

Knowledge sharing in times of a pandemic: An intergenerational learning approach

Surabhi Singh  | Nobin Thomas  | Ranjeet Numbudiri 

Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management, Indian Institute of Management Indore, Indore, India

Correspondence

Surabhi Singh, Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management, Indian Institute of Management Indore, Indore, India.
Email: fi19surabhis@iimdr.ac.in

Knowledge sharing is a key challenge for modern organizations, especially in periods of uncertainty such as that of the current pandemic. This conceptual paper argues that intergenerational learning (IGL) is a useful intervention to address the challenge of knowledge sharing in the New Ways of Working. We conducted an integrated literature review based on the PRISMA methodology. Our findings reveal the limited adoption of reverse mentoring in practice, indicating the need to have a more curated intervention to promote knowledge sharing in modern organizations. We advance the discourse about reverse mentoring with the aim of overcoming its challenges and presenting a self-driven approach to sharing the tacit knowledge inherent in an organization. The study contributes by presenting a conceptual model of IGL that promotes knowledge sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic through the leveraging of the multi-generational workforce's diversity. Further, the study has implications for practice that can aid effective knowledge management in the current times.

KEYWORDS

COVID-19, intergenerational learning, knowledge sharing, new ways of working, PRISMA, reverse mentoring

1 | INTRODUCTION

The concept of New Ways of Working (NWoW) has gained currency in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Broadly, it encompasses varied forms of alternative work arrangements, such as remote working, teleworking, and flexible-working that are enabled by new-age technology (Gerards, de Grip, & Weustink, 2020). Such trends also existed prior to the pandemic, but the global lockdown has increasingly forced organizations to adopt and adapt to the NWoW. As an emergent trend, NWoW is increasingly attractive for the multi-generational workforce, which is a prominent trait of modern organizations.

Prior research demonstrates that organizations value generational diversity because it increases team performance, but it also creates challenges for knowledge transfer (Becker, Richards, & Stollings, 2020). Key reasons for this challenge are the younger workforce's high turnover rates and the increased outflow of the aging workforce (Peet, Walsh, Sober, & Rawak, 2010). Moreover, engaging different generations meaningfully in a rapid, unpredictable,

paradoxical, and tangled¹ environment problematize intergenerational work further (Suomäki, Kianto, & Vanhala, 2019). At the same time, the current pandemic has posed several challenges for organizations, one of which is engaging and retaining a multi-generational workforce in a remote setup. Scholars have argued that age diversity can offer a significant competitive advantage to organizations (Richard & Miller, 2013); however, its link with knowledge management (KM) requires more inquiry.

To solve the emerging challenges facing effective KM in the current crisis, organizations find creative ways to promote knowledge sharing among a multi-generational workforce. One such approach has been reverse mentoring, whereby a younger employee is assigned as a mentor to an older employee, usually to bridge the technology divide between the two generations and to develop future leaders (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012). Reverse mentoring differs from the traditional forms of mentoring as it is a flipped arrangement of mentoring to facilitate the learning process and promote knowledge sharing. Despite increased scholarly attention to reverse mentoring over the past decade, our study indicates its limited adoption and inherent

challenges. The scant scholarly discourse about reverse mentoring, which is limited in the literature to bridging the technical divide between various generations, has restricted its adoption in modern organizations. Hence, there is a need to expand this discourse, given the merits of reverse mentoring for promoting knowledge transfer and presenting a scalable and sustainable method of managing and sharing knowledge during a crisis.

This study identifies the need to develop a conceptual model that promotes knowledge transfer in an age-diversified workforce and overcomes reverse mentoring's challenges, especially during the current pandemic. We posit that in NWoW, the mentor-mentee relationship is not driven by age and seniority but by the individuals' knowledge and expertise. We pursue two research objectives: first, we synthesize the literature on reverse mentoring and explore why its adoption as a practice is still embryonic; and second, we present intergenerational learning (IGL) as an effective knowledge-sharing intervention in the uncertain times of the current pandemic. With these objectives, we build an argument favoring IGL as a more sustainable knowledge sharing model than reverse mentoring. We postulate that the roles of a mentor and protégé would be reversed during the relationship and make it a more bilateral and continuous learning process. We also develop a triadic model that includes a manager's evolving role to anchor an IGL program.

This paper contributes to the growing field of KM, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it informs future research through its conceptual framework for IGL. The study expands the existing literature on mentoring and brings a new perspective on KM, which is an evident need in the current period of uncertainty and crisis. By presenting a triadic framework of knowledge sharing, we propose a sustainable way to promote the transfer of knowledge among various generational cohorts that co-exist in workplace characterized by the emergent NWoW.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. First, we present a retrospective view on KM, after which we conduct a systematic review of literature on reverse mentoring using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) methodology (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). We then build an argument supporting IGL and propose a conceptual framework that can promote knowledge sharing in times of uncertainty. Next, we discuss the merits of the proposed model to promote knowledge sharing in a multi-generational workforce, especially during the current pandemic. We finish by discussing the limitations of this research and by presenting future research directions. In line with recent research, we refrain from using generational labels (such as Baby Boomers, Gen-Y, Gen Z) that tend to be stereotypes; instead, we use the terms younger and older employees when discussing different age cohorts (Cox, Young, Guardia, & Bohmann, 2018).

