THE ROLE OF MANAGERS IN BUILDING TEAM RESILIENCE: THE CASE OF MULTICULTURAL TEAMS

Agnieszka WALCZAK-SKAŁECKA[1*], Kamil SKAŁECKI[2], Michalina OGIŃSKA[3]

[1] Lublin University of Technology; a.skalecka@pollub.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-1386-2158
[2] Lublin University of Technology; k.skalecki@pollub.pl, ORCID: 0009-0007-5585-095X
[3] Lublin University of Technology; m.oginska@pollub.pl, ORCID: 0009-0003-3883-0886
* Correspondence author

Purpose: This article aims to present the study's findings exploring the role of managers in building the resilience of multicultural teams.

Design/methodology/approach: The empirical study was conducted using in-depth individual interviews (IDI). The sample included 10 middle-level managers leading multicultural teams in London. The research was conducted between April and May 2025.

Findings: The research results indicate that managers perceive communication as the greatest challenge in multicultural teams. At the same time, creating conditions that enhance communication, particularly through open exchange of ideas, transparency, constructive feedback, and the promotion of trust and solidarity, is crucial for strengthening team resilience. Equally important is the manager's developmental orientation and their active efforts to foster this mindset among all team members.

Research limitations/implications: The primary limitation of the study is its small sample size, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future research could be conducted in other cultural and organizational contexts.

Practical implications: The study provides managers with concrete guidelines on how to build resilience in teams through fostering open communication, trust, and conscious management of differences. The findings can be used to design more effective training programs for leaders, which may contribute to greater efficiency and employee satisfaction in diverse teams.

Social implications: The study results may contribute to a better understanding of the role of managers in building resilience in diverse teams, as well as greater acceptance of diversity itself, which can be perceived as a resource. This, in turn, can support the development of more open and inclusive work environments.

Originality/value: The study explores the perspective of multicultural team managers, which can be considered extreme examples of diversity in teams. Examining such highly diverse teams provides valuable insights into managerial strategies aimed at building resilience in teams situated at the far end of the diversity spectrum.

Keywords: team resilience, team management, multiculturalism, team diversity, managerial attitude.

Category of the paper: Research Paper.

1. Introduction

Contemporary teams and organizations face increasingly rapid and complex challenges. The philosophy of continuous growth does not allow for pauses on the development path, which requires significant resources, primarily from individuals who constitute the source of created value. In the knowledge economy, people remain the principal source of value. Therefore, ensuring conditions under which individuals, teams, and organizations can work effectively and withstand successive disruptions appears to be of critical importance today. One of the qualities that can and should be developed in this regard is resilience. Resilience is one of the factors influencing task performance effectiveness (Meneghel, Martínez et al., 2016; Meneghel, Salanova et al., 2016; Varajão et al., 2023) and is also associated with a sense of meaning at work and with employee well-being (Alliger et al., 2015; Tugade, Fredrickson, 2004).

Resilience is a multidimensional and multilevel concept. Team diversity within an organization is one of the factors that can potentially support the development of organizational resilience (Duchek et al., 2020).

The present study focuses on the individual perspective of managers leading multicultural teams. Team resilience, diversity, and the challenges of multicultural teams have been explored for years. However, much remains to be discovered at the intersection of these areas. In teams characterized by high levels of diversity, such as multicultural teams, the number of factors disrupting everyday work is significantly greater - even in the absence of external turbulence or crises. Multiculturalism itself can be viewed as a lens through which to examine the challenges faced by contemporary leaders in their efforts to build resilience within internally diverse teams.

2. From team diversity to its resilience

The concept of organizational resilience has emerged from a broader understanding of resilience, which originally stems from psychology. This is highly relevant for management studies, as the individual perspective is necessary (Hartwig et al., 2020), although not sufficient, to fully comprehend the complexity of the phenomenon (Stoverink et al., 2020). Resilience is one of the essential characteristics of individuals, teams, organizations, and systems, enabling adaptation, recovery, the maintenance of performance, and other effective ways of coping with adversity, without falling into persistent, long-term regressive behavior patterns (Alliger et al., 2015; Bowers et al., 2017; Chapman et al., 2020; Hartwig et al., 2020; Home III, Orr, 1997).

Organizational and team resilience are not simply the sum of the individual resilience of the people who create these teams or entire organizations (Bowers et al., 2017; Chapman et al., 2020; Hartwig et al., 2020). Team resilience results from both individual characteristics and the processes occurring between individuals. Therefore, resilience should be examined not only as a static outcome, which can be defined as a capacity or characteristic. Above all, resilience is an ongoing process. Individuals, teams, and organizations develop resilience through a dynamic process of interaction with environments that are often unpredictable and difficult to understand[1]. This occurs through building trust and solidarity, shared leadership, open communication, and the cultivation of team cohesion, without implying the formation of monolithic groups at the team or organizational level (Brykman, King, 2021; Mitchell et al., 2025; Morgan et al., 2015; Pavez et al., 2021; Varajão et al., 2021). The more variable the reality, the more important it becomes to understand the factors that support the development and maintenance of resilience. Resilience cannot be regarded as a permanently acquired individual or organizational competency that requires no further attention. Its benefits are hard to overestimate, including the maintenance or improvement of task performance, innovation, employee well-being, and even reliability (Hartmann et al., 2020; Hartwig et al., 2020; Meneghel, Martínez et al., 2016; Varajão et al., 2023).

