

Age-Diverse Workplace Friendship: A Systematic Literature Review and Recommendations for Future Research

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ABSTRACT

Friendship may help to bridge differences between people, such as between age-diverse employees. Oftentimes, age diversity in employee interactions cultivates interpersonal tensions. Age-diverse workplace friendship—a relationship between coworkers of different ages, who like each other and who are engaged in a balanced social exchange—may help to overcome these interpersonal tensions because having something in common can de-escalate age-related difficulties and reduce negative feelings between diverse individuals. Despite the relevance of the topic, literature focusing on age-diverse workplace friendship is rare. To address this gap and direct future research, we aim to integrate research on related topics such as workplace friendship and (age) diversity at work into a systematic literature review. Concentrating primarily on the formation and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship, we identified similarity-attraction theory, social identity theory, and socioemotional selectivity theory as the three dominant theories referenced in the literature and utilize them to embed and connect our findings into existing theory. More specifically, we review and summarize the findings of our systematic literature review into an integrated framework depicting the antecedents, formation and maintenance processes, and outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings and point out directions for future research.

KEYWORDS: workplace friendship, workforce aging, social interactions at work, age diversity, interpersonal processes

In the workplace, friendship is associated with several benefits, such as the provision of instrumental and emotional resources (Kram & Isabella, 1985; Sias, 2005), reduced withdrawal, and increased performance (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Moreover, friendship may help to bridge differences between people, such as between age-diverse employees. Oftentimes, age diversity in employee interactions cultivates interpersonal tensions (Urlick et al., 2016), for instance through age-related social categorizations (North & Fiske, 2015). These categorizations reflect the differences individuals emphasize in age-based social perceptions. *Age-diverse workplace friendship*—a relationship between coworkers of different ages, who like each other and who are engaged in a balanced social exchange (Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Ingram & Zou, 2008)—may help to overcome these interpersonal tensions because having something in common can de-escalate age-related difficulties (Ho & Yeung, 2020; Sherif, 1958) and reduce negative feelings between diverse individuals (Swart et al., 2011). The need to explore age-diverse workplace

friendship as a way to bridge age-related differences is fueled by the global workforce aging and increasing age diversity in the workplace. The enhanced exposure to coworkers of different age groups “gives rise to increased risk of cross-generational misunderstanding and resentment” (North & Fiske, 2015, p. 174). It becomes clear that, if not addressed by managing and encouraging positive workplace relationships, negative workplace relationships can have a detrimental effect on various individual and organizational outcomes (Morrison, 2008). We, therefore, focus on age-diverse workplace friendship as a form of positive workplace relationships that could unite age-diverse coworkers.

In general, workplace friendship research has advocated its role in improving employee interactions. For instance, Shah and Jehn (1993) showed that friendship groups display lower levels of conflict and better task performance. As a result of the potential conflicts stemming from age differences between age-diverse colleagues, age-diverse workplace friendship thus offers a unique area of research. However, despite

its growing relevance, the role of age diversity has largely been ignored in workplace friendship research. For instance, scholars have briefly recognized that diversity in workplace friendship could impact friendship formation and maintenance (Adams & Torr, 1998; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2011) or result in lower job performance in the early stages of friendship (Methot et al., 2016), but have not yet explored how specific types of diversity, such as age-diversity, guide workplace friendship processes. Likewise, the literature lacks an integrative framework structuring the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of workplace friendship. This is unfortunate given the promising role of workplace friendship in bridging the gap between employees of different ages. We aim to address these shortcomings by conducting a systematic literature review. Specifically, we aim to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What are the core theories most commonly used in the literature to describe age-diverse workplace friendship?
- (2) Which antecedents promote or hinder the formation of age-diverse workplace friendship?
- (3) Through which processes does age-diverse workplace friendship manifest and how do these processes translate into specific outcomes?
- (4) What are the individual and organizational outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship?

Consequently, our contribution to the literature will be threefold: First, we will uncover age as a current blind spot in the formation of workplace friendship. We will expand research on workplace friendship and cross-group friendship, which to date primarily focuses on aspects like ethnicity or gender (Davies et al., 2011), but less often on age. We extend this perspective by linking the concepts of age diversity and workplace friendship, which have not yet been joined in the work context. This not only advances research in both fields but is also of enormous relevance on a practical level, as our results will contribute to our understanding of and dealing with age diversity in the workplace. In addressing this lack of research and suggesting age-diverse workplace friendship as a possible means to bridging the gap between age-diverse coworkers, we also follow the calls for research on the prevention of conflict between different age groups at work (Rudolph & Zacher, 2015) as well as research on diversity and work relationships (Heaphy et al., 2018).

Second, we aim to provide the first comprehensive review in the field of workplace friendship with a focus on diversity between the involved coworkers, depicting the process from its development to its consequences, highlighting both benefits and possible detriments. Previous work has focused on single aspects of workplace friendship, like the phases (Sias & Cahill, 1998), what fosters them (Li & Hung, 2009), the internal processes they induce (Chua et al., 2008), or the advantages and downsides associated with them (Caillier, 2017; Chung et al., 2018; Ingram & Zou, 2008; Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018), without integrating these aspects. Although we maintain a focus on the unique case of age-diverse workplace friendship, our research may serve as a starting point for a more general comprehensive view of diverse workplace friendship.

Third, due to our broad search approach for literature, our literature review will integrate several different research streams to capture

the multiplex nature of age-diverse workplace friendship. We will rely on different fields of research such as workplace friendship and positive social interactions at work, communication, (age-)diverse relationships at work, and developmental research. Specifically, we draw from literature coming from the ensuing disciplines: work and organizational psychology, social psychology, gerontology, developmental psychology, sociology, business, and management. As a result, our systematic literature review will allow us to point out avenues for future research and make suggestions to guide practitioners in their approach to managing age-diverse workplace friendship.

Taken together, our objectives for this literature review are (a) to uncover the links of age-diverse workplace friendship by summarizing the existing literature, (b) to uncover the core theories used in the literature with regard to age-diverse workplace friendship, and (c) to present our findings into an overarching framework depicting the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Defining age-diverse workplace friendship

Age-diverse workplace friendship refers to a friendship between coworkers of different ages. Research has repeatedly highlighted the difficulty of defining friendship in general as it encompasses a wide range of attributes (Adams et al., 2000). Typical indicators of friendship include a mutual voluntary selection, sharing companionship, goals, interests, norms, and values, as well as confidentiality and concern for each other (Adams et al., 2017). Workplace friendship adds embeddedness in the work context to this friendship foundation and thus fuses a personal with a professional relationship (Ingram & Zou, 2008), thereby creating a multiplex connection of instrumentality and friendship (Methot et al., 2016).

Age-diverse workplace friendship can be seen as a specific type of workplace friendship that is reflected in the age difference of the befriended employees. A numerical definition of when the age difference between two people can be assumed as significant is difficult to specify, although existing literature relies on a chronological age difference of between 10 and 15 years to discern age-diverse workplace friendship from common workplace friendship (Elliott O'Dare et al., 2019b; Holladay & Kerns, 1999). This is partly due to the complex conceptualization of age itself. Kooij et al. (2008) argue that chronological age in the working environment is not always an ideal operationalization of age, as the process of aging can be very heterogeneous between individuals. Due to these different yet often interrelated age concepts, the term “age-diverse” allows space for a certain ambiguity, as it entails the subjective age-related self- and external assessment of two people. In a similar vein, Clair et al. (2019) reflect upon the contemporary complexity of identity formation concerning demographic identities. Although they do not include age as a category in their work, the general discussion on the different definitions of age shows that individual age-related identities may not always conform to traditional expectations. Research on intergenerational contact takes a different approach, often using fixed age thresholds to categorize employees into “older” and “younger” groups (e.g., Iweins et al., 2013) or asking subjects to imagine individuals from another generation (e.g., Burmeister et al., 2021). While generational differences and collective experiences can be reflected

in individual preferences (Benson & Brown, 2011), our work aims to focus on the overarching age-related processes that define age-diverse friendship. For this reason, we do not set a fixed number from which we define an age difference between individuals, but rather emphasize the perceived age difference.

Viewing age-diverse workplace friendship as a dynamic process

In general, friendship is understood as a dynamic relationship, indicating development and evolution over time (Adams & Blieszner, 1994; Blieszner & Adams, 1992). Adams and Blieszner (1994) describe three phases varying in length and conscious development which friendship progresses through on a dyadic level (i.e., between two individuals; Verbrugge, 1983). The first phase, friendship *formation*, marks the beginning of a friendship, with two strangers becoming acquainted and eventually developing a friendship. The second phase, friendship *maintenance*, is a highly variable period regarding the processes that take place between friends and their conscious regulation. Friendship *deterioration* is the final phase, in which the friendship is ended. This phase is optional as friendship may not end. There is an enormous spectrum of variation, for example in terms of the reasons for deterioration or the awareness of the development. The three phases have been transferred to the workplace (Sias et al., 2004; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Sias et al., 2012a, 2012b), with different factors influencing workplace friendship depending on the phase of the friendship (Sias & Cahill, 1998). For instance, opportunities for interaction (a result of workspace design, which we touch upon as an organizational antecedent of age-diverse workplace friendship) are particularly relevant at the beginning of a friendship, whereas topics of open and intimate communication (for instance through self-disclosure, which we will illustrate as a behavioral process of age-diverse workplace friendship) grow more important as friends grow closer. Although the deterioration of workplace friendship may happen, we focus on the development and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship due to its potential benefits.

Differentiating age-diverse workplace friendship from other workplace relationships

Workplace friendship can be differentiated from other relationships at work (e.g., mentorship, relationship with supervisors, or other employees). As Morrison and Cooper-Thomas (2017) point out, pure work relationships are based on the exchange of work-related resources and exist between occupants of work roles—thus, the individuals involved are interchangeable, and they are only important in terms of their work role. In contrast, workplace friendship employs a holistic view of the friend (i.e., perceiving them as an individual beyond their work role; Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2017). Besides, work relationships adhere to the rules of the organizational context, are formally defined (e.g., between mentor and mentee or supervisor and subordinate), and are maintained through shared work-based goals and responsibilities. In contrast, individuals decide to pursue workplace friendship in mutual voluntariness without formal compulsions and are driven by the intrinsic value of the relationship (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2017).

Distinguishing age-diverse workplace friendship from constructs that involve hierarchical distinctions is central, as positions further up

organizational hierarchies are traditionally connected to higher age (Macan et al., 1994; North & Shakeri, 2019), and thus, hierarchical distinctions could be expected in age-diverse workplace friendship. Two examples of such relationships can be found in leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and mentorship. LMX, on the one hand, addresses the relationships that leaders build and sustain toward their subordinates in the work context (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). It posits that leaders only develop close relationships (i.e., high-quality LMX) with a few instead of all followers due to resource constraints. A direct comparison reveals that high-quality LMX and age-diverse workplace friendship are interlinked. For instance, Tse et al. (2008) showed that high-quality LMX precedes workplace friendship. They argued that high-quality LMX is likely to be experienced as a source of emotional and instrumental motivation by employees, thus stimulating friendship development. Similarly, research suggests that high-quality LMX prompts individuals to develop friendship at work via reciprocal resource exchanges (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003) or by developing a shared identity through frequent interactions (Katrinli et al., 2008). Indeed, Boyd and Taylor (1998) provide an approach on how LMX and workplace friendship can co-develop over time. Building on this, the life cycle of LMX described by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) shares parallels with the friendship development phases described earlier. Like friendship development, LMX starts with two strangers who initially come together on a formal level within their work roles. As the relationship intensifies into the second phase, the social exchange between the individuals involved also intensifies and begins to include a personal level beyond the work context. The final phase of the LMX relationship is additionally characterized by emotional exchange (e.g., mutual respect, trust). However, scholars have noted that, unlike workplace friendship, LMX does not take into account aspects such as shared goals, norms, and mutuality (Bono & Yoon, 2012). This suggests that the individuals involved in LMX do not necessarily evaluate their relationship in the same way and do not necessarily pursue the same relationship goals. However, such a common ground is pivotal for workplace friendship (Adams et al., 2017). Moreover, since LMX as a leadership theory only refers to the relationship between supervisors and employees, it only takes into account workplace friendship between individuals who occupy these work roles. As a result, it cannot consider workplace friendship between peers.

Mentorship, on the other hand, is characterized by an intensive exchange between a senior and a junior coworker, in which the traditionally older, more experienced mentor provides different resources, such as support, direction, and feedback, to the traditionally younger, less experienced mentee (Russell & Adams, 1997). According to Kram (1983), friendship is a psychosocial function of mentoring that develops in more advanced stages of mentorship in case of great intimacy between mentor and mentee. It aids the mentee to cultivate a sense of professional identity and competence (Kram & Isabella, 1985). At the empirical level, little research to date has explored the interplay between mentorship and friendship as a distinct relationship (Allen et al., 2004), but instead addressed friendship within the larger bundle of psychosocial support functions. Along these lines, Eby and Lockwood (2005) refer to friendship as a benefit that can be associated with mentorship. In contrast, Snoeren et al. (2016) use a narrative case study to illustrate how mentorship is mutually constructed

by mentor and mentee. In doing so, they describe many characteristics of their notion of mentorship that are consistent with our conceptualization of friendship, such as care, trust, and mutual influence. Yet, while mentorship has been shown to benefit both mentor and mentee (Russell & Adams, 1997), Kram and Isabella (1985) pointed out that mentoring relationships are nonetheless based on an unequal exchange gradient, with the mentor as the designated primary guide or sponsor, and additionally often come with a natural end date when the mentee's professional development has reached a certain stage and the mentor-mentee relationship is redefined (Kram, 1983). Both of these points contradict central aspects of our definition of age-diverse workplace friendship (i.e., reciprocity and detachment from formal compulsions). Thus, research suggests that mentorship may co-occur with or even evolve into what we define as age-diverse workplace friendship but does not inherently include it.

METHOD

In line with recommendations on literature reviews (Cooper, 1988; Harari et al., 2020; Héliot et al., 2020; Webster & Watson, 2002), we applied a systematic search approach. This allowed us to adhere to standards of transparency, quality, and reproducibility of our results as well as to cover the relevant literature in the most comprehensive manner. As our initial search for literature on age-diverse friendship had been scarce, we extended our search to adjacent topics. Thus, we included the more developed research on cross-group friendships at work (e.g., regarding ethnicity) along with research on intergenerational contact at work. If transferable to the age-diverse workplace context, the literature on common workplace friendship was also considered. The literature on age-diverse friendship between related persons outside of work (e.g., grandchildren-grandparents) was excluded as such relationships differed too greatly from our focal dynamics (i.e., dualistic nature joining collegial relationship and friendship; Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2017).

We thus searched the Web of Science Core Collection for research containing any of the search strings specified in Table 1. Previous research offers different labels for similar concepts that resemble our conceptualization of workplace friendship described above (e.g., multiplex ties, Lepine et al., 2012; rich ties, Aalbers et al., 2014; high-quality relationships, Demir et al., 2015), which we included in our search. To cover as broad a spectrum of literature as possible, we included all documents that were available up to the time of our search, regardless of publication type. Accordingly, as selection criteria, the literature had to be available in English at the time of our search and address the three previously defined questions of our literature review. The process of our literature search is shown in detail as a flowchart

Table 1. List of search strings.

	Search string
1	"work* friend**"
2	"work* relation**"
3	"work* network"
4	"intergenerational friend**"
5	"intergenerational relation* NOT parent**"
6	"age-diverse friend**"
7	"age-diverse relation**"

in Figure 1. In summary, we conducted an initial backward literature search in November 2019 that revealed 37 relevant pieces of literature. We then used a forward search to capture literature not covered in the initial search in March 2020 (cf. Harari et al., 2020). This second search yielded an additional 31 pieces of literature meeting our selection criteria, bringing the total number we included to 68.

To accomplish the goals of our literature review, we identify constructs from the literature that are related to age-diverse workplace friendships. These constructs are assigned as antecedent, process, or outcome depending on how they have been addressed in previous research (e.g., as a predictor, mediator, or outcome). In addition, we analyze and integrate prominent theories from the literature that offer explanations for the relationship between the identified constructs.

In sum, we aimed to provide a systematic review covering the literature exhaustively to integrate the aforementioned literature streams. In this process, we focused on the aspects that distinguish age-diverse workplace friendship from common workplace friendship. For this reason, the antecedents, processes, and outcomes we outline in this manuscript are not exhaustive and must be considered in addition to the more general aspects that characterize workplace friendship.

RESULTS

Before presenting the results of the review, we first provide an overview of the key theories we identified in the literature. As mentioned above, we then use the categorization of the literature into antecedents, processes, and outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship to organize the results. Table 2 contains the publications included in our systematic review with the main findings. Moreover, Figure 2 presents our framework on age-diverse workplace friendships extracting and integrating the findings from this review.

Research question 1: theoretical anchoring of age-diverse workplace friendship

To embed our literature review in a theoretical framework, we utilize three theories that are closely linked to the formation and maintenance of workplace friendship, namely social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), similarity-attraction theory (SAT; Byrne, 1971), and socioemotional selectivity theory (SST; Carstensen, 1992). We identified these three theories as core theories from the literature that relate to the formation and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendships.

First, SIT explains and predicts intergroup behavior on the grounds of social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It proposes how individuals distinguish between social groups based on factors like surface-level (e.g., age, gender, and ethnicity) and deep-level characteristics (e.g., attitudes, values, and work style) and identify with the social group they have categorized themselves as belonging to via social identification. Through social comparison, individuals then contrast these in-groups and out-groups to determine their relative standing in the social context.

Second, closely connected to categorizations of and within individuals, is SAT (Byrne, 1971), which translates the sentiment of the well-known proverb "birds of a feather flock together" into psychological research. It proposes that perceived similarity leads to an attraction between two individuals (Aron & Lewandowski, 2001), which is also referred to as homophily. Despite the theory's initial focus on attitude

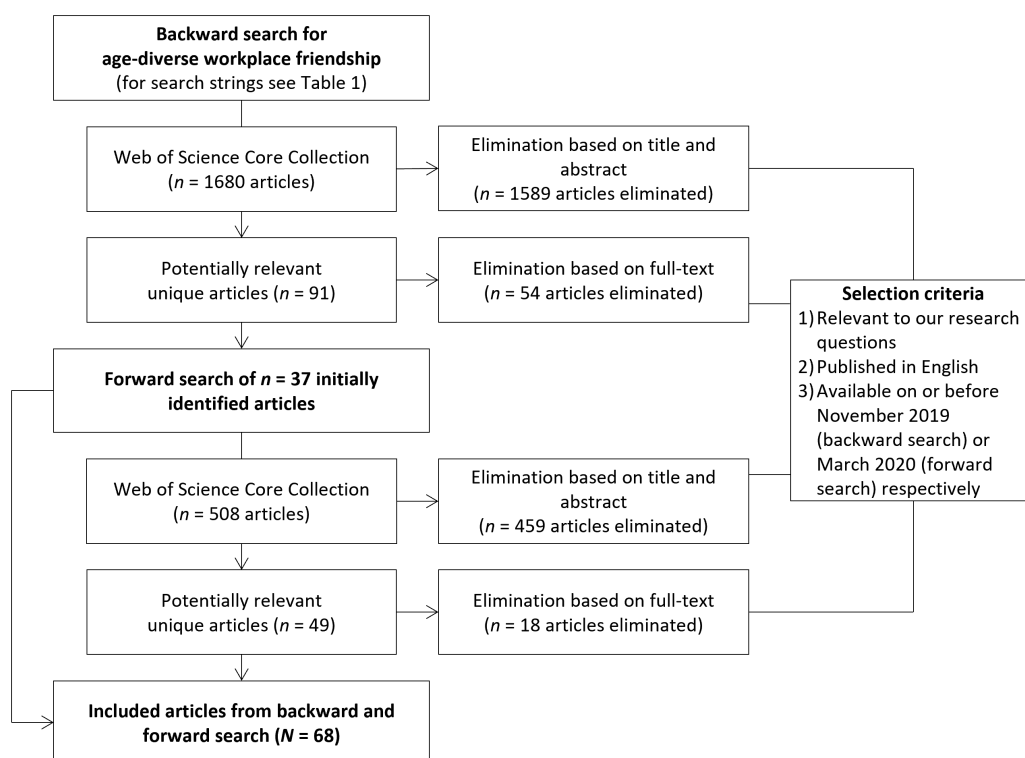


Figure 1. Process of the literature search.

similarity, it has since been extended to include demographic similarity (Williams et al., 2007). Similar to group categorizations in SIT, the perception of similarity in a dyad can thus occur both on the surface- and deep-level.

Third, SST proposes a major motivational shift across the lifespan (Carstensen, 1992). It posits that shrinking time horizons, which are typically associated with increasing age, are linked to a greater preference for present-oriented, emotionally meaningful activities and goals. According to the theory, an expansive perception of the future is associated with future-oriented goals (e.g., career development; Lang & Carstensen, 2002), which usually require effort in the present and only manifest their profit in the future. In contrast, when individuals feel that their time becomes more constrained and that reaping the harvest of their labors will no longer be reasonable or possible in the future, they experience a shift toward short-term, emotionally meaningful goals (e.g., generativity; Lang & Carstensen, 2002).

Together, these theories carry different propositions that affect the formation and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship. Due to the surface-level dissimilarity inherent in the relationship, age-diverse coworkers might categorize each other into different social groups according to SIT, involving an exaggeration of the difference between groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In line with SAT, such a focus on differentiating traits is not beneficial to the development of interpersonal attraction, a central cornerstone in close relationships (i.e., a friendship; Berger et al., 1977). However, age-diverse coworkers may share other similarities that foster friendship. Simultaneously, SST proposes different reactions depending on the perceived future time:

a constrained future time is associated with a stronger preference for emotionally close social partners (Hommelhoff et al., 2018), while an expansive future time is associated with a preference for novel social interactions (Carstensen et al., 2003), a prerequisite for the development of new relationships. In the following sections, we will present theoretical work and empirical findings relevant to age-diverse workplace friendship and align them with the predictions of the three theories outlined here.

Research question 2: antecedents of age-diverse workplace friendship

In line with work on the development of peer friendship at work (Sias & Cahill, 1998), we have identified two categories of antecedents for age-diverse workplace friendship, namely *individual and interpersonal antecedents* as well as *organizational antecedents*.

Individual and interpersonal antecedents

Individual and interpersonal antecedents include characteristics connected to befriended individuals. While exclusively individual characteristics have played a role in friendship research, we join the reasoning that friendship is intrinsically dyadic (Verbrugge, 1983). In dyadic relationships, one's individual characteristics are inherently tied to the characteristics of the friend (i.e., interpersonal aspects) and can therefore not be considered in isolation. We identified the following individual and interpersonal characteristics as important to age-diverse workplace friendship: *friendship chemistry* (notably *perceived similarity*), *age-related identity*, *age-related motivation*, and *age-related attitudes*.

Friendship chemistry. Friendship chemistry is a broad antecedent of workplace friendship (Gao et al., 2016). Campbell et al. (2015) listed reciprocal candor (i.e., being open with one another), mutual interest, personableness (i.e., expressing warmth, kindness, consideration, and understanding), physical attraction, and perceived similarity as the five relevant factors for friendship chemistry in a non-work context. They described friendship chemistry as an immediate emotional and psychological bond between two individuals. They also revealed age differences in the occurrence of friendship chemistry, arguing that younger individuals were more likely to experience friendship chemistry, which they attributed to their comparatively lower family and work demands. Although workplace friendship is not specifically explored in their study, these findings also hint at possible age-related differences in friendship chemistry at work. For instance, when a person climbs the organizational hierarchy, as it often is the case with increasing age (Mao & Hsieh, 2012; Wright, 2012) and tenure (North & Shakeri, 2019), they may be faced with increasing responsibilities, leaving them with fewer resources to initiate new friendships with younger, more recently hired employees. This inference is supported by tangentially related research on the connection between one's organizational level and friendship frequency: individuals at higher organizational levels, such as managers, report fewer workplace friendships (Mao, 2006) and different friendship expectations than those with a lower position in the organizational hierarchy (Mao & Hsieh, 2012). This trend again suggests that with an advanced organizational level and the often accompanying higher age, individuals may experience less friendship chemistry at work compared to lower organizational levels, which are usually occupied by younger coworkers, due to the different resource allocations. Moreover, we note that these results exemplify Carstensen's (1992) theoretically indicated shift from emphasizing the number of social relations to focusing on their quality in SST, causing older individuals to focus on the friendship chemistry in relationships they already have and be more reluctant to invest in friendship chemistry found in new relationships. Overall, these findings support the notion of organizational level as a possible obstacle to age-diverse workplace friendship concerning friendship chemistry.

In this context, we emphasize perceived similarity as a component of friendship chemistry that is particularly relevant to age-diverse workplace friendship (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2011; Omuris, 2019). Early work on the development of interpersonal relationships highlights the role of interpersonal attraction in friendship formation (Sias & Cahill, 1998), echoing SAT (Byrne, 1971), according to which interpersonal attraction is a result of perceived similarity. Research shows diverging results in terms of surface- and deep-level similarity. On the one hand, empirical evidence suggests that younger individuals prefer to work with employees of the same age, which is consistent with the predictions of SAT. This so-called age-similarity preference is related to increased workplace conflict in age-diverse work environments (Standifer et al., 2013). On the other hand, while surface-level demographic similarity is inherently lower between age-diverse coworkers compared to same-age individuals, theoretical work argues that surface-level similarity plays a less significant role in friendship formation than deep-level similarity (Sias & Cahill, 1998). More recent research suggests that even on the deep level, only relationship-relevant attitude dissimilarities lead to outcomes such as increased tension (Reid et al., 2017), which to

us illustrates the need to distinguish between different types of similarity in SAT. Furthermore, deep-level similarity is positively related to the relationship quality with coworkers in immigrants and this connection is amplified by a form of perceived workplace diversity (Valenzuela et al., 2020).

In summary, these findings imply that (a) while age-similarity preference exists in line with SAT, deep-level similarity is more significant in friendship formation, and (b) workplace age diversity could boost the positive effects of deep-level similarity on friendship formation. However, empirical findings suggest that surface- and deep-level similarity operate in complex interplay. For instance, Williams et al. (2007) revealed that based on SAT, perceived age dissimilarity can impair perspective-taking, which we will identify as a cognitive process of age-diverse workplace friendship, if individuals are similar on a deep level (i.e., in terms of work style).

Age-related identity. Another antecedent of age-diverse workplace friendship is the concept of *identities and identification* (Clair et al., 2019). Sluss and Ashforth (2008) differentiate between dyadic identities (i.e., relational) and those related to a larger collective (i.e., social), both of which are relevant to age-diverse workplace friendship. Relational identities are derived from relationships with other people (e.g., between coworkers), while social identities are based on social groups (e.g., an organization or age group). Group differentiation based on surface- or deep-level characteristics has been viewed as an immanent feature of social identities (Ferdman & Sagiv, 2012).

However, more recent research suggests that these distinctions may not always be as clear-cut as they have been portrayed in the past and that different identities can merge. For instance, Elliott O'Dare (2019) challenges this inherent group differentiation by introducing the concept of all-age identity as a key element of age-diverse friendship for older adults. This all-age identity is characterized by the simultaneous experience and display of emotions and behaviors which might stereotypically be attributed to different age groups (e.g., feeling childish and acting upon it in one situation, but feeling older than an age-other friend and acting accordingly in another situation). Intergenerational friendship helps develop and maintain this fusion of different age-based identities into a fluid all-age version for the older friendship partner (Elliott O'Dare et al., 2019a). Similarly, by building on SIT, research on cultural diversity at work shows that gap bridging behaviors, which aim at facilitating and enhancing socio-emotional collaboration in diverse teams, are connected to cultural identity plurality (i.e., holding multiple cultural identities at once; Backmann et al., 2020). These findings may be transferred to an age-diverse workplace context, as gap bridging behaviors to span bridges between age-diverse individuals through shared identity may provide a fertile ground for the development of close relationships. Another rather contemporary component fostering the development of a mutual identity is the dilution of boundaries between work and private life through social media. For instance, drawing on SIT, Bartels et al. (2019) showed that the perceived relationship quality with professional contacts on social media promoted identification with one's work department. Although they controlled for age in their analysis, research on generational differences in social media usage suggests that different age groups do utilize social media differently (Fietkiewicz et al., 2016). Thus, age-related differences between employees regarding the effects of professional contacts

Table 2. Research on the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship.

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
1	2014	Aalbers, Dolfsma, & Koppius	Mixed methods (Study 1 qualitative $n = 50$, Study 2 quantitative $n = 324$)	British journal of management	Organizational outcomes	The authors compared the knowledge transfer between different types of workplace relationships (i.e., formal, informal, and rich) in organizational innovation networks. They showed that rich ties in a multiplex network have a stronger link to knowledge transfer and supported their statistical results with qualitative interviews.
2	2016	Ashforth, Schimoff, & Rogers	Conceptual	Academy of management review	Organizational antecedents, cognitive processes	The authors elaborated the concept of personal identification as perceived oneness with another individual and defined three paths leading to such identification processes, including a closeness-focused route. They theorized that closeness-focused personal identification targets close relational partners and operates through reciprocal identity merging.
3	2020	Babelová, Stareček, Koltnerová, & Cagáňová	Quantitative ($n = 1,471$)	Sustainability	Cognitive processes	The authors explored generational differences regarding perceived organizational performance in recruiting and retaining employees, including workplace relationships. Among other findings, they showed that employees from different generational groups perceived relationships among employees as significantly different from one another.
4	2020	Backmann, Kanitz, Tian, Hoffmann, & Hoegl	Mixed methods (Qualitative and quantitative: Study 1 $n = 491$, Quantitative: Study 2 $n = 272$)	Journal of international business studies	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The authors determined five behaviors aimed at bridging the cultural gap in multinational teams and explored their impact on cultural identity plurality via cultural intelligence. They found that identity plurality was positively related to cultural gap bridging behaviors and that this relationship was mediated by cultural intelligence.
5	2019	Bartels, van Vuuren, & Ouwerkerk	Quantitative ($n = 1,002$)	Management communication quarterly	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The authors investigated how being connected with coworkers on social media platforms influences employee identification with different organizational levels. Their results indicated that the quality of relationships with work-related contacts promoted identification with one's department. In contrast, the perceived authority of online contacts increased organizational identification.
6	2019	Burns, Sheppard, Henderson, Wassel, Cope, Barber, & Pillemer	Systematic review/Meta-analysis ($n = 63$ studies)	American journal of public health	Organizational antecedents	The authors examined the relative effectiveness of ageism interventions consisting of education on ageism, intergenerational contact, or both. They revealed that ageism outcomes in attitudes, knowledge, and comfort toward older adults could be reduced through the interventions and that combining education and contact had the strongest effect on attitudes toward older adults.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
7	2019	Cadieux, Chasteen, & Packer	Quantitative ($n = 302$)	The journals of gerontology	Individual and interpersonal antecedents, cognitive processes	The authors explored the processes of improving age-based attitudes through intergenerational contact and how they were influenced by the concept of inclusion of the outgroup in the self. They showed that quality contact leads to self-expansion, which was in turn connected to more positive attitudes toward older people and reduced incompetence stereotypes. The author explored the link between high-quality relationships at work, social impact, job stress/exhaustion, and commitment. The results showed a positive connection between high-quality workplace relationships and commitment, which was partially mediated via social impact. In addition, high-quality relationships showed a direct negative effect on job stress/exhaustion, whereas its partial mediation through social impact had a positive effect.
9	2015	Campbell, Holderness, & Riggs	Quantitative (Exploratory analysis $n = 688$, confirmatory analysis $n = 715$)	The social science journal	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	Drawing on interdependence theory and friendship formation research, the authors analyzed the underlying components of friendship chemistry. They found reciprocal candor, mutual interest, personableness, similarity, and physical attraction as the five individual and dyadic factors involved in friendship initiation.
10	2013	Chen, Mao, Hsieh, Liu, & Yen	Quantitative ($n = 309$)	The social science journal	Organizational antecedents	The authors explored the connection between interactive justice, which describes the perceived fairness of interpersonal treatment of an employee, and workplace friendship with the quality of leader-member exchange as a mediator. They discovered that leader-member exchange fully mediated the significant relationship between interactive justice and workplace friendship.
11	2008	Chua, Ingram, & Morris	Quantitative ($n = 101$)	Academy of management journal	Cognitive processes, affective processes	The authors differentiated between cognition-based and affect-based trust to investigate how these types of trust were related to the relational content of ties in professional networks. Their results indicated that affect-based trust, but not cognition-based trust, is higher for friendship ties.
12	2019	Clair, Humberd, Rouse, & Jones	Conceptual	Academy of management review	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The authors built a framework of non-normative demographic identities that describe four types of misalignment between organizational categorizing and an individual's understanding of their demographic identity. They additionally theorized categorization threat as a possible outcome of such misalignments from a needs perspective, describing the need for identity autonomy and identity legitimacy as unique forces in explaining negative results of incorrect categorization.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
13	2016	Colbert, Bono, & Purvanova	Mixed methods; Study 1 qualitative ($n = 287$ for item creation, $n = 177$ for scale validation), Study 2 quantitative ($n = 151$ pairs)	Academy of management journal	Behavioral processes	Through creating a taxonomy of relationship functions, the authors examined the impact of workplace relationships on employee flourishing. They describe friendship as such a function of workplace relationships, along with ask assistance, career advancement, emotional support, personal growth, and the opportunity to give to others.
14	2018	Cooper-Thomas & Morrison	Conceptual	Industrial and organizational psychology journal	Organizational antecedents	The authors revisited social exchange theory in light of the increasing complexity of interpersonal relationships and changing work contexts.
15	2019	Craig & Kuykendall	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 749$, Study 2 $n = 310$)	Journal of vocational behavior	Individual outcomes	Drawing on social support resources theory, the authors investigated the influence of supportive friendship on well-being via self-esteem. They specifically compared workplace friends to nonwork friends and found that workplace friends influence work-related well-being, but not general well-being.
16	2017	Cranmer, Goldman, & Booth-Butterfield	Quantitative ($n = 207$)	Western journal of communication	Behavioral processes, individual outcomes	The authors studied the relationship between support at work and job satisfaction as a function of organizational assimilation. Their results showed that received emotional, instrumental, and informational support all had direct effects on job satisfaction, which were being mediated by the different dimensions of organizational assimilation.
17	2014	Cronin	Qualitative ($n = 40$)	Emotions, space and society	Organizational antecedents	The author explored the connections between friendship, emotions, and the context in which friendships occur. She described the influences of workplaces on friendships and analyzed the emotional experience resulting from such relationships.
18	2013	Dumas, Phillips, & Rothbard	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 228$, Study 2 $n = 141$)	Organization science journal	Organizational antecedents	Falling back on research on boundary theory, the authors investigated the effect of integration behaviors on workplace relationships in a racially diverse workforce. Their results showed that integration behaviors were positively associated with relationship closeness for demographically similar individuals. In the case of dissimilarity, no such significant connection was found. Besides, the authors found that the quality of the experience during integration explained the weaker association between integration behaviors and closeness for dissimilar individuals.
19	2019	Ehrhardt & Ragins	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 312$, Study 2 $n = 173$, Study 3 $n = 210$)	Academy of management journal	Individual outcomes	The authors investigated the reasons and mechanisms of relational attachment at work and its impact on different work-related outcomes. To achieve this, they developed and tested a theoretical model of relational attachment at work. They found that attachment to others was positively related to organizational attachment if social support fit their individual needs.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
20	2019	Elliott O'Dare, Timonen, & Conlon	Qualitative ($n = 23$)	Journal of aging studies	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	Adopting the perspective of the older friend, the authors examined narratives on intergenerational friendships. They discovered a disregard of social age norms as a key theme, which was expressed by the striving to continue a sense of belonging and connectedness through intergenerational friendships.
21	2019	Elliott O'Dare, Timonen, & Conlon	Qualitative ($n = 8$)	Ageing and society	Individual outcomes	The authors reviewed past academic research on intergenerational friendships between adults and looked for reasons for the sparsity of results they encountered. Among other results, they reported research on different outcomes of age-diverse friendship.
22	2019	Gerlach	Quantitative ($n = 571$)	German journal of human resource management: Zeitschrift für personal-forschung	Organizational antecedents	Building on theories of organizational justice and social exchange, the author addressed justice perceptions as antecedents to workplace relationships and explored their link to employee job outcomes. The findings indicated that, depending on the relative organizational status of the individuals involved, informational and interpersonal justice influences the quality of workplace relationships. Furthermore, the results pointed out different pathways through which such relationships impact job performance.
23	2018	Gibson, Harari, & Marr	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 142$, Study 2 $n = 245$, Study 3 $n = 280$)	Organizational behavior and human decision processes	Behavioral processes	The authors challenged the prevailing belief that self-disclosure always has a positive impact on workplace relationships. Their findings consistently showed that revealing weaknesses to coworkers of lower status had negative consequences for the higher-status individual engaging in self-disclosure. These negative responses included status penalty, which is associated with decreased influence, increased task conflict, and lower post-disclosure relationship quality. Their results indicated perceived vulnerability as a psychological process of this phenomenon.
24	2003	Hargie, Dickson, & Nelson	Mixed methods (Qualitative: Organization A $n = 24$, Organization B $n = 8$, Organization D $n = 10$; Network analysis: Organization C $n = 10$)	Journal of business and technical communication	Cognitive processes	The authors compared the intergroup relations and communication between disparate social groups (i.e., Protestant and Catholic) in four Northern Irish companies. They identified six overarching themes across the different organizations and data collection methods. Their results stressed the impact of training and interventions by third parties on cross-group exchanges and noted that workplaces may serve as forums to bring individuals from different groups together.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
25	2017	Ho & Yeung	Quantitative (N = 220)	International journal of psychology	Organizational antecedents	The authors integrated the dual concern model of conflict and social identity theory into an integrated model of conflict, which they applied to an intergenerational work context to study the effect of social identity salience on motivational orientation and conflict strategies. Their results demonstrated that subgroup and superordinate identities influenced conflict strategies but not motivational orientation.
26	2015	Holian	Qualitative (n = 26)	Labour & industry: a journal of the social and economic relations of work	Organizational antecedents	The authors explored the experiences of older employees and their implications within a multigenerational organizational context. They stressed the similarity between older employees and other groups of employees while highlighting the complexity of individual differences within group-level patterns.
27	2019	Hommelhoff	Qualitative (n = 201)	Zeitschrift für Arbeits- und organisationspsychologie	Individual outcomes	In an exploratory study, the author examined the conflicts among workplace friends. She stated that the most common sources of conflict stem from status aspects, such as hierarchies or promotions, which clash with friendly affection. Although she explained that positive experiences are more prevalent than conflicts, such conflicts are particularly stressful, and their frequency is related to lower job satisfaction.
28	2017	Hood, Cruz, & Bachrach	Quantitative (n = 120 teams)	Journal of business and psychology	Individual outcomes	The authors introduced a multiplex view of intrateam conflict in social relationships at work and its influence on team performance by consulting conservation of resource theory, multiplex social networks research, and conflict involvement perspective. Their findings implied that conflict between team members who are friends influence team performance negatively, whereas the opposite holds for conflicts between non-friends.
29	2019	Hsu, Liu, & Tsaur	Quantitative (n = 310)	International journal of contemporary hospitality management	Individual outcomes	The authors explored the effect of workplace bullying on employee wellbeing with a focus on organizational justice and workplace friendship as moderating variables. They found that workplace friendships had a positive direct effect on employee wellbeing but did not buffer the adverse effects of workplace bullying on employee wellbeing.
30	2008	Ingram & Zou	Conceptual	Research in organizational behavior	Affective processes, behavioral processes, individual outcomes	The authors discussed the mechanisms to which friendships at work are subject and addressed possible risks of such relationships. They also commented on the integration of workplace friendships into network structures.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
31	2018	Khazanchi, Sprinkle, Masterson, & Tong	Conceptual	Academy of management review	Organizational antecedents	The authors discussed possible beneficial and detrimental influences of spatial workspace layout on workplace relationships and presented their results in a spatial model of work relationships. They identified relationship-building pathways leading to the creation of instrumental or expressive relational ties as well as relationship-straining pathways hindering expressive ties while fostering negative ties.
32	2018	Kohan, Safari, & Teimouri	Quantitative ($n = 502$)	Human systems management	Organizational antecedents	The authors examined the impact of transformational leadership on workplace friendship and organizational climate in a military context. The results indicated that transformational leadership was positively correlated with workplace friendship.
33	2001	Lindorff	Quantitative ($n = 572$)	Work & stress	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The author investigated the social inclusion of managers and differences between work and non-work sources of support and stress. The results indicated that non-work support played a more important role for managers compared to support from work relationships and that the type of support differed between those sources. At work, the support from co-employees was rated as more frequently available than that from subordinates or supervisors.
34	2018	Longmire & Harrison	Meta-analysis ($n = 304$ samples)	The Journal of applied psychology	Cognitive processes, affective processes	The authors examined the differences, limitations, and consequences of perspective-taking and empathic concern in the work context and concluded that both constructs have distinct influences on work-related outcomes.
35	2018	Lopez-Kidwell, Niven, & Labianca	Conceptual	Journal of organizational behavior	Affective processes	The authors propose a model explaining the dynamic influence of interpersonal affect on organizational relationships by drawing on social network theory and the circumplex model of affect, which differentiates between trait relational affect and state relational affect.
36	2017	Lu, Hafenbrack, Eastwick, Wang, Maddux, & Galinsky	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 115$, Study 2 $n = 108$, Study 3 $n = 141$, Study 4 $n = 2,226$)	The Journal of applied psychology	Organizational outcomes	Drawing on the creative cognition approach, the authors studied how close social cross-cultural relationships between individuals affected their creativity. Their results demonstrated the positive effects of intercultural social relationships on different creativity outcomes.
37	2019	Lysova, Allan, Dik, Duffy, & Steger	Conceptual	Journal of vocational behavior	Individual outcomes	The authors reviewed the literature on meaningful work and discussed how the contributing factors may interplay in a way that allows organizations to advance meaningful work. Among these factors, they described high-quality relationships as a beneficial manifestation of the social context at work.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
38	2019	Lytle & Levy	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 354$, Study 2 $n = 505$)	The gerontologist	Organizational antecedents	The authors investigated the two key factors for reducing ageism, education about aging and extended contact, as interventions on their own and in combination. They showed that their interventions lead to less negative attitudes toward older adults and increased knowledge of older adults. However, they noted that these effects did not always extend beyond the first test. Utilizing a social exchange theory lens, the authors analyzed variables involved in the development of organizational attachment and its persistence. Their results showed that positive relationships at work partially mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and turnover intention. The authors pointed out how different types of positive workplace relationships may affect employee withdrawal behaviors differently.
39	2015	Madden, Mathias, & Madden	Quantitative ($n = 73$)	Management research review	Individual outcomes	The authors investigated the impact of employees' organizational level on workplace friendship. Their results indicated that a higher organizational level is associated with less workplace friendship. They noted that this finding was in line with power theory, but counterintuitive in light of the higher capabilities of resource-supplying of individuals at higher organizational levels and their central positions in organizational networks.
40	2006	Mao	Quantitative ($N = 288$)	The international journal of human resource management	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The authors researched the relationship between organizational level and friendship expectations at work to explain inconsistencies in the existing literature. They found that the expectation of instrumental friendship at work did not differ depending on the organizational level, whereas the expectations of expressive friendship at work were negatively related to the organizational level.
41	2012	Mao & Hsieh	Quantitative ($n = 222$)	Asian business & management	Individual and interpersonal antecedents, organizational antecedents	Conceptualizing workplace friendship as a factor in an organization's social environment, the authors draw on the theory of motivation to explain the effects of workplace friendship on perceived job significance. Their results indicated that workplace friendship was positively related to perceived job significance. This relationship was independent of the employees' organizational level.
42	2012	Mao, Hsieh, & Chen	Quantitative ($n = 290$)	Journal of management & organization	Individual outcomes	

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
43	2008	Masselink, Lee & Konrad	Quantitative ($n = 2,018$)	Health care management review	Individual outcomes	The authors relied on the theory of social capital to explain the role of relational factors, such as relations with coworkers, staff, and patients, on withdrawal intentions in physicians. They revealed that relationships with coworkers were negatively related to withdrawal intentions only for physicians in large-group practices, but not in solo/small-group practices. The authors note that these mixed findings are not consistent with previous research on knowledge workers.
44	2018	Methot, Rosado-Solomon, & Allen	Conceptual	Academy of management review	Organizational antecedents	The authors introduced a relational theory of HR management to explain the interplay between human resource practices and social networks. They argued that individuals construe their identity in relation to their dyadic and collective relationships, which can be modified through human resource practices.
45	2010	Milner, Russell, & Siemers	Mixed methods (Study 1 quantitative $n = 101$, Study 2 qualitative $n = 14$)	South African journal of psychology	Organizational antecedents, individual outcomes	The authors explored the relationship between workplace friendship and organizational commitment in socially isolating work environments. Their results indicated that workplace friendships can increase organizational commitment. Besides, they identified four themes of call center work environments specifically, namely the alienating nature of their work, a high commitment to the superordinate institution which the call centers belonged, structural and managerial restrictions on friendship formation, and the employee's agency to defy those restraints.
46	2017	Morrison & Macky	Quantitative ($N = 1,000$)	Applied ergonomics	Organizational antecedents	The authors investigated the impact of shared work environments on the demands and resources of employees. They found that demands increased with higher levels of shared environments, whereas the support dimension of workplace friendship remained unchanged and perceptions of supervisory support decreased.
47	2019	Nguyen	Qualitative ($n = 30$)	International journal of sociology	Organizational antecedents	The author analyzed the development of cross-cultural conviviality as a mode of togetherness in a culturally diverse workplace. They identified the three central themes of leadership, casual and extra-organizational socializing, and intercultural civility, the latter of which was connected to conflict avoidance.
48	2018	Okoe, Boateng, Narteh, & Boakye	Quantitative ($n = 569$)	The service industries journal	Organizational outcomes	The authors investigated the relationship between workplace friendship and service innovation with knowledge sharing as a moderating variable. Their findings suggested workplace friendship as a predictor of service innovation but implied that workplace friendship and knowledge sharing showed no interaction effect on service innovation.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
49	2019	Omuris	Mixed methods (Study 1 qualitative $n = 17$, Study 2 & 3 qualitative $n = 507$ each)	International journal of contemporary hospitality management	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The authors investigated the topic of workplace friendships and developed a six-factor workplace friendship scale with the following dimensions: Trustworthiness, competency, having someone's back, value-life interest similarity, caring personal relationships, and socio-cultural similarity.
50	2018	Ozbek	Quantitative ($n = 313$)	Journal of economy culture and society	Individual outcomes	Employing an organizational social capital perspective and social exchange theory, the author explored the negative effects of two types of workplace friendships (i.e., with coworkers and a supervisor) on employee's job insecurity and turnover intention in relation to their work ethic. He concludes that the benefit of workplace friendships for an employee is lower job insecurity, whereas an organization profits from workplace friendships through decreased turnover intention and organizational deviance as well as increased job performance. The results additionally showed that these associations depended on the individual's level of work ethic.
51	2018	Persson, Lindström, Petterson, & Andersson	Quantitative ($n = 689$)	Work	Individual outcomes	Adopting a salutogenic perspective, the authors investigated the connection between health and positive social relationships among employees in the eldercare sector. Coworker belongingness and positive relationships with managers were among the significant predictors of health they identified.
52	2018	Pillemer & Rothbard	Conceptual	Academy of management review	Organizational antecedents, individual outcomes	Based on theories of close relationships, social exchange, and boundary management, the authors created a theoretical framework focusing on the tensions between central friendships characteristics and pivotal organizational components involved in workplace friendships. They described how certain aspects of workplace friendships can have a positive impact on work outcomes but may also lead to adverse consequences.
53	2018	Rai & Agarwal	Quantitative ($n = 835$)	Employee relations	Individual outcomes	The authors explored the relationships between workplace bullying and several employee outcomes considering psychological contract violation and workplace friendship. They discovered that workplace friendships buffered the negative effects of workplace bullying on the observed employee outcomes.
54	2017	Reid, Davis, Pollack, & Coughlan	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 81$, Study 2 $n = 185$)	The journal of psychology	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	Drawing on balance theory, the authors investigated the role of issue relevance on imbalance-induced tension in workplace relationships. Their findings demonstrated that only relationship-relevant self-supervisor dissimilarity lead to increased tension in response to the disagreement as well as decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Non-relevant dissimilarity showed no such effect.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
55	2016	Schafer & Upmiekis	Quantitative ($n = 2,583$)	Social psychology quarterly	Individual and interpersonal antecedents, behavioral processes	The authors uncovered the differences in advice transmission across age groups and studied age-contingent connections between giving advice and life meaning. They described advice-giving as a means to develop life meaning and enhancing the well-being of others and noted that, although the connection between giving advice and life meaning is the strongest for late-middle age adults, opportunities to engage in such behaviors decrease with age. The authors investigated the effects of multiplex relationships on individual performance applying network analysis. They found that relationships including the discussion of work-related and non-work-related topics predicted performance advantages compared to solely work-focused ties without social interactions. Besides, they revealed that this effect was only present up to a certain number of multiplex workplace ties.
56	2017	Shah, Parker, & Waldstrom	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 204, 156$; Study 2 $n = 106$)	Management communication quarterly	Organizational antecedents	The authors illustrated the development of workplace friendship and explored different factors and communicative changes in the development process. They identified three main transition phases and described the content a depth of communication associated with each.
57	1998	Sias & Cahill	Quantitative ($n = 19$ friendships)	Western journal of communication	Individual and interpersonal antecedents, organizational antecedents, affective processes	The authors explored the communication practices applied by coworkers in the initiation and maintenance of workplace friendships. They highlight aspects such as communication frequency or perceived communication quality as well as the importance of different communication methods in the electronically connected workplace. Their results indicated that the observed communication methods differed in perceived quality of communication and that the use of different methods varied between older and younger employees.
58	2012	Sias, Pedersen, Gallagher, & Kopaneva	Quantitative ($n = 140$)	Human communication research	Organizational antecedents	The authors introduced the concept of age similarity preference to describe the extent to which individuals favor interaction with others within or outside their age group at work and investigated its relationship with conflict perception. Their results suggested that age similarity preference influenced the reported conflict and that this connection was mediated via uncertainty and perceived work-related challenges. Besides, younger individuals were more likely to show age similarity preference.
59	2013	Standifer, Lester, Schultz, & Windsor	Quantitative ($n = 262$)	Human relations	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The authors introduced the concept of age similarity preference to describe the extent to which individuals favor interaction with others within or outside their age group at work and investigated its relationship with conflict perception. Their results suggested that age similarity preference influenced the reported conflict and that this connection was mediated via uncertainty and perceived work-related challenges. Besides, younger individuals were more likely to show age similarity preference.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
60	2018	Tran, Nguyen, Dang, & Ton	Quantitative ($n = 303$)	Behavioral sciences	Individual outcomes, organizational outcomes	The authors explored the effects of workplace relationships on working behaviors and performance. They revealed that high-quality workplace relationships showed positive effects on several work attitudes, but not on performance ratings, which they attributed to the context of the nursing profession they had examined.
61	2020	Valenzuela, Jian, & Jolly	Quantitative ($n = 347$)	Employee relations	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The authors investigated the link between immigrants' perceived deep-level similarities and perceived ethnic diversity at work with their coworker relationship quality. Their findings showed that perceived deep-level similarity was positively related to relationship quality with coworkers and that increasing perceived ethnic diversity at work strengthened this link.
62	2017	Vassou, Zopiatis, & Theocharous	Quantitative ($n = 414$)	International journal of hospitality management	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	Drawing on the contact hypothesis viewpoint, the authors examined intercultural encounters at work and their effects on local hospitality employees on a sociocultural and organizational level. Among other findings, they showed that prior attitudes toward an out-group significantly influence the development of intercultural relationships at work.
63	2015	Wilk & Makarius	Quantitative ($n = 222$)	Organization science	Individual and interpersonal antecedents, organizational outcomes	The authors investigated racial dissimilarity in chosen relationships both outside and inside a work context. They noticed spillover effects of racially dissimilar relationships outside of work on those at work, such that individuals have similar relationships in both contexts with regards to racial dissimilarity. They additionally found that having racially dissimilar choice relationships increased extra-role behaviors.
64	2012	Wright	Quantitative (Study 1 $n = 360$, Study 2 $n = 225$, Study 3 $n = 188$)	The journal of psychology	Individual and interpersonal antecedents	The author considered the stereotypical idea that professionals at the top of the hierarchy are exposed to social isolation. Her results show that the perceived loneliness at work did not differ between managers and non-managers. She attributes this to a greater role of qualitative aspects of the work environment compared to the position in the hierarchy on perceived loneliness at work.
65	2019	Yakubovich & Burg	Quantitative ($n = 451$ individuals = 11,281 'within-Cohort' dyads)	Human relations	Organizational antecedents	The authors researched the impact of formal interdependence and informal tie creation and its persistence in a field experiment. Their results showed that formal interdependence aided the development of informal ties and increases the persistence of pre-existing informal ties. The latter effect decreased with tie strength.

Table 2. Continued

No.	Year	Authors	Method	Outlet	Categorization	Main findings
66	2018	Yang & Mishra	Conceptual	Industrial and organizational psychology	Organizational antecedents	The authors proposed interventions promoting positive perspectives as valuable options for enhancing workplace relationship quality in the context of contemporary work reality. They described two types of interventions for enhancing prosocial behaviors (i.e., kindness toward others, perceived prosocial impact) and discussed their practical implications. The authors considered the opportunities and obstacles connected to information exchange between coworkers on social networking sites. Drawing on social exchange theory and boundary theory, they showed that coworker friendship on social networking sites was connected to job embeddedness and satisfaction through instrumental coworker support.
67	2020	Yang & Wong	Quantitative ($n = 253$)	International journal of hospitality management	Individual outcomes	Drawing on social exchange theory, the authors outlined the topic of generalized social exchange as a central factor in the free exchange of resources within groups and the formation of group-based identities and compared it to reciprocal and negotiated exchange.
68	2018	Yoshikawa, Wu, & Lee	Conceptual	Industrial and organizational psychology	Organizational antecedents	Drawing on social exchange theory, the authors outlined the topic of generalized social exchange as a central factor in the free exchange of resources within groups and the formation of group-based identities and compared it to reciprocal and negotiated exchange.

in social media on identity formation should be considered as a possible influence.

In summary, our review of these findings presents a double-edged sword: On the one hand, age-diverse individuals may identify each other as out-group members based on demographic aspects as SIT initially proposes (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). On the other hand, new streams of research suggest that a clear separation into distinct identities may exist only to a limited extent and that a more fluid approach to identity provides a basis for age-diverse workplace friendship.

Age-related motivation. Furthermore, the individual antecedents of age-diverse workplace friendship include age-related motivational aspects. Research relying on SST repeatedly shows that a constrained future time perspective is associated with generative goals (i.e., supporting and guiding younger people or helping to contribute to the next generation), whereas the perception of expansive time is linked to growth or development goals (i.e., acquiring knowledge or experiencing novel situations; Fasbender, Wöhrmann et al., 2019; Kooij & van de Voorde, 2011; Kooij & Zacher, 2016). Kooij and van de Voorde (2011) additionally revealed age-related changes in future time perspective, indicating that time perceptions begin to shrink for middle-aged employees, resulting in a higher generativity orientation and a lower development orientation. It can thus be argued that the prospect of being able to avail oneself of the knowledge and expertise of older coworkers through the social exchange within workplace friendship could serve as an age-related motivation for younger individuals to engage in age-diverse workplace friendship. Regarding motivational factors for older employees to enter age-diverse workplace friendship, research indicates that higher-ranking individuals rate the support they receive from non-work sources like spouses as higher in quantity and quality compared to work sources (Lindorff, 2001). However, the provision of support and passing on of knowledge could be a source of motivation for older employees to enter into an age-diverse workplace friendship, for instance, due to the generative potential of such relationships (McAdams, 2006) as well as the social and personal meaning work holds for older adults (Fasbender et al., 2016). This is especially important given the decreasing chances to partake in generative activities with age (Schafer & Upenieks, 2016).

Age-related attitudes. Another factor relevant to the formation of age-diverse workplace friendship is the attitude one holds toward individuals from the other age group. Wilk and Makarius (2015) demonstrated that demographic dissimilarity in voluntary friendships outside the work context is related to preferences in workplace friendship. Moreover, research in the cultural diversity domain establishes prior attitudes as one central determinant in intercultural relationship formation at work (Vassou et al., 2017). According to this, positive or negative patterns arise in contact with other groups, as attitudes existing before contact manifest themselves in corresponding positive or negative behavior from the very beginning of inter-group contact. Translated into an age-diverse context, this means that one's attitudes toward the other age group before an initial contact in a work setting could play a major role in the formation of age-diverse workplace friendship, potentially facilitating

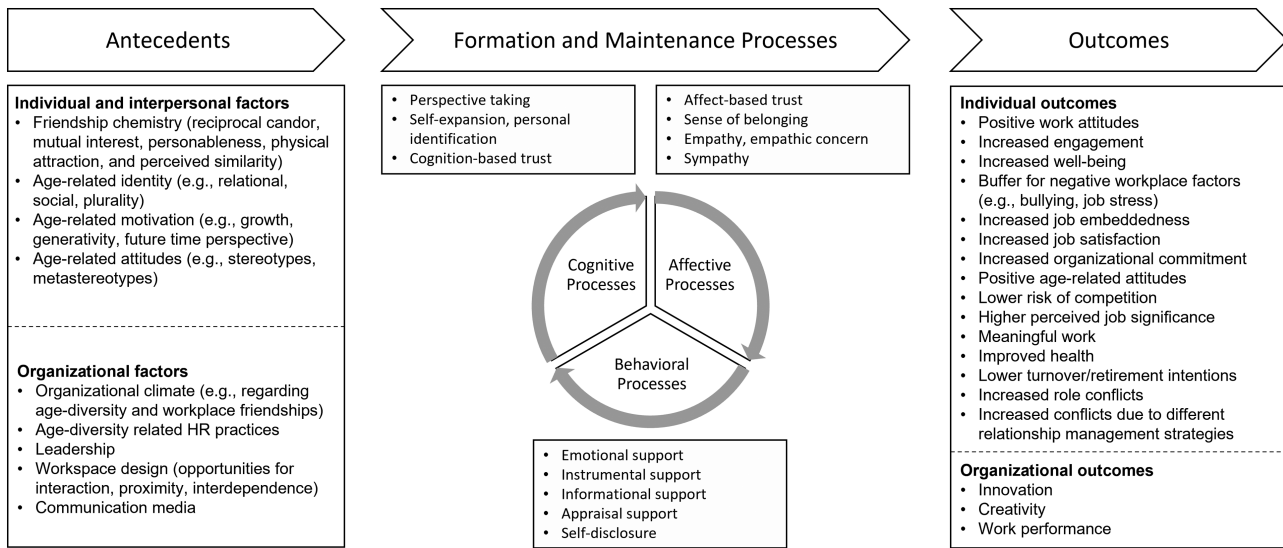


Figure 2. Results of systematic literature review: age-diverse workplace friendship framework.

or obstructing it (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Age-based (meta-) stereotypes are one example of such attitudes. While stereotypes manifest themselves as over-generalized views toward certain groups of people, meta-stereotypes describe the assumptions a person has about the stereotypes others hold toward groups to which one belongs (Finkelstein et al., 2013). As an empirical example of this, Cadieux et al. (2019) showed that the incompetence stereotypes young individuals held of older adults significantly predicted their general attitudes toward older adults as a group. In a wider sense, studies on multicultural perspectives indicate that inclusive perceptions toward outgroups at work are linked to more positive attitudes toward outgroup members (Plaut et al., 2009; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). In particular, Richeson and Nussbaum (2004) draw on SIT to approach this phenomenon. We thus infer that SIT suggests stereotyping as a mechanism through which groups are distinguished as individuals strive to achieve or maintain a positive social identity in comparison to out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 2010). Hence, theoretical and empirical research show that age differences must be considered as a potential obstacle in age-diverse friendship formation due to social norms and expectations.

Organizational antecedents

Organizational antecedents include characteristics connected to the organizational environment in which age-diverse workplace friendship develops. Workplaces as a contextual framework shape emerging friendship significantly through factors like tasks, routines, or demands. They also actively provide a basis for initiating relationships by grouping individuals who otherwise may never meet (Cronin, 2014). Hence, organizations significantly shape the relationships of their employees through different social aspects (Costas, 2012; Tse et al., 2008) and therewith have the potential to consider different age-related needs in HR practices (Holian, 2015). We identified the following organizational characteristics as important to age-diverse workplace friendship: *organizational climate, age diversity-related human resource (HR) practices, leadership, workspace design, and communication media.*

Organizational climate and age diversity-related HR practices. Identities and identification are crucial beyond the individual and interpersonal level, as they are shaped on the social level as well. To this purpose, the closely linked organizational age climate and age diversity-related (HR) practices (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015; Fasbender & Gerpott, 2021b; Heaphy et al., 2018; Pytlovany & Truxillo, 2015) are particularly important. Organizational age climate covers a shared understanding of diversity-related beliefs and expectations of an organization, which are revealed through policies, practices, and rewards. Among other outcomes, such forms of organizational support shape inter-age group perceptions and play a role in dual identity development by linking one's age-based identity with an organizational identity (i.e., identifying oneself as a member of one's organization; Iweins et al., 2013). Similarly, the dual identity model (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000) posits that perceived group identity differences (i.e., age-based) are compensated for by perceived similarities from a superordinate common identity (i.e., organization-based). One's individual tendency to engage in generalized social exchange (i.e., resource exchange beyond dyadic ties via shared indirect social exchange in groups; Cooper-Thomas & Morrison, 2018) may encourage a psychological connection between individual group members and a collective identity (Yoshikawa et al., 2018). Methot et al. (2018) theorize that HR practices can also alter an individual's relational identity through changing internal organizational social structures, for instance by targeting composition (i.e., homogeneity), network configuration (i.e., density), and network content (i.e., tie strength). They further propose that such identity disruptions temporarily impair individual work performance.

Moreover, research suggests that the salience of subgroup or superordinate identities impacts one's strategies used in navigating social situations in an intergenerational context (Ho & Yeung, 2017). Transferred to age-diverse friendship and its formation, individuals could display more friendship-facilitating strategies toward individuals at the other end of the age spectrum if they share a salient superordinate identity with them. These connections emphasize the fluent

transition and reciprocal influence between the organizational and the individual identity components, the latter of which we described in the section on the individual antecedents of workplace friendship.

Furthermore, as another example of HR practices, interventions against ageism (i.e., stereotypes, prejudice, or discrimination against others based on demographic age) can lead to a change in attitudes, knowledge, and comfort toward older people (Burnes et al., 2019; Lytle & Levy, 2019), thus targeting individual- and interpersonal-level attitudes, which we identified as central to identity formation above.

Leadership. Leadership affects age diversity at work as another organizational factor that is closely linked to organizational climate (Naegele et al., 2018). It is defined as directing and coordinating the activities of group members to accomplishing group objectives (Jago, 1982). As such, leadership affects workplace relationships such as friendships (Li & Hung, 2009) and has been highlighted as a tool for managing workplace diversity (Nguyen, 2019). Among the many different types of leadership, transformational leadership provides a good example in our context, as it aims to shape the follower's values and attitudes away from egoistic, individual goals, toward collective, superordinate goals (Podsakoff et al., 1990). It is positively related to workplace friendship prevalence (Kohan et al., 2018) and is additionally theorized to reduce subgroup formation among diverse employees, which would otherwise bear the risk of relationship conflicts based on demographic differences (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015). This aligns with the earlier reasoning that superordinate elements foster age-diverse workplace friendship by creating a common ground.

One way in which leadership manifests is via perceptions of organizational justice (Armağan & Erzen, 2015), which is in turn related to workplace friendship (Chen et al., 2013). For instance, Gerlach (2019) investigated the effects of informational justice (i.e., the justness regarding the communication of decisions and procedures) and interpersonal justice (i.e., the justness of interpersonal treatment) on workplace friendship, showing that such justice perceptions fostered workplace relationship quality. Discrimination by leaders on the grounds of age (i.e., age discrimination), which is experienced by younger and older employees alike (Snape & Redman, 2003), has been hypothesized to weaken organizational justice perceptions (Viitasalo & Nätti, 2015). While research around age-inclusive leadership is not yet fully fleshed out, initial findings show that leadership can be a linchpin for organizations to guide age diversity, for instance through justice perceptions (Hertel & Zacher, 2018), and therewith foster age-diverse workplace friendship (Chen et al., 2013). In addition, scholars suggest that the communication of organizational justice is connected to the social identity of employees (Poole, 2007). This relationship suggests that leadership may influence employees' social work identity via organizational perceptions of justice.

