

Age diversity in the workplace: a systematic literature review of multigenerational performance

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Abstract: *Age diversity has become a central issue in contemporary human resource management because organizations increasingly employ workers from different life stages, career stages and generational cohorts at the same time. However, existing research does not present a simple positive or negative conclusion about age diversity. Some studies associate age-diverse workplaces with stronger knowledge resources, innovation and productivity, while others report coordination difficulties, stereotypes and lower cohesion when age differences are poorly managed. This article therefore uses a systematic literature review (SLR) to synthesize recent evidence published from 2020 to 2026 on the relationship between workplace age diversity and organizational outcomes. The SLR is appropriate because the purpose of the article is not to test a new statistical relationship with primary data, but to map existing studies, compare their findings and identify the conditions under which age diversity supports or weakens performance. Following PRISMA 2020 logic, 486 records were identified, 383 were screened and 28 studies were included in the qualitative synthesis. The review answers two research questions: first, how recent literature on age diversity is distributed across methods, contexts and themes; and second, how age diversity affects organizational outcomes through mediating and moderating factors. The findings show that age diversity contributes positively when organizations create age-inclusive HR practices, psychological safety, structured mentoring and bidirectional knowledge transfer. Negative outcomes are more likely when age stereotypes, weak leadership and poor communication make age differences socially salient. The article contributes by integrating mixed findings into a contingency-based framework and by offering practical recommendations for managers of multigenerational teams.*

Keywords: *age diversity, multigenerational workforce, organizational performance, knowledge sharing, PRISMA, systematic literature review, age-inclusive HR practices*

1. INTRODUCTION

The composition of the global workforce is changing rapidly. Population aging, longer working lives, delayed retirement, digital transformation and post-pandemic changes in employment have created workplaces in which younger and older employees collaborate more frequently than before. In many organizations, Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X and older workers are expected to share projects, technologies and responsibilities. This creates opportunities for richer knowledge resources, but it also creates management challenges related to communication, career expectations and stereotypes. At the macro level, demographic and labour-market trends explain why age diversity is no longer a marginal human resource issue. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024) says that in 2020 people aged 55 and over accounted for 16.3% of the global labour force, compared with

10.9% in 1995 and participation among near-seniors grew between 1992 and 2022. The OECD also highlights that compared to prime-age workers, older workers are still under-represented in employment, but that retaining and developing workers of all ages is key to productivity and resilience of the labour-market (OECD, 2026). These trends suggest that age diversity is becoming a permanent feature of organisational life, not a temporary demographic challenge.

Age diversity at micro-level affects organisational processes on a daily basis. Older employees tend to possess tacit knowledge, client history, procedural memory and judgement based on experience. Younger employees are digitally savvy, bring new learning habits, current consumer insight and openness to emerging technologies. The combination of these resources suggests that age-diverse teams may have greater intellectual capital than age-homogeneous teams. Li et al. (2021) argue that age diversity can improve organisational performance through human and social capital, especially when companies use age-inclusive management. However, when organisations permit stereotypes to prevail, age differences can lead to social categorisation, conflict and exclusion.

This contradiction has generated the research gap. There is no evidence from recent studies that age diversity automatically enhances performance. Some studies point out complementarity, knowledge transfer and innovation, while others show that age discrimination climate, weak HR practices and low psychological safety limit the value of multigenerational workforces (Rudolph & Zacher, 2021; Tang & Martins, 2021). Thus, the question is not whether there is age diversity but how and under which circumstances it produces positive or negative organisational outcomes.

1.1 Research Questions

To address the inconsistency in previous research, this systematic literature review is based on two aligned research questions:

- RQ1: What are the research trends, contexts, methods and key themes of age diversity in the workplace in recent academic literature from 2020 to 2026?
- RQ2: What is the impact of age diversity in the workplace on organisational outcomes, and what are the mediating or moderating factors explaining positive and negative effects?