2 | KM IN RETROSPECT

As a prologue to this study, this section presents various perspectives on KM. This retrospective and high-level view of the extant literature

on KM and mentoring is imperative to our study as it acts as a bridge to explore new ways of knowledge sharing in the present crisis.

The concept of KM can be viewed from many perspectives, such as learning and unlearning, counter-knowledge, IGL, and reverse mentoring. While all of these are different methods to steer an organization's KM efforts, every organization adopts and executes a curated KM process to promote knowledge transfer within the system. The focus of this paper is reverse mentoring and broadening its scope to an IGL approach. We select these as the foci of our study as we argue that a sustainable and self-driven knowledge transfer method is required in times of crisis and uncertainty.

Scholars have presented the concept of "stocks" that reside in individuals and "flows" that exist at a dyadic level of learning. Hence, the need for feedback and a feed-forward mechanism is imperative to a knowledge-sharing and mentoring intervention. However, our literature review reveals that reverse mentoring interventions have lacked these two critical mechanisms, limiting the scope for a KM perspective. Indeed, the acquisition of new learning (feed-forward) and use of past learning (feedback) create a healthy tension that is crucial for ensuring that learning happens across levels and continuously.

Further, the empirical work of Bontis, Crossan, and Hulland (2002) found a positive relationship between the stocks of learning (across various levels) and business performance. They built on Crossan, Lane, and White's (1999) seminal 4I framework, according to which organizational learning is a dynamic process at the macro, meso, and micro levels, and consists of four steps: intuiting, interpreting, integrating, and institutionalization. The 4I framework has attracted increasing attention in the literature, and in the current study, which presents knowledge sharing at the individual and dyadic levels, this model is instrumental.

The SECI model (Nonaka, 1994) of socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization explains the two forms of knowledge (tacit and explicit) and the knowledge transfer process. Further, Andreeva and Ikhilchik (2011) proposed empirically testing operationalization of the SECI model across various cultures. This is a vital aspect to be considered because KM interventions vary from one culture to another. Gerpott, Lehmann-Willenbrock, and Voelpel (2017) presented a phased model of IGL comprising three stages: familiarization, assimilation, and detachment. This model is an improvisation on Tuckman's (1965) seminal model of group development consisting of the four sequential stages of forming, storming, norming, and performing.

Recently, Bratianu and Bejinaru (2019) conceived knowledge as a field comprising three distinct forms: rational (explicit and objective), emotional (subjective), and spiritual (values and beliefs). These three forms can be transformed into another form, leading to iterative and interactive knowledge forms that promote learning and unlearning processes. Their thermodynamics model proposes an energy metaphor that positions knowledge as a field, which manifests in various transformational forms and leads to knowledge transformation. Building on this model, we argue that generational differences will create both opportunities for and challenges to knowledge sharing. The emerging workforce consisting of the younger generation differs from

the older workforce in its work values (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Hence, this friction will create barriers as well as gateways for IGL.

Counter-knowledge, which is another critical theme in the KM literature, refers to certain misconceptions (rumors, gossip, and grapevines) that are created and circulated within an organization. When individuals create inaccurate interpretations of facts and events, counter-knowledge results. However, scholars have claimed that such misconceptions and disinformation leading to counter-knowledge are not always uncalled for, as often it is the grapevine that promotes knowledge sharing in an organization (Baumeister, Zhang, & Vohs, 2004; Martelo-Landroguez, Cegarra Navarro, & Cepeda-Carrión, 2019). Research has shown that unlearning can help overcome the downside of counter-knowledge (Cegarra-Navarro, Eldridge, & Sánchez, 2012). Further, empirical research shows linkages between counter-knowledge and goal orientation through unlearning in the education sector (Cegarra-Navarro, Soto-Acosta, & Martínez-Caro, 2016).

To summarize, it is vital to consider multiple dimensions when exploring KM's existing models and developing a new framework that promotes knowledge sharing in times of uncertainty. The existing KM models need to be revisited because workplace dynamics have changed substantially due to the unprecedented challenges created by the current pandemic. Malhotra (2005) suggested relating and integrating KM into enterprise business processes to ensure strategic agility and adaptability, which could be categorically linked to the KM challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a large section of the active workforce working in remote setups, there are limited knowledge-sharing possibilities by way of traditional forms of mentoring and KM. Hence, developing a

sustainable and scalable model that promotes knowledge sharing is a pressing need. To that end, we focus on reverse mentoring as it is often considered a new approach to managing generational diversity and promoting knowledge sharing. In order to develop a framework of knowledge sharing suitable for the current situation caused by the pandemic, we first delve deeper into the existing literature on reverse mentoring and conduct a PRISMA-based literature review. These are elaborated in the next section.

3 | METHOD

We conducted an integrated literature review on reverse mentoring by adopting the PRISMA methodology (Moher et al., 2009). This section elaborates on the PRISMA methodology's four protocols, which we adopted for the current study. Figure 1 presents the PRISMA flowchart.

3.1 | Identification

We searched ProQuest, JSTOR, and EBSCO's comprehensive repository for relevant peer-reviewed papers published from 2009 to 2020. As reverse mentoring is a recent trend, we selected this period (a little over a decade) as the appropriate window for our literature review. Among the research keywords were "reverse mentoring," "intergenerational mentoring," "reciprocal mentoring," and other related terms. We also used inclusive and exclusive criteria, advanced search options, and a reference list review to identify the most relevant articles.