Workspace design. On a more fundamental level, research has highlighted the role of workspace design in the development of workplace relationships. The spatial workplace design has been theorized to influence work relationships through relationship-building and relationship-straining mechanisms alike (Khazanchi et al., 2018; Morrison & Macky, 2017). Khazanchi et al. (2018)

describe how aspects such as proximity, privacy, and workspace assignment foster relationships by increasing both face-to-face communication frequency and the general communication duration, adding non-work-related content to communication compared to an exclusive task-focus, and identity-oriented marking behaviors (e.g., personalized workplace decoration). They contrast these with workspace design elements like crowding, low privacy, and unassigned workspaces that cultivate relationship-straining effects by leading to self-regulatory resource depletion, and control-oriented or defensive territorial behaviors. Similarly, socially isolating workplaces do not foster workplace friendship (Milner et al., 2010), suggesting that a balance between too little privacy and seclusion may be the golden middle ground for the development of workplace friendship. Relatedly, opportunities for interaction (i.e., proximity or task interdependence; Sias & Cahill, 1998) precede age-diverse workplace friendship. For instance, opportunities for generativity can increase intergenerational contact quality for older employees (Henry et al., 2015) in line with SST (Carstensen, 1992), while increasing informal interdependence supports the creation of friendship irrespective of the demographic similarity of the employees involved (Yakubovich & Burg, 2019). Workspace design and the nature of the task at hand directly influence how employees interact at work through spatial assignment to a workspace. Such physical arrangements are not random but depend on other factors, such as organizational level (Mao & Hsieh, 2012). Hence, older employees, who are frequently ranked higher in organizational hierarchies, may be situated in separate or isolated locations, potentially putting them at a higher risk of experiencing the relationships-straining mechanisms of isolation. However, research on racial diversity suggests that not all interactions between coworkers are beneficial in diverse workforces and thus, merely increasing the interaction frequency is not necessarily the optimal approach to establishing a solid foundation for age-diverse workplace friendship (Dumas et al., 2013). Instead, the quality of interaction between (age-)diverse employees is critical to developing close relationships at work (Fasbender & Wang, 2017).

Communication media. Electronic developments regarding communication media in the workplace constitute an additional influencing factor. Research on communication in light of technological advancements has highlighted face-to-face communication as the highest quality form of communication at work and as the most important method for workplace friendship maintenance (Sias et al., 2012b). Yet, in electronically connected organizations, physical proximity was listed as the least important factor to workplace friendship initiation, indicating that face-to-face interaction is not necessarily bound to physically close workspaces. Besides, Sias et al. (2012b) observed generational differences in the use and perceptions of the examined communication methods. They noted that, in comparison to their older counterparts, younger employees used social networking, instant messaging, and texting more frequently as communication methods. Besides, the younger coworkers perceived communication via these media as of higher quality than older employees. Yang and Mishra (2018) indicated a positive effect of using social media with work coworkers on a concept theoretically close to workplace friendship (i.e., high-quality work relationship). Although younger and older employees report the same basic order regarding their primarily preferred

communication methods (Sias et al., 2012b), this may hinder the development of age-diverse friendship, especially in organizations relying heavily on communication media primarily preferred by specific age groups. The reduction of social contacts due to their personal importance and emotional meaningfulness, as described by SST (Carstensen, 1992) may additionally reinforce this communication barrier. Pillemer and Rothbard (2018) additionally discussed the possibly ambivalent influences of social media use on workplace friendship, stressing the role of increased disclosure and tensions as important aspects to consider.

Research question 3: formation and maintenance processes of age-diverse workplace friendship

To structure the processes involved in the formation and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship, we consult Adams and Blieszner's (1994) classification of interactive processes in dyadic friendship, which span *cognitive*, *affective*, and *behavioral processes*. We were able to identify the constructs specified in the following sections in our literature search as relevant to age-diverse workplace friendship and assigned them to the respective overarching processes category based on Adams and Blieszner's (1994) theoretical foundation. Because workplace friendship is often conceptualized as a state (i.e., assessed in terms of prevalence; Nielsen et al., 2000) instead of the development it resembles, many studies capture a mere snapshot of a workplace friendship at a given time instead of placing it in the broader, dyadic relationship context. To account for this development, we describe the processes involved in the formation and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship. Blieszner and Adams (1992) specified how the relevant interactions in friendship develop in relation to the friendship phase throughout the friendship, but often only change in quantity and quality instead of their fundamental nature. Thus, many processes are as essential at the beginning of a workplace friendship as they are later on (e.g., self-disclosure, trust), but are subject to quantitative and qualitative variation.

Cognitive processes

Cognitive processes refer to the internal thoughts of each dyad partner concerning themselves, their friend, or their relationship (Adams & Blieszner, 1994), which have been shown to differ between different generational groups (Gyurák Babelová et al., 2020). We identified the following cognitive processes as important to age-diverse workplace friendship: *perspective-taking*, *self-expansion and personal identification*, as well as *cognition-based trust*.

Perspective-taking. Among the cognitive processes is perspective-taking (i.e., the ability and motivation to put oneself in others' shoes), which is prevalent in social interactions (Longmire & Harrison, 2018). Although the literature on empathy development suggests age-related differences in perspective-taking with weaker performances for older persons (O'Brien et al., 2013), Zhang et al. (2013) demonstrated that these can be traced back to a lack of motivation among older individuals. Furthermore, they showed that older adults performed at levels comparable to younger ones if perceived closeness was increased. Thus, we infer that age-diverse workplace friendship may be linked to a higher motivation to engage in perspective-taking as a cognitive process in befriended individuals.

Self-expansion and personal identification. The mechanism of self-expansion, which is connected to different identity concepts, is another cognitive process involved in age-diverse workplace friendship. It describes the expansion of one's self-concept to include an outgroup through a stronger focus on similarities, which leads to an expanded perceived overlap between the self and others (Cadieux et al., 2019). Cadieux et al. (2019) were the first to apply this concept to an age-diverse context, showing that the inclusion of others in the self was preceded by quality contact and lead to more positive attitudes toward older people, indicating that self-expansion may alter age-related attitudes, which we specified as an antecedent of age-diverse workplace friendship earlier. Personal identification illustrates a similar notion on a dyadic scale, where a person defines themselves as an extension of another individual (Ashforth et al., 2016). Closeness-focused personal identification, in particular, refers to individuals with whom one has formed close social relationships. Ashforth et al. (2016) argue that reciprocal identity merging is a side effect of the closeness in such relationships and that identity holism (i.e., the combination of a given identity or identity attributes with a focal identity into a more extensive whole) can be an outcome of closeness-focused personal identification. As the terms "self-concept" and "identity" are often used interchangeably (e.g., Oyserman, 2001) or identities are described as parts of the self-concept (Hargie et al., 2003), we note that it is worth considering self-expansion in an age-diverse context as a possible mechanism for cultivating an all-age identity and finding a common ground between age-diverse individuals in line with SIT as described earlier.

Cognition-based trust. Trust as the conviction that relationship partners can rely on one another and are concerned about the needs and interests of their partner is an important element of various relationships (Allen & Eby, 2012). Trust is an immediate result of organizational justice (Bidarian & Jafari, 2012), which we described as an organizational antecedent of age-diverse workplace friendship. Chua et al. (2008) investigated the prevalence of trust in different professional relationships and differentiated between cognition-based trust, drawn from a calculative and instrumental assessment of the other person, and affect-based trust, based on the emotional connection with the other individual. They found that cognition-based trust as the cognitive component of trust is connected to what they refer to as career guidance ties, which are relationships that—much like our definition of workplace friendship—join instrumental and socioemotional features. They additionally argue that cognition-based trust is founded in the perception of the other person in a relationship as experienced, competent, and knowledgeable and note that guidance ties traditionally involve age-different individuals. Chua et al. (2008) further suggested that status differences may increase the likelihood of utilizing a cognition-based trust as a basis for relationships. For this reason, we consider cognition-based trust as a cognitive process of age-diverse workplace friendship.

Affective processes

Affective processes involve emotional reactions to friendship. Lopez-Kidwell et al. (2018) argued that the affect experienced in interaction with a given individual influenced the development of the relationship with that person over time and that a strong social

tie such as friendship requires the repeated absence of negative experiences for both individuals involved. We identified the following affective processes as important to age-diverse workplace friendship: *affect-based trust, sense of belonging, empathy and empathic concern, and sympathy*.

Affect-based trust. Among the affective processes is affect-based trust as the emotional trust component that is positively linked to friendship ties (Chua et al., 2008). In connection with the findings regarding the dominance of cognition-based trust in case of status differences, these findings insinuate that age-diverse workplace friendship, which joins instrumental and socioemotional elements and often contains status differences, may be more likely than age-similar workplace friendship to simultaneously incorporate cognition-based trust along with affect-based trust.

Sense of belonging. Moreover, intergenerational contact utilizes a sense of belonging (i.e., feeling connected and close to others) as a needs-based mechanism leading to work-related outcomes (i.e., work engagement; Burmeister et al., 2021), which could be considered as an affective friendship process. Burmeister et al. (2021) revealed age-related differences in the effects of a sense of belonging, which they attributed to age-related changes in the perceived occupational future time. Specifically, they argued that feeling a connection to other individuals at work complements older employees' goal priorities as it constitutes a pleasant socio-emotional experience, which aligns with SST (Carstensen, 2006).

Empathy and empathic concern. Ingram and Zou (2008) additionally stress the role of empathy, which is defined as the ability to form an emotional connection with another individual (Galinsky et al., 2008), as an affective component of workplace friendship and argue that it aids communication. Empathic concern describes the motivational component of empathy and constitutes a central factor in strengthening social connections in the workplace, above and beyond the conceptually similar cognitive component of perspective-taking (Longmire & Harrison, 2018). Empathic concern is contingent upon one's perceived occupational future time, which shifts from a more expansive view in younger employees to a more constrained perspective for older employees (Fasbender et al., 2020), and thus indirectly depends on age. Specifically, Fasbender et al. (2020) connect the age-dependence of empathic concern to the motivational shift implied by SST, explaining that the quality of social interactions is valued more highly with a constrained occupational future time perception. Therefore, we infer that an older worker may develop empathy for their age-other counterpart more easily compared to a younger worker in an age-diverse workplace friendship.

Sympathy. Ingram and Zou (2008) also remarked on the impact of *sympathy*, defined as "experience of being moved by, or responding in tune with, another person" (Hodges & Myers, 2007, p. 296), as especially relevant in mentor-mentee-relationships. Since these are traditionally age-diverse and can represent a special foundation for workplace friendship, sympathy is likely an affective process in age-diverse workplace friendship as well.

Behavioral processes

Behavioral processes include different types of activities in age-diverse workplace friendship, such as support (Kram & Isabella, 1985), and refer to the overarching concept of relational exchange among workplace friends (Ingram & Zou, 2008). We identified the following behavioral processes as important to age-diverse workplace friendship: different types of support (i.e., *emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, appraisal support*) and *self-disclosure*.

Support. Cranmer et al. (2017) divide the types of support at work into three overarching categories. The first, *emotional support*, is characterized by behavior that serves the psychological well-being of the other, such as listening to their problems or providing empathy. Secondly, *instrumental support* refers to directly helping another person with work, for example by doing part of their tasks. *Informational support* involves the provision of advice or information to help the recipient to manage problems. Lobel et al. (1994) additionally name *appraisal support* as a type of support at work, which takes the form of feedback or information for self-evaluation. Colbert et al. (2016) note several functions of workplace relationships, which to us can partly be viewed as examples of the types of work support described above and matched to either generativity-oriented or growth-oriented goals following the notion of SST (Carstensen, 2006). For instance, providing task assistance or emotional support as well as the more general opportunity to give to others can be aligned with the generative goal of sharing one's expertise with a younger coworker. On the contrary, the functions of career advancement and personal growth may be associated more closely with the developmental goal of learning and advancement. Following this line of thought and given that one's future time perspective has been shown to affect work-related behavioral outcomes (Henry et al., 2017), we believe it is likely that the behaviors displayed in an age-diverse friendship differ due to different future time perspectives. Similarly, Schafer and Upenieks (2016) showed that increasing age is associated with fewer opportunities to engage in advice-giving (i.e., instrumental support) as a generative process despite its increasing importance to generating life meaning for older adults. They rely on Erikson's developmental theory (Erikson, 1950), which highlights contribution to the well-being of others and is focused on the conflict between achieving generativity versus declining into stagnation. Considering the demographic developments of today's workforce, older employees may thus profit from forming age-diverse workplace friendships by expanding their opportunity structures concerning generativity striving. This is particularly reflected in the finding that advice-giving in a familial context does not solely account for the development of life meaning but is stimulated by the advice offered to a broad range of advice targets (Schafer & Upenieks, 2016).

Self-disclosure. The process of *self-disclosure* (i.e., revealing oneself to another person through verbal communication) is typically associated with a feeling of closeness or trust in a relationship and is seen as an indicator of high-quality relationships at work (Tardy & Dindia, 2006). Gibson et al. (2018) challenged this generalizing perspective by considering the relative status of the individuals in task-oriented relationships participating in self-disclosure processes. Throughout three experiments, they showed that weakness disclosures had detrimental consequences for coworkers with a higher status compared

to self-disclosures expressed by peer status coworkers. Higher status coworkers received status penalties in consequence of their self-disclosure, which translated to perceptions of decreased influence, increased task conflict, and lower post-disclosure relationship quality. We deduce that these findings point out possible pitfalls against the background of age-diverse workplace friendship, which can stem from a status difference in the individuals involved. If an older and potentially higher-ranking individual utilizes self-disclosure within a friendship to appear more approachable, this could potentially backfire and ultimately decrease the perceived relationship quality for the recipient of the self-disclosure.

