UNDERSTANDING INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION: EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND COLLABORATION STRATEGIES IN THE MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

Adnan IQBAL[1]

Abstract

This conceptual paper aims to explore the challenges and opportunities of intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. The paper provides a theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of intergenerational collaboration, including the communication, management, and collaboration strategies that can facilitate effective collaboration among different generations. The method section outlines the research design, literature review process, and synthesis approach used in developing this conceptual paper. By drawing on a diverse range of academic sources, the paper aims to provide a robust theoretical framework for understanding and promoting intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. Drawing on existing literature from various disciplines, the paper examines the factors that influence intergenerational collaboration, including differences in values, leadership styles, technological adoption, change and communication styles. The paper also highlights the potential benefits of intergenerational collaboration, such as increased creativity, innovation, and knowledge sharing. Finally, the paper proposes strategies for strengthening intergenerational collaboration in the workplace, including mentorship programs, professional development and communication styles. The findings of this paper will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of intergenerational collaboration in the workplace and inform the development of policies and programs that support collaboration among different generations. Overall, the paper aims to stimulate further research and discussion on the topic of intergenerational collaboration and its role in promoting organisational success and individual well-being.

Keywords: *Intergenerational Collaboration, Multigenerational Workforce, Communication Strategies, Management Strategies, Organisational Success, Individual Well-Being*

[1] Dr., Kaplan Business School, Australia, a.n.iqbal@gmail.com, Orcid: 0000-0002-8393-9835

KUŞAKLARARASI İŞ BİRLİĞİNİ ANLAMAK: ÇOK KUŞAKLI İŞ GÜCÜNDE KARŞILAŞILAN ZORLUKLAR VE İŞ BİRLİĞİ STRATEJİLERİNİ KEŞFETMEK

Öz

Bu kavramsal çalışma, çok kuşaklı iş gücünde kuşaklar arası iş birliğinin zorluklarını ve fırsatlarını keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, farklı kuşaklar arasında etkili iş birliğini kolaylaştırabilecek iletişim, yönetim ve iş birliği stratejilerini içeren kuşaklar arası iş birliğinin dinamiklerini anlamak için teorik bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Yöntem bölümünde, bu kavramsal çalışmanın geliştirilmesinde kullanılan araştırma tasarımı, literatür tarama süreci ve sentez yaklaşımı ana hatlarıyla açıklanmaktadır. Çeşitli akademik kaynaklardan yararlanarak, çalışma, çok kuşaklı iş gücünde kuşaklar arası iş birliğini anlamak ve teşvik etmek için sağlam bir teorik çerçeve sağlamayı hedeflemektedir. Farklı disiplinlerden mevcut literatüre dayanarak, çalışma, değer farklılıkları, liderlik tarzları, teknolojik benimseme, değişim ve iletişim tarzları gibi kuşaklar arası iş birliğini etkileyen faktörleri incelemektedir. Çalışma ayrıca kuşaklar arası iş birliğinin artan yaratıcılık, yenilikçilik ve bilgi paylaşımı gibi potansiyel faydalarını vurgulamaktadır. Son olarak, çalışma, iş yerinde kuşaklar arası iş birliğini güçlendirmek için mentorluk programları, profesyonel gelişim ve iletişim tarzlarını içeren stratejiler önermektedir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, iş yerinde kuşaklar arası iş birliğinin önemini daha iyi anlamaya katkıda bulunacak ve farklı kuşaklar arasında iş birliğini destekleyen politika ve programların geliştirilmesine rehberlik edecektir. Genel olarak, çalışma, kuşaklar arası iş birliği ve bu iş birliğinin örgütsel başarı ve bireysel refahı teşvik etmedeki rolü üzerine daha fazla araştırma ve tartışmayı teşvik etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kuşaklararası İş Birliği, Çok Kuşaklı İş Gücü, İletişim Stratejileri, Yönetim Stratejileri, Örgütsel Başarı, Bireysel Refah*

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing diversity of the workforce has resulted in the emergence of the multigenerational workforce, where employees from different age groups, cultures, and backgrounds work together (Sobrino-De Toro, 2019). Diversity in the workplace increases as baby boomers delay retirement and join the other generations in the labour force (Bennett et al., 2012). Differences in age, intrinsic and extrinsic motivator preferences, and characteristics of generational workers can lead to challenges for business managers in retaining their multigenerational staff (Zemke et al., 2000). While the multigenerational workforce has numerous benefits, such as diversity of perspectives and experiences, it can also present challenges, particularly in terms of intergenerational collaboration (Chaprana, 2022).

Intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce can be understood through the lens of social identity theory proposed by Tajfel et al. (1979), which suggests that individuals define themselves in part by their membership in social groups, such as generations. Each generation has its unique set of experiences, values, and attitudes, which can influence how they interact and collaborate with individuals from other generations.

Collaborating effectively across different generations requires a deep understanding of the factors that influence communication, management, and collaboration strategies (Waldman, 2021). This understanding can help organisations develop effective policies and programs to promote intergenerational collaboration, thereby enhancing organisational success and individual well-being (Nurhas et al., 2023).

The study of intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce is significant for several reasons. Firstly, the increasing diversity of the workforce means that employees from different age groups, cultures, and backgrounds are working together more frequently than ever before. Effective collaboration across different generations is essential for organisations to achieve their goals and maintain a competitive advantage in a rapidly changing business environment (Cox and Blake, 1991; Saxena, 2014).

Secondly, intergenerational collaboration is essential for promoting individual well-being. Employees who feel valued and included in the workplace are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, have higher levels of engagement and productivity (Norouzi et al., 2022), and experience greater levels of job satisfaction and happiness (Krzeczkowska et al., 2021).

Thirdly, intergenerational collaboration can promote social cohesion and reduce ageism in the workplace. By working together and learning from each other, employees from different generations can develop a greater appreciation of each other's perspectives and experiences (Iweins et al., 2013), which can help break down stereotypes and promote mutual respect.

Finally, understanding the dynamics of intergenerational collaboration is crucial for organisations seeking to create inclusive work environments that value diversity and foster innovation and creativity (Cox and Blake, 1991).

This conceptual paper aims to provide a theoretical framework for understanding intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. The paper will examine the challenges and opportunities of intergenerational collaboration, the communication, management, and collaboration strategies that can facilitate effective collaboration among different generations, and the potential benefits of intergenerational collaboration for organisational success and individual well-being.

The paper will also propose strategies for strengthening intergenerational collaboration in the workplace, including professional development, mentorship programs, and communication styles. The findings of this paper will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of intergenerational collaboration in the workplace and inform the development of policies and programs that support collaboration among different generations.
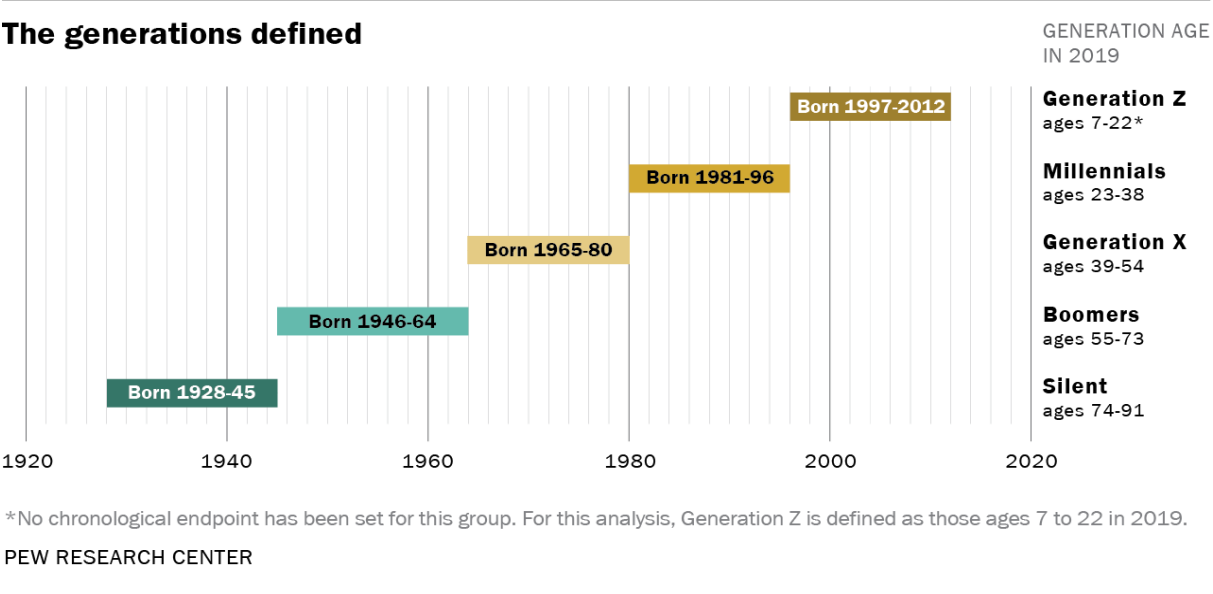
2. GENERATIONS OVERVIEW

A generation can be defined as an "identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages" (Kupperschmidt, 2000). At present, the society lives amid a plurality of ideals, coming from different generations present in the community and job market de Brito (2013). It is incredibly important to identify the different generations (Baby Boomers, X, Y and Z) present in an organisation and learn how to develop intergenerational collaboration. "A generation is defined by what it thinks, feels, and experiences and not just by dates of birth" (Zemke et al., 2000). Each generation has unique characteristics that are directly linked to their behaviour, customs and values. To better understand each generation, it is important to know their individualities and their impact on the organisational environment.

The term "multigenerations" refers to the presence of individuals from different age groups and generations in the workplace (Srinivasan, 2012). This includes Baby Boomers (born
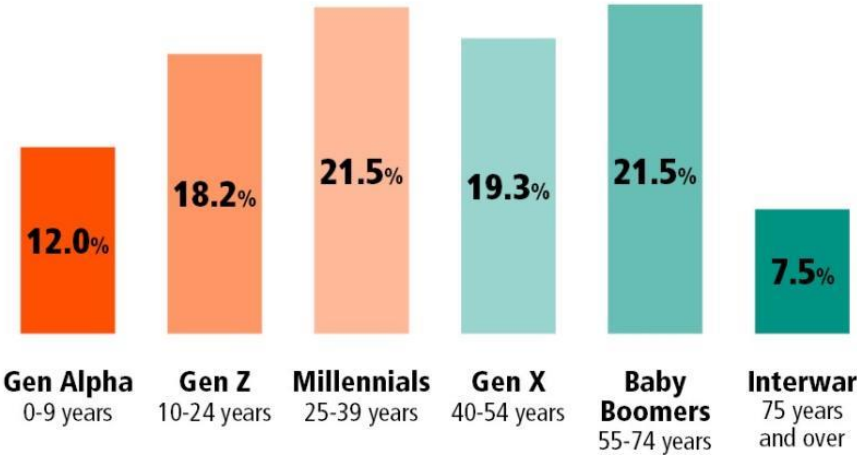
between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012). The multigenerational workforce is becoming increasingly common in many organisations due to factors such as delayed retirement, longer life expectancy, and changing attitudes towards work and career.

Figure 1. The Generation Defined

The generations defined

GENERATION AGE IN 2019

Born 1997-2012 — **Generation Z** ages 7-22*

Born 1981-96 — **Millennials** ages 23-38

Born 1965-80 — **Generation X** ages 39-54

Born 1946-64 — **Boomers** ages 55-73

Born 1928-45 — **Silent** ages 74-91

1920 1940 1960 1980 2000 2020

*No chronological endpoint has been set for this group. For this analysis, Generation Z is defined as those ages 7 to 22 in 2019.

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Source: Dimock, 2019

Figure 2. Census Count by Generation (Australian)

Gen Alpha 0-9 years — 12.0%
Gen Z 10-24 years — 18.2%
Millennials 25-39 years — 21.5%
Gen X 40-54 years — 19.3%
Baby Boomers 55-74 years — 21.5%
Interwar 75 years and over — 7.5%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021

The idea of classifying generations started with the baby boomers. After this, the changes started happening frequently for around 20 years, finishing in 1964 as noted by Greeley (1994).

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The multigenerational workforce presents both opportunities and challenges for organisations (Waldman, 2021). By recognising and addressing generational differences and biases, fostering open communication and collaboration, and providing opportunities for learning and development, organisations can create inclusive and engaging work environments that value diversity and promote innovation and creativity. Here is a brief overview of multigeneration in the workplace.

2.1. Silent Generation

In 2020, this generation represents people who are 75 to 95 years old (Howe, 2014). The vast majority of people from the silent generation have retired and are therefore not the main focus of this research. The Silent Generation grew up facing social and economic problems, as they were the generation right before World War II, born between 1925 and 1945 (Howe, 2014).

The silent generation were told that the sacrifices made in battle were for their future. Due to all the difficulties faced when they were kids, the Silent Generation consider the possibility of work a privilege, with this mindset they achieve great results, being considered a hard-working generation (Kane, 2019).

2.2. Baby Boomers

According to SBCoaching (2019), the baby boomer generation got its name as it represents the "boom" in births that happened between 1946 and 1964. This phenomenon is explained by the return of World War II combatants, who as an act of compensation for the lives taken in battle, increased the birth rate. This generation is also called the 'TV Generation' (1950/1960) as they were born during the period in which the television was invented. The majority of this generation are parents and even grandparents, but they were young during the 60s and 70s. Therefore, they were shaped by significant political, economic and cultural changes that the world was going through at that time and television played an essential role in all this transformation, as it served as a means of propagating ideas and tendencies. The message mobilised the population to fight for their rights.

Baby boomers seek individual appreciation and recognition. Their motivation is directly linked to money, and they are willing to assume positions of responsibility as long as they are highly rewarded (Brower, 2022). This competitive, individual, and committed trait reveals the relentless pursuit of professional success.

2.3. Generation X

Generation X represents baby boomers' children. For SBCoaching portal (2019), this generation's focus ends up taking the lamentations of its predecessors much more into account. They see their parents dedicating their lifetime to a single company, often giving up better offers due to their loyalty to their company, but sometimes they are not recognised for this. Generation X are more open to new opportunities. Jordão (2016) still shows that the social profile of this generation presents the balance between personal and professional life, motivation in the face of new challenges, a more open view of the world, faith in meritocracy and a value of teamwork.

2.4. Generation Y

According to Jordão (2016) Generation Y is known as the Millennial generation, or, Internet generation. This generation developed at a time of huge technological advances and economic prosperity in a highly urbanised environment. This was also immediately after the establishment of the domain of virtuality as a system of social and media interaction, and in part at the level of labour relations. If Generation X was conceived in the transition to the new technological world, Generation Y was the first genuinely born in this environment, even if incipient (Jordão, 2016). The author shows that Generation Y was the first to be born and raised in an advanced technological environment with greater social interaction, via virtual means.

According to Guaita (2016) conducted a survey and she noted that 50% of the labour market consisted of individuals from Generation Y, also known as Millennials. According to the same survey, in 2020, professionals in the age group of up to 34 years were predicted to occupy 75% of the vacancies.

2.5. Generation Z

Generation Z emerged from the middle of the 90s, born in a time of globalisation. Braga and Sene (2017) present that Generation Z is quite different from the generations that preceded it. Although many have not yet entered the labour market, there are quite striking characteristics of virtual natives that should bring about changes in the working world. Although they appear to be more demanding than millennials, they are also much more proactive, which should be considered by the market (Törőcsik et al., 2014). For that reason, they seek to create their own solutions when they find nothing that satisfies them. The entrepreneurial profile is one of the traits that defines the youngest group in the generational pyramid.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This conceptual paper utilises a literature review and synthesis approach to provide a theoretical framework for understanding intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. The research design involves a comprehensive review of existing literature on the topic, drawing from academic articles, books, and relevant studies. The purpose is to examine the challenges and opportunities of intergenerational collaboration, communication, management, and collaboration strategies, as well as the potential benefits for organisational success and individual well-being.

3.2. Process

Identification of Relevant Literature: The initial step involves identifying and collecting relevant literature on the multigenerational workforce, social identity theory, and intergenerational collaboration. Academic databases, journals, and reputable sources are systematically searched to ensure a comprehensive review.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: The selected literature is assessed based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Only studies and articles that directly contribute to the understanding of intergenerational collaboration, its challenges, and benefits are included. Additionally, it was taken care that only latest scholarly articles should be included to address the contemporary challenges faced by multigeneration.

Synthesis of Findings: The collected literature is synthesised to extract key themes, concepts, and empirical evidence related to intergenerational collaboration. The synthesis process involves categorising information, identifying patterns, and summarising major findings.

The method section outlines the research design, literature review process, and synthesis approach used in developing this conceptual paper. By drawing on a diverse range of academic sources, the paper aims to provide a robust theoretical framework for understanding and promoting intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce.

4. INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION- BENEFITS

Intergenerational collaboration refers to the interaction and collaboration between individuals from different age groups. This collaboration has numerous benefits for individuals,

organisations, and society as a whole.

4.1. Enhanced Productivity

Intergenerational collaboration leads to increased productivity as it brings together individuals with diverse skills, knowledge, and perspectives. A study by Brčić and Mihelič (2015) found that that while motivation and willingness significantly influence knowledge sharing, communication and collaboration exhibit insignificant relationships. Furthermore, respondents, both younger and older, report that the amount of knowledge received in mentoring processes is less than what is desired. Similarly, Kiviranta (2010) emphasises that if managers know how to manage people from different generations, they are able to increase productivity, wellbeing, and retention of their employees. To achieve all those objectives, the managers should keep their employees motivated, ensure their personal growth in job and make sure the work community is supportive and functional enough.

Building respect and communication among employees of various ages can help employers leverage the talents of each, while building productivity. The transfer of work experience and knowledge is crucial to transmission of industry expertise. Mentoring programs have historically been used for transferring knowledge by pairing experienced senior employees with juniors, similar to the cultural described in Mannheim's theory. Yet mentoring, like cultural transmission, is not limited to a unidirectional transfer and can be used to enhance intergenerational relatability and communication. Reverse mentoring is a process of pairing junior employees for the sharing of expertise and skills with their senior colleagues (Sanner-Stiehr and Vandermause, 2017).

Overall, intergenerational collaborations can be a powerful way to enhance productivity and create a more inclusive and supportive work environment. By valuing and leveraging the contributions of people of all ages, organisations can create a more dynamic and innovative workplace that benefits everyone.

4.2. Improved Decision-Making

Intergenerational collaboration provides opportunities to bridge discussions between people with insights into past, present, and future generations; diverse and complementary points of views; knowledge of various life course stages; and diverse values and priorities (Kennedy and Gislason, 2022). Furthermore, collaboration between different age groups helps to bring varied perspectives to decision-making processes. In line with Gerhardt et al. (2022)

recognised that age-diverse teams are valuable because they bring together people with complementary abilities, skills, information, and networks. If managed effectively, they can offer better decision-making, more-productive collaboration, and improved overall performance.

Research by Zurba et. al (2020) found that intergenerational collaboration positively influenced decision-making outcomes due to the diversity of perspectives and experiences. They suggested that a comprehensive programme of work to encourage institutions and organisations to engage younger generations (as well as older people) in decision-making" and "monitor the participation of younger people". Overall, the study provides evidence to support the idea that intergenerational collaboration can lead to improved decision-making in the workplace. By bringing together employees with different experiences, perspectives, and skills, organisations can make better decisions that consider a wider range of factors and potential outcomes.

4.3. Increased Creativity and Innovation

Intergenerational collaboration fosters creativity and innovation by promoting the exchange of ideas, experiences, and knowledge. When people from different age groups come together to work on a project, they bring unique perspectives and experiences to the table. The diversity of ideas and ways of thinking can lead to more creative solutions and innovative approaches. According to a study by Nurhas et al. (2023), intergenerational collaboration led to increased creativity in problem-solving processes. Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce (Forbes, n.d.) note that:

> *"Today, diversity and inclusion efforts are de rigueur for almost all companies. Executives understand that their companies can't be successful on a global platform if they don't have a diverse and inclusive workforce. A diverse and inclusive workforce is necessary to drive innovation, foster creativity, and guide business strategies. Multiple voices lead to new ideas, new services, and new products, and encourage out-of-the box thinking".*

Older individuals often have a wealth of experience and knowledge, while younger individuals may have a fresh perspective and be more open to new ideas and technologies. By combining these different strengths, intergenerational teams can create more well-rounded and effective solutions.

Additionally, working with people from different generations can help break down stereotypes and promote understanding and empathy (Rentz, 2015). This can lead to better communication and collaboration, which in turn can help teams work more effectively and efficiently. Overall, intergenerational collaboration has the potential to bring significant benefits to organisations and communities, including increased creativity, innovation, and understanding.

4.4. Enhanced Learning and Development

Collaboration between individuals from different age groups can facilitate learning and development. This is because each age group brings unique perspectives, experiences, and knowledge to the table, and when they collaborate, they can learn from each other and gain new insights. For example, older individuals may have more life experience and knowledge, while younger individuals may have a better understanding of the latest technology and trends. When they work together, they can share their knowledge and learn from each other.

Table 1. Integrational Collaboration Benefits

Integrational Collaboration- Benefits
Enhanced Productivity
Improved decision-making
Increased creativity and innovation
Enhanced learning and development
Improved social cohesion

Source: Author's Construct

A study by Maslo (2019) found that intergenerational collaboration led to improved learning outcomes and helped individuals to develop new skills. She noted that the intergenerational collaboration in research affects the synergy of ideas which in a cyclical sequence transforms the theoretical constructs in more and more universal applicable practical knowledge.

Collaboration between different age groups can also promote social and emotional learning (Nurhas et al., 2023), such as empathy, understanding, and communication skills (Lyu et al., 2020). This is especially important in today's global and diverse society, where people from different backgrounds and age groups interact with each other on a regular basis.

4.5. Improved Social Cohesion

Intergenerational collaboration can help to promote social cohesion and reduce intergenerational stereotypes and conflicts. By working together, individuals from different age groups can gain a better understanding of each other's perspectives and experiences, which can lead to greater empathy and respect. Intergenerational collaboration can also help to break down negative stereotypes that exist between different age groups.

For example, younger individuals may view older individuals as out-of-touch or resistant to change, while older individuals may view younger individuals as entitled or lacking in experience. By collaborating and working together, these stereotypes can be challenged and dispelled (Wu et al., 2023).

A study by Nurhas et al. (2023) found that intergenerational collaboration improved attitudes towards other age groups and promoted social inclusion. They concluded that the core of intergenerational integration lies in effective communication between intergenerational groups, equal collaboration, strong empathy that results in social inclusion and strong integration. Overall, intergenerational collaboration can help to promote social cohesion and reduce intergenerational stereotypes and conflicts by fostering empathy, respect, learning, and a sense of community.

In summary, intergenerational collaboration has numerous benefits for individuals and society as a whole, including enhanced productivity, improved decision-making, increased creativity, enhanced learning and development, and improved social cohesion.

5. INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION-CHALLENGES

Today's workforce is the first in history to span five generations, so it is no surprise that organisations are facing challenges when it comes to intergenerational collaboration. Workplace communications are evolving rapidly, and each generation defines successful collaboration differently (Alton, 2017). However, intergenerational collaboration at the workplace can pose a variety of challenges due to differences in work styles, values, communication preferences, and technology use among different age groups.

The multigenerational workforce is a relatively new phenomenon in today's workforce, which has led to numerous challenges for managers and leaders. Researchers have examined the generational differences in work values, outcomes, and person-organisation values fit

(Cennamo and Gardner, 2008). Here are some key intergenerational collaboration challenges at the workplace:

5.1. Communication Styles

Different generations may have different communication styles, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (Iqbal and Trevisan, 2022). According to Smola and Sutton (2002), once several generations of employees are in the workforce together managers should be "[...] encouraged to deal with generational differences. Failure to do so may cause misunderstandings, miscommunications, and mixed signals." Younger generations tend to prefer instant messaging and social media for communication, while older generations may prefer face-to-face conversations or phone calls (Johnson and Johnson, 2010).

Furthermore, younger and older workers may have different communication preferences and styles, leading to misunderstandings and conflict (Swan, 2012). For instance, younger workers may prefer digital communication methods, such as email or instant messaging, while older workers may prefer face-to-face communication (Robbins and Judge, 2020).

A baby boomer manager may prefer giving feedback in person, while a Gen Z employee may prefer receiving feedback via text or email. This can lead to miscommunications and misunderstandings, especially if the manager's feedback is critical (Smola and Sutton, 2002).

5.2. Work Values

Different generations may have different work values and priorities. For example, younger generations may prioritise work-life balance, while older generations may prioritise job security and loyalty to the organisation. Each generation may have its own work style, leading to differences in expectations and work ethics (Stanley, 2010). For example, older workers may prioritise job security and loyalty, while younger workers may prioritise work-life balance and flexibility (Davidescu et al., 2020).

Furthermore, each generation may have its own values and beliefs, which can lead to differences in how they approach work and life. For example, younger workers may prioritise social justice and diversity, while older workers may prioritise traditional values such as hard work and discipline (Robbins and Judge, 2020).