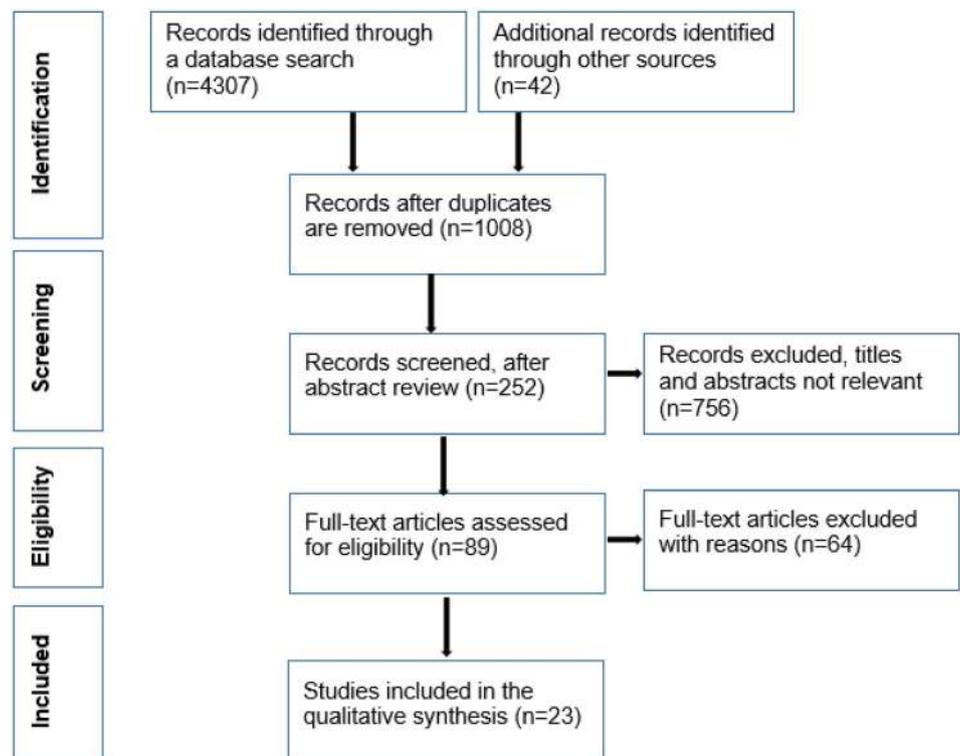


FIGURE 1 PRISMA diagram for literature review on reverse mentoring [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

3.2 | Screening

At the screening stage, we estimated that there were over 4,000 relevant articles. We then rejected duplicate articles from the larger dataset and shortlisted articles based on a review of the abstracts and titles. Articles where the title and abstract were not aligned to the current study's research objectives were excluded at this stage.

3.3 | Eligibility

In the third stage, we studied the full-text articles to assess their eligibility for inclusion in the current study. We noted that while reverse mentoring appeared as a keyword in some abstracts, the full-text article had only limited coverage of the phenomenon. Hence, such studies did not pass the threshold for inclusion in this literature review.

3.4 | Included

Finally, we included 23 articles that matched our research scope and then consolidated our literature review, as shown in Table 1. The table outlines the contributing authors, type of study, a brief overview, and the key findings of each study. We have also included conceptual papers because we believe that theory building is an essential aspect of an emerging research area. Reverse mentoring being an upcoming trend in the industry is captured in various conceptual as well as empirical papers.

4 | REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON REVERSE MENTORING

This section presents a synthesized summary of the integrated review of literature on reverse mentoring (also see Table 1). In line with Marcinkus Murphy (2012), reverse mentoring comprises four key characteristics: (1) unequal status of partners; (2) the aim of sharing knowledge; (3) promotion of leadership development; and (4) mutual support. Hence, knowledge sharing and reciprocity are the critical themes of any reverse mentoring program. Scholars present reverse mentoring as a forward-thinking organizational tool that facilitates an environment of continuous learning and growth for both parties involved in the mentoring dyad (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012).

Chen (2013) argued that reverse mentoring facilitates a more professional learning experience than traditional methods. Building on these findings, Chen (2014) proposed that reverse mentoring is an innovative approach to developing future leaders from the younger workforce. Through their empirical study, Sharma and Nagi (2018) analyzed reverse mentoring's practical implications in an Indian context. They also elaborated on the success factors required in various demographic and cultural contexts. Further, Chen (2016) explained the concept of reverse mentoring through the popular

ARCS (attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction) model of learning motivation (Keller, 1983) and emphasized on the role of training.

While the origins of reverse mentoring lie in its emergence as a practical approach to bridging the technological gap between generations, some studies have also explored its adoption in the fields of education, language skills, economic theories, and health sciences (Clarke et al., 2019). As highlighted in prior studies, the issues with reverse mentoring indicate the power imbalance that emerges in such a mentoring relationship. Scholars have challenged the foundation of the construct of reverse mentoring, arguing that a younger mentor will lack the required confidence and experience, especially in fields such as health sciences and education (Clarke et al., 2019). This may lead to barriers in effective knowledge sharing between the mentor and the mentee. Further, overlapping and blurred boundaries lead to ambiguity in the mentoring dyad and act as a roadblock in the free flow of knowledge within a system.