Research question 4: outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship

The consequences of age-diverse workplace friendship can be clustered in individual and organizational outcomes. Although age-diverse workplace friendship is construed on a dyadic scale and we thus relied on the interpersonal perspective to illustrate its antecedents, its effects are primarily evident at an individual level. Moreover, while the antecedents and processes of age-diverse workplace friendship we gathered from the literature are either induced or influenced by the age difference of the dyad partners, we found no such differentiation for its outcomes, indicating that they follow the patterns of general workplace friendship. The outcome variables listed in the following sections were deduced based on their common utilization as dependent variables of workplace friendship and similar relationships.

Individual outcomes

Most research to date has focused on the positive outcomes of workplace friendship. For the individual, these include *positive work attitudes* (Tran et al., 2018) as well as higher *engagement* and *well-being* (Hsu et al., 2019; Rath & Harter, 2010; Simon et al., 2010). However, the effect of workplace friendship on well-being at work is stronger than its impact on general well-being (Craig & Kuykendall, 2019). In addition, workplace friendship has been identified as a *buffer for negative workplace behaviors or factors* such as bullying (Rai & Agarwal, 2018) or job stress and exhaustion (Caillier, 2017; Chang et al., 2016). Furthermore, instrumental support, a behavioral process of workplace friendship, is connected to *increased job embeddedness* (e.g., one's perceived attachment, affiliation, and obligation to their organization; Yang & Wong, 2020), while received instrumental, emotional, and informational support positively influence *job satisfaction* (Cranmer et al., 2017; Yang & Wong, 2020). Moreover, workplace friendship is associated with *increased organizational commitment* (Coetzee et al., 2019; Milner et al., 2010). However, this relationship may not be linear as scholars have shown that organizational commitment is positively related to the social support an employee receives if it corresponds to their needs concerning work relationships and neither exceeds it nor falls short of that individual threshold (Ehrhardt & Ragins, 2019).

Regarding individual outcomes related to age-diverse workplace friendship more specifically, more positive attitudes toward the respective other age groups (i.e., *age-related attitudes*) are a likely result of age-diverse workplace friendship, as research on cross-group friendship suggests (Davies et al., 2011; Elliott O'Dare et al., 2019b; Wright et al., 1997). This is an especially promising prospect considering the issue of age-related conflicts in the workplace, which we stressed at the

beginning of our paper, as it emphasizes the role age-diverse workplace friendship can play in conflict reduction. Given that we identified age-related attitudes as an antecedent of age-diverse workplace friendship, this connection could represent a feedback loop in which the outcomes of one age-diverse workplace friendship encourage the formation of future age-diverse workplace friendship. Additionally, age-diverse workplace friendship is promising to be a type of work relationship *resistant to competition based on demographic and work role-related similarity* compared to age-similar workplace friendship (Ng & Feldman, 2009; Zou & Ingram, 2013). Moreover, high-quality workplace relationships are positively connected to aspects such as social impact or commitment (Caillier, 2017) as well as *perceived job significance* and intrinsic motivation (Mao et al., 2012). Similarly, Lysova et al. (2019) list high-quality relationships at work as a factor involved in fostering *meaningful work*, which they describe as personally significant and rewarding. This component of social impact conceptualized in the sense of meaningful tasks could play an important role, especially for older friendship partners in age-diverse workplace friendship, due to the increasing need for a generative experience with increasing age.

Research on positive work relationships has identified the feeling of belonging to one's coworkers (which we identified as an affective friendship process) as a significant predictor of an employee's *overall health* (Persson et al., 2018). This finding gains relevance against the background of the influence of health-related losses on future time perspective (Kooij & van de Voorde, 2011). For example, age-diverse workplace friendship could contribute to older workplace friends maintaining an extensive future time perspective and thus to the sustenance of their growth and development motives. While workplace friendship, in general, is associated with *lower turnover intentions* (Madden et al., 2015; Masselink et al., 2008; Ozbek, 2018), age-diverse workplace friendship, in particular, could contribute to older employees' motivation to continue working after reaching the official retirement age through their future time perspective (Kooij & van de Voorde, 2011).

Previous research on the dark sides of workplace friendship has been rather rare (Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018). Yet, age-diverse workplace friendship may be particularly prone to *role conflicts* (i.e., conflicting demands of different roles occupied by one person) induced by status differences (Ng & Feldman, 2009), which are connected to decreased job satisfaction (Hommelhoff, 2019). Research suggests that role conflicts may be even more common if these status differences are created within a pre-existing workplace friendship. As such, a new leader may struggle to adjust to their new role as a superordinate if they share old friendships with their subordinates (Unsworth et al., 2018).

In addition, the concurrent existence of affective and instrumental characteristics in relationships, as it is the case in age-diverse workplace friendship, may lead to conflicts due to different or perhaps contradictory strategies of relationship management (Ingram & Zou, 2008).

In general, conflicts in workplace friendships have detrimental effects on group performance (Hood et al., 2017) and their deterioration is connected to stress, lower task performance, and turnover (Sias et al., 2004). Ingram and Zou (2008) additionally remark how the conflict between friendship and competition at work can threaten a person's self-concept, for instance, if one person is promoted and the other is not. Research has indicated that conflict between cross-group individuals at work may differ from a conflict between individuals within the same social group because of perceived social distance,

which describes the perception that there is a difference between the self and another social entity (Chan & Goto, 2003).

Organizational outcomes

For the organization, *innovation* could be affected by age-diverse workplace friendships (Chang et al., 2016; Okoe et al., 2018). While multi-plex networks of rich ties (i.e., overlapping relationships in formal and informal networks, such as friendships), generally show a stronger effect on knowledge transfer in organizational networks (Aalbers et al., 2014), innovation could additionally benefit from non-redundant ties outside the group (Rietzschel & Zacher, 2015), which may be facilitated by age diversity (Joshi & Jackson, 2003). Furthermore, Lu et al. (2017) investigated the impact of close social intercultural relationships on *creativity* based on the creative cognition approach, which states that exposure to diversity can encourage more creative thinking. They conclude that such relationships aid creativity through cultural learning. Close social age-diverse relationships likely expose the involved employees to diverse mindsets as well, thus facilitating cross-age learning and creativity. Research on intergenerational learning in organizations supports this notion (Gerpott et al., 2017), showing that older and younger coworkers hold distinct types of knowledge that they can exchange bidirectionally.

Moreover, workplace relationships between diverse employees are linked to increased extra-role behaviors, which support coworkers beyond the expected extent (Wilk & Makarius, 2015) and can be seen as part of an individual's *work performance*. Connecting this with the learning aspect described above, employee-coworker relationships impact job performance partly via an increased motivation to engage in the behaviors of learning and knowledge sharing beyond one's contractual work roles (Gerlach, 2019). This connection holds a particular significance for age-diverse workplace friendships, as the inherent age gap is likely to be associated with non-redundant knowledge that can be shared in both age directions (Burmeister et al., 2018; Fasbender & Gerpott, 2021a; Fasbender et al. in press). Relatedly, the transfer of knowledge picks up on the motives of development and generativity described in SST (Lang & Carstensen, 2002). However, further findings suggest that workplace friendship is not always related to work performance in this way but may depend on the respective profession under consideration (i.e., staff nurses; Tran et al., 2018).

DISCUSSION

With this systematic literature review on age-diverse workplace friendship, we aimed to provide a coherent picture of the state of the science on age-diverse workplace friendship and therewith establish a basis from which to point out avenues for future research and make suggestions to guide practitioners in their approach to manage age-diverse workplace friendship. We integrated our findings into a framework by identifying the antecedents of such age-diverse workplace friendships, describing the underlying processes involved in their formation and maintenance, and outlining the possible outcomes. By approaching age-diverse friendships from a multitude of different perspectives, including work and organizational psychology, social psychology, gerontology and developmental psychology, sociology, business, and management, we were able to work out age-diverse workplace friendship as a unique and valuable relationship in the workplace that provides many individual benefits and contributes to the wider organizational functioning.

Theoretical conclusions

In the following section, we will outline the conclusions of our findings regarding our theoretical perspective. We based our theoretical framework on three theories, namely SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), SAT (Byrne, 1971), and SST (Carstensen, 2006), to capture the formation and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship. We were able to apply the three basic theories most notably within the antecedents and processes of age-diverse workplace friendship. For instance, we pointed out how SAT (Byrne, 1971) plays into the notion of friendship chemistry as a building block in workplace friendship (Gao et al., 2016) and how organizational climate and age-diversity related HR practices influence common superordinate identities in line with SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) between age-diverse coworkers (Ho & Yeung, 2017; Methot et al., 2018), emphasizing the role of organizations in creating an environment for the formation of age-diverse friendship development. Similarly, we noted self-expansion as a relevant cognitive process in age-diverse workplace friendship, again related to SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), or the provision of different types of support as a behavioral process depending on the motivational shifts connected to aging as described in SST (Carstensen, 2006). We could not find such a strong theoretical link to the three theories in the outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendships, which instead reflected the general outcomes of workplace friendship. Yet, as a general inference from our systematic literature review, we conclude that only a marginal portion of the literature we identified in our systematic literature search directly addressed age-diverse friendship in the workplace. Instead, we found research dealing with intergenerational or cross-group contact (e.g., Burnes et al., 2019; Ho & Yeung, 2017; Lu et al., 2017) and common friendship at work (e.g., Campbell et al., 2015; Hommelhoff, 2019). To change this, we will now address gaps in existing research to address specific issues that remain unanswered or unclear in our model of age-diverse workplace friendships.

Implications for future research

In the following sections, we point to shortcomings in the current literature and suggest avenues for future research to explore age-diverse workplace friendships. We begin with more general theoretical tendencies we discovered in the literature and move on to more specific future research directions. Table 3 contains an overview of the questions for future research that we deduced from the implications.

Overarching theoretical aspects

One major issue that shapes our recommendations for future research is the lack of empirical evidence on the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of age-diverse friendships as a whole. In this sense, our literature search did not lead to any direct research on how the antecedents of age-diverse workplace friendships are linked to outcomes via the processes described. While there are more general findings on isolated connections, such as the links between perceived similarity and perspective-taking (Williams et al., 2007) or between instrumental support and job embeddedness (Yang & Wong, 2020), we were unable to find research that considered the connections in their full scope.

In addition, future research could benefit from examining the theoretical propositions of the core theories we identified in more detail. We suggest that future research could consider linkages between the theories (e.g., how do the age-related identity processes proposed by SIT intertwine with the goal-setting proposed by SST?). We hope that

Table 3. Implications for future research: list of research questions.

Categorization	Research Questions
Overarching theoretical aspects	<p>1a. Can the antecedents of age-diverse workplace friendship be empirically linked to the outcomes via the identified formation and maintenance processes?</p> <p>1b. In which ways are the core theories we identified intertwined (e.g., identity processes and goal setting)?</p> <p>1c. Is there an interplay between different types of diversity (e.g., regarding age, gender, or ethnicity) such that age-diverse workplace friendship facilitates diversity-related antecedents, processes, and outcomes in other domains?</p> <p>1d. How does the relative strength of age-diverse workplace friendship emerge from the antecedents, how does it manifest itself in the formation and maintenance processes, and what impact does it have on subsequent outcomes?</p> <p>1e. Do the dyadic connections between the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship transfer to broader levels of analysis (e.g., team level, organizational level)?</p> <p>1f. What are further antecedents, processes, and outcomes unique to age-diverse workplace friendship?</p> <p>1g. What leads to age-diverse workplace friendship deterioration and what are its consequences?</p> <p>1h. How do relative organizational status and the direction of the age difference between the befriended coworkers influence the formation, maintenance, and deterioration of age-diverse workplace friendship as well as its outcomes?</p> <p>1i. What are the boundary conditions of age-diverse workplace friendship?</p>
Antecedents of age-diverse workplace friendship	<p>2a. Are there intermediate factors that link individual antecedents to the processes of age-diverse workplace friendship (e.g., age-diversity competence)?</p> <p>2b. Are there specific tools for organizations to provide necessary antecedents and thus influence the formation and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship?</p> <p>2c. How can age-diverse workplace friendship develop in times of remote work?</p>
Processes of age-diverse workplace friendship	<p>3a. How do age-related motivational concepts such as occupational future time perspective shape the formation and maintenance processes of age-diverse workplace friendship?</p> <p>3b. How do processes of age-diverse workplace friendship change over the course of formation and maintenance? Which patterns emerge regarding the processes of age-diverse workplace friendship throughout its development?</p>
Outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship	<p>4a. What are the consequences of low levels of workplace friendship in an age-diverse context and are they connected to negative outcomes such as age-related workplace conflict or age discrimination?</p> <p>4b. What happens to coworkers not involved in the friendship?</p>

by integrating the theories in this way, future research will gain a richer understanding of the processes involved in forming and maintaining age-diverse workplace friendships.