2.1. Multiculturalism as one dimension of team diversity

Contemporary organizations, particularly those operating globally or located in multicultural urban areas, increasingly leverage the potential of multicultural teams, recognizing them as a key factor in stimulating creativity and innovation. However, managing multicultural teams requires substantial engagement and effort from both team members and leaders. "Appropriate management" can serve as an effective means of overcoming distrust, stress, and lack of cohesion, thereby enabling better utilization of team diversity (Bueno, Freitas, 2015; Freitas, 2008). Cultural diversity fosters creativity by allowing team members to perceive problems from multiple perspectives, leading to a greater number of solutions and unconventional approaches. Collaboration in such an environment also promotes experiences that contribute to individual professional development and overall organizational effectiveness (Chevrier, 2004; Freitas, 2008). Such a team structure allows more effective responses to dynamic and complex challenges (Bueno, Freitas, 2015) while simultaneously shaping team and organizational resilience. The effective functioning of diverse teams (e.g., multicultural teams) requires the development of efficient communication channels, which is a fundamental task for the manager. Communication challenges in teams go beyond language barriers,

---

[1] Describing the complexity of socio-economic reality today is so challenging that both practitioners and researchers use acronyms to facilitate communication about this complexity and unpredictability, for example: VUCA – Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity, BANI – Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, Incomprehensible, TUNA – Turbulent, Uncertain, Novel, Ambiguous, RUPT – Rapid, Unpredictable, Paradoxical, Tangled.

also encompassing differences in nonverbal communication deeply rooted in cultural contexts (Heinz, 2014). These contexts can be analyzed across multiple dimensions. Diversity related to multiculturalism can concern several dimensions (Hofstede et al., 2011):

- power distance, which refers to the extent to which members of a society accept and reinforce inequalities in power distribution; within a team, this manifests as variation ranging from unconditional acceptance of organizational hierarchy to collaborative interactions between employees at different hierarchical levels on a partnership basis,
- individualism versus collectivism, which may be reflected in a team in differing degrees of emphasis on individual autonomy versus group belonging,
- masculinity, which relates to the individual importance placed on success and achievement; at the opposite end of the cultural variation continuum lies concern for others and cooperation,
- uncertainty avoidance, which translates into the degree of risk acceptance and openness to innovation,
- long-term orientation, reflected in future-focused behaviors, versus short-term orientation, which emphasizes the present and the past, including traditions,
- indulgence, which in a team may range from strict adherence to social norms to joyful expression and the satisfaction of immediate individual needs.

Multiculturalism within a team thus serves as an excellent example of diversity across multiple aspects of team functioning, ranging from interactions among its members to the ways tasks are performed. Such diversity poses challenges, particularly for the direct supervisor. However, it can become a source of strength and resilience, provided that both individual and team potential are managed appropriately.

2.2. Diversity and multiculturalism as sources of team resilience – the role of the manager

Managers play a crucial role in building team resilience by influencing employees' individual attitudes, managing group dynamics, and implementing organizational practices. Strategic human resource management should focus on modifying leadership methods, procedures, and personnel policies. Such actions aim to develop core employee competencies, which directly contribute to strengthening the entire organization's resilience (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Psychological safety fosters employee engagement, innovation, and team effectiveness, ultimately leading to organizational success. The manager's role is to encourage and support processes such as free exchange of ideas, expression of emotions, and constructive feedback, as well as identifying and leveraging employees' strengths (Ashkanasy, 2003; Kinnunen et al., 2024). An effective manager of a multicultural team thus acts as a mediator, facilitator, and architect of group processes, managing the process and directing members' potential toward the completion of assigned tasks (Heinz, 2014). The same applies to other dimensions of team member diversity. It is the leader's actions that most strongly influence the

team's adaptive capacity, recovery of energy and potential, and development. Even if a team consists of individuals who maintain their own personal resilience, without managerial involvement, these individual practices often cannot be translated into the team space.

In addition, individual leader resilience appears to be important for promoting resilient behavior by demonstrating ways of coping with difficult situations (Malini et al., 2025; McEwen, 2022). A leader can also influence team resilience by developing and promoting team members' attitudes related to trust, solidarity, open communication, and a positive team atmosphere (Meneghel, Salanova et al., 2016; Pavez et al., 2021; Varajão et al., 2021). Social support climate, team coordination (Morgan et al., 2013; Stephens et al., 2013), and other social resources within the team (Meneghel, Martínez et al., 2016), which should be at least partially managed by the manager, are also important for team resilience. Furthermore, the manager is also a key agent in giving meaning to the team's activities, which positively impacts its resilience (Talat, Riaz, 2020).

Among the specific actions a team leader can undertake to enhance the team's resilience potential are creating opportunities for collective learning, reflection, and experience sharing (McCray et al., 2016; Nzinga et al., 2021). Mindfulness training, emotional intelligence development, and communication skills training may also prove beneficial (Malini et al., 2025; McEwen, 2022; Nzinga et al., 2021). As previously noted, team resilience is linked to both team effectiveness and the quality of group experiences. The manner in which leadership is enacted within the team plays a crucial role in promoting and developing team resilience. Transformational and servant leadership are conducive models in this regard (Dimas et al., 2018; Dwidienawati et al., 2022; McEwen, 2022; Siddiquei et al., 2025).