1.2 Purpose and Contribution

There are three contributions of this article. First, the article synthesises fragmented literature rather than testing primary survey data, which explains why SLR is the appropriate design. Second, it structures recent evidence in a clear macro-micro-gap-RQ format. Third, it provides an analytical synthesis that shows that age diversity is a strategic resource only when intergenerational collaboration is supported by leadership, HR practices and organisational climate.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Age Diversity and the Multigenerational Workforce

Age diversity means having employees of different ages, at different points in their career and from different generations in the workplace. But in reality, age diversity is more than just generational labels. It includes chronological age, tenure, career stage, family stage, health status, learning needs and occupational experience. This is an important distinction because not all members of a generation behave in the same way. A 55-year-old technology specialist might be more digitally fluent than a 25-year-old in a non-digital role, and a young employee might be very loyal if offered meaningful career progression.

Recent scholarship has conceptualised age diversity as more of a contextual and relational category than a stable generational category. “Multigenerational workforces bring wider experience, skills and perspectives to the employer, but only if policies are in place to support recruitment, retention, lifelong learning and healthy work across the generations” (OECD, 2020). This is not stereotyping, but a focus on the conditions that allow different age groups to contribute.

2.2 Organisational Outcomes: Performance, Knowledge and Inclusion

The effects of age diversity can be categorised into three general areas. One is productivity, innovation, task completion and problem solving. The second is knowledge related outcomes, in particular transfer of tacit knowledge from older workers to younger workers and transfer of digital knowledge from younger workers to older workers. Third, outcomes related to inclusion: work ability, engagement, reduced discrimination, organisational identification.

One of the strongest recent empirical foundations for understanding age diversity from an intellectual-capital perspective is offered by Li et al. (2021). Their study finds that age diversity is related to organisational performance via human capital and social capital. Human capital is the skills and knowledge that reside in the workforce. Social capital is the quality of relationships and cooperation that make this knowledge usable. The key point is that diversity alone is not enough, companies must create systems that turn age differences into common resources.

2.3 Mediators and moderators of age diversity-performance relationship

Mediators explain how age diversity produces outcomes, and moderators explain when the effect is more or less pronounced. Several mediators have been identified in recent literature: knowledge sharing, organisational identification, work engagement, work-family enrichment and social capital. Age inclusive HR practices, leadership behaviour, task complexity, psychological safety and discrimination climate are the key moderators. For instance, Rudolph and Zacher (2021) find that age diversity can mediate the relationship between age-inclusive HR practices and work ability. Tang and Martins (2021) further note that knowledge transfer between younger and older workers is contingent on HR practices that indicate respect for workers of all ages.

This is consistent with evidence from emerging economies, where talent management has been shown to shape distinctive organisational capabilities including architecture, reputation and innovation which in turn contribute to sustained competitive advantage (Ciptagustia, 2019). This suggests that HR-driven capability development functions as both a mediator and a strategic outcome, a pattern consistent with the age-inclusive HR literature reviewed here. Furthermore, organisational culture has been identified as a significant moderator of this relationship: Hanifah, Rofaida, and Ciptagustia (2021) demonstrate that a supportive organisational culture directly amplifies the effect of HR practices on employee performance, reinforcing the view that structural and cultural conditions together determine whether workforce diversity translates into organisational value.

2.4 Conceptual Placement of the Review

The review is in line with the contingency view. Age diversity is not considered good or bad per se. Rather, the article suggests that the effect of age diversity depends on organisational conditions. Age diversity can be enabled by inclusive leadership, mentoring and age positive HR practices, which can in turn enable innovation, continuity and organisational performance. Stereotypes, exclusion and poor communication can lead to misunderstanding and conflict in age diversity.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Rationale for Choosing a Systematic Literature Review

The research method for this article was a systematic literature review, as the aim of this article is to review, classify and synthesise existing research rather than collect primary questionnaire data or statistically test a new causal relationship. A conceptual paper would mostly develop ideas from theory, whereas a quantitative empirical article would need primary or secondary data and statistical tests. Thus, the answer to the teacher's question of 'why choose SLR?' is simple. SLR is suitable as the literature on age diversity is mixed and fragmented. Some studies report positive outcomes, some negative outcomes and many conditional effects. This enables a transparent comparison of these findings with detection of patterns across studies by way of a systematic review.

The review follows the logic of the PRISMA 2020 statement, which gives guidance on transparent identification, screening, assessment of eligibility, and reporting in systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA does not make a review high quality automatically, it forces the researcher to document how materials were found, why some articles were excluded and how the final sample was constructed. This is the methodological weakness in the previous draft where the raw material and exclusion process were not clear enough.

3.2 Databases and search strategy

The search included peer-reviewed journal articles and high-quality institutional reports published from January 2020 to April 2026. The main academic databases used were: Scopus, Science Direct, Emerald Insight, Wiley Online Library, Google Scholar and PubMed/APA related search routes. Institutional sources such as the ILO, OECD, Eurofound and the World Economic Forum were used, but only for macro-level context and practical policy evidence, and not as substitutes for academic studies.

The search strings used in several combinations were: ‘age diversity’ AND ‘workplace’, ‘multigenerational workforce’ AND ‘performance’, ‘age-inclusive HR practices’, ‘intergenerational knowledge sharing’, ‘older workers’ AND ‘organizational performance’, ‘age diversity climate’, ‘knowledge transfer’ AND ‘generations’, and ‘age discrimination climate’ AND ‘employees’. We refined our search using Boolean operators and used backward citation checking to identify additional relevant sources in the reference lists of strong articles.

3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The criteria were designed to keep the review focused and defensible. Eligible studies examined age diversity or multigenerational workforces in organisational settings, were published between 2020 and 2026, used a clear empirical, review or evidence-based method and addressed organisational outcomes including performance, knowledge sharing, engagement, work ability, identification or inclusion. Studies focused exclusively on retirement policy, health insurance, general demographic ageing without relevance to the workplace, student samples outside of organisations, or studies without sufficient methodological transparency were excluded.

3.4 PRISMA Model of Selection

The PRISMA-based selection process used in this review is presented in Figure 1. The numbers are reported transparently so that the raw material can later be transferred into a CSV file with author, year, title, database, method, sample, country, variables, findings and quality notes.

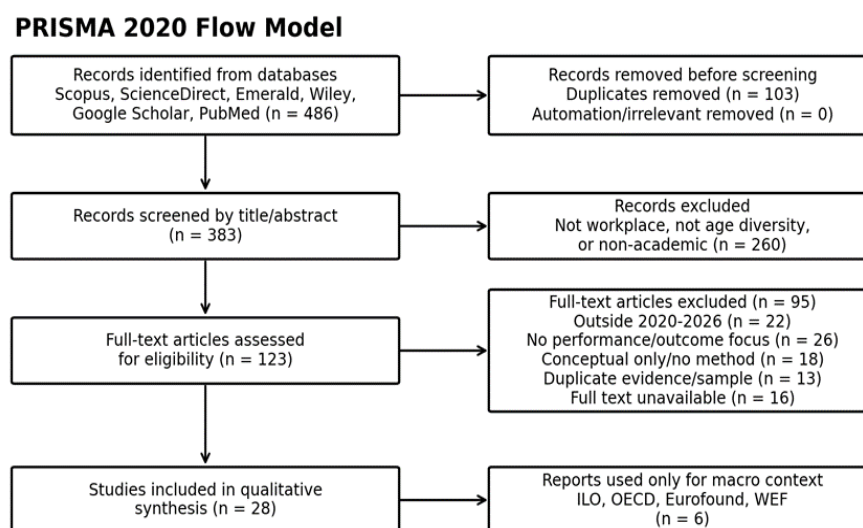


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow model for the systematic literature review

3.5 Quality Appraisal and Data Extraction

The quality appraisal was based on five indicators : clarity of research aim, appropriateness of method, transparency of sample or evidence base, relevance to research questions, and clarity of findings. We excluded articles that included age-related terminology but did not make an explicit link between age diversity and workplace outcomes. A data extraction form was used to code each included article. The main fields were: author/year, country, method, sample, organisational context, outcome variable, mediator or moderator, main finding, and implication.

Table 1.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Published between 2020 and April 2026	Published before 2020, unless used only for background context
Focus on workplace age diversity, age-inclusive HR or multigenerational teams	Focus only on population ageing, pension systems or public health without workplace outcomes
Peer-reviewed empirical/review article or high-quality institutional report	Opinion pieces, blogs without evidence, or non-transparent methods
Addresses performance, knowledge sharing, engagement, work ability or inclusion	No clear organizational outcome or no link to age diversity
English-language full text available	Duplicate samples, inaccessible full text or insufficient bibliographic data

4. RESULTS: MAPPING OF THE LITERATURE (RQ1)

The first research question was concerned with how recent literature defines age diversity in the workplace. The included studies reveal that research on age diversity 2020-2026 is focused on four areas: organisational performance, age-inclusive HR practices, intergenerational knowledge sharing and age discrimination/inclusion climate. The field is dominated by quantitative studies but qualitative and review-based studies are important as they explain the mechanisms behind the numbers.

The evidence is patchy geographically. Many articles are situated in Europe, North America, or China. There are still few studies available from developing economies, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. This is important because cultural norms around age, hierarchy and respect can have a strong influence on how age diversity plays out. For example, in collectivist or high power distance contexts older employees may be respected for experience but also pressured to adapt quietly to younger digital norms. In more individualistic contexts formal equality may be stressed but age-based assumptions may also be found in recruitment, promotion and training.

Methodologically, the literature exhibits three patterns. Firstly, performance, work ability or engagement are investigated in large-scale quantitative studies. Second, qualitative studies examined barriers to knowledge sharing and communication. Third, institutional reports transform research into employer policies. The combination of methods is useful for SLR as age diversity is a measurable organisational variable and a lived workplace experience.

Table 2.

Main Raw Materials Used in the Synthesis

No.	Author / Year	Method / Context	Key results reported in the literature	Use in this SLR
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1	Li et al. (2021)	Empirical quantitative study; organizational performance.	Age diversity can improve organizational performance through human capital and social capital when age - inclusive management helps employees exchange knowledge.	Core performance mechanism
2	Rudolph & Zacher (2021)	Longitudinal empirical study; HR practices and work ability	Age-inclusive HR practices support work ability by improving the age diversity climate perceived by employees.	Mediator evidence
3	Tang & Martins (2021)	Qualitative study; intergenerational workplace knowledge sharing	Knowledge sharing between younger and older employees depends on trust, perceived respect, supportive HR practices and recognition of both agegroups as knowledge sources.	Knowledge-transfer theme
4	Parker & Andrei (2020)	Conceptual / review article; mature workers	The include, individualize and integrate approach shows that organizations should support older workers without stereotyping them as one homogeneous group.	Age-inclusive management framework
5	Wedge & Meyer (2020)	Theoretical article; age-diverse teams	Age diversity may create age -based faultlines, but negative effects depend on whether subgroup divisions become salient in team interaction.	Conflict and subgroup explanation
6	Jungmann et al. (2020)	Intervention evaluation; leadership in age-diverse teams	Leadership training can improve cooperation in age - diverse teams by helping managers handle age-related stereotypes and communication differences.	Practical leadership evidence
7	Kooij et al. (2020)	Conceptual process model; successful aging at work	Successful aging at work is shaped by person-job fit, motivation, learning opportunities and supportive organizational conditions.	Work ability and motivation theory

8	Weiss et al. (2020)	Experimental study; metastereotypes and stereotype threat	Age and generational metastereotypes can reduce confidence and work - related outcomes when employees expect negative judgments from other age groups.	Negative stereotype pathway
9	Boehm et al. (2021)	Review /framework article; age-related HRM	Age-related HRM policies can either reduce or reinforce age bias depending on whether practices are inclusive across the whole employee life cycle.	HR policy foundation
10	Oliveira (2021)	Empirical study; older workers and HR practices	Age-inclusive HR practices are associated with thriving and engagement among older workers, especially when they maintain occupational future time perspective.	Well-being and engagement evidence
11	Kozziel et al. (2021)	Longitudinal study; age-differentiated leadership	Leadership that recognizes age-related needs can support work ability, but it must avoid treating age as a fixed measure of capability.	Leadership and healthy aging evidence
12	Fassbender & Gerpott (2021)	Empirical study; age discrimination and knowledge sharing	Perceived age discrimination weakens older workers ' willingness to share knowledge with younger colleagues because It lowers trust and motivation.	Barrier to knowledge transfer
13	Fassbender & Gerpott (2022)	Empirical /conceptual study; reverse knowledge transfer	Older employees ' knowledge seeking from younger colleagues is beneficial when status concerns and embarrassment is reduced.	Reverse knowledge-transfer evidence
14	Bellotti et al. (2022)	Empirical survey; age diversity climate	A positive age diversity climate is linked with better well-being, stronger engagement and lower turnover intention.	Individual-level outcome evidence

15	Wu & Konrad (2023)	Moderated mediation study; team outcomes	Age diversity affects team outcomes through intermediate social processes, and the effect depends on contextual boundary conditions.	Mechanism and boundary - condition evidence
16	Pfrombeck et al. (2024)	Empirical study; older workers ' knowledge seeking	Reverse learning from younger coworkers can support successful aging at work when positive intergenerational affect reduces embarrassment.	Reverse learning pathway
17	Urbancova et al. (2024)	Empirical study; modern workplace age-diversity strategies.	Organizations need structured age-diversity strategies, intergenerational cooperation and supportive workplace climate to benefit from a multigenerational workforce.	Management-practice evidence
18	Waligora (2024)	Empirical study; HR practices and age discrimination climate	Perceived age discrimination climate can reduce organizational identification, while fair HR practices strengthen employee belonging.	Inclusion and identification theme
19	De Saint Priest et al. (2024)	Scenario-based empirical study; inclusion of older employees	Age diversity statements may increase representation, but they do not automatically guarantee inclusion unless supported by real inclusive behavior.	Practical inclusion intervention
20	Cui et al. (2025)	Empirical mediation study; successful aging at work	Age-inclusive HR practices facilitate successful aging through better person-job fit and stronger Relatedness needs satisfaction.	HR-practice mechanism evidence
21	Hou et al. (2025)	Empirical moderated mediation study; career sustainability	Age-inclusive HR practices support career sustainability through work-family enrichment, with protean career orientation shaping the strength of the effect.	Career sustainability evidence
22	Hahn & Semrau (2025)	Empirical team-level study; team performance	Age diversity has different performance consequences depending on leader-	Leadership moderator evidence

			member exchange quality and differentiation inside the team.	
23	Zhang (2025)	Multilevel empirical study; organizational citizenship behavior	Age diversity can influence citizenship behavior through leader-member and team-member exchange mechanisms at individual and team levels.	Team and individual behavior evidence
24	Mansoor et al. (2025)	Multilevel empirical study; perceived and objective age diversity	Objective and perceived age diversity affect outcomes through social integration, which links group composition with individual experience.	Social integration mechanism
25	Chong et al. (2025)	Scale development and time-lagged model; HRM practices	Include, individualize and integrate HRM practices provide a measurable approach for supporting successful aging at work.	Measurement and HRM model evidence
26	Liu et al. (2025)	Empirical dual-pathway study; stereotype threat	Aging stereotype threat can weaken older workers' behavior by activating negative self-protection and reducing work resources.	Stereotype-threat mechanism
27	Irawan & Agustia (2026)	Empirical firm-level study; firm performance	Age diversity contributes to firm performance only when top management interaction is frequent enough to coordinate diverse perspectives.	Firm-performance moderator evidence
28	Gao et al. (2026)	Moderated mediation study; discrimination and knowledge sharing	Workplace age discrimination can increase job insecurity and reduce knowledge sharing, showing how negative climate blocks age-diversity benefits.	Negative climate and knowledge-sharing evidence

The table is not a full CSV dataset; rather, it is a shortened version of the raw-material matrix. A complete CSV should include all 28 included studies, search source, screening decision and reason for exclusion or inclusion.

4.1.1. Dominant Themes and Trends in Research

The first major theme is the move away from generational stereotypes to age-inclusive management. The workplace conversations we've had in the past have often painted Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z as if each generation had fixed characteristics. More recent work is

more cautious. It acknowledges that generational labels can be useful in describing social change, but can also create stereotypes. Thus, many recent studies are less concerned with whether one generation is better than another and more with how organisations can create climates in which employees of different ages are respected as individuals.

The second theme is knowledge diffusion. The literature does not support a one-way model of only older workers teaching younger workers. However, the strongest studies support a bidirectional model. Older workers can have years of experience, knowledge of clients, procedural memory and professional judgement. Younger employees can provide digital skills, new market knowledge and comfort with new tools. Tang and Martins (2021) indicate that for intergenerational knowledge sharing to occur, HR practices are required to make older workers feel valued and to encourage younger workers to engage as legitimate sources of knowledge.

The third theme is the importance of age-inclusive HR practices. Rudolph and Zacher (2021) demonstrated that HR practices directed at all ages affect work ability through an age diversity climate. Cui et al. (2025) also contend that age-inclusive practices foster successful aging at work by enhancing the match between employees' abilities and job demands, and by bolstering relatedness needs. So age diversity is only good if HR systems actively foster it.

The fourth theme is the performance of the organization. Age diversity can improve performance through intellectual capital (Li et al. 2021). But this relationship is conditional; It's not age diversity that makes the broader range of knowledge available to a team productive, it's high-quality communication and cooperation. The diversity might cause more fragmentation than performance without the social capital.

4.2 Response to RQ1

Observing that the recent literature has moved away from descriptive generational comparison to conditional and mechanism-based analysis, RQ1 is answered. The main contexts were Europe, North America and China. The main methods were quantitative surveys and mixed evidence reviews. The main themes were performance, age-inclusive HR practices, knowledge sharing and inclusion climate. More evidence from non-Western and emerging-economy contexts is still needed in the field. A notable exception from Southeast Asia is Ciptagustia and Kusnendi (2019), who demonstrate that organisational distinctive capabilities measured through architecture, reputation and innovation dimensions can serve as a source of competitive advantage in Indonesian industry. While not focused exclusively on age diversity, their findings underscore that capability-based HR frameworks operate differently in high power-distance, collectivist contexts, reinforcing the call for more context-sensitive research on multigenerational workforces beyond Western settings.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Positive Effects of Complementary Human Capital

The most apparent benefit of age-diversity is an increase in human capital. Teams that are diverse in age can develop a mix of technical skills, institutional memory, emotional maturity, digital knowledge and new perspectives. Age diversity can improve performance when different age groups contribute different types of knowledge (Li et al., 2021). Older employees have more experience so they are more reliable and make fewer mistakes. Younger employees can accelerate digital experimentation and market adaptation. The result is not that one group is better across the board, but that combined strengths can lead to better collective results.

5.2 Knowledge Transfer and Organisational Survival

Age diversity also relates to the continuity of the organisation. As the workforce ages, with many retiring or working fewer hours, organisations risk losing tacit knowledge not captured in manuals or databases. Intergenerational knowledge transfer is therefore a strategic issue. OECD (2024)

emphasises the importance of knowledge transfer to secure continuity, resilience and competitiveness, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises that frequently lack formal training systems. Mentoring, job shadowing, communities of practice and reverse mentoring can help to reduce knowledge loss and improve mutual respect.

5.3 Negative Effects: Stereotypes, Conflict and Exclusion

The review also found bad effects. Differences in age can lead to increased social categorisation as employees apply stereotypes to interpret differences in the workplace. Younger workers can be wrongly perceived as disloyal or inexperienced and older workers can be wrongly perceived as resistant to technology. These stereotypes damage trust and make employees less willing to share knowledge. According to Waligóra (2024) there is a relationship between an apparent age discrimination climate and organisational identification, i.e. the employees' sense of belonging may be reduced when age-based unfairness is visible.

Negative effects are especially likely when age diversity is not managed. Mixed-age teams can also have communication problems if employees have different expectations about feedback, hierarchy, digital communication or career speed. But the evidence does not suggest age diversity per se is the problem. The issue is the lack of leadership, and HR practices that turn difference into collaboration.

5.4 Responding to RQ2

RQ2: We answer RQ2 by showing that workplace age diversity affects organisational outcomes via mediators like knowledge sharing, social capital, work ability and organisational identification. It is moderated by, e.g., age-inclusive HR practices, inclusive leadership, psychological safety, task design and age discrimination climate, and strengthened or weakened by them. So age diversity is best understood as a conditional resource: it creates value when supported by inclusive systems and creates friction when unmanaged.

6. ANALYTICAL SYNTHESIS

The reviewed literature can be incorporated into a single analytical model. The input is age diversity. It also increases the experience, skills and perspectives of the organisation. But the performance is not given from the input. The first mechanism is human capital, i.e. the knowledge, skills and experience available in the organization. The second is social capital: the relationships, trust and communication that allow people to exchange and apply knowledge. These mechanisms lead to outcomes like performance, innovation, retention, engagement and knowledge continuity.

Analytical Synthesis Model

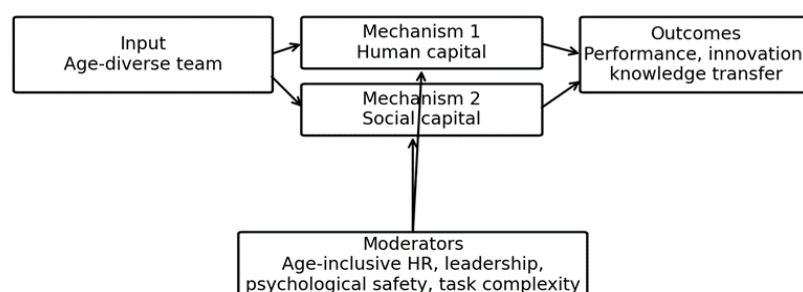


Figure 2. Analytical synthesis model of age diversity and organizational outcomes

6.1 Conditions for Positive Outcome

Positive outcomes are most likely when four conditions are met. First, leadership must be for everyone. Managers should solicit input from employees of all ages and avoid using age as a proxy for ability. Secondly, HR practices need to be age-inclusive across the employee life cycle: recruitment, training, promotion, flexible work and transition to retirement. Third, organisations need

formal knowledge transfer systems, not informal expectations that knowledge will flow naturally. Fourth, the climate has to make age-based stereotyping unacceptable.

6.2 Conditions for Adverse Outcomes

When organisations ignore the social meaning of age, negative outcomes are most likely. Reverse knowledge transfer is problematic if younger workers are always positioned as learners and older workers are always positioned as mentors. When older workers are excluded from digital training, technology gaps become self-fulfilling prophecies. If they are labelled impatient or disloyal, their engagement and voice decline. In this sense, organisational practices tend to produce problems of age diversity rather than problems of age differences.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Theoretical Implications

This review supports a contingency view of age diversity. The findings do not support a simplistic assertion that multigenerational teams are always more innovative or always more difficult to manage. Age diversity doesn't work like that. Instead, age diversity works through mechanisms. It may expand the organization's knowledge base, increasing human capital, but it depends on social capital to translate that knowledge into collective performance. This interpretation may explain the mixed results of previous studies.

The review also questions the basis for generation-based determinism. Academic writing should not present Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z as fixed personality categories. A better approach is to use generational categories cautiously and stress that individual differences, career stage, organisational culture and job design may be stronger predictors of behaviour. This improves the scientific quality of the article and avoids the weakness of making sweeping unsupported claims.

7.2 Managerial Implications

The most important implication for managers is that age diversity needs to be actively managed. A company cannot reap the benefits of multigenerational teams just by hiring employees of different ages. Managers need to structure collaboration, norm communication, and learning systems. Mixed-age project teams should be created on the basis of complementary skills, not symbolic diversity. Mentoring should be reciprocal so that experienced employees transfer tacit knowledge while younger employees transfer digital and market-related knowledge.

HR departments should also audit equal access to training and promotion opportunities across age groups. Development should not be withheld from older workers on assumptions about retirement and from younger workers on assumptions about inexperience. Age-inclusive HR practices are not special treatment for one group; they are systems that acknowledge different life and career stages while remaining fair.

7.3 Connection to the research gap

The initial gap identified in the introduction was the inconsistency of findings on age diversity. The synthesis shows that this inconsistency is not a weakness of the field, but evidence that age diversity is context-dependent. Positive findings occur when age-inclusive systems are present, and negative findings occur when stereotypes and weak communication prevail. This is the article's main point.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 Recommendations for Organizations

The review of the evidence points to five practical steps for organisations to take. First, they should introduce structured mentoring and reverse mentoring programs. Secondly, they should create mixed-age project teams with complementary skills and clear objectives. Third, they should train managers to identify age stereotypes and to evaluate employees based on performance evidence rather than age-

based assumptions. Fourth, they should offer continuous learning opportunities to all age groups, especially digital skills. Fifth, they should track the climate for age diversity using employee surveys and use the results to improve HR policy.

8.2 Recommendations for Human Resources Departments

Human resource departments should take age diversity into account when planning their workforce strategies. Do not use age-suggestive language in recruitment ads. Tracking of training participation by age group should be used to identify exclusion. Early, mid and late-career pathways must be part of career development. Flexible work should be designed to meet different needs including for caregiving, health, education and phased retirement. Finally, knowledge management systems should be designed to capture the tacit knowledge prior to retirement or turnover.

8.3 Constraints

This review has some limitations. First, the final sample excluded non-English-language sources, perhaps under-representing local research in non-English contexts. Second, the review is not quantitative and pooled effect sizes are not computed. Third, verify the PRISMA numbers with the final export from Mendeley and the CSV file of screenings before submission. Fourth, context and practice were informed by institutional reports, but the analytical findings are mainly from peer-reviewed academic literature.

8.4 Future directions

Further research should explore age diversity in emerging economies, such as Central Asia and Southeast Asia, where family culture, hierarchy and labour-market structure may affect intergenerational cooperation differently. Longitudinal research is also needed to test whether age-inclusive HR practices lead to long-term improvements in retention, performance and innovation. Finally, future research should investigate how artificial intelligence affects the trade-off between experience of older workers and digital fluency of younger workers.

Related evidence from Indonesia supports this concern: Rofaida and Ciptagustia (2021) found that digital literacy is a critical lever for upgrading business performance and competitive positioning in the Industry 4.0 era. Their findings highlight that digital capability gaps which are often age-related in practice require deliberate organisational investment, a point directly relevant to managing multigenerational workforces where younger and older employees may enter with very different baseline digital competencies. The measurement and structural modelling approaches discussed in Ciptagustia, Rofaida, and Kusnendi (2024) further provide methodological frameworks that future researchers can apply when testing age diversity models in management and business research contexts.

9. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review examined recent evidence on workplace age diversity and organisational outcomes published between 2020 and 2026. The article was conceived as an SLR because the main academic problem is not the lack of theory but the inconsistency and fragmentation of empirical findings. The review follows PRISMA logic to increase transparency of the selection process and to address the main methodological concern from the teacher: the article does not claim to test a direct relationship between variables with primary data. Instead, it systematically maps and synthesises the evidence that's already out there.

The review concludes that age diversity is a conditional organisational resource. When organisations develop age-inclusive HR practices, inclusive leadership and structured intergenerational knowledge transfer, it may improve performance, innovation, knowledge continuity and employee engagement. It can also create conflict, stereotypes and reduce identification where age differences are unmanaged. So the most important conclusion is not that older or younger employees are better, but that

organisations become more valuable if they combine the strengths of different age groups in a respectful and systematic way.

The article contributes by identifying the research gap, reformulating the research questions and proposing an analytical model that explains the effects of age diversity on outcomes. The findings suggest that managers should go beyond stereotypes and design systems that allow collaboration across life stages. The findings of the research suggest the need for more cross-cultural, longitudinal and emerging economy studies in the field. Age diversity will become increasingly important to the modern workplace; organisations that manage it well will be better positioned for knowledge retention, digital transformation and long term performance.

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