

MAPPING RESILIENCE CHANNELS IN GENERATION Z: A COMPARATIVE PILOT STUDY AMONG POLISH AND CROATIAN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT This article examines preferred mental resilience channels among members of Generation Z entering the labor market in Poland and Croatia. It presents results from a pilot cross-national study based on Mooli Lahad's BASIC Ph model, used here as an exploratory framework for mapping coping-channel preferences rather than for testing causal relations. The study aims to identify descriptive differences in resilience profiles between Polish and Croatian business administration students and to discuss their possible relevance for HRM practice oriented toward well-being and sustainable employability. In the pilot sample, Polish students reported higher mean preferences for the Cognition and Social channels, whereas Croatian students more often favored the Physical and Belief channels. The findings suggest that young people in the two samples may draw on somewhat different resilience resources, which may be useful when designing context-sensitive HRM interventions; however, these implications should be treated as preliminary because the study is exploratory and descriptive in character.

KEYWORDS: *mental resilience; Generation Z; BASIC Ph model; workplace environment perception; coping channels; HRM*

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary labor market environment exerts a strong influence on the attitudes and behavior of Generation Z as it enters professional life. Young people are beginning their careers in conditions shaped by technological change, socio-economic uncertainty, and heightened psychological pressure, which has intensified scholarly and practical interest in mental resilience and employee well-being. Workplace stress has become a pervasive phenomenon, especially among younger cohorts, calling into question the adequacy of traditional HR strategies in supporting employee psy-

chological well-being. At the same time, organizations increasingly recognize that support for mental health is not only a social obligation but also a strategic HRM issue related to retention, engagement, and sustainable employability.

Within this context, the BASIC Ph model developed by Mooli Lahad offers a useful framework for examining different ways in which individuals respond to workplace stress and restore equilibrium. Its six channels—Belief, Affect, Social, Imagination, Cognition, and Physical—allow resilience to be approached as a multidimensional set of preferred coping resources rather than as a single, uniform trait. This perspective is es-

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pecially relevant to Generation Z, whose labor-market expectations combine a desire for security, meaning, flexibility, feedback, and supportive interpersonal relations.

The present article focuses on a pilot comparison of Polish and Croatian business administration students at the threshold of labor-market entry. Its purpose is not to test causal relations between resilience channels, HRM practices, and well-being, but to provide an exploratory map of preferred BASIC Ph channels and selected descriptive differences between the two national samples. In this sense, the article contributes preliminary comparative evidence and offers a basis for future research using more advanced statistical testing and formal instrument validation.

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2.THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Mental resilience as a multidimensional construct

Mental resilience is a multidimensional concept whose meaning varies across psychological, educational, and organizational literatures. In broad terms, it refers to the capacity to adapt positively in the face of adversity, maintain psychological balance, and recover after stress, challenge, or disruption (Ostaszewski, 2014). The literature also distinguishes resilience as a process from resiliency as a more stable set of traits or predispositions (Junik, 2016; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003), which is

useful for clarifying the conceptual background of the present study.

Different authors have framed resilience as a trait, a process, and an outcome – see Table 1. This tripartite understanding is important because it shows that resilience may involve relatively durable individual characteristics, dynamic adaptation under difficult conditions (Wagnild & Young, 1993), and observable effects of protective processes (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). In organizational settings, resilience is also discussed beyond the individual level, including team resilience and organizational resilience (McEwen & Boyd, 2017; Denyer, 2017), which underscores the relevance of social and contextual conditions in strengthening adaptive capacity.

For the present study, particular importance is attached to Lahad’s (2017) understanding of resilience as growth through adversity and to his effort to identify distinct channels through which people cope with stress. Given the exploratory character of the study, the theoretical framework is used primarily to justify the relevance of the BASIC Ph model for describing coping preferences, not to test the full explanatory scope of resilience theory.

2.2. The BASIC Ph model

The BASIC Ph model is one of the most practical frameworks for understanding the multidimensional nature of coping and resilience. According to Lahad (1993),

TABLE 1. Selected Definitions of Mental Resilience

Author	Definitions of Mental Resilience
S.S. Luthar, D. Cicchetti B.Becker	A dynamic process of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity.
A. S. Masten	Ordinary magic – common yet powerful adaptive processes that enable growth under unfavorable conditions.
M. Rutter	A mechanism that modifies the negative effects of risk exposure.
J. Block, A.M. Kremen	A flexible capacity to adapt to changing circumstances.
S.C. Kobasa	A set of traits enabling the maintenance of health in the face of stress: control, commitment, and perceiving difficulties as challenges.
S. Fergus, M. A. Zimmerman	A process of overcoming the negative effects of risk, coping with trauma, and avoiding adverse consequences.
P. Clough, D. Strycharczyk	A psychological characteristic consisting of four components: control, commitment, challenge, and confidence.
M. Lahad	The ability to adapt and recover in the face of stress, challenges, difficulties, and setbacks.

SOURCE: Authors’ own elaboration based on: 1. Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000); 2. Masten, A. S. (2001); 3. Rutter, M. (1987); 4. Block, J., & Kremen, A. M. (1996); 5. Kobasa, S. C. (1979); 6. Fergus, S., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2005); 7. Clough, P., & Strycharczyk, D. (2015); 8. Lahad, M. (1993, 2017).

every individual can draw on six channels of response to stress: Belief, Affect, Social, Imagination, Cognition, and Physical. The acronym BASIC Ph is formed from the initial letters of the channel names. People may use all six, but usually in different proportions depending on personality, life experience, and context.

The **Belief** channel relates to values, identity, spirituality, and meaning-making. **Affect** concerns the experience and expression of emotions. The **Social** channel refers to social support and interpersonal relationships, while **Imagination** involves symbolic and creative transformation of difficult experiences. **Cognition** is linked to analysis, planning, understanding, and problem-solving, whereas the **Physical** channel concerns bodily regulation through movement, rest, somatic routines, or health-related practices.

The model is useful in organizational and educational contexts because it allows practitioners to think about resilience support in more differentiated ways. For example, mentoring and teamwork may strengthen the Social channel, clear information and planning support the Cognition channel, and health-promoting and recovery-oriented practices can strengthen the Physical channel. This makes BASIC Ph a suitable exploratory framework for analyzing resilience preferences among young people preparing to enter employment.

2.3. Resilience, HRM, and Generation Z

Contemporary HRM increasingly emphasizes not only productivity and competence development but also psychological well-being, autonomy, social support, and meaningful work (Borowska-Pietrzak, 2023). In this perspective, employee resilience is shaped not only by individual predispositions but also by organizational conditions such as role clarity, trust, supportive leadership, manageable workloads, and opportunities for development (Juchnowicz, 2014; Listwan, 2010; Hamel, 2004). Sustainable HRM and well-being-oriented HRM therefore provide an important interpretive background for this study.

Generation Z is especially relevant in this context because members of this cohort are entering work with strong digital competence, high expectations regarding authenticity and flexibility, and pronounced sensitivity to stress, overload, and the quality of workplace relationships (Czyczerska et al., 2020). They value rapid feedback, transparent communication, developmental opportunities, and a sense of meaning at work (Fuchs, Lorenz, & Fuchs, 2024; Kawka, & Borovac-Zekan, 2024; Zavodna & Falch, 2022). These features make the question of preferred resilience channels particularly important for HRM practice, especially when organizations aim to tailor support to early-career employees.

3. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND: GENERATION Z IN POLAND AND CROATIA

Generation Z is entering the labor market in both Poland and Croatia under conditions of demographic change, labor shortages, and shifting expectations about work. In both countries, young people value job security, development opportunities, workplace flexibility, and positive interpersonal relations, but they also face barriers related to precarious employment, labor-market uncertainty, and changing organizational expectations.

In Croatia, the labor market has been shaped by demographic decline, youth emigration, and continuing difficulties in youth employment, even though employers increasingly recognize the need to adapt to Gen Z expectations through mentoring, flexibility, and supportive work environments (Perić et al., 2021; Pekica, 2020; Kawka & Borovac-Zekan, 2023; HR Days, 2023). Croatian studies cited above also suggest the importance of meaningful work, social connection, and interpersonal openness among young people entering employment.

In Poland, Generation Z is also entering a labor market marked by demographic contraction, structural shifts, and tensions between skills shortages and youth insecurity (EUROSTAT, 2025). Polish evidence presented in relevant papers (Randstad Report, 2025; Pracuj.pl, 2025; Hays Poland, 2025) highlights the importance of financial stability, development opportunities, work-life balance, transparent communication, and supportive relations at work.

Because the respondents in the present study were business administration students from the University of Gdańsk and the University of Split, the findings should be interpreted in light of their educational profile, which may heighten awareness of organizational processes, leadership, and HRM practices.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1. Study design and aim

This study employed a cross-sectional pilot survey design. Its aim was primarily exploratory: to map preferred BASIC Ph resilience channels among selected representatives of Generation Z and to compare descriptive patterns between Polish and Croatian management students. The study also examined respondents' perceptions of workplace environment, selected HRM and empowerment practices, and life satisfaction and agency indicators.

The article does not test causal relations between resilience channels and the other dimensions exam-

ined, nor does it formally test statistical differences between the two national subsamples. Instead, it reports descriptive patterns intended to support interpretation, discussion, and the future refinement of the research design.

At the same time, the exploratory aim of this study may be interpreted as an initial step toward extending the theoretical discussion on the micro-foundations of Human Capital Management in the context of generational change. In particular, the sensitivity of Generation Z and their differentiated resilience-channel preferences may be seen as signals of an emerging shift toward a more individualized, experience-based, and well-being-oriented HCM paradigm. This perspective aligns with recent cross-cultural approaches that call for a rethinking of Human Capital Management considering digitalization, cultural diversity, and changing employee expectations, especially among Generation Z entering the labor market (Kawka, Goić, Contreiras, & Bento, 2025).

In this sense, mapping resilience channels in conjunction with life satisfaction at the early career stage may serve as a preliminary step in identifying the behavioral and psychological microfoundations through which Generation Z interprets work and organizational experience. Although the present study does not test causal mechanisms, the observed descriptive patterns may inform future theory development and empirical modeling, particularly in relation to designing HR practices that simultaneously optimize organizational processes and support retention strategies tailored to Generation Z. From this perspective, the BASIC Ph framework offers a lens for identifying differentiated

coping-channel preferences, which—when interpreted alongside life satisfaction and agency indicators—can be translated into targeted HCM practices. These, in turn, may contribute to shaping work environments better aligned with Generation Z expectations and, consequently, to strengthening retention, although such relationships remain to be empirically verified in future research.

4.2. Sample

The study was conducted among 361 students from economics and management faculties at the University of Gdańsk in Poland and the University of Split in Croatia. The Polish subsample included 205 respondents, while the Croatian subsample included 156 respondents. Women constituted the majority in both groups, and most respondents were enrolled in bachelor’s programs in business administration, though master’s students were also represented.

A substantial majority of respondents had work experience during their studies. At the time of the survey, around 70% of respondents in both groups were employed, and more than 95% had worked at some point during their studies. The main difference concerned the form of employment: in Poland, civil-law contracts were dominant, while in Croatia student contracts and internships were much more common.

These sample characteristics are important for interpretation. Because the respondents were business administration students and most had at least some employment experience, their answers likely reflect an early-career perspective shaped by both academic

TABLE 2. Research sample

	Total Poland (UG) n = 205 [%]	Total Croatia (UNIST) n = 156 [%]
Gender – female	76,63	73,62
Gender – male	21,53	25,05
Mode of study – bachelor’s degree	70,9	79,54
Mode of study – master’s degree	29,1	20,46
Employed /Working/ at the time of the survey	70,05	68,54
Employed /Working/ at any time during the course of studies	96,42	95,98
Form of employment – employment contract	15,78	14,95
Form of employment – civil law contract	59,27	2,01
Form of employment – student contract/student internship	7,26	67,98

SOURCES: Authors’ own research.

exposure to management topics and practical contact with workplaces.

4.3. Instrument

The study used a specially designed proprietary survey instrument based on literature in HRM and management psychology (Borowska-Pietrzak et al., 2025) and on the BASIC Ph model (Lahad, 1993; 2017). The questionnaire addressed four areas: identification of preferred resilience channels, assessment of workplace environment expectations and experiences, diagnosis of empowerment-related dimensions, and quality-of-life and agency indicators.

The instrument was developed for this pilot stage in order to gather exploratory comparative data. At this stage, the analysis does not provide a formal psychometric validation of the instrument, which limits the strength of inferences that can be drawn from the observed patterns. This issue should therefore be treated as a central limitation and a priority for future research.

4.4. Data analysis

The present paper reports descriptive statistics only. The empirical analysis is based primarily on mean scores, frequencies, and comparative descriptive interpretation of the two subsamples. Inferential testing of between-group differences, correlations, or structural relations between BASIC Ph channels and HRM-related variables was not conducted in this phase of the research and is therefore not reported in this paper.

This methodological decision matters for interpretation. The findings presented below should therefore be understood as descriptive tendencies in a pilot sample, not as statistically verified differences or causal relations.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Preferred BASIC Ph channels

The descriptive results (Table 3) indicate that the most frequently preferred resilience channels among Polish students were Cognition, Social, and Imagination. In the Croatian sample, the most prominent channels were Physical, Social, and Cognition/Imagination. The largest descriptive difference between the two groups concerned the Belief channel, which had a markedly lower mean in the Polish sample than in the Croatian one.

These patterns suggest that Polish respondents more often relied on analytical and relational coping resources, whereas Croatian respondents more often emphasized physical regulation and value-related or meaning-related resources. The Affect channel was relatively important in both groups, which indicates that emotional processing may also be relevant for young employees in both national contexts.

Because only descriptive analysis was used, these findings should be interpreted cautiously. They indicate observable differences in preferred channel profiles within the pilot sample, but we cannot claim that they demonstrate statistically tested differences between countries.

TABLE 3. Results of mapping preference choices of a selected Generation Z group regarding mental resilience building channels using the BASIC Ph method

Channels in the BASIC Ph Method	Total Poland (UG) n= 205 Mean channel preference choice scale: [0-36]	Total Croatia (UNIST) n= 156 Mean channel preference choice scale: [0-36]	Total Poland (UG) Level of differentiation in channel choice results	Total Croatia (UNIST) Level of differentiation in channel choice results
B - Belief	7,20	11,16	92%	63%
A - Affect	12,46	11,12	47%	33%
S - Social	14,02	13,36	57%	49%
I - Imaginary	12,97	12,49	39%	51%
C - Cognition	14,86	12,49	44%	51%
PH- Physical	12,88	13,76	54%	41%

5.2. Workplace environment perception

The respondents answered the questions in this group on a five-degree response scale: Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Always. Students from both countries generally assessed their work environments moderately positively (Table 4). In both groups, very

high positive responses concerned role clarity, task clarity, and knowledge of what was expected at work, which suggests that clarity of duties and goals is an important condition for early-career respondents. Respondents in both countries also relatively often reported that they could count on help from colleagues.

At the same time, some descriptive differences

TABLE 4. Assessment of the importance of factors shaping a friendly work environment

	Total Poland (UG) (n = 205) [%]	Total Croatia (UNIST) (n = 156) [%]
I know what is expected of me at work (YES).	92.21	93.34
I can decide on my own when to take breaks at work (YES).	60.69	47.65
Different groups require different things from me, which are hard to combine (NO).	42.06	41.10
I know how to carry out the tasks assigned to me (YES).	88.37	89.98
I experience unpleasantness at work in the form of rude remarks or behaviors (NO).	70.48	63.67
I am assigned deadlines that are impossible to meet (NO).	78.27	67.32
If work becomes too difficult, I can count on help from a colleague (YES).	73.11	67.36
I receive constructive comments and feedback on my work (YES).	39.06	43.35
I receive constructive comments and feedback on my work (NO).	26.15	19.65
I must work very intensively (YES).	48.63	40.67
I decide on my own pace of work (YES).	36.69	37.34
I decide on my own pace of work (NO).	32.52	28.35
My duties are clearly defined (YES).	73.84	78.67
I am forced to neglect some duties because I have too much work (NO).	44.73	38.69
The goals of my department are clearly defined (YES).	72.69	73.36
There is friction or conflict between employees (NO).	60.58	48.69
I decide on my own how I perform my work (YES).	43.79	32.62
I decide on my own how I perform my work (NO).	32.63	28.36
I am unable to take sufficient breaks at work (NO).	59.00	39.69
I know how my role fits into the overall goals of the organization (YES).	66.00	67.36
I am pressured to work long hours (NO).	69.01	69.32
I can decide what I do at work (NO).	45.53	35.99
I can decide what I do at work (YES).	17.45	27.98
I must work at a fast pace (YES).	49.63	36.66
I am a victim of harassment or bullying at work (NO).	9.94	9.01
I have unrealistic and tight deadlines (YES).	21.20	28.90
I know that my supervisor will always help me if I have a problem at work (YES).	57.43	69.70

(YES - percentage of respondents who answered "often" or "always")

(NO - percentage of respondents who answered "never" or "rarely")

SOURCES: Authors' own research.

emerged. Polish students more often reported work intensity, fast pace, and difficulty related to deadlines, but they also somewhat more often indicated autonomy regarding how work was performed. Croatian students appeared to report somewhat lower pace-related pressure but also lower autonomy in some dimensions of task execution***.

Constructive feedback emerged as an area that still requires improvement in both groups. The data also suggest that support from supervisors and the ability to ask for help are unevenly distributed, which has implications for resilience-supportive HRM practices.

5.3. HRM and empowerment perceptions

The respondents answered the questions in this group on a five-degree response scale: Strongly disagree / Disagree / Neutral / Agree / Strongly agree. The descriptive results (Table 5) indicate that both groups value respectful treatment, supportive colleagues, and participation in workplace processes. Croatian students more often indicated consultation with management about changes and greater room for co-decision-making in some areas, while Polish students evaluated access to information and opportunities to ask questions to management more positively.

TABLE 5. Assessment of HR/Empowerment program degree in the workplace

	Total Poland (UG) (n = 205) [%]	Total Croatia (UNIST) (n = 156) [%]
I am respected in the workplace (YES).	66.64	77.32
I receive help and support from colleagues (YES).	76.74	76.33
Management always consults employees about changes at work (YES).	41.32	56.38
Management always consults employees about changes at work (NO).	26.89	13.62
I can, to some extent, decide how I work (YES).	52.69	64.31
I have opportunities to ask management questions about changes at work (YES).	73.64	59.36
I can talk to my supervisor about issues that have worried or upset me at work (YES).	52.90	55.70
My working hours can be flexible (YES).	49.22	50.01
My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems (YES).	58.63	55.99
When changes are introduced at work, I know how they will affect daily operations (YES).	49.00	61.66
I receive support when performing emotionally difficult work (YES).	44.37	51.38
Work relationships are tense (YES).	9.31	24.63
Work relationships are tense (NO).	61.38	47.66
My supervisor encourages and motivates me to work (YES).	59.07	58.34
My supervisor encourages and motivates me to work (NO).	29.63	11.64

(YES - percentage of respondents who answered "agree" or "strongly agree")

(NO - percentage of respondents who answered "strongly disagree" or "disagree")

SOURCES: Authors' own research.

*** One of the reasons for these differences may be the form of engagement dominant in each country. As mentioned earlier, in Croatia, engagement based on student contracts dominates, which probably places less responsibility on students, but also less autonomy at work. On the other hand, in Poland, 'civil law contract' dominates, which probably means greater responsibility at work, but also more demanding tasks and higher expectations.

In both groups, collegial support was rated relatively highly. However, support in emotionally demanding work and systematic developmental feedback appear less consistently available, which suggests that organizations may need to strengthen these areas if they want to support young employees more effectively. More broadly, the results indicate that Generation Z expects both clarity of rules and a meaningful degree of agency in daily work – which may translate into a quest for a greater sense of security and predictability at work.

5.4. Life satisfaction and agency

118 The pilot data show (Table 6) higher average ratings among Polish students on most reported life-satisfaction and agency indicators, including health, sleep, self-esteem, personal relationships, support from friends, overall quality of life, coping confidence, and belief in solving problems through effort. Croatian respondents also reported positive evaluations, but the Polish means were higher across most dimensions presented in the Table 6. The smallest difference concerned life meaning and purpose, where both groups reported relatively high values and the gap was narrower. The table presents ranking values, where higher values indicate greater perceived importance of the attribute.

Juxtaposing these data with results concerning BASIC Ph channels suggests that, in the Polish sample,

stronger Cognition and Social preferences appeared alongside higher reported self-esteem, optimism, sense of influence, agency, and life satisfaction, while in the Croatian sample stronger Belief and Physical preferences appeared alongside relatively greater emphasis on meaning and psychophysical balance. This could mean that supporting the Cognition and Social channels may have real implications for individual well-being, which is particularly significant for HRM practitioners designing work environments and actions supporting psychological resilience. These findings should be regarded as a descriptive co-occurrence rather than a tested relationship. As noted earlier, this work does not test whether these patterns are statistically associated, so they should be interpreted as exploratory tendencies.

6. DISCUSSION

In this discussion, it is certainly necessary to emphasize once again the exploratory nature of the study. Rather than testing explanatory mechanisms, the findings provide an initial descriptive map of how different resilience channels may be more visible in two national student samples and how these profiles may be interpreted through the BASIC Ph framework.

The Polish sample showed a profile centered more strongly on Cognition and Social resources. Within the logic of the BASIC Ph model, this may indicate a

TABLE 6. Response results – assessment of life satisfaction degree

	Total Poland (UG) (n = 205)	Total Croatia (UNIST) (n = 156)
How satisfied are you with your health?	6.32*	4.68
How satisfied are you with your sleep?	5.30	3.93
How satisfied are you with yourself?	5.85	4.55
How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?	6.04	4.66
How satisfied are you with the support you receive from friends?	6.92	4.88*
How would you rate the overall quality of your life?	6.58	4.86
How much do you enjoy life?	6.29	4.85
To what extent do you feel that your life has meaning and purpose?	5.93	5.07*
I have high self-esteem.	5.44	4.83
I am usually able to handle whatever happens to me.	6.99*	4.82
I can solve most problems if I put in enough effort.	7.42*	5.29*

Scale: [1 – very low rating, 9 – very high rating]

* - three highest results of answers for particular country

SOURCES: Authors' own research.

stronger reliance on analysis, planning, task orientation, relational support, and teamwork when dealing with stress or uncertainty. The same sample also reported higher mean values in life satisfaction and agency indicators, which may suggest that analytical and relational coping resources are especially salient in this group; however, the present paper does not test whether these descriptive patterns are statistically significant or whether the variables are empirically related.

The Croatian sample, by contrast, showed relatively stronger emphasis on the Physical and Belief channels. Interpreted through BASIC Ph, this pattern may point to the importance of bodily regulation, balance, values, identity, and meaning-making in the ways Croatian respondents manage difficulty or stress. The somewhat stronger role of participation and co-decision-making in the Croatian responses on HRM, and empowerment items may also fit with a work context in which agency is experienced through involvement, recognition, and alignment between personal and organizational values.

At the same time, some common patterns across both samples are at least as important as the differences. In both countries, respondents valued role clarity, clearly defined goals, collegial help, and supportive relationships. This is consistent with broader literature cited in the paper, which portrays Generation Z as expecting transparent communication, developmental feedback, meaningful work, and psychologically safe workplace relationships.

One of the clearest practical observations concerns feedback and emotional support. In both groups, access to constructive comments and support in emotionally demanding work appears less robust than role clarity or collegial assistance. From a BASIC Ph perspective, this may matter because regular feedback and emotionally safe communication can help activate not only the Social channel but also the Affect channel, both of which are relevant to adaptive stress regulation among young employees.

Taken together, the findings support a view of resilience-oriented HRM as a multi-channel endeavor. For respondents whose profile is more cognitive and social, organizations may need to emphasize clear communication, transparency, collaborative learning, mentoring, and peer support. For respondents whose profile gives more weight to belief and physical regulation, organizations may need to pay greater attention to meaningful work, value congruence, participation, sustainable work rhythms, and somatic well-being. These implications are promising, but in light of the pilot design of this research, they should be treated as provisional and hypothesis-generating rather than definitive.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on a cross-sectional pilot design and self-report data, which restricts causal interpretation and may introduce common-method bias. Second, the sample consists exclusively of business administration students from two universities, which limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader Generation Z workforce.

Third, the present article reports descriptive analyses only and does not test statistical differences between the Polish and Croatian subsamples or associations between BASIC Ph channels and HRM-related variables. As a result, the discussion must remain cautious and should not be read as evidence of verified correlations or causal pathways. Fourth, the research instrument used at this pilot stage was not formally psychometrically validated in the present study.

Future research should therefore proceed in several directions. It should include larger and more diverse samples, extend beyond student populations, assess the reliability and validity of the instrument, and apply inferential statistics to examine whether observed differences between countries are statistically significant. At later stages, more advanced analyses could also examine associations between resilience channels, workplace perceptions, empowerment, and well-being in cross-cultural contexts.

8. CONCLUSION

This pilot study provides preliminary cross-national evidence on how business administration students in Poland and Croatia describe preferred BASIC Ph resilience channels at the threshold of labor-market entry. It offers a preliminary but distinct “resilience map” Generation Z profiles in Poland and Croatia. In the Polish sample, Cognition and Social channels were more prominent, while in the Croatian sample Physical and Belief channels were more visible. Across both groups, respondents valued role clarity, supportive collegial relations, and a workplace environment that offers both structure and room for agency.

For organizations, this means the need for hybrid, multi-channel HRM: combining clarity and learning (Cognition), relationships and cooperation (Social), meaning and values (Belief), and somatic well-being (Physical), while simultaneously strengthening safe emotional expression (Affect) and creative symbolization (Imagination). A work environment designed in line with these guidelines increases the chance of developing sustainable resilience among young employees and their effective functioning under conditions of uncertainty.

The main scientific contribution of the article is clearly exploratory. It offers an initial comparative map that can inform future validation of the research instrument and more rigorous testing of relationships between resilience channels, work expectations, and HRM practices. The practical contribution lies in showing that resilience-oriented HRM for Generation Z may

benefit from a differentiated, multi-channel approach combining clarity, support, meaning, participation, and well-being-oriented work design. These implications, however, should be treated as preliminary until they are tested in broader and methodologically stronger studies.

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MAPIRANJE KANALA OTPORNOSTI U GENERACIJI Z: KOMPARATIVNA PILOT
STUDIJA POLJSKIH I HRVATSKIH STUDENATA

SAŽETAK

Ovaj članak istražuje kanale i strategije mentalne otpornosti koje preferiraju pripadnici generacije Z koji ulaze na tržište rada u Poljskoj i Hrvatskoj. Članak prezentira rezultate međunacionalnog pilot istraživanja temeljenog na Mooli Lahadovom BASIC Ph modelu, koji se ovdje koristi kao istraživački okvir za mapiranje preferiranih kanala suočavanja, a ne za testiranje uzročno-posljedičnih odnosa. Cilj studije je identificirati deskriptivne razlike u profilima otpornosti između poljskih i hrvatskih studenata poslovne ekonomije i raspraviti njihovu moguću relevantnost za prakse upravljanja ljudskim resursima usmjerene na dobrobit i održivu zapošljivost. U uzorku pilot istraživanja, poljski su studenti češće preferirali kanale kognitivnog i socijalnog, dok su hrvatski studenti češće favorizirali kanale fizičkog i vjerskog suočavanja. Nalazi upućuju na to da mladi ljudi u dva poduzorka mogu koristiti donekle različite resurse otpornosti, što može biti korisno pri oblikovanju kontekstualno osjetljivih HRM praksi; međutim, ove implikacije treba tretirati kao preliminarne zbog istraživačkog i deskriptivnog karaktera studije.

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KLJUČNE RIJEČI: *mentalna otpornost; Generacija Z; BASIC Ph model; percepcija radnog okruženja; kanali suočavanja; HRM*