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research design and context

To understand managers' perspectives on their roles in building team resilience, the individual in-depth interviews (IDI) method was employed. This approach allows for the exploration of personal perspectives and ways of understanding a specific segment of the participants' reality (Glinka, Czakon, 2021). It is therefore not a method suitable for uncovering broader patterns or mechanisms, although at various stages of research projects, it can help refine assumptions, adjust directions of inquiry, or reveal actors' motivations. As a standalone method, particularly in areas where systematic research is still lacking, it enables a closer understanding of the situation and the identification of its essential components. Interpretation of data collected in this manner can also contribute to uncovering important constitutive or identity-related work undertaken by the study participants (Alvesson, 2003).

In multicultural teams, it is important to be particularly sensitive to individual interpretations and even more cautious about the researcher's own beliefs. To take these issues into account, discussions were held within the research team at every stage of the study. During the scenario preparation stage, the wording of individual questions was discussed in order to ensure maximum neutrality and openness.

The research conducted aimed to understand how the actions of managers of multicultural teams guide these teams toward greater resilience. The findings from such a study can serve as a basis for expanding the practices already employed by middle-level managers overseeing various teams.

The research sample was selected purposefully. The survey involved 10 male and female middle managers who manage culturally diverse teams. To ensure the greatest possible diversity, participants were recruited from London, where the level of cultural diversity is significantly higher than in Polish enterprises. Detailed information on the subjects is provided in Table 1.

Table 1.
Detailed data on the surveyed group of managers

CODE	Gender	Industry	Team size
Id1	Male	IT	10 people
Id2	Female	Architecture	15 people
Id3	Female	Fashion	9 people
Id4	Female	Catering	18 people
Id5	Female	Advertising	11 people
Id6	Female	Gastronomy	14 people
Id7	Male	Hospitality	25 people
Id8	Female	Creative	11 people
Id9	Male	Retail	11 people
Id10	Male	Gastronomy	9 people

Note. All participants were middle-level managers.

Source: own elaboration.

3.2. Data collection and analysis

The interviews were semi-structured, primarily comprising open-ended questions. Their duration ranged from 30 to 58 minutes. All interviews were conducted remotely between April and May 2025. While conducting interviews via electronic communication has certain limitations, it allows for the inclusion of participants from different parts of the world, and many potential limitations can be mitigated when using videoconferencing (Lobe et al., 2020). With the consent of all participants, Google Meet was used to conduct and record the video conferences. The recordings were then transcribed.

The transcription data was translated into Polish. All data was coded in Polish, and randomly selected fragments were also coded in English. A hybrid approach to coding was used, where some of the codes were generated based on an analysis of the literature on resilience, and some emerged from the data. Parallel coding by two researchers and discussion to agree on meanings in the process were intended to minimize the influence of the researchers' individual beliefs. The data were analyzed and synthesized using MAXQDA software. To ensure anonymity, all information that could potentially identify participants was removed.

4. Results

The themes emerging from the statements of the surveyed managers were aggregated into several categories, which are reflected in the structure of the following subsection.

4.1. Challenges related to cultural diversity

Managers participating in the survey recognize the challenges associated with the cultural diversity of the teams they lead. The most common category of everyday challenges involves communication problems. Interpretative differences are particularly significant because they form the fundamental basis of all processes within the team, including those that underpin the completion of both individual and team tasks. Among the communication challenges, managers mentioned both verbal (e.g., accent, idioms, jargon, slang) and nonverbal (e.g., tone of voice, eye contact) language barriers, which can lead not only to misunderstandings but also to feelings of exclusion. A particularly sensitive communication category involved jokes and sarcasm, which are always strongly culturally marked and can easily be misinterpreted by individual team members. Silence also proved to be a significant challenge, as it is perceived in some cultures as a lack of engagement and in others as a sign of respect. Another category concerned expectations regarding work execution and related attitudes, including punctuality, approaches to hierarchy, time management, feedback provision, initiative-taking, and the degree of directness in communication. These differences led team members to conflicts of varying intensity. Table 2 presents a list of quotes exemplifying the various categories of challenges.

Table 2.
Everyday challenges related to team cultural diversity, according to accounts of surveyed managers - examples from the survey

Challenge	Exemplification in collected data
Communication difficulties	"The biggest challenge is communication – both linguistic and cultural. For example, some colleagues are very direct in communication, others are more reserved and diplomatic. Some jump straight into tasks, while others prefer to build a relationship first. These differences are subtle but significant" [Id 1]. "I remember a situation when a new employee misunderstood the expression 'touch base' and thought it referred to a problem with results. Another time, a joke made by a British colleague was taken very seriously by someone from a different cultural background" [Id 1]. "Although everyone in the team speaks English, for most it is not their native language. This sometimes leads to misunderstandings, especially when discussing complex technical issues" [Id 2]. "Another problem is that the way feedback is received differs depending on culture. In some, directness is the norm - even necessary - while in others it may be perceived as aggression or disrespect" [Id 4]. "One of the main challenges is different expectations regarding feedback. Some are used to direct statements - 'do this better,' 'fix this' - and are fine with it. Others perceive it as harsh or rude" [Id 6]. "There are also differences in sense of humor - jokes do not always translate well, and sometimes someone gets unintentionally offended" [Id 9]. "The biggest challenges are communication and expectations. Sometimes people interpret instructions differently depending on where they come from and what experiences they have" [Id 10]. "We had a waiter from Turkey who misunderstood the instruction 'cover the section' - he thought it meant physically covering the tables!" [Id 10].
Diverse work expectations and norms	"Some team members are very respectful of authority and are reluctant to question decisions. Others speak freely and ask questions" [Id 1]. "For example, our Polish and Indian team members are very task-oriented and punctual. Some British employees have a more flexible approach, especially regarding deadlines. Regarding hierarchy, I noticed that some colleagues from Asia expect clear instructions from managers, whereas others - for example from Spain or the UK - feel comfortable questioning ideas and speaking freely, even to superiors" [Id 2]. "In my view, the biggest challenge is assumptions - both mine and the team members'. Sometimes people assume that their way of working is the normal or correct way" [Id 3]. "For example, during meetings I noticed that some people do not speak up, even if they have good ideas - particularly those from cultures where questioning a superior is seen as disrespectful. Others, such as some younger employees born in the UK, are very open and forthcoming" [Id 3]. "Employees from more hierarchical cultures often expect direct instructions and hesitate to act independently, fearing they might overstep. Conversely, those from more egalitarian cultures can act without asking managers" [Id 4]. "Some cultures emphasize speed, others precision. I had a Spanish colleague who loved talking to clients - he spent more time serving them, which seemed to slow things down for the British. But he built client loyalty like no one else" [Id 6]. "An employee from Vietnam made a mistake, and I corrected him publicly during a meeting. Afterwards, he became withdrawn and distant. I then learned that public correction can be perceived as highly embarrassing in his culture" [Id 7]. "A recurring challenge is balancing cultural sensitivity with operational efficiency. For example, some employees may feel uncomfortable working with pork or alcohol due to religious beliefs, which can be limiting in hospitality" [Id 7]. "Perceptions of time are another difference. Some are very punctual and adhere to strict schedules, while others have a more flexible approach. This can be problematic for deadlines or client meetings. And humor - it is not always universal" [Id 8]. "The main challenge is communication - both linguistic and cultural. For example, someone might say 'yes' during a briefing but actually not understand the task. This used to frustrate me until I realized that in some cultures, saying 'no' directly to a manager may be considered disrespectful" [Id 9]. "Employees from Eastern Europe are usually very punctual and task-focused. Those from Southern Europe or Latin America have a more 'relaxed' approach to time - not due to laziness, but simply a different working pace" [Id 10].

Cont. table 2.

Cultural conflicts	"A few months ago, we had a misunderstanding between a Spanish developer and a Polish tester. The developer felt that the tester was too critical and rigid in her bug reports, using phrases like 'this feature doesn't work' or 'this is wrong" [Id 1]. "A few years ago, a British team member gave quite direct feedback to a Nigerian colleague during a project review. He felt publicly embarrassed and began withdrawing from participating in meetings" [Id 2]. "Once, a Spanish bartender and a British kitchen assistant argued about cleanliness. The Brit thought the Spaniard was lazy for not cleaning up a spill immediately, while the Spaniard was simply waiting for the rush to pass. One saw it as negligence, the other as 'not urgent [Id 4]. "We had a conflict between a Polish chef and a Turkish bar assistant regarding cleaning. One felt it wasn't his responsibility, the other called him lazy. Tension arose" [Id 6]. "Last year, there was a tense situation between a French employee and a Kenyan employee in the kitchen. The Frenchman was very direct and liked giving orders, whereas the Kenyan strongly valued group harmony and felt disregarded" [Id 7]. „A Brazilian employee greeted people very warmly - sometimes hugging or placing a hand on the shoulder. A British colleague found it uncomfortable and perceived it as an invasion of personal space" [Id 9].

Source: own elaboration.

4.2. Promoting interpersonal trust

The managers participating in the survey emphasized the importance of creating an environment open to diversity and differing perspectives, one that fosters trust in the sense that personal worldviews are, on the one hand, accepted but, on the other, not assumed to be the default perspective for other team members. Developing such an approach requires numerous small managerial interventions, as well as high levels of sensitivity and attentiveness from the leader. Employees gradually become able to engage in interactions that go beyond their culturally conditioned ways of perceiving reality. Managers promote trust among team members by, for instance:

− encouraging open communication, asking questions, and conducting individual conversations that foster an atmosphere of safety,

− adapting communication styles and encouraging the expansion of communication behavior repertoires,

− simplifying communication by avoiding idioms, providing clear instructions, explaining key concepts, paraphrasing, and summarizing to ensure messages are correctly understood,

− encouraging the adoption of different perspectives,

− implementing a "buddy system" for new members, which helps them integrate, understand processes, and build a sense of competence.

A set of selected quotes exemplifying the individual groups of actions is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Managerial actions in promoting interpersonal trust – examples from the survey

Manager's actions	Exemplification in collected data
Encouraging questions and open communication	„In my opinion, the key is open communication and empathy. I try to be very clear in both written and spoken communication - avoid idioms, explain key terms and make sure everyone understands, especially new team members. I also encourage people to ask questions and make it clear that there is no shame in not knowing something. We also introduced the practice of paraphrasing and summarizing during meetings" [Id1]. „We also use visualization. […] drawings, sketches, models - which help overcome language barriers" [Id2]. „We introduced the practice of encouraging follow-up questions. I always say: <There is nothing wrong with asking twice>. We also try to write everything down after meetings - summary emails in bullet points are very helpful. I also regularly hold one-on-one meetings with team members to give them space to ask questions or raise issues they wouldn't want to bring up in a larger group" [Id5]. „We offer language support and organize workshops <Workplace communication in an intercultural context>. During the sessions, we show how the same phrases can be interpreted differently depending on one's background. […] I try to be a role model of open and respectful communication. I encourage asking questions, requesting clarifications, and I always repeat the most important information" [Id7].
Building a climate of psychological safety	„The key is patience. I also encourage team members to pair up informally - someone more fluent in English can help a colleague who is still learning. This builds trust. I also regularly organize short feedback sessions in a more relaxed atmosphere, where different issues can be raised" [Id3]. „I take time to get to know what motivates each person, how they prefer to receive feedback, and what makes them feel safe at work. I talk openly with the team about cultural differences - sometimes with humor, sometimes more seriously" [Id4]. „Above all - patience. I have learned to slow down and check whether someone really understood, rather than assuming they did. I repeat key information in several ways - verbally, in writing, and visually. We also do short role-plays during training, which help to understand situations in practice" [Id9].
Adapting communication style	„In some [cultures], directness is the norm - or even a necessity - while in others it can be perceived as aggression or disrespect. As a manager, I had to learn to adapt my communication style to the person I was speaking with" [Id4]. „I now speak in a more neutral and structured way. Instead of asking, <Are there any questions?>, I prefer to say, <Could you explain how you see your next steps?>. This way, I can ensure we have a shared understanding" [Id5]. „We set clear standards: punctuality, hygiene, customer service - these are non-negotiable. But the way we communicate these expectations can vary. I tell some people more firmly, others with more support. A leader must be flexible" [Id7].

Source: own elaboration.

4.3. Integration and building a sense of group agency

Communication appears to be the fundamental determinant enabling teamwork. However, to build team effectiveness and resilience in the face of numerous challenges, including those arising from internal diversity, it is also necessary to undertake additional efforts. The managers interviewed devote considerable time and energy to activities aimed at fostering pro-team attitudes and cultivating a sense of collective agency, which underpins the success of every team. Within this category of activities, the following practices were identified:

–   encouraging initiative and responsibility,
–   appreciating diverse viewpoints and contributions to teamwork,
–   strengthening the sense of individual competence,

  - ensuring equal participation in team activities, including rotation of responsibilities,
  - organizing intercultural meetings and celebrating various holidays, which foster a sense of equality and significance of belonging within the team.

A set of selected quotations exemplifying the respective groups of activities is presented in Table 4.

Table 4.
Managerial actions in the area of integration and fostering a sense of collective agency – examples from the survey

Manager's actions	Exemplification in collected data
Encouraging initiative and responsibility	„Equal participation in meetings - I make sure that everyone has a chance to speak, especially those who are quieter or less confident in their language skills" [Id1]. „I make sure that everyone has equal opportunities for responsibility - without favoritism" [Id3]. „For example, during meetings I noticed that some people don't speak up, even if they have good ideas - especially those who come from cultures where questioning a manager is seen as disrespectful. Others, such as some younger employees born in the UK, are very open and outspoken. Maintaining balance in this dynamic, so that no one feels dominated or overlooked, is a constant task" [Id3]. „We make sure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in decision-making. It's not symbolic - it truly impacts our projects" [Id5]. „I also make a point of inviting employees from different cultures to decision-making meetings - not only those who speak English as their native language or have more outgoing personalities" [Id7]. „We also try to rotate responsibilities so that closed nationality-based groups don't form" [Id10].
Recognizing diverse contributions	„Fair evaluation process - we make sure that assessments are based on results and contributions, not on how confident someone is during meetings. We remind managers not to confuse silence with a lack of leadership potential. We want everyone to have equal growth opportunities - regardless of their background" [Id1]. „I also try to recognize individual achievements - especially of those who are less confident or less outspoken. They also deserve recognition" [Id3]. „I challenge the belief that leadership roles are only for native speakers or those with a Western education" [Id7]. „We also value different aspects of work - not only speed or client feedback, but also teamwork, helping others, and a positive attitude. This creates a fairer sense of worth" [Id10].
Team integration	„I try to celebrate cultural events from different backgrounds. For example, last year we set up a shop window display for Diwali, and a few months later we organized a lunch for employees for Eid. These may seem like small things, but they matter" [Id3]. „We organize meetings - dinners where everyone brings something from their own country, quizzes, and employee birthdays. But I always emphasize: participation is voluntary. Building relationships has to be natural" [Id6].

Source: own elaboration.

4.4. Supporting development processes

All the managers in the study approached situations requiring their intervention with humility. These were usually situations arising from cultural differences. In the teams studied, numerous systemic actions are implemented to help onboard new employees and continuously improve the way people from different cultural backgrounds collaborate. Among such actions, managers mentioned:

  - training sessions organized in collaboration with experts from within or outside the organization,
  - mentoring and coaching programs, both at the group and individual levels,

- support systems for junior employees by assigning them mentors at the beginning of their organizational journey.

Among less formal activities were individual conversations, sharing experiences, and presenting one's own country and customs. All of these elements, according to the managers interviewed, contribute to a corporate culture built on openness, respect, and the understanding of the need for continuous development. This is reflected, among other things, in the mindset of the managers themselves, who interpret conflict situations as opportunities for discussion, learning, and improving individual competencies, as well as for strengthening and developing the team as a whole. This, in turn, provides an excellent foundation for building team resilience. A selection of quotes exemplifying these groups of activities is presented in Table 5.

Table 5.
Managerial actions in supporting development processes – examples from the survey

Manager's actions	Exemplification in collected data
Supporting individual development	„We take various actions: Individual coaching sessions to help people from outside the UK understand how career development works in the British context - with a focus on visibility, communication, and self-promotion. Language and communication support - if someone wants to improve their business English or presentation skills, we provide time and resources. A mentoring program - we connect less experienced employees with more senior ones who help them not only technically but also culturally" [Id1]. „We make sure everyone has access to the same mentoring and training opportunities. I also encourage younger employees to set their own development goals and help them find the right resources" [Id2]. „I try to regularly discuss career goals during performance reviews. I also connect team members with mentors outside their immediate circle, especially if they might have limited access to such networks in the UK" [Id5]. „Each person has an individual development plan. But we also know that cultural background influences how people talk about their achievements. That's why we give feedback on an ongoing basis, not just once a year. We have promoted people from underrepresented backgrounds into leadership roles, giving them support - assigning mentors, offering them client-facing roles, and increasing their visibility. We also collaborate with organizations such as Creative Access that support creators from minority groups. Our goal is not just to hire diverse people but to help them become decision-makers" [Id8].
Supporting team development	[after a conflict situation] „We met together and agreed on a new way of reporting bugs - fact-based but using neutral language (e.g., 'Expected action: X. Actual result: Y.'). It worked - now they get along well" [Id1]. „Once a year we work with a diversity consultant who runs intercultural communication workshops. They cover topics such as unconscious bias and cultural aspects of behavior. We also use online platforms that offer short e-learning modules on cultural sensitivity, available at any time" [Id5]. „Twice a year we invite external trainers specializing in intercultural communication. They run engaging workshops - with simulations, role-playing, and scenarios where you have to collaborate with someone with a different communication style. We also use the 'Culture Map' tool based on Erin Meyer's research. It helps leaders understand where a person is positioned on different cultural scales - how directly they speak, how they react to confrontation, how they give feedback, etc" [Id8].

Cont. table 5.

Reinterpreting events to foster development	„Some colleagues are very direct in communication, others more reserved and diplomatic. Some jump straight into tasks, others prefer to build a relationship first. These differences are subtle but significant - and the ability to navigate between them is part of our development as a team. […] Managing a multicultural team in one place, like London, is both a challenge and a privilege. It requires awareness, flexibility, and empathy - but it brings huge benefits. We learn from each other every day. We build stronger and more creative teams. We create a workplace where everyone - regardless of background - can feel part of it and succeed. If I were to add one more thing, I would say: diversity doesn't work without inclusion. The mere fact of having many nationalities in one room is not enough. You need to make sure every voice is heard and respected. That is the real work - and it's worth doing" [Id1]. „I treat them as opportunities to learn. Most conflicts don't come from bad intentions - someone offended someone else unintentionally. I try to mediate, listen to both sides, and explain perspectives" [Id6]. „The first step is realizing that not every conflict is bad - sometimes it's simply an expression of the development process" [Id8]. „The most important thing is that I treat conflict resolution as part of the team's learning proces" [Id9].

Source: own elaboration.

Diversity in these teams is not perceived as a barrier. The success of these teams depends on the extent to which the manager is able to reinterpret this reality as a source of development and potential, both in relation to individuals and to the team as a whole.

5. Conclusions

The challenges arising from the cultural diversity of team members, as experienced by the managers surveyed, may seem minor compared to those brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, by treating these difficulties as resilience training, both the team and the manager can be better prepared to activate adaptive behaviors at the right moment, regardless of the scale of the challenges they may face in the future.

The difficulties faced by members of multicultural teams and their managers constitute an excellent field for shaping attitudes and behaviors associated in the literature with enhancing team resilience. First, these include cognitive and affective trust, which together form interpersonal trust (Pavez et al., 2021). In multicultural teams, this trust is developed, among other ways, through systematic learning about other cultures and perspectives. Second, open communication and empathy, which, according to the concept of Emotional Carrying Capacity (ECC), constitute the basis of a key mechanism explaining the resilience of individuals and teams (Stephens et al., 2013). The ability to express emotions has also been highlighted by other authors as an important factor in fostering team resilience (Brykman, King, 2021; Duchek et al., 2020; Nzinga et al., 2021). In multicultural teams, where the ways of expressing emotions are highly diverse due to the cultural backgrounds of individual team members, such openness and the manager's sensitivity to these issues become extremely important. Third, shared leadership (Hartwig et al., 2020), which in the studied teams manifested as encouragement to take greater responsibility and decision-making. Finally, a focus on continuous development

and interpreting reality through the lens of learning opportunities - both individual and team-based (Hartmann et al., 2020; Hartwig et al., 2020; Luthans et al., 2007; Mitchell et al., 2025; Nzinga et al., 2021; Stephens et al., 2013; Tugade, Fredrickson, 2004).

The individual attitude of the manager plays a crucial role, particularly in terms of demonstrating adaptive behaviors and, in this way, modeling the behaviors of individual team members (Malini et al., 2025; McEwen, 2022). In the case of the managers studied, this primarily involved calmness, patience, showing respect, including team members in decision-making processes, encouraging them to take responsibility, and adhering to collectively agreed-upon rules while simultaneously being flexible and open to adjustments or revisiting these rules when necessary.

A Resource Model of Team Resilience Capacity (Brykman, King, 2021) assumes that the Voice Climate (openness to expressing opinions and emotions, feeling of being heard, and receiving an appropriate response from the supervisor) prevailing in the team is the basic factor enabling the building of Team Resilience Capacity, which in turn leads to effective Team Learning. This model, therefore, suggests that resilience is necessary for learning, and not the other way around. The picture obtained from the stories of the managers participating in the study also highlights these connections. However, the individual role of the manager in creating a climate conducive to learning is strongly emphasized here, which Brykman and King refer to as Leader's Learning Goal Orientation and point to its mediating role in building Team Resilience Capacity.

The theoretical implications arising from the presented analyses thus confirm the current state of knowledge regarding managerial factors and strategies that strengthen team resilience. This confirmation specifically pertains to the management of culturally diverse teams. Among the practical implications, it is particularly important to emphasize recommendations concerning managerial attitudes that support team development.

The primary limitation of this study is the small number of participants. However, this allowed for an in-depth examination of the perspectives of managers of multicultural teams regarding their personal attitudes that enhance the resilience of the individuals they manage. The specific conditions present in multicultural teams can serve as an inspiration for further research on diverse teams, aimed at identifying and comparing managerial strategies for building team resilience.

References

1. Alliger, G.M., Cerasoli, C.P., Tannenbaum, S.I., Vessey, W.B. (2015). Team resilience. How teams flourish under pressure. *Organizational Dynamics*, *44*(3), 176-184. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2015.05.003

2. Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond Neopositivists, Romantics, and Localists: A Reflexive Approach to Interviews in Organizational Research. *The Academy of Management Review*, *28*(1), 13-33. https://doi.org/10.2307/30040687

3. Ashkanasy, N.M. (2003). Emotions in organizations: a multi-level perspective. In: *Research in Multi Level Issues, Vol. 2* (pp. 9-54). Emerald (MCB UP). https://doi.org/10.1016/S1475-9144(03)02002-2

4. Bowers, C., Kreutzer, C., Cannon-Bowers, J., Lamb, J. (2017). Team Resilience as a Second-Order Emergent State: A Theoretical Model and Research Directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*, 1360. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01360

5. Brykman, K.M., King, D.D. (2021). A Resource Model of Team Resilience Capacity and Learning. *Group & Organization Management*, *46*(4), 737-772. https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011211018008

6. Bueno, J.M., Freitas, M.E.D. (2015). As equipes multiculturais em subsidiárias brasileiras de multinacionais: Um estudo de casos múltiplos. *Organizações & Sociedade*, *22*(72), 15-34. https://doi.org/10.1590/1984-9230721

7. Chapman, M.T., Lines, R.L.J., Crane, M., Ducker, K.J., Ntoumanis, N., Peeling, P., Parker, S.K., Quested, E., Temby, P., Thøgersen-Ntoumani, C., Gucciardi, D.F. (2020). Team resilience: A scoping review of conceptual and empirical work. *Work & Stress*, *34*(1), 57-81. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2018.1529064

8. Chevrier, S. (2004). Le management des équipes interculturelles. *Management international*, *8*(3), 31-40. https://doi.org/10.59876/a-k2ad-qb5s

9. Dimas, I.D., Rebelo, T., Lourenço, P.R., Pessoa, C.I.P. (2018). Bouncing Back from Setbacks: On the Mediating Role of Team Resilience in the Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Team Effectiveness. *The Journal of Psychology*, *152*(6), 358-372. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2018.1465022

10. Duchek, S., Raetze, S., Scheuch, I. (2020). The role of diversity in organizational resilience: A theoretical framework. *Business Research*, *13*(2), 387-423. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0084-8

11. Dwidienawati, D., Ichsan, M., Syahchari, D.H. (2022). How Transformational Leadership Influences Individual Resilience and Team Resilience in Project Management. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management*, 1853-1859. https://doi.org/10.46254/NA07.20220429

12. Freitas, M.E.D. (2008). O imperativo intercultural na vida e na gestão contemporânea. *Organizações & Sociedade*, *15*(45), 79-89. https://doi.org/10.1590/S1984-92302008000200005

13. Glinka, B., Czakon, W. (2021). *Podstawy badań jakościowych*. PWE.

14. Hartmann, S., Weiss, M., Newman, A., Hoegl, M. (2020). Resilience in the Workplace: A Multilevel Review and Synthesis. *Applied Psychology*, *69*(3), 913-959. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12191

15. Hartwig, A., Clarke, S., Johnson, S., Willis, S. (2020). Workplace team resilience: A systematic review and conceptual development. *Organizational Psychology Review*, *10*(3-4), 169-200. https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386620919476

16. Heinz, K. (2014). Multicultural team conflict management. *Securitologia*, *19*(1), 117-128. https://doi.org/10.5604/18984509.1129727

17. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., Minkov, M. (2011). *Kultury i organizacje* (III zmienione). PWE.

18. Home III, J.F., Orr, J.E. (1997). Assessing behaviors that create resilient organizations. *Employment Relations Today*, *24*(4), 29-39. https://doi.org/10.1002/ert.3910240405

19. Kinnunen, J.P., Puusa, A., Hallikainen, H. (2024). *Individual Resilience in Organizations in the Business Context: A Conceptual and a Bibliometric Analysis, 73*(3).

20. Lengnick-Hall, C.A., Beck, T.E., Lengnick-Hall, M.L. (2011). Developing a capacity for organizational resilience through strategic human resource management. *Human Resource Management Review*, *21*(3), 243-255. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2010.07.001

21. Lobe, B., Morgan, D., Hoffman, K.A. (2020). Qualitative Data Collection in an Era of Social Distancing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1609406920937875. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920937875

22. Luthans, F., Avolio, B.J., Avey, J.B., Norman, S.M. (2007). Positive psychological capital: Measurement and relationship with performance and satisfaction. *Personnel Psychology*, *60*(3), 541-572. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2007.00083.x

23. Malini, H., Sari, Y.P., Lin, C.-Y., Sarfika, R. (2025). Intervention to Enhance Resilience among Nurse Managers: A Systematic Review. *The Open Nursing Journal*, *19*, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.2174/0118744346372674250410072032

24. McCray, J., Palmer, A., Chmiel, N. (2016). Building resilience in health and social care teams. *Personnel Review*, *45*(6), 1132-1155. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-04-2014-0095

25. McEwen, K. (2022). Building Resilience at Work: A Practical Framework for Leaders. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, *16*(2), 42-49. https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21814

26. Meneghel, I., Martínez, I.M., Salanova, M. (2016). Job-related antecedents of team resilience and improved team performance. *Personnel Review*, *45*(3), 505-522. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-04-2014-0094

27. Meneghel, I., Salanova, M., Martínez, I.M. (2016). Feeling Good Makes Us Stronger: How Team Resilience Mediates the Effect of Positive Emotions on Team Performance. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *17*(1), 239-255. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9592-6

28. Mitchell, R., Von Stieglitz, S., Gu, J., Boyle, B., Ocampo, A.C.G. (2025). Tackling adversity with open minds: Team personality composition facilitates shared leadership and team resilience. *Applied Psychology*, *74*(1), e12568. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12568

29. Morgan, P.B.C., Fletcher, D., Sarkar, M. (2013). Defining and characterizing team resilience in elite sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *14*(4), 549-559. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2013.01.004

30. Morgan, P.B.C., Fletcher, D., Sarkar, M. (2015). Understanding team resilience in the world's best athletes: A case study of a rugby union World Cup winning team. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *16*, 91-100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2014.08.007

31. Nzinga, J., Boga, M., Kagwanja, N., Waithaka, D., Barasa, E., Tsofa, B., Gilson, L., Molyneux, S. (2021). An innovative leadership development initiative to support building everyday resilience in health systems. *Health Policy and Planning*, *36*(7), 1023-1035. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czab056

32. Pavez, I., Gómez, H., Laulié, L., González, V.A. (2021). Project team resilience: The effect of group potency and interpersonal trust. *International Journal of Project Management*, *39*(6), 697-708. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2021.06.004

33. Siddiquei, A., Ahmad, S., Asmi, F. (2025). Fostering team resilience with servant leadership: A multi-level study of the construction industry. *Acta Psychologica*, *253*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.104732

34. Stephens, J.P., Heaphy, E.D., Carmeli, A., Spreitzer, G.M., Dutton, J.E. (2013). Relationship Quality and Virtuousness: Emotional Carrying Capacity as a Source of Individual and Team Resilience. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *49*(1), 13-41. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886312471193

35. Stoverink, A.C., Kirkman, B.L., Mistry, S., Rosen, B. (2020). Bouncing Back Together: Toward a Theoretical Model of Work Team Resilience. *Academy of Management Review*, *45*(2), 395-422. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2017.0005

36. Talat, A., Riaz, Z. (2020). An integrated model of team resilience: Exploring the roles of team sensemaking, team bricolage and task interdependence. *Personnel Review*, *49*(9), 2007-2033. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-01-2018-0029

37. Tugade, M.M., Fredrickson, B.L. (2004). Resilient Individuals Use Positive Emotions to Bounce Back From Negative Emotional Experiences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *86*(2), 320-333. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.86.2.320

38. Varajão, J., Fernandes, G., Amaral, A. (2023). Linking information systems team resilience to project management success. *Project Leadership and Society*, *4*, 100094. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2023.100094

39. Varajão, J., Fernandes, G., Amaral, A., Gonçalves, A.M. (2021). Team Resilience Model: An Empirical Examination of Information Systems Projects. *Reliability Engineering & System Safety*, *206*, 107303. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ress.2020.107303