Our literature review also identifies certain case studies of reverse mentoring (Burdett, 2014; White, 2019). Research indicates that careful matching of mentors and mentees, building a trust-based environment, and a culture of openness and respect are factors that facilitate effective execution of reverse mentoring programs (von Preußen & Beimborn, 2019). Scholars have also positioned reverse mentoring as a cost-effective and innovative leadership development intervention (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012; Meister & Willyerd, 2010). Kaše et al. (2019) developed a conceptual model to investigate the role of intrinsic motivation for younger mentors and extrinsic motivation for the older protégés, with the mentors and mentees being connected in a dyad.

M. Harvey et al. (2009) presented another perspective of reverse mentoring by discussing its relevance for female leadership development programs. Harrison (2017) argued that reverse mentoring promotes horizontal competency development and explained it through a systematic review of empirical studies. A few studies are specific to certain industries; for instance, Hernandez et al. (2018) discussed reverse mentoring's effectiveness in the healthcare industry. Another recent study used a mixed methods design to explore the outcomes of a reverse mentoring program in the education industry, identifying benefits due to mentoring interventions (Leedahl et al., 2019).

Prior research has consolidated reverse mentoring's positive effects, such as strengthening employee diversity, promoting employee retention (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012), and breaking negative age-related stereotypes (Joshi, Dencker, & Franz, 2011). Chaudhuri and Ghosh (2012) postulated reverse mentoring as a critical intervention for engaging the older workforce and increasing the younger workforce's commitment.

A recent qualitative study by Gabriel et al. (2020) elaborated the challenges that leaders encounter when managing employees older than themselves. Gadowska-Lila (2020) used a qualitative study of five reverse mentoring pairs in five different organizations in Poland to investigate the advantages of reverse mentoring for the individuals. The findings reveal that higher engagement, enhanced IT skills, increased job satisfaction, and breaking of age barriers were among

TABLE 1 Summary of integrated literature review

Author	Type of study	Overview	Findings
Baily (2009)	Conceptual	Discusses limitations of reverse mentoring and argues on broadening the scope beyond the sharing of new IT skills	Reverse mentoring has more to it than just technical knowledge sharing
M. Harvey, McIntyre, Thompson Heames, and Moeller (2009)	Conceptual	Reverse mentoring is presented as a possible intervention to create strong female leaders with a global outlook	Steps to implement a global mentoring program for female global managers
Marcinkus Murphy (2012)	Literature review	Identifies the characteristics, antecedents, and outcomes of a reverse mentoring program. A conceptual framework is developed. Essential components to create a robust reverse mentoring program are presented	Reverse mentoring is an elaborate phenomenon that covers several dimensions
Chaudhuri and Ghosh (2012)	Conceptual	Reverse mentoring is proposed as a social exchange tool, leveraging competencies of all generations, prepositions are presented	Presents a mutual learning process through reverse mentoring that benefits both the parties involved in the dyad
Chen (2013)	Qualitative	Fourteen participants of reverse mentoring dyad were interviewed. Professional profiling of gen X and Y. presented the effect of reverse mentoring on the three functions of traditional mentoring: Career development, psychological support, and role modeling	Reverse mentoring as an intervention to manage a multi-generational workforce
Chen (2014)	Qualitative	Reviewed a scale on traditional mentoring functions from the combined perspectives of reverse mentoring and millennial professional characteristics. Research setting - Taiwan	The proposed scale helps in quantifying reverse mentoring outcomes
Burdett (2014)	Qualitative	A case-based approach is followed to examine the experiences of a large Australian government department, where reverse mentoring was used for bridging the technological divide	Reciprocal benefits for both the involved parties. Formal reverse mentoring can be made successful by defining clear procedures and creating effective structures. In addition, the time spent on participant preparation is a crucial factor
Sharma and Nagi (2018)	Quantitative	Explored the factors affecting reverse mentoring in the Indian context. $n = 530$	Practical implications for implementing a successful reverse mentoring program
Chen (2016)	Quantitative	Use of the ARCS model of learning motivation on the function of reverse mentoring. $n = 225$	Training helps in the effectiveness of reverse mentoring
Harrison (2017)	Conceptual	A systematic review of empirical studies to understand how millennial leaders can be developed using innovator competencies. Eleven studies were identified and reviewed systematically	Reverse mentoring promotes horizontal competency development, and generational characteristics are associated with Information Communication Technology (ICT) and reverse mentoring
Gerpott et al. (2017)	Qualitative	The intergenerational learning process was studied over 3 years for younger mentors and older learners ($n = 31$). A three-phased model of intergenerational learning proposed: Familiarization, assimilation, and detachment	Proposed intergenerational learning to be conceptualized as a bidirectional process
Breck, Dennis, and Leedahl (2018)	Qualitative	Identified three themes related to social connection during an inter-generational learning process. Focused at enhancing self-efficacy for older learners, doing away with the age-related stereotypes, and enhancing cross-generation connect and engagement	Reverse mentoring as an intervention to decrease the social isolation of older adults by empowering them technically