Moreover, as different diversity topics often share some overlap (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015), future research should investigate the interplay of different types of diversity at work. In this sense, research should explore whether age-diverse workplace friendship facilitates diversity-related antecedents, processes, and outcomes in other domains (e.g., gender or ethnicity), and vice versa. The assumption of such a connection is plausible, given that diversity perceptions in different domains influence each other (Daniels et al., 2017).

Regarding broader tendencies in the literature on workplace friendship, we also noticed that workplace friendship is often conceptualized as a status for the relationship between two people, such that only the prevalence of a workplace friendship is measured (Nielsen et al., 2000). However, we argue that this approach does not fully capture the interpersonal dynamics of workplace friendship (e.g., Blieszner & Adams, 1992; Sias et al., 2004; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Sias et al., 2012a). Hence, we suggest that future research should extend its focus on the relative strength of friendship, for instance through reported cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes we described earlier (Blieszner & Adams, 1992).

Moreover, in our literature review and the model we derived from the existing literature, we focused on the dyadic level of analysis to assess the processes between two age-diverse workplace friends. However, this perspective neglects broader levels of analysis (e.g., team level, organizational level; De Meulenaere et al., 2016; Harrison & Klein, 2007). Such perspectives provide another angle to assess age-diverse workplace friendship, increasing the complexity of the topic as age-diversity needs to be considered in a wider sense.

As another point, qualitative research may help to uncover additional antecedents, processes, and outcomes unique to age-diverse workplace relationships to gain a wider picture of how age-diverse friendships unfold at work. Similar to Elliott O'Dare et al.'s (2019a) analysis, research should adopt the perspective of befriended age-diverse coworkers to recognize age-related factors and differences and consequently test their influence on friendship formation and maintenance between age-diverse coworkers.

Furthermore, although we only touch upon this marginally, dealing with the deterioration of friendships at the workplace is also relevant, since this process bears the risk of harming future work-related cooperation of the individuals involved (Sias et al., 2004). Therefore, it would be valuable to explore the factors leading to the deterioration of

age-diverse workplace friendship as well as the consequences of such development.

Additionally, future research may have a closer look at the relative organizational status of age-diverse workplace friends and their age. In this regard, reverse mentoring could be a starting point for further investigation (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012), as it is based on the recognition that junior or recently hired employees have knowledge they can share and are willing to do so with more senior coworkers. We believe it would be valuable to explore the role of organizational status and the direction of the age difference in age-diverse workplace friendship (i.e., workplace friendship formed between older supervisor-younger subordinate vs. younger supervisor-older subordinate), how it influences their formation, maintenance, and deterioration as well as their outcomes.

Moreover, although we did not explore the boundary conditions of our model on age-diverse workplace friendship for economic reasons at this early stage of research on age-diverse workplace friendships, we encourage future research to consider moderators as a valuable research topic to employ a more fine-grained analysis of established connections.

Antecedents of age-diverse workplace friendship

Regarding research on the antecedents of age-diverse workplace friendships, we suggest the investigation of moderators such as an age-diverse equivalent to what research labels cultural intelligence, which Backmann et al. (2020) identified as an indirect connection between cultural identity plurality to gap bridging behaviors. Cultural intelligence is defined as one's ability to function and manage culturally diverse environments effectively. We are confident that such a competence could also be transferred into age-diverse contexts. Following the example of Ang et al. (2015) concerning cultural intelligence, age-diversity competence could analogously refer to a set of skills that describes how a person functions in a work context involving specific compositions of age-diverse individuals (Earley & Ang, 2003). For instance, a younger employee who has so far worked exclusively with similarly old coworkers would probably be better able to cope with a transfer to a similarly structured team than with a transfer to a team with a diverse age structure. We argue that future research should investigate age-diversity competence as a possible link between gap bridging behaviors and age identity plurality. Triandis (2006) offers one point of reference by describing various aspects of cultural intelligence that are also applicable to an age-diverse context, such as suspending judgment until enough information about the other person becomes available and exhibiting appropriate affect and behaviors.

To enable practitioners to manage age-diverse workplace friendships, future research needs to take a closer look at the influence organizations can exert. For instance, utilizing potential advantages of age-diverse workplace friendships (e.g., regarding creativity) without triggering conflicts requires knowledge about the exact parameters organizations can shape. The discrepancy between research in an organizational and individual or interpersonal context shows that there is still a lot of room for research on the organizational perspective of age-diverse workplace friendship. For example, there is research on interventions against age discrimination (e.g., Burnes et al., 2019; Lytle & Levy, 2019) or on interventions to reduce negative age-related stereotypes (Jungmann et al., 2020), but to our knowledge, there is no research on specific HR practices that deal with the management

of age-diverse friendship. As such, it is not yet clear whether there are specific tools for organizations to actively influence the formation and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship to gain the greatest benefit from it as an organization and to aid the befriended coworkers in navigating this special work relationship. Aron et al. (1997) offer an approach to initiating friendship through their 'fast friends' intervention. This involves guiding individuals in pairs through various relationship-building tasks that could be transferred to a context that includes the workplace and age diversity. Another point of influence for organizations, which we pointed out as an organizational antecedent above, is the role of workspace design. Given the developments regarding remote work (Ozimek, 2020), we encourage future research to examine the implications of remote work for age-diverse workplace friendship. This may be particularly relevant in light of the generative value we propose age-diverse workplace friendship to have for older employees and whether this translates to remote work as well.

Formation and maintenance processes of age-diverse workplace friendship

Regarding the processes of age-diverse workplace friendship, past research has considered the underlying motivational aspect of self-expansion, self-expansion motivation, in cross-group settings (Dys-Steenbergen et al., 2016; Paolini et al., 2016). Self-expansion motivation describes the motivation to engage in self-expansion to increase one's resources, perspectives, and identities that support one's ability to achieve goals (Aron et al., 2013). We believe that it would be valuable to explore the impact of age-related motivational concepts, such as occupational future time perspective, on self-expansion motivation to determine whether and how age differences may influence this cognitive process of age-diverse workplace friendship.

Besides, we mention the quantitative and qualitative changes formation and maintenance processes undergo between the beginning of a workplace friendship and its developmental course (Bliesner & Adams, 1992). We believe that it would be fruitful for future research to explore this change in processes throughout age-diverse workplace friendship development to explore possible patterns. These insights could, in turn, be used by organizations to specifically support age-diverse workplace friendship in its different phases of formation and maintenance.

Outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship

We uncovered evidence for age-related differences in both antecedents and processes of age-diverse workplace friendship (e.g., for motivation or certain types of support; Cranmer et al., 2017). In contrast, we did not discover as many age-related differences concerning the outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship. This indicates an implicit assumption that age-diverse friendship is not distinct from other workplace friendships. However, we do not think that this conclusion can be drawn without further research. The few approaches we identified, suggest that age-diverse workplace friendship can lead to unique outcomes. This includes more favorable attitudes toward the other age group as a generalization from positive interactions with single coworkers belonging to the other age group (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1996). These are implied by cross-group friendship research (Davies et al., 2011) but should also be investigated specifically for the age-diverse work context. Further outcomes could be reduced age-related tensions and relationship conflicts (Ingram & Zou, 2008), improved

attitudes toward the other age group, or the potential synergy effects of age-diverse workplace friendship on creativity (Lu et al., 2017).

However, we believe that it is not only relevant to explore how the consequences of age-diverse workplace friendship compared to age-similar workplace friendship differ but what the consequences of low levels of workplace friendship in an age-diverse work context are and whether these are connected to age-related workplace conflict (Urlick et al., 2016) or age discrimination (Naegele et al., 2018). In this regard, it may be interesting to investigate age-diverse friendship as a moderator to the relationship between age diversity and outcomes at different organizational levels (e.g., individual, team, organization), for instance also explaining what happens to coworkers not involved in the friendship.

Implications for practice

There are relevant implications from the existing literature for supporting age-diverse workplace friendship in practice. Table 4 presents an overview of the following implications for practice. Organizations should be aware of how they can promote the development of age-diverse workplace friendship and support its maintenance through its antecedents. To achieve this, organizations should focus on facilitating friendship chemistry between age-diverse colleagues to conquer the

age-similarity preference predicted by SAT. For instance, they can give room for employees to explore their similarities to increase their perceived similarity (Reid et al., 2017). In addition, they can provide training opportunities to improve employees' perspective-taking, explicitly incorporating age diversity exercises (Williams et al., 2007). Improved perspective taking could help employees to recognize and appreciate the common ground they share with colleagues of different ages thereby enabling them to detect similarities.

In addition, organizations can foster the creation of common identities in line with SIT. To achieve this, they can apply a transformational leadership style or actively practice generalized social exchange within the organization (Yoshikawa et al., 2018). Similarly, organizations should improve age-related attitudes within the organization. For example, they can reduce prevailing negative age-related stereotypes by offering diversity trainings (Burnes et al., 2019) or by facilitating interactions between age groups (Lytle & Levy, 2019).

Furthermore, organizations should improve their age diversity climate by treating all employees equally irrespective of their age to strengthen justice perceptions between age groups (Rudolph & Zacher, 2020). Moreover, organizations should create room for different friendship processes. As such, establishing workplaces that balance isolation and crowding among age-diverse colleagues is a

Table 4. Implications for practice to support the development and maintenance of age-diverse workplace friendship.

Objective	Recommendations	Theoretical foundation	Sources
Facilitating friendship chemistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give room for people to explore their similarities to reduce perceived dissimilarity Provide training opportunities to improve perspective taking to enable employees to detect similarities 	SAT	Nielsen et al. (2000); Reid et al. (2017); Williams et al. (2007)
Fostering the creation of common identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize identity-shaping measures (e.g., transformational leadership or generalized social exchange) 	SIT	Podsakoff et al. (1990); Yoshikawa et al. (2018)
Improving age-related attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer diversity trainings (e.g., with a focus on reducing ageism) to conquer age-based (meta-)stereotypes Create opportunities for contact between age-diverse employees (e.g., by creating age-diverse teams) 	SIT	Burnes et al. (2019); Lytle & Levy (2019)
Improving organizational age diversity climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat employees equally irrespective of age to strengthen justice perceptions and thus social work identities between age groups 	SIT	Poole (2007)
Creating room for different friendship processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design workspaces that ensure a balance between crowding and isolation to increase the quality of colleague interactions Enable employees to make high-quality connections with colleagues of different ages informally (e.g., through shared tasks) or formally (e.g., through age-diverse mentorship) Actively encourage employees to seek and providedifferent types of behavioral support at work (e.g., via reward systems) Offer company retreats or sponsored volunteer service among age-diverse employees to give space to the affective friendship processes 	SST	Chaudhuri & Ghosh (2012); Khazanchi et al. (2018); Mao & Hsieh (2012)
Dealing with conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train managers in conflict resolution with an emphasis on (age-)diversity (e.g., techniques on how to reduce perceived social distance by creating common ground) 	SIT	Colbert et al. (2016); Methot et al. (2018); Schafer & Upenieks (2016)
			Cadieux et al. (2019); Chan & Goto (2003)

Note. SAT = Similarity-Attraction Theory; SIT = Social Identity Theory; SST = Socioemotional Selectivity Theory.

potential starting point for organizations to improve age-diverse contact quality (Khazanchi et al., 2018). Additionally, organizations should enable employees to establish high-quality connections that play into their age-specific needs regarding work relationships according to SST. This could be done either informally through shared tasks and or formally through age-diverse or reverse mentoring programs (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Mao & Hsieh, 2012). Furthermore, organizations can create room for the different behaviors that are part of workplace friendship. (Schafer & Upenieks, 2016). As such, they could introduce reward systems encouraging employees to seek and provide support and provide incentives for teamwork involving age-diverse workplace friends in particular (Colbert et al., 2016; Schafer & Upenieks, 2016). Moreover, organizations can help provide room for the different processes of age-diverse workplace friendship by offering company retreats or sponsored volunteer service as such circumstances help to consolidate multiplex relationships (Methot et al., 2018).

In addition, organizations should also be sensitive to possible outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship including conflicts, as these can have grave effects on different work outcomes (Hommelhoff, 2019; Sias et al., 2004). To deal with such conflicts, we recommend special training for managers on how to prevent conflicts among age-diverse workplace friends and deal with them specifically, as they may differ from conflicts among workplace friends lacking this type of diversity (Chan & Goto, 2003; Wijbenga, 2019). As the perceived social distance between the involved individuals may be a deciding factor in cross-group conflicts (Chan & Goto, 2003), one potential way to aid conflict resolution could be to reduce the perceived social distance. To achieve this, managers may emphasize common ground between the parties during conflict resolution to encourage their self-expansion (Cadieux et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

Global workforce aging and increasing age diversity in the workplace add to the importance of understanding age-diverse workplace friendship as a way to bridge possible age-related differences. Our systematic literature review revealed a theoretical framework of the antecedents, formation and maintenance processes, and outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendship. In addition, we identified SIT, SAT, and SST as the theoretical foundations of age-diverse workplace friendship and provide insights into some of the unsolved issues in the field. Overall, our work underpins the importance of age-diverse workplace friendship by highlighting its mainly beneficial individual and organizational outcomes and provides a valuable starting point for future research.

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