Understanding Age-Diverse Knowledge Exchange through Social Comparison

Laura Rinker, Ulrike Fasbender, and Fabiola H. Gerpott

Please cite as:

Rinker, L., Fasbender, U., & Gerpott, F. H. (2025, in press). *Understanding Age-Diverse Knowledge Exchange through Social Comparison.* In E. F. Fideler (Ed.), The Oxford Handbook of Intergenerational Connections. Oxford University Press.

Author Note

Abstract

This chapter outlines social comparison dynamics and age-diverse knowledge exchange within the workplace. It provides an overview of three relevant theories (i.e., social comparison theory, social identity theory, and intergroup contact theory) that serve as theoretical frameworks for the chapter, and it identifies three key areas for future research in the context of age-diverse knowledge exchange from a social comparison lens: 1) employee use of social comparisons to identify suitable knowledge exchange partners and role distribution within knowledge exchange relationships by employees of different ages, especially in the context of evolving expertise dynamics; 2) the dilemma associated with age-diverse knowledge exchange including the potential competence-related gains and costs younger and older employees must consider when engaging in knowledge exchange; and 3) how social comparisons may improve intergroup contact quality by fostering perspective taking and, building on this, by capitalizing on the social comparison tendencies of particular age groups.

Keywords: social comparison, age diversity, knowledge exchange, social identity, intergroup contact

Understanding Age-Diverse Knowledge Exchange through Social Comparison

Introduction

The exchange of knowledge between age groups has emerged as a vital asset for organizations striving to remain competitive in the face of developments such as retirement brain drain and the downsizing of the workforce due to lower birthrates.[1] Considering the ongoing societal aging of industrialized countries and the associated postponement of retirement,[2] workplaces are rapidly transforming into melting pots for workers of different ages. While in theory, this development creates excellent conditions for age-diverse knowledge exchange (referring to the transfer of unique knowledge between younger and older employees[3]), employees of different ages face various challenges.

One such challenge involves managing the social dynamics between different age groups, in particular social comparison (i.e., assessing oneself through comparison with others),[4] which may both hinder and foster age-diverse knowledge exchange. It is important to foster age-diverse knowledge exchange due to its immense potential for increasing innovation,[5] enhancing employee development,[6] and ensuring the preservation of organizational memory.[7] With each age group providing unique perspectives and expertise,[8] age-diverse knowledge exchange contributes not only to knowledge retention but also to the creation of new knowledge.

Within the knowledge exchange literature, social comparisons have recently garnered attention as a crucial lens through which to understand the social dynamics of age-diverse knowledge exchange.[9] It provides a nuanced perspective for comprehending how employees of different ages perceive their relative standing within the social organizational hierarchy and how this perception influences their engagement in knowledge exchange. In this regard, Fasbender and Gerpott suggest that anticipated current and future status differences may

shape knowledge exchange between different age groups.[10] This is because older employees may rank higher than their younger counterparts at a given time but may be out-competed by their younger colleagues in the future. As a result, tensions and competition between age groups can emerge,[11] which may impede knowledge exchange.

Alternatively, a more positive scenario is also plausible, in which status or knowledge differences between age-diverse colleagues encourage them to share their respective expertise, experiences, and insights. In this case, older, often more experienced employees, may be motivated by the desire to cement their perceived status and legacy within an organization by imparting wisdom to younger colleagues.[12] Likewise, a younger employee may aspire to climb the organizational ladder, learn from more experienced colleagues, and demonstrate up-to-date knowledge.[13] Therefore, it is fitting and valuable to provide an overview of relevant theories and the current empirical evidence to showcase how social comparison shapes age-diverse knowledge exchange and how future research can contribute to further understanding of this phenomenon.

By shedding light on the interplay between age-diverse knowledge exchange and social comparison dynamics at work, the chapter will make three contributions: 1) a comprehensive overview of pertinent theories that help explain the multifaceted relationship between social comparison and knowledge exchange in an age-diverse context (i.e., social comparison theory, social identity theory, and intergroup contact theory); 2) examples of how social comparisons may play a role in age-diverse knowledge exchange based on these theoretical frameworks and the existing tentative and adjacent empirical insights; and 3) promising areas for future research in the domain of social comparisons and age-diverse knowledge exchange. Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the existing research within three theoretical perspectives and suggested future research areas emerging from their integration.

< place fig. 1.1. here   Past and Future Age-diverse Knowledge Exchange Research from the (Joint) Perspectives of Social Comparison Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Intergroup Contact Theory >

Theoretical Frameworks and Empirical Findings: Linking Social Comparison and Knowledge Exchange in an Age-Diverse Context

To unravel the interplay of social comparisons among younger and older employees in age-diverse knowledge exchange, it is helpful to review Festinger's theory of social comparisons[14] and Zell and Alicke's temporal social comparison theorizing,[15] as well as the underlying principles and empirical findings of social identity theory[16] and intergroup contact theory[17]—two perspectives that scholars have used to examine the social dynamics of age-diverse knowledge exchange.[18]

Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory was introduced by Festinger in 1954, positing that individuals have an inherent tendency to evaluate themselves by comparing their attributes, skills, and achievements with those of others. Rooted in the desire for accurate self-assessment and identity formation,[19] social comparison shapes individuals' perceptions of their place in the social hierarchy and informs affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses.[20] Social comparisons can be characterized by their directionality: They can be upward (i.e., with others who are better than oneself), lateral (i.e., with others who are equal to oneself), or downward (i.e., with others who are worse than oneself). To differentiate further, scholars also discern whether one feels more similar or less similar to the other person in response to social comparison.[21]

While researchers have tended to view social comparisons as static or singular events, Zell and Alicke encourage a more dynamic view of social comparisons over time[22] by examining how relative differences in various domains (e.g., status, experience, or salary)

evolve. This temporal perspective provides an opportunity to consider relative gains and losses compared to comparison targets. Fasbender and Gerpott note that this perspective is particularly applicable to age-diverse colleagues—older employees often have higher current status due to longer work history, and younger counterparts have more space to rise in the ranks owing to their relatively lower status.[23] This circumstance could have both positive and negative effects on knowledge exchange, as it has a motivating potential but may also trigger fears among age-diverse colleagues.

Social Identity Theory

Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory explains how people form and maintain social identities,[24] stating that individuals classify themselves and others into groups based on shared characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, or religion). Then, individuals evaluate these groups in terms of social status and their own identity, which influences their self-concept and behavior. As a result, social identities are those parts of the self-concept that stem from membership in social groups. Social identity formation and social comparison processes intersect through their mutual influence on how individuals perceive themselves as well as the social groups to which they assign themselves.[25] The theory explains the formation of social identities based on group membership, while comparisons contribute to maintaining those identities and the dynamics between different social groups.[26] In this context, social comparisons are a cognitive process through which individuals ascertain distinct and shared social identities.[27]

Empirical findings support social identity theory in the context of age-diverse knowledge exchange. For instance, age plays a pivotal role in shaping social groupings among employees,[28] when it affects the willingness to share knowledge with colleagues of other age groups.[29] Age, compared to other demographic characteristics, is a particularly salient characteristic for subgroup formation.[30] Specifically, drawing on social identity theory,

Gerpott and colleagues argued that age diversity fosters the formation of subgroups through social categorizations and increases the risk that shared knowledge is seen as outdated or inadequate, which can threaten one's identity. In light of this, they empirically showed that perceptions of age diversity in training groups obstruct learning through decreased knowledge sharing among group members.[31] In addition, older employees are apt to share less knowledge with younger colleagues if they perceive a threat to their social identity (i.e., perceived age discrimination).[32]

Intergroup Contact Theory

The concept of intergroup contact theory stems from Allport's contact hypothesis,[33] proposing that interactions between members of diverse groups can mitigate biases and encourage constructive relationships between these groups.[34] Group interaction can lead to greater understanding and awareness, along with diminishing feelings of apprehension. To achieve this, the interactions are ideally based on equal standing, shared objectives, and collaborative efforts. Yet, the intersection of intergroup contact and social comparisons has been rarely studied in the context of age diversity, despite initial conceptual considerations[35] and promising tentative findings[36] showing that social comparisons between age groups as part of age-diverse knowledge exchange can improve contact and understanding between groups by fostering perspective taking and a sense of shared identity.

Empirical findings support the theoretical notions of intergroup contact theory within the context of age-diverse knowledge exchange: intergroup contact as part of knowledge exchange fosters positive age-diverse interactions, enhances the quality of connections between different age groups, and positively shapes attitudes and behaviors toward older employees.[37] For example, younger workers empathize more with older colleagues when they engage in knowledge exchange.[38] For older employees, knowledge exchange is associated with positive perceptions of an organization's intergenerational climate.[39] In sum,

the quality and quantity of contact between age groups promotes positive views of older workers and reduces ageism through knowledge exchange.[40]

Social Comparison in Age-Diverse Knowledge Exchange: Areas for Future Research

Whereas research on social comparisons at work[41] and research on age-diverse knowledge sharing from the perspectives of social identity and intergroup contact theory[42] has received considerable scholarly attention in the past,[43] research advocating the integration of these theoretical perspectives is still in its infancy.[44] For this reason, the following section draws on existing theoretical considerations and empirical findings from both fields to offer ideas for future research. Specifically, it suggests three possible research areas to shed light on social comparisons in age-diverse knowledge exchange processes.

The first considers how social comparisons may be used by employees of different ages to identify and select suitable knowledge exchange partners. The second advocates for research contrasting the potential gains and costs that employees of different age groups have to weigh during knowledge exchange. The third elaborates on how social comparisons can help to build bridges between age groups in light of age-diverse knowledge exchange.

Identification and Selection of Suitable Knowledge Exchange Partners

Before employees can engage in knowledge exchange, they must identify suitable partners for the process. Age, as a distinguishing demographic factor between employees, can significantly influence how individuals perceive and choose their exchange counterparts. The interplay between age and expertise offers room for social identities and social comparison dynamics to shape the formation of knowledge-exchange partnerships.

Traditionally, age has been associated with accumulated expertise and experience as older employees often possess deep-rooted organizational knowledge, garnered through years of immersion in company practices and industry developments.[45] This accumulation of knowledge makes older employees indispensable actors in organizational knowledge

exchange, especially when considering the preservation of organizational memory as an important goal. Younger employees, by contrast, are traditionally assigned to the receiving party in the source-recipient model of knowledge transfer.[46] Nevertheless, research has found that they may contribute fresh insights and up-to-date knowledge from their education to invigorate established practices[47] along the lines of a mutual exchange model.[48] In particular, the advent of the digital age has introduced a critical shift in the traditional expert-novice relationship between older and younger employees. In combination, the attributes of both age groups foster an environment in which they can complement each other through collaboration.

Employees use social comparisons to evaluate their strengths and shortcomings in light of what colleagues belonging to other age groups bring to the table. For instance, older employees can contribute company-specific knowledge or strategies for dealing with social situations, whereas younger employees can offer systematic learning strategies or methods to obtain information.[49] Thus, while age can serve as an initial marker of accumulated experience, the shifting dynamics of expertise in the digital age may reshape traditional perceptions of who sends knowledge and who receives knowledge.[50] Such changes in role distribution may also affect older and younger employees' social identity as knowledge senders and knowledge receivers.

Therefore, researchers are encouraged to explore the role of social comparisons in the context of age- versus experience-based identities for identifying knowledge exchange partners for employees of different ages. For instance, scholars could explore interactions between age and expertise in partner selection by investigating whether older individuals place a higher value on certain types of expertise due to their experience, and whether younger individuals prioritize different domains of expertise due to their digital literacy and familiarity with emerging technologies. Research could also inquire into how these priorities

differ in employees when selecting knowledge recipients versus knowledge sources. Furthermore, scholars could examine whether the traditional age-based identities (i.e., "older workers," "younger workers") are giving way to more expertise-based identities (e.g., "digital natives," "digital pioneers") as a consequence of redefining one's identity through social comparisons. Lastly, research could also investigate whether such shifts in the relevance of age-based and expertise-based identities create new opportunities for collaboration and understanding between younger and older employees by shaping knowledge exchange partner identification and selection.

Knowledge Exchange as an Age-Diverse Dilemma: Potential Gains and Costs

Cabrera and Cabrera compare knowledge sharing among colleagues to a public goods dilemma,[51] a situation in which individuals must decide whether to contribute to a shared resource that benefits everyone or withhold their contribution for personal gain. Such a dilemma manifests in the workplace when individuals must decide whether to share their knowledge (and potentially risk the loss of personal recognition, power, or unique expertise) or withhold it.

The potential gains and costs feeding into this dilemma for workplace colleagues of different ages are at least partly rooted in social comparisons. Social comparisons in age-diverse knowledge exchange can either fulfill or compromise employees' fundamental human need for competence.[52] This need (i.e., psychological desire to feel effective, capable, and successful in one's activities and endeavors)[53] persists across the lifespan but may vary depending on one's life stage.[54]

Age-diverse knowledge exchange can fulfill employees' need for competence in two ways. First, it allows employees to identify and strategically seek out unique knowledge from colleagues in other age groups to enhance their own knowledge repertoire.[55] Second, it can foster employees' sense of competence by providing younger and older employees alike with

a platform to share their unique knowledge. In turn, sharing knowledge may promote employees' experience as competent professionals,[56] which is important for younger employees seeking to establish themselves professionally as well as for older employees striving to consolidate their professional standing.

On the flip side, social comparisons with colleagues of other age groups can also be detrimental to employees' competence need fulfillment. Younger employees may feel inadequate when they compare their knowledge and skills to those of older, more experienced colleagues, especially if they perceive a substantial discrepancy with their older colleagues that they cannot resolve in the future. Older employees engaging in age-diverse knowledge exchange may encounter perceptions of competence erosion, a concern that their knowledge is outdated. If older employees feel sidelined, their sense of competence is jeopardized and this may discourage knowledge exchange altogether.[57] Future research examining these potential gains and costs associated with social comparisons for younger and older employees can lay a foundation for solving the knowledge exchange dilemma in the context of age-diverse knowledge transfer.

Bridging Age-Related Divides Through Social Comparisons

While social comparisons can create a barrier to age-diverse knowledge exchange if they involve costs, they also can provide an opportunity to build bridges between different age groups in line with intergroup contact theory.[58] Specifically, social comparison can facilitate intergroup contact by serving as a psychological mechanism that drives individuals from different age groups to interact, engage, and find common ground during and after knowledge exchange.

For instance, social comparison encourages individuals to consider the viewpoints and experiences of others.[59] As employees of different ages compare their strengths and weaknesses during knowledge exchange, they gain insights into each other's unique

circumstances. This perspective taking can lay the foundation for positive intergroup contact as it fosters positive interactions and cultivates social connections.[60]

Suls and Mullen argue that middle-aged individuals (i.e., between 40 and 65 years) show an increased preference for social comparisons with dissimilar others, especially in a work context.[61] Thus, middle-aged employees could act as ideal intermediaries between younger and older age groups in the workplace. As an additional benefit of social comparisons in the context of intergroup contact, Sharp, et al. reported that the tendency to engage in social comparison moderated the impact of extended contact with outgroups.[62] Specifically, they observed that White, heterosexual individuals with a greater tendency to engage in social comparison experienced more pronounced positive effects (i.e., more favorable attitudes) of extended contact, both with Asian and gay groups. In sum, this reasoning suggests that social comparison and subsequent cognitive processes such as perspective taking may enhance contact between age groups following age-diverse knowledge exchange.

Future research should explore the potential synergies of social comparisons and knowledge exchange processes in bridging age-related divides. For instance, leveraging social comparison as a psychological mechanism, intervention studies could explore how social comparisons drive individuals from different age groups to interact, engage, and find common ground during and after knowledge exchange. To illustrate, interventions might encourage employees of varying ages to engage in structured knowledge exchange activities that explicitly involve social comparison processes. These activities could be designed to foster perspective taking and empathy by encouraging participants to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in comparison to their colleagues of different age groups.[63] Moreover, scholars could ascertain whether middle-aged employees' social comparison preferences enable them to act as facilitators of high-quality intergroup contact in age-diverse knowledge exchange. In this way, middle-aged employees could act as mediators between younger and

older colleagues, bridging the two ends of the age spectrum. Specifically, this triadic model of age-diverse knowledge exchange should be compared with the prevailing dyadic approach.[64]

Conclusion

This chapter explored knowledge exchange between employees of different age groups by integrating a social comparison perspective with two theoretical frameworks commonly used in age-diverse knowledge exchange research (social identity theory and intergroup contact theory) and outlining extant empirical findings. It presented three future research areas to better connect social comparison and age-diverse knowledge exchange perspectives. First, the chapter suggested that social comparisons may influence the identification of suitable knowledge exchange partners and the distribution of roles within knowledge exchange relationships, especially in the context of evolving expertise dynamics. Second, it discussed the dilemma associated with age-diverse knowledge exchange, drawing attention to the potential competence-related gains and costs employees must weigh. Last, the chapter outlined how social comparisons may improve intergroup contact quality by encouraging perspective taking and, building on this, by capitalizing on the social comparison tendencies of particular age groups.

As organizations become increasingly age-diverse, understanding how social comparisons influence the exchange of knowledge among employees of different ages is crucial for leveraging the unique advantages that age diversity can bring to an organization. Continued research on the intersection of social comparisons and age-diverse knowledge exchange holds the promise of providing valuable insights and practical strategies for organizations seeking to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by an increasingly age-diverse workforce.

References

Allport, Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Addison-Wesley, 1954.

Ashforth, Blake E., and Fred Mael. "Social Identity Theory and the Organization." *The Academy of Management Review* 14, no. 1 (1989): 20. https://doi.org/10.2307/258189.

Borgatti, Stephen P., and Rob Cross. "A Relational View of Information Seeking and Learning in Social Networks." *Management Science* 49, no. 4 (2003): 432–45.

Bratianu, Constantin, and Ramona Diana Leon. "Strategies to Enhance Intergenerational Learning and Reducing Knowledge Loss." *VINE* 45, no. 4 (2015): 551–67. https://doi.org/10.1108/VINE-01-2015-0007.

Burmeister, Anne, Ulrike Fasbender, and Jürgen Deller. "Being Perceived as a Knowledge Sender or Knowledge Receiver: A Multistudy Investigation of the Effect of Age on Knowledge Transfer." *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 91, no. 3 (2018): 518–45. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12208.

Burmeister, Anne, Fabiola H. Gerpott, Andreas Hirschi, Susanne Scheibe, Karen Pak, and Dorien Kooij. "Reaching the Heart or the Mind? Test of Two Theory-Based Training Programs to Improve Interactions Between Age-Diverse Coworkers." *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 20, no. 2 (2021): 203–32. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2019.0348.

Burmeister, Anne, Mo Wang, and Andreas Hirschi. "Understanding the Motivational Benefits of Knowledge Transfer for Older and Younger Workers in Age-Diverse Coworker Dyads: An Actor-Partner Interdependence Model." *The Journal of Applied Psychology* 105, no. 7 (2020): 748–59. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000466.

Buunk, Bram Pieter, and Jan Fekke Ybema. "Social Comparison and Occupational Stress: The Identification-Contrast Model." In *Health, Coping, and Well-Being: Perspectives from*

Social Comparison Theory. Edited by Bram P. Buunk and Frederick X. Gibbons, 359–88. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1997.

Cabrera, Angel, and Elizabeth F. Cabrera. "Knowledge-Sharing Dilemmas." *Organization Studies* 23, no. 5 (2002): 687–710. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840602235001.

De Blois, Sarah, and Martine Lagacé. "Understanding Older Canadian Workers' Perspectives on Aging in the Context of Communication and Knowledge Transfer." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 42, no. 4 (2017): 631–44. https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2017v42n4a3071.

Dietz, Laura, Anne Burmeister, and Ulrike Fasbender. "Age and Knowledge Exchange." In *Age and Work: Advances in Theory, Methods, and Practice*. Edited by Hannes Zacher and Cort W. Rudolph. 1st ed., 259–76. SIOP Organizational Frontiers Series. New York, NY: Routledge, 2022.

Fasbender, Ulrike, and Fabiola H. Gerpott. "Knowledge Transfer Between Younger and Older Employees: A Temporal Social Comparison Model." *Work, Aging and Retirement* 8, no. 2 (2022): 146–62. https://doi.org/10.1093/workar/waab017.

Fasbender, Ulrike, and Fabiola H. Gerpott. "Why Do or Don't Older Employees Seek Knowledge from Younger Colleagues? A Relation–opportunity Model to Explain How Age‐inclusive Human Resources Practices Foster Older Employees' Knowledge Seeking from Younger Colleagues." *Applied Psychology* 71, no. 4 (2022): 1385–1406. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12362.

Fasbender, Ulrike, Fabiola H. Gerpott, and Dana Unger. "Give and Take? Knowledge Exchange Between Older and Younger Employees as a Function of Generativity and Development Striving." *Journal of Knowledge Management* 25, no. 10 (2021): 2420–43. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-11-2020-0856.

Fasbender, Ulrike, and Fabiola Heike Gerpott. "To Share or Not to Share: A Social-Cognitive Internalization Model to Explain How Age Discrimination Impairs Older Employees' Knowledge Sharing with Younger Colleagues." *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 30, no. 1 (2021): 125–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2020.1839421.

Fasbender, Ulrike, and Mo Wang. "Intergenerational Contact and Hiring Decisions About Older Workers." *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 32, no. 3 (2017): 210–24. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-11-2016-0339.

Festinger, Leon. "A Theory of Social Comparison Processes." *Human Relations* 7, no. 2 (1954): 117–40. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202.

Firzly, Najat, Lise van de Beeck, and Martine Lagacé. "Let's Work Together: Assessing the Impact of Intergenerational Dynamics on Young Workers' Ageism Awareness and Job Satisfaction." *Canadian journal on aging = La revue canadienne du vieillissement* 40, no. 3 (2021): 489–99. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0714980820000173.

Geeraerts, Kendra, Jan Vanhoof, and Piet van den Bossche. "Teachers' Perceptions of Intergenerational Knowledge Flows." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 56 (2016): 150–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.024.

Gerpott, Fabiola H., Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock, Ramon Wenzel, and Sven C. Voelpel. "Age Diversity and Learning Outcomes in Organizational Training Groups: The Role of Knowledge Sharing and Psychological Safety." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 32, no. 18 (2021): 3777–3804. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1640763.

Gerpott, Fabiola Heike, Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock, and Sven C. Voelpel. "A Phase Model of Intergenerational Learning in Organizations." *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 16, no. 2 (2017): 193–216. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2015.0185.

Gray, Peter H., and Darren B. Meister. "Knowledge Sourcing Effectiveness." *Management Science* 50, no. 6 (2004): 821–34. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1030.0192.

Greenberg, Jerald, Claire E. Ashton-James, and Neal M. Ashkanasy. "Social Comparison Processes in Organizations." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 102, no. 1 (2007): 22–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.09.006.

Harvey, Jean‑François. "Managing Organizational Memory with Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer." *Journal of Knowledge Management* 16, no. 3 (2012): 400–417. https://doi.org/10.1108/13673271211238733.

Hogg, Michael A. "Social Identity and Social Comparison." In *Handbook of Social Comparison*. Edited by Jerry Suls and Ladd Wheeler, 401–21. Boston, MA: Springer US, 2000.

Lagacé, Martine, Anna Rosa Donizzetti, Lise van de Beeck, Caroline D. Bergeron, Philippe Rodrigues-Rouleau, and Audrey St-Amour. "Testing the Shielding Effect of Intergenerational Contact Against Ageism in the Workplace: A Canadian Study." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 8 (2022). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19084866.

Lagacé, Martine, Lise van de Beeck, Caroline D. Bergeron, and Philippe Rodrigues-Rouleau. "Fostering Positive Views About Older Workers and Reducing Age Discrimination: A Retest of the Workplace Intergenerational Contact and Knowledge Sharing Model." *Journal of applied gerontology the official journal of the Southern Gerontological Society* 42, no. 6 (2023): 1223–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/07334648231163840.

Lagacé, Martine, Lise van de Beeck, and Najat Firzly. "Building on Intergenerational Climate to Counter Ageism in the Workplace? A Cross-Organizational Study." *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 17, no. 2 (2019): 201–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2018.1535346.

Lee, Soohyun. "The Bright and Dark Sides of Upward Social Comparison: Knowledge

Sharing and Knowledge Hiding Directed at High Performers." Dissertation, Graduate

Faculty in Psychology, City University of New York, 2022.

https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/4928/.

Levy, Moria. "Knowledge Retention: Minimizing Organizational Business Loss." *Journal of*

Knowledge Management 15, no. 4 (2011): 582–600.

https://doi.org/10.1108/13673271111151974.

Morin, Alain. "A Neurocognitive and Socioecological Model of Self-Awareness." *Genetic,*

Social, and General Psychology Monographs 130, no. 3 (2004): 197–222.

https://doi.org/10.3200/MONO.130.3.197-224.

Mussweiler, Thomas. "'Seek and Ye Shall Find': Antecedents of Assimilation and Contrast in

Social Comparison." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 31, no. 5 (2001): 499–509.

https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.75.

Onu, Diana, Thomas Kessler, and Joanne R. Smith. "Admiration: A Conceptual Review."

Emotion Review 8, no. 3 (2016): 218–30. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073915610438.

Park, Jisung, Heesun Chae, and Jin Nam Choi. "The Need for Status as a Hidden Motive of

Knowledge-Sharing Behavior: An Application of Costly Signaling Theory." *Human*

Performance 30, no. 1 (2017): 21–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/08959285.2016.1263636.

Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological*

Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness. Guilford Press, 2017.

https://doi.org/10.1521/978.14625/28806.

Ryan, Richard M., and Jennifer G. La Guardia. "What Is Being Optimized? Self-

Determination Theory and Basic Psychological Needs." In *Psychology and the Aging*

Revolution: How We Adapt to Longer Life. Edited by Sara H. Qualls and Norman Abeles,

145–72. Washington: American Psychological Association, 2000.

Šajeva, Svetlana. "Encouraging Knowledge Sharing Among Employees: How Reward Matters." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 156 (2014): 130–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.11.134.

Schmidt, Xenia, and Katrin Muehlfeld. "What's so Special About Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer? Identifying Challenges of Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer." *management revu* 28, no. 4 (2017): 375–411. https://doi.org/10.5771/0935-9915-2017-4-375.

Sharp, Melanie, Alberto Voci, and Miles Hewstone. "Individual Difference Variables as Moderators of the Effect of Extended Cross-Group Friendship on Prejudice." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 14, no. 2 (2011): 207–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210391122.

Suls, Jerry. "From the Cradle to the Grave: Comparison and Self-Evaluation Across the Life-Span." In *Psychological Perspectives on the Self*. Edited by Jerry M. Suls, 97–125. Hillsdale, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1982.

Tajfel, H., and J. C. Turner. "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour." In *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Edited by S. Worchsel and W. G. Austin, 7–24. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, 1986.

Turner, John C. "Social Comparison and Social Identity: Some Prospects for Intergroup Behaviour." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 5, no. 1 (1975): 1–34. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420050102.

Urick, Michael. "Generational Differences and COVID-19: Positive Interactions in Virtual Workplaces." *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 18, no. 4 (2020): 379–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2020.1818662.

Urick, Michael J., Elaine C. Hollensbe, Suzanne S. Masterson, and Sean T. Lyons. "Understanding and Managing Intergenerational Conflict: An Examination of Influences

and Strategies." *Work, Aging and Retirement*, 2016, waw009.

https://doi.org/10.1093/workar/waw009.

Wang, Changyu, Yihong Dong, Zixi Ye, and Jiaojiao Feng. "Linking Online and Offline

Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer to Younger Employees' Innovative Work Behaviors:

Evidence from Chinese Hospitals." *Journal of Knowledge Management* 27, no. 3 (2023):

762–84. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-11-2021-0839.

Wang, Cynthia S., Tai Kenneth, Gillian Ku, and Adam D. Galinsky. "Perspective-Taking

Increases Willingness to Engage in Intergroup Contact." *PloS one* 9, no. 1 (2014): e85681.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0085681.

Zell, Ethan, and Mark D. Alicke. "Comparisons over Time: Temporal Trajectories, Social

Comparison, and Self-Evaluation." *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 2010, n/a-n/a.

https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.737.

Figure 1.1. Past and Future Age-diverse Knowledge Exchange Research from the (Joint) Perspectives of Social comparison theory, social Identity Theory, and Intergroup Contact Theory.

Social Comparison Theory		
Social Identity Theory		**Intergroup Contact Theory**

Social Identity Theory (Topics covered by past research):
- Age-related social categorization processes and willingness to share knowledge
- Age-related social identity threats as hindrances to knowledge sharing

Social Identity Theory (Suggested future research areas):
- Identification and selection of suitable knowledge exchange partners based on age and expertise
- Shifts from traditional age-based identities to expertise-based identities

Social Comparison Theory (Suggested future research areas):
Examining the dilemma of age-diverse knowledge transfer in light of social comparisons, specifically:
- – Social comparison-based potential gains (e.g., building and experiencing competence)
- – social comparison-based potential costs (e.g., experiencing inadequacy or competence erosion)

due to social comparisons across age groups

Intergroup Contact Theory (Topics covered by past research):
- Cognition and behaviors toward age-related outgroups following knowledge exchange
- Perceptions of age-related organizational climate following knowledge exchange

Intergroup Contact Theory (Suggested future research areas):
- Using social comparisons in age-diverse knowledge exchange to foster perspective taking
- Comparing dyadic knowledge exchange models with triadic ones including middle-aged intermediaries

☐ Topics covered by past research   ⬚ Suggested future research areas

Notes

---

[1] (Levy 2011)

[2] (Schmidt and Muehlfeld 2017)

[3] (Dietz, Burmeister and Fasbender 2022)

[4] (Festinger 1954)

[5] (Wang et al. 2023)

[6] (Bratianu and Leon 2015)

[7] (Harvey 2012)

[8] (Gerpott, Lehmann-Willenbrock and Voelpel 2017)

[9] (Fasbender and Gerpott 2022)

[10] (Fasbender and Gerpott 2022)

[11] (Urick et al. 2016)

[12] (Park, Chae and Choi 2017)

[13] (Fasbender, Gerpott and Unger 2021)

[14] (Festinger 1954)

[15] (Zell and Alicke 2010)

[16] (Tajfel and Turner 1986)

[17] (Allport 1954)

[18] (Burmeister, Wang and Hirschi 2020); (De Blois and Lagacé 2017); (Fasbender and Gerpott 2021); (Geeraerts, Vanhoof and van den Bossche 2016)

[19] (Festinger 1954)

[20] (Greenberg, Ashton-James and Ashkanasy 2007)

[21] (Buunk and Ybema 1997); (Mussweiler 2001)

[22] (Zell and Alicke 2010, 375)

[23] (Fasbender and Gerpott 2022)

[24] (Tajfel and Turner 1986)

[25] (Hogg 2000)

[26] (Turner 1975)

[27] (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Tajfel and Turner 1986)

[28] (Geeraerts, Vanhoof and van den Bossche 2016)

[29] (Urick 2020)

[30] (Gerpott et al. 2021)

[31] (Gerpott et al. 2021)

[32] (Fasbender and Gerpott 2021)

[33] (Allport 1954)

[34] (Fasbender and Wang 2017)

[35] (Onu, Kessler and Smith 2016)

[36] (Sharp, Voci and Hewstone 2011)

[37] Fasbender and Gerpott 2022; Lagacé et al. 2022.

[38] (Firzly, van de Beeck and Lagacé 2021)

[39] (Lagacé, van de Beeck and Firzly 2019)

[40] (Lagacé et al. 2023)

[41] (Greenberg, Ashton-James and Ashkanasy 2007)

[42] (Schmidt and Muehlfeld 2017)

[43] (Gerpott et al. 2021; Lagacé et al. 2022; Lagacé et al. 2023; Urick 2020)

[44] (Fasbender and Gerpott 2022)

[45] (Gerpott, Lehmann-Willenbrock and Voelpel 2017)

[46] (Harvey 2012)

[47] (Gerpott, Lehmann-Willenbrock and Voelpel 2017)

[48] (Harvey 2012); Fasbender, Gerpott and Unger 2021

[49] (Gerpott, Lehmann-Willenbrock and Voelpel 2017)

[50] (Burmeister, Fasbender and Deller 2018)

[51] (Cabrera and Cabrera 2002)

[52] (cf. Fasbender and Gerpott 2022)

[53] (Ryan and Deci 2017)

[54] (Ryan and La Guardia 2000)

[55] (Borgatti and Cross 2003; Gray and Meister 2004)

[56] (Šajeva 2014)

[57] (Lee 2022)

[58] (Allport 1954)

[59] (Morin 2004)

[60] (Wang et al. 2014)

[61] (Suls 1982)

[62] (Sharp, Voci and Hewstone 2011)

[63] (cf. Burmeister et al. 2021)

[64] (Harvey 2012)