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Author	Type of study	Overview	Findings
Hernandez, Poole Jr, and Grys (2018)	Conceptual	Focuses on creating future leaders from the current millennials	Reverse mentoring as an effective intervention to create future leaders
White (2019)	Qualitative	The importance of transformation and advancement within Aflac. Three critical interventions are studied: Career success center, upskilling employees for the future, and reverse mentoring programs	Innovative ways to transform and advance the workforce
Kaše, Saksida, and Mihelič (2019)	Quantitative	Sample of younger mentors ($n = 457$) and older learners ($n = 293$). Examined the psychological processes that contribute to skill development in a reverse mentoring program	Motivational processes in reverse mentoring unfold differently for the involved participants
Chaudhuri (2019)	Conceptual	Creating a conducive culture in order to implement a reverse mentoring program and making it successful	Ten key hallmarks to implement a successful reverse mentoring program
von Preußen and Beimborn (2019)	Qualitative	Focuses on the outcomes and success factors of reverse mentoring programs. Nine pairs in four different organizations were interviewed. Thirty-one different outcomes were explored and discussed. Success factors were also presented	Reverse mentoring is much beyond technical knowledge sharing. Several outcomes can be explored for the longevity of this phenomenon
Leedahl et al. (2019)	Mixed methods	Quantitative and qualitative data were collected to study a reverse mentoring program at a mid-sized public university. Research setting - New England	Best practices for intergenerational learning are presented
Clarke, Burgess, van Diggele, and Mellis (2019)	Conceptual	Examines the role of reverse mentoring in medical education, and health services due to increased adoption of advanced technologies in the healthcare sector	Literature review reveals limited research on reverse mentoring in areas beyond mainstream business. Suggests application of reverse mentoring programs in medical education sector
Gabriel, Alcantara, and Alvarez (2020)	Qualitative	Examines the leadership attributes and potential of millennial managers in the context of Philippine workplace culture	Leadership abilities of the younger workforce are in nascent stages of development. Reverse mentoring is found to be an important intervention to promote future leaders
Pruett (2020)	Qualitative	Covers a literature review on the influence of mentoring programs for a multi-generational workforce. In addition, covers the best strategies to implement mentoring programs	Positive outcomes of mentoring on knowledge transfer by way of
Gadomska-Lila (2020)	Qualitative	Identifies advantages of reverse mentoring based on qualitative methods and semi-structured interviews, along with conditions that promote desired advantages. Research context - Poland	Presented various benefits of reverse mentoring such as effective knowledge sharing, employee engagement, leadership development, building intergenerational relations
Raza and Onyesoh (2020)	Qualitative	Adopts RM program with DE&I angle and paired a senior white leader (who acted as mentee) with two junior black and minority ethnic (BME) staff (who acted as mentors) who met six times over a period of 6 months	Findings revealed several positive outcomes of RM at different levels (individual, departmental, organizational, and symbolic); such as usage of gender inclusive language, meeting targeted staffing for BME

the many positive reverse mentoring outcomes at an individual level. For organizations, the visible outcomes were, among others, effective knowledge sharing, increased efficiency, better onboarding, higher creativity, and innovativeness (Gadomska-Lila, 2020).

A recent study by Raza and Onyesoh (2020) explored reverse mentoring using a diversity lens: a senior white leader (mentee) was paired with two junior black and minority ethnic (BME) staff (mentors), who met six times over 6 months. The findings revealed several

positive outcomes of this reverse mentoring program at different operation levels (individual, departmental, organizational, and symbolic), such as gender-inclusive language usage and meeting staffing targets for BME employees.

The literature review findings reveal that reverse mentoring has yet to receive the required traction in practice, which is unsurprising given the limited number of empirical studies and smaller sample sizes (Chen, 2016). Further, the limited literature on reverse mentoring is coupled with issues of research quality (Sulopuisto, 2020). We argue that limiting discourse about reverse mentoring primarily to the digital learning framework precludes many other areas of research, like NWoW, work-life balance, workplace diversity, and inclusion. In the next section, we discuss the scant adoption of reverse mentoring in practice and argue that reverse mentoring should be broadened to promote knowledge sharing in NWoW.

5 | FROM REVERSE MENTORING TO IGL

Research on reverse mentoring has also faced criticism. Baily (2009) posited that reverse mentoring is not a widespread phenomenon and that the focus has primarily been on the transfer of technical competencies. We posit that reverse mentoring may face challenges from rapidly emerging online training platforms, which enable self-learning as an effective way to cope with technology shifts.

Cultural contexts might also impact reverse mentoring's adoption, as the elements of power-distance and collectivism significantly impact the mentoring relationship (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010). Hall (1989) categorized cultures into high context (HC) and low context (LC), based on differences in communication style and culture, such as differences between collectivist and individualist cultures (Hofstede, 2011). In an HC culture, knowledge is usually not explicitly written or spoken; hence, communication is rather indirect and ambiguous. In addition, HC culture is usually stable, cohesive, and not prone to frequent changes (Nishimura, Nevgi, & Tella, 2008). This may lead to knowledge transfer challenges, so a reverse mentoring intervention in an HC culture may not yield great success.

For instance, reverse mentoring's key premise is a role reversal, which contradicts the general ideology of placing an older employee in a perceived superior position in certain hierarchical cultures. We believe that such an arrangement may not be accepted or widely adopted in HC cultures where knowledge is situational, in contrast to LC cultures where knowledge is transferable. Reverse mentoring inverts the widely popular dyadic mentoring relationship, and it contradicts the more widely accepted norm of having an older mentor and a younger protégé (Chaudhuri, 2019). In an LC culture, language is explicit, and communication is linear and direct (Nishimura et al., 2008). In addition, an LC culture tends to be individualist rather than collectivist, implying that individuals have primacy over group needs. This indicates that a reverse mentoring initiative, when applied in an HC culture, may be less successful than if it is applied in an LC culture.

