred the alternative A, based on success of an enterprise, human resource development, team work and employee recognition, as the most suitable over the next five years.

Profile of the company culture dominant in medium-sized enterprises with employees up to 250 and large businesses with employees 250+ in Slovakia is evaluated following the average summation of individual alternatives and by calculating their average, Table 8.

Table 8. Corporate culture profile in enterprises with the number of employees up to 250 and over 250

	Up to 250 employees				**Over 250 employees**			
Culture profile	**Clan**	**Adhocracy**	**Market**	**Hierarchy**	**Clan**	**Adhocracy**	**Market**	**Hierarchy**
Now	**27.64**	21.14	23.82	27.39	25.38	20.80	25.06	**28.76**
Preferentially	**34.56**	21.06	20.16	24.23	**32.43**	23.17	19.49	24.91

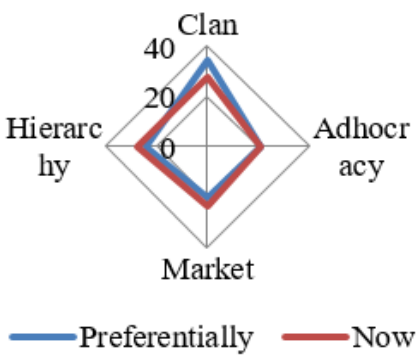

Figure 13. Corporate culture profile in enterprises with less than 250 employees

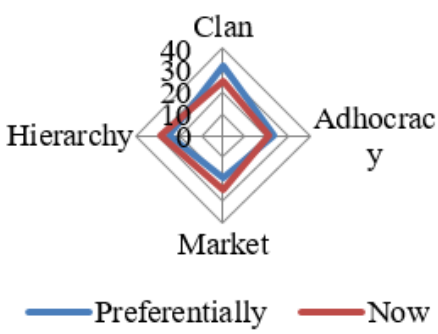

Figure 14. Corporate culture profile in enterprises with more than 250 employees

Following the results of questionnaires on the basis of evaluation methods by Cameron and Quinn, we drew a conclusion that **clan culture, with the highest number of points (Figure 13), is dominant corporate culture in medium-sized enterprises at the present time and in the future.** Friendly work environment is preferred in the clan culture. It is aimed at internal support, however, flexibility as well as the interest in people and customers are considered essential. **The difference can be seen in the perception of corporate culture by employees of large businesses in Slovakia. According to their opinion the hierarchical company culture is that with the highest number of points at the present time.** The basic principle typical for hierarchical corporate culture is to keep within strict rules and regulations (Figure 14). The emphasis is put on effectiveness, supply reliability, meeting deadlines, low costs to ensure free running of an organisation. Enterprises with the number of employees 250+ are focused on internal support. Stability and control are key factors. Employee management is aimed especially at job security.

Perception of the corporate culture for the future is the same. Employees of the medium-sized enterprises as well as large businesses in Slovakia would prefer clan culture over the next five years. It is based on family work environment, family-like atmosphere and mutual support. Leaders and managers are seen as mentors even as step parents. Loyalty, mutual trust and traditions serve as "glue" to integrate the members of the organization. Duties are considered essential. Organisation puts emphasis on long-term contribution of human resource development, ethics and coherence. Team work, harmony and participation are the centre of attention of an organisation.

5. Conclusions

Global crisis as well as further changes in economy influenced the behaviour of many organizations. To be able to react to this situation as well as to ensure the sustainability and continuous development companies have created new ideas how to optimize the company performance (Čambál and Cagáňová, 2010). Actual research (Matraeva *et al.*, 2016; Jaeger and Desmond, 2013; Hitka and Balážová, 2013; Balogh *et al.*, 2011; Hitka and Czajkowska, 2010) show that hierarchical corporate culture is dominant in enterprises, however, in the case of business development success employees would prefer clan culture in the future. The research confirmed this trend as well, especially in large businesses that were analysed. 41 large businesses with the number of employees over 250 were analysed in total. Therefore we can state that corporate culture did not change in term of time and this trend can be seen in large businesses in Slovakia.

On the other hand, we must mention the differences in perception of corporate culture by employees of medium-sized enterprises and large businesses at the present time. As the results show, hierarchical corporate culture dominates large businesses at the present time. However, following the results of the research conducted in 108 medium-sized enterprises we found out that the clan culture dominates these enterprises. It is because of the lower number of employees and thus the atmosphere in the workplace is more family-like. Opinions expressed by respondents are oriented to openness, trust, interest in people respectively. It shows the preference to clan corporate culture. Our outputs confirm the research studies of Hitka *et al.* (2015, 2012) as well.

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