A study conducted by Cennamo and Gardner (2008) found that the youngest groups placed more importance on status and freedom work values than the oldest group. Baby

Boomers reported better person-organisation values fit with extrinsic values and status values than Generation X and Generation Y.

Similarly, a study conducted by Gursoy et al. (2008), they explored generational differences in work values and generational gaps in the hospitality workforce. They found that the Baby Boomers respect authority and hierarchy, while the Generation Xers (Gen Xers) rebel against authority. Their findings also suggested while Baby Boomers live to work, Gen Xers work to live. The Baby Boomers are willing to wait their turn for promotions and rewards and are very loyal. On the other hand, Gen Xers expect immediate recognition through title, praise, promotion, and pay.

Understanding the work values of these young individuals helps organisations appreciate how to structure jobs, working conditions, compensation packages, and human resource policies to attract GenMe (Millennials and Yers). What a Boomer or Xer valued or expected from work when he or she was young may be very different from what a member of GenMe values coming into the workplace (Twenge et al., 2010).

5.3. Technology Adoption

Different generations may have different levels of comfort and proficiency with technology. Many researchers agreed that Millennials grew up extremely comfortable with technology as a part of their daily lives, which was contrary to the two earliest generations (Cekada, 2012). For example, younger generations may be more comfortable with new technology and digital tools, while older generations may prefer traditional methods. A Gen Z employee who is tech-savvy may have difficulty working with a baby boomer colleague who struggles with using technology (Lyons and Kuron, 2013). The Gen Z employee may expect quick responses to emails and messages, while the baby boomer may prefer face-to-face communication. This can lead to misunderstandings and delays in completing tasks (Underwood, 2007).

Çoklar and Tatli (2021) explored the concept of "digital nativity," which refers to an individual's familiarity and proficiency with digital technology. The participants were 270 people, 90 from each of the X, Y and Z generations and it was found that the level of digital nativity increases as we move from the X generation to the Z generation. In terms of gender, while males in the X and Y generations have a higher level of digital nativity than females, there was no difference in the Z generation. The researchers examined the effects of age and

technological experience on digital nativity levels and their impact on work outcomes, including job satisfaction, work engagement, and turnover intentions.

5.4. Leadership Styles

Different generations may have different leadership styles and expectations (Cox et al., 2013). For example, younger generations may prefer a more collaborative and flexible leadership style, while older generations may prefer a more hierarchical and authoritative approach.

Based on author's personal experience, one example of intergenerational collaboration challenges is when a younger employee is leading a team with older members. The younger employee may prefer a more collaborative leadership style and be more open to new ideas and technology, while the older members may prefer a more hierarchical approach and be more resistant to change. This can lead to conflicts and challenges in working together effectively.

Gursoy et al. (2008) note that the managers belong to boomer cohort have low opinions of the Gen X and Gen Y employees. They perceive them to be inconsistent, unreliable, and calculating in their work, and they therefore did not deserve prompt recognition and reward. As subordinates, the Boomers also do not think highly of their Gen X managers; they perceive them as inexperienced and incapable of leading and managing them and others. Boomers are most unhappy whenever their younger bosses overlook their hard work and snap at them for reminiscing about their time.

A study by Easton and Steyn (2022) found that millennials prefer empowering and transformational leadership styles as they regard these styles as effective. However, important to note is that Generation X has very similar preferences. This finding will assist with improved development of millennial leaders in the workplace. Furthermore, transactional leadership and directive leadership are not, in general, associated with leader effectiveness, and should be avoided.

5.5. Attitudes Towards Change

Different generations may have different attitudes towards change, which can affect their willingness to embrace new ideas and processes (Ludviga and Sennikova, 2016). Ludviga and Senņikovas (2016) conducted a study to explore how three major generations of employees – Baby Boomers, Xers and Millennials, react to change and how their commitment to change

affect satisfaction and engagement. In their study, resistance to change was found to be characteristic to 43.5% of Baby Boomers, 18.7% of Yers and only 8.2% of Millennials. Support of change was characteristic to 68.4% of generation X representatives, 54.2% of generation Y representatives and only 43.5% of Baby Boomers. Which means younger generations may be more open to change and innovation, while older generations may be more resistant to change. Older workers may be resistant to change, especially technological changes, due to their lack of familiarity and comfort with new technologies (Verma and Garg, 2023).

A study by Schoch (2012) found that Generations X and Y are more comfortable with technology and technical changes than the older generations. Baby Boomers and Traditionalists did not grow up with technology in their day to day lives, and while they are capable of learning, they can be lacking some of the basic skill sets and confidence to do so.

Managers today have the unique challenge of not only managing these varied generations, but in getting them to respect each other. This challenge can become even more difficult if said manager is from a younger generation than the employees, which can be the case when working with technology changes. Thus, it is imperative for the change manager to be able to relate to individuals from each generation. Managers must know how to communicate, how to motivate, and how to provide feedback to each generation, as well as how to recruit and retain these employees (Njoroge and Yazdanifard, 2014).

6. STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION

The review of literature showed that across the world and across disciplines, fun filled workplace, an organisational culture that promotes work life balance, upward mobility, flexible work environment, career advancement, supportive supervisors and engagement through social media are the various strategies that would help organisations could foster intergenerational collaboration. Based on the review, the following common themes have been identified:

Table 2. Strategies to Facilitate Intergenerational Collaboration

Author(s) / Strategies	DeIuliis and Saylor (2021)	Jagajeevan, et al. (2021)	Montoya (2019)	Jones (2017)	Kapadia (2015)	Burke et al. (2015)	North and Fiske (2015)	Bennett et al. (2012)
Coaching and Mentoring	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Practice-Ready Skills	✓							
Facilitate a Growth Mindset	✓							
Workplace culture		✓		✓		✓		
Skill development		✓			✓	✓		
Role clarity		✓						
Communication platform		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Cross-collaboration								
Professional development	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Foster a diversity-friendly				✓				
Encourage a healthy work-life balance				✓				
Eliminate negative generational stereotyping.				✓				
Challenging work assignment					✓			
Flexible scheduling						✓		
Use of technology								✓
Collaborative workspaces			✓	✓				✓
Non-hierarchical work styles								✓

Source: Author's construct

To overcome these challenges, it is important to promote open communication, respect different perspectives, and find common ground to work towards shared goals. The literature suggests that effective communication, mentoring, professional development, work culture and use of technology strategies are essential for successful intergenerational collaboration in the multigenerational workforce. Understanding the generational differences in work values and managing diversity can also contribute to a more productive and harmonious workplace. Furthermore, the importance of supervisor support and leadership style should not be overlooked when managing a multigenerational workforce.

6.1. Coaching, Mentoring and Professional Development

Mentoring is a key strategy in intergenerational collaboration that involves pairing a more experienced individual, known as the mentor, with a less experienced individual, known as the mentee, for the purpose of sharing knowledge, skills, and experience. The mentor serves as a guide, coach, and role model for the mentee, offering support and advice as the mentee

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navigates their personal and professional development.

In the human resource and talent management fields, many organisations s over recent years have adopted a coaching and mentoring model to enhance the growth and performance of their employees, while also cultivating more effective employee-supervisor relationships (DeIuliis and Saylor, 2021).

Professional development is a crucial component of any successful organisation. It allows employees to develop new skills and knowledge, improve their performance, and stay up to date with the latest industry trends. Intergenerational collaboration, on the other hand, refers to the practice of working together across different age groups to achieve common goals (DeIuliis and Saylor, 2021).

One way to encourage intergenerational collaboration is to offer training programs that cater to the different learning styles and preferences of each generation. For example, older employees may prefer more traditional classroom-style training, while younger employees may prefer more interactive and technology-driven learning experiences (Montoya, 2019).

Case Study: Mentoring at IBM

IBM is a global technology company that has been actively engaging in intergenerational collaboration through mentoring programs. One such program is the "Reverse Mentoring" program that pairs senior executives with younger employees for the purpose of sharing knowledge and skills (Stock, 2018; Montoya, 2019).

In this program, younger employees, often referred to as "Millennial Mentors," are paired with senior executives, who are referred to as "Boomer Mentees." The program aims to provide the senior executives with insights into emerging technologies, trends, and ways of working, while also giving the younger employees an opportunity to learn from the experience and expertise of the senior executives.

One example of this program's success is the partnership between an executive in his 50s and a young employee in his 20s. The executive was struggling to understand social media and how it could be used for business purposes. The young employee, who was an expert in social media, was able to teach the executive how to use various social media platforms, create engaging content, and leverage social media for business growth (Stock, 2018).

Through this mentoring relationship, the executive was able to gain valuable knowledge and skills, which helped him to improve his leadership and decision-making abilities. At the same time, the young employee gained exposure to the executive's experience and insights, which helped him to develop a deeper understanding of business strategy and leadership (Montoya, 2019).

Overall, coaching, mentoring and professional development are important strategies for intergenerational collaboration as they can help to build stronger relationships between individuals from different generations, promote knowledge-sharing, and support personal and professional growth.

6.2. Interpersonal Communication Styles and Platforms

Interpersonal communication involves the exchange of information, ideas, and feelings between people. In an intergenerational collaboration, effective interpersonal communication enables individuals of different ages and backgrounds to understand each other's perspectives, needs, and values. This understanding is critical in building trust, respect, and rapport, which are essential for successful collaboration.

Another important aspect of interpersonal communication in intergenerational collaboration is the use of appropriate language and communication styles. This includes recognising and respecting generational differences in communication preferences and adapting communication styles accordingly. For example, older team members may prefer face-to-face communication, while younger members may prefer digital communication (Jagajeevan et al., 2021).

Case Study: The Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC)

One example of intergenerational collaboration in Australia that relies on communication is the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC). The AYCC is a youth-led organisation that aims to tackle climate change by empowering young people to take action in their communities. The organisation relies heavily on communication to facilitate collaboration between young people and older generations (AYCC, n.d.).

Through a variety of communication channels, including social media, email, and face-to-face meetings, the AYCC connects young people with older generations who have experience in fields such as business, politics, and academia. By fostering these

intergenerational connections, the AYCC aims to create a diverse and powerful coalition that can effectively advocate for climate action (Hilder and Collin, 2022).

Overall, this case study demonstrates the importance of communication as a key strategy for intergenerational collaboration in Australia. By promoting understanding, respect, and empathy across different age groups, these initiatives are helping to build a stronger, more cohesive society for all Australians.

6.3. Workplace Culture and Collaborative Workspaces

Workplace culture can play a critical role in fostering intergenerational collaboration. In today's workplaces, we have employees from multiple generations working together, including Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. Each generation brings unique experiences, skills, and perspectives to the table, and creating a culture that embraces these differences can help to foster collaboration and increase productivity. A study by Montoya (2019) found that the collaboration of older and younger generations would allow them to begin to ask questions and look for commonalities in knowledge transfer inquiries via the means of brainstorming and social interactions.

In addition, workplace culture can also promote intergenerational collaboration by creating opportunities for employees to socialise and connect outside of work-related activities. This can include team-building exercises, social events, and community service projects. By bringing employees together in a non-work setting, it can help to break down barriers and foster stronger relationships across generations (Garg and Mahipalan, 2023).

Case Study: The Australian Departmental Store Chain

The Australian department store chain, XYZ, has been actively working to promote intergenerational collaboration in its workplace culture. XYZ recognised that its workforce was becoming increasingly diverse, with employees from multiple generations, and wanted to create a culture that embraced these differences and fostered collaboration.

To achieve this, XYZ implemented a number of initiatives, including:

Flexible work arrangements: XYZ introduced flexible work arrangements that allowed employees to work from home or adjust their work schedules to better accommodate their personal lives. This helped to create a more inclusive workplace culture that recognised the diverse needs of its employees.

Professional development opportunities: XYZ invested in professional development opportunities that were relevant to all generations, including training programs and workshops that focused on digital skills and customer service.

These initiatives helped to create a workplace culture that valued diversity, promoted open communication, and provided opportunities for learning and collaboration across generations. As a result, XYZ was able to foster a more productive and engaged workforce, which ultimately led to improved business outcomes.

In summary, XYZ's case study demonstrates that workplace culture plays a critical role in promoting intergenerational collaboration. By creating a culture that values diversity, encourages open communication, and provides opportunities for learning and collaboration, organisations can foster a more productive and engaged workforce that is better equipped to tackle the challenges of today's rapidly changing business landscape.

7. CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper provides a summary of existing studies identifying methods, tools, and strategies used to facilitate intergenerational collaboration in the workplace. Intergenerational collaboration in the workplace is an important topic that has gained a lot of attention in recent years. As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, with people from different age groups working together. Intergenerational collaboration in the workplace can bring numerous benefits to both organisations and employees.

This collaboration can lead to increased creativity, innovation, and productivity in the workplace. With the rise of multigenerational workforces, it is becoming increasingly important for individuals of different ages to work together effectively. The strategies, as outlined above, were identified by various researchers, and perceived to be useful or effective in the workplaces. However, the evidence is too premature to draw definitive conclusions regarding its impact and efficacy in the workplace. Here is the summary of the study:

Figure 3. Multigeneration, Challenges and Managing Strategies
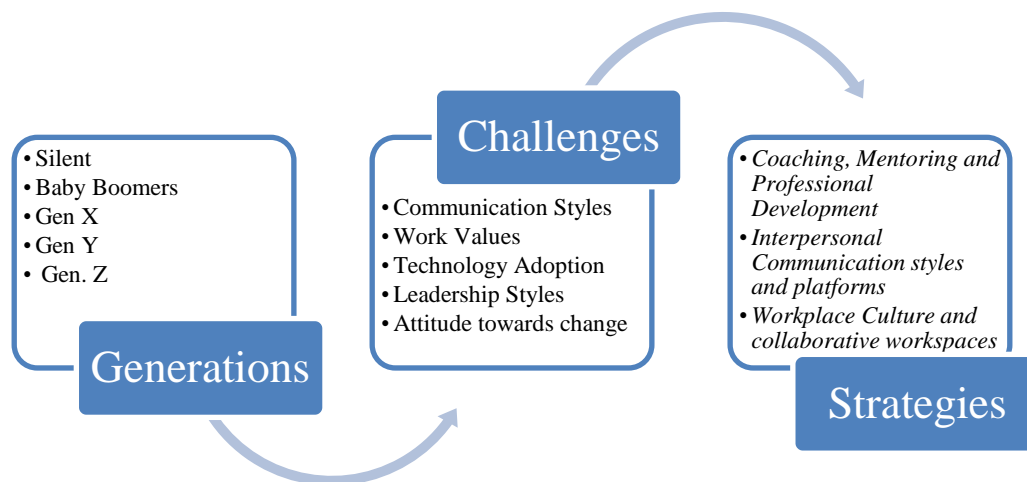
This study suggests that intergenerational collaboration is a valuable emerging area of research. To foster intergenerational collaboration, organisations can implement professional development programs, workplace culture, communication styles and mentoring programs that bring employees of different ages together. By creating a culture of respect and inclusivity, organisations can help their employees work together more effectively, regardless of their age or background. Through intergenerational collaboration, younger workers can learn from the experience and wisdom of their older colleagues, while older workers can benefit from the fresh perspectives and new ideas of younger workers.

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