Further, inhibitions to accept a younger mentor seem to emerge from the general perception about the younger generation, which is often stereotyped as casual, focused, frivolous, lazy, and spoiled (Breck et al., 2018). However, contrary views posit that the younger generation is perfectionist, less selfish, oriented toward social and community issues, and has a high desire to learn and grow in the workplace (Arnett, 2013). Another limitation of a reverse mentoring intervention is that it is often conceptualized as a short-lived process that concludes with the transmission of specific knowledge from a younger mentor to an older protégé. In contrast, knowledge sharing is a continuously evolving and enduring process.

Prior research has demonstrated that reciprocal knowledge sharing results in successful employee performance (Aryee, Walumbwa, Seidu & Otaye, 2016). Scholars have recommended expanding the scope of reverse mentoring (Mullen & Noe, 1999) given its benefits to knowledge sharing. Such shared experiences impact on the behavior and expectations of individuals in the workplace. Although IGL is a common phenomenon in practice, research on it has only recently gained impetus (Ropes, 2013; Tempest, 2003). Traditionally, IGL was considered more unidirectional, according to which people with higher knowledge shared their knowledge with those with less experience or knowledge (J. F. Harvey, 2012).

Another factor that has encouraged research on IGL is the management of tacit knowledge, which is difficult to imitate and translate through the usual training methods. As Wagner and Sternberg (1985) showed, tacit knowledge is an aspect of practically intelligent behavior acquired through experience and is unrelated to general cognitive ability. The earlier manifestations of IGL regarding tacit knowledge involved the older workforce sharing their practical knowledge with the younger generations (Zuccherro, 2011). Knowledge sharing in uncertain times becomes a key challenge for contemporary organizations because of the dynamic environment. It is also imperative to preserve the tacit knowledge residing in various generational cohorts in the organization and to encourage a bilateral learning process that cuts across generations. In addition, the changing demographics of the workforce are an ongoing stress test of the KM capabilities of organizations.

Through an IGL program, different generations can share their tacit knowledge and build peer relationships, which is likely to provide organizations with competitive advantages (Calo, 2008). Prior research has established that peer relationships play a more instrumental role in career development than traditional mentoring relationships (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Based on the literature review, we argue that an IGL program is a more appropriate and sustainable approach to achieving individual and organizational outcomes in the long term while nurturing a culture of knowledge sharing.

Hence, we present three arguments why it is necessary to expand the phased model of Gerpott et al. (2017). First, our synthesized literature review reveals that research and theory building in the field of IGL are sparse. Second, to broaden the scope of IGL programs, our conceptual model proposes two new stages of application and advancing to supplement the earlier model. Third, we posit that the model does not need to follow a sequential approach, and the

detachment stage proposed by Gerpott et al. (2017) might not exist in every organizational context. In relation to NWoW, this final stage of detachment may not hold, so the phased model might culminate at the assimilation stage itself.

Further, COVID-19 has widened the gap between various generations in the remote work setup. The older workforce is feeling left out of various new developments around technology and NWoW, and the younger workforce is not getting the required mentoring and is feeling detached from its roots (Ayalon et al., 2020). Based on these arguments, we postulate a need for a renewed model of knowledge sharing for the current COVID-19 situation, and one, which corroborates with the dynamism of NWoW and helps in the transfer of tacit knowledge.

6 | CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF IGL

During the current pandemic, when a large segment of the active workforce is working in a remote setup, effective knowledge transfer across various employees' cohorts has become problematic. While there are several informal opportunities for knowledge sharing in a typical office setup, knowledge sharing gets deprioritized in a virtual workplace. Our literature analysis indicates that an intergenerational knowledge-sharing program usually has a more prolonged impact and is not likely to be driven by a formal time-bound closure. Hence, it makes the knowledge-sharing process transcend times of uncertainty such as that caused by the current pandemic.

We propose a conceptual framework of IGL comprising four stages: association, acquisition, application, and advancing to promote knowledge sharing. These four stages augment the understanding of IGL in the context of the pandemic. While the earlier models conclude at a detachment stage in which the mentor and the protégé conclude their knowledge-sharing process, we posit that an IGL program may not necessarily have a formal closure. In this model, the participants' association progresses through various stages and enables knowledge sharing between different generations. This model's key feature is the evolving role of a manager across the four stages of the knowledge-sharing process, which distinguishes it from the earlier models of learning and reverse mentoring. The manager acts as a relational bridge between the two generations who come forward for an IGL program. Unlike earlier models, both the participants switch their roles across various stages, implying there is no designated "mentor" or "protégé" in the proposed model. Moreover, the proposed model is triadic rather than dyadic, given that a manager acts as a facilitator throughout the intervention. The following subsections explain the knowledge-sharing process as it evolves through the four stages of the proposed model.

6.1 | Association

In the first stage of association, the manager acts as a broker and brings together the participants from different generations keen to

participate in this triadic knowledge-sharing process. The manager and the two participants explore the possible training needs and areas of knowledge exchange, and they identify their learning goals. While no formal training-need analysis is done in this intervention, an open and insightful conversation between the participants promotes an understanding of individual-specific training requirements. The manager brings the participants together on a common platform and helps them to develop flexible and evolving learning plans that cater to their mutual learning needs.

As the IGL intervention is bilateral and evolving, this framework also enables the flexibility to have multiple learning plans spaced out across time. Thus, knowledge sharing is likely to occur on an ongoing and evolving basis, which is especially important in the current uncertain times. The manager's role is crucial as he/she acts as an informal checkpoint to monitor the participants' compatibility in this intervention.

6.2 | Acquisition

In the acquisition stage, the knowledge-sharing process is initiated between the two participants. The manager's role now evolves to become that of a facilitator, and the participants adopt various methodologies for transferring knowledge, such as informal meetings, demo sessions, on-the-job training, and live sessions. These methodologies could be combined in various ways to suit the mutual learning goals. The roles of mentor and protégé are switched periodically at different stages of the learning process, and this is primarily driven by the role that a participant is playing based on the evolving knowledge-sharing process.

The participants absorb knowledge and acquire new learning as they proceed in the knowledge-sharing process. Tacit knowledge sharing also happens in this stage as participants do not rely on the existing content or formalized modules, instead leveraging their respective areas of expertise. We propose that two-way knowledge sharing takes place at this stage and that both participants in such a program gain from it.

6.3 | Application

In the third stage, the participants adopt the learning and outcomes by specifically applying them in a professional or personal setting. The manager who now acts as a consultant, encourages and motivates the participants to apply their newly acquired knowledge across different work segments. Since IGL is predominantly a self-evolving process, it facilitates agile adaptation to the work environment's rapidly changing demands. Hence, its application does not become a forced choice but is more of a self-driven approach to sharing and using the tacit knowledge among the participants. This self-evolving intervention thus provides the right push to promote KM in times of a crisis like the current pandemic. This stage also enables identification of errors due to the mentee closely working with the mentor.

We further contend that, given the generational differences between the participants, the application of acquired knowledge (both explicit and implicit) will be heavily driven by constant encouragement. In addition, since this model of IGL is unconstrained by the availability of time, it provides the space and flexibility to adapt and apply the acquired knowledge when the participants feel ready. We argue that such a self-driven approach will be beneficial in the rapid adoption of an IGL program.

6.4 | Advancing

In the fourth and final stage, the learning relationship between the two participants progresses to an advanced level. The manager now plays the observer's role and keenly traces the two participants' knowledge-sharing journey. While the participants continue to share their tacit knowledge and skills regularly, they continue to seek newer skills. Hence, there is no formal closure in an IGL program, and it goes beyond the boundaries of a traditional mentoring intervention or even a reverse mentoring program. When participants bond at an informal and personal level, the association tends to be stronger and more useful as they tend to share experiences more freely and comfortably. The advancing stage also allows for more effective feedback mechanisms, which are operational in an informal mode.

7 | DISCUSSION

The proposed conceptual framework offers several advantages over reverse mentoring and the earlier models of IGL. Being free from generational biases, this model can be quickly adopted by practitioners across various contexts and can help manage the tacit knowledge that resides throughout the organization. The four stages of the proposed conceptual model, as depicted in Figure 2, may not always be sequential, unlike in the earlier models. For instance, when the participants have prior familiarity with each other, the first stage of accommodation might be relatively shorter or even non-existent. In such a scenario, the knowledge-sharing process might commence from the acquisition stage. Further, the final stage of advancing can vary from one context to another, depending on whether the tacit knowledge has been appropriately transferred or needs to be transferred in due time.

The proposed framework has several expected outcomes: meaningful engagement of an age-diversified workforce, enhanced motivation, increased productivity and efficiency, and promotion of a culture of knowledge sharing. Another essential distinction between this model and earlier models is the absence of a pre-set mentor and protégé, implying that such a program can be successfully adopted even in HC cultures where reverse mentoring could not be adopted. Given that it is free from designation biases, the framework's generalizability is higher than that of other models. In addition, an IGL can act as a constant source of motivation for various involved parties as it is an expansion of the reverse mentoring framework intended to offer

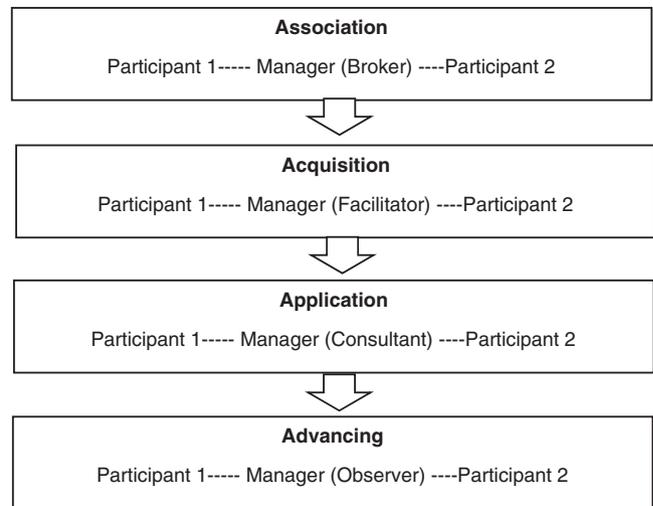


FIGURE 2 A conceptual framework for intergenerational learning and knowledge sharing

varying degrees of motivation to the mentor and the mentee (Kaše et al., 2019).

The idea behind promoting knowledge sharing as a self-driven process could also be explained by way of a recent knowledge dynamics model presented by Bratianu and Bejinaru (2019). Their study was the first to present knowledge as an energy metaphor, whereby they explained knowledge dynamics' transformational process as akin to thermodynamics. They argued that the SECI model, as a social phenomenon, is contextual and cannot promote knowledge transfer. Instead, the social spiral of knowledge creation (called *Ba* in Japanese) could be any space in which knowledge is created. This holds for the current scenario of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to more virtual and geographically displaced teams. In such a situation, knowledge sharing faces challenges if based on the earlier models of KM. However, our proposed framework crosses a physical office's spatial boundaries and transcends spaces to promote a self-driven knowledge-sharing process. The transferability of knowledge is imperative for ensuring knowledge dynamics, and hence it becomes crucial to assess the current dynamics before adopting an IGL program.

We also posit that an IGL will promote diversity within an organization because the different generations involved in such a program benefit from each other's perspectives on various emerging trends. For instance, Raza and Onyesoh (2020) studied several positive outcomes of a reverse mentoring program from a diversity perspective and indicated that a long association with increased frequency of connecting will lead to better results. We suggest that extending this to an IGL program would result in various generations coming together to promote knowledge sharing, and that the relationship between the generations would not be bound by time or space.

Our framework also promotes counter-knowledge created during an IGL intervention through informal communication channels, which would lead to knowledge sharing. This aligns with prior studies, which have established that counter-knowledge is not always bad (Baumeister et al., 2004). The triadic nature of the proposed

framework means that counter-knowledge will be embedded within the framework, as the model is not a formal intervention. Hence, any side effects from counter-knowledge could be mitigated by way of unlearning, as suggested by prior studies (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2012). The conceptual framework offers the scope to improvise, as the nuances of generational differences vary among generational cohorts and evolve with time.

8 | KNOWLEDGE SHARING THROUGH IGL DURING COVID-19

Knowledge inherent in an organization provides a competitive advantage, and a practical KM process promotes learning. Knowledge sharing is a key premise for all forms of mentoring, be it traditional mentoring, reverse mentoring, or the proposed form of IGL. However, the efficacy of each of these interventions differs based on the context in which they are applied. In the current context of COVID-19, there is an apparent drift between various generational cohorts (Ayalon et al., 2020).

The proposed conceptual framework contributes by providing a practical knowledge-sharing approach between various generational cohorts in an organization. Moreover, such an intervention is likely to help preserve the traditional organizational values and culture by sharing them across generations. While the older generation can drive re-infusion of values and culture, the younger workforce can, in turn, equip the older cohort technically and help them to adapt to the NWoW. Hence, IGL promotes the co-creation of a supportive culture in times of uncertainty such as that of the current pandemic. Our model differs from the traditional dyadic models by presenting a triadic relationship more appropriate to the current times. Along with the two participants in an IGL program, the role of the manager also evolves. As explained in the model, the manager starts as a broker in the initial stage, moves on to become a facilitator, then a consultant, before, in the final stage, acting as an observer.

Bratianu and Bolisani (2015, p. 170) stated that the “future is not a simple extrapolation of the present, but a thinking world where new knowledge should be created and processed to achieve some strategic business objectives.” Research indicates that excessive formal training interventions may not be effective and successful in the current COVID-19 situation. Such programs usually cover a large audience and are facilitated by one or two trainers, whereas an IGL is a focused and bilateral relationship involving two employees and a manager.

Further, engaging employees in a remote setup becomes essential and achievable through such an IGL intervention. Despite operating in a virtual work environment, when participants are brought together in an IGL program they are more likely to feel engaged, motivated, and committed to the cause of knowledge sharing. Given these benefits, we foresee that the proposed framework will have high receptivity during the COVID-19 uncertainties and offers a mechanism for knowledge sharing beyond the regular work boundaries. It provides a platform for the various generations to express themselves, share their tacit knowledge, and contribute to creating a learning organization.

9 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

Our study has certain limitations, the most apparent being the absence of empirical evidence to validate the proposed conceptual model. We believe that the model needs to be stress-tested in an organizational setup where multiple generations co-exist and an IGL intervention is adopted to promote knowledge sharing. The impact of the model on knowledge sharing in a virtual workplace needs to be qualitatively assessed. Hence, we encourage future research to explore the IGL phenomenon and its adoption and impact in times of crisis and uncertainty. Further, Baily (2009) argued that an IGL program's success depends significantly on a culture of openness and trust. We posit that knowledge transfer varies between HC and LC cultures; hence, future studies could test this by comparing the two different contexts.

From the perspective of feedback and feed-forward mechanisms involved in the iterative learning process (Cathcart, Greer, & Neale, 2014), our framework has a limitation because the process culminates at the advancing stage. The unexpected errors encountered in the application stage, when the mentor may lack expertise, would require the intervention of the manager to find a possible resolution mechanism. This requires calibration in terms of a new dyad or some external intervention. We recognize that real-time feedback and feed-forward processes occur across every stage and involve every generation. However, there are critical elements of the feedback process that could impact this model's operationalization.

Another limitation concerns the distinct attributes of the individuals involved in an IGL intervention. A recent study by Gadomska-Lila (2020) pointed to the nuance of matching the generations in a reverse mentoring program and studied unique relations, such as a mentor being a younger woman. Hence, future research could focus on the element of gender in the learning and knowledge sharing process. Future studies could also explore how knowledge sharing in a period of uncertainty results in unlearning and IGL taking place over an unprecedentedly short time span.

10 | CONCLUSION

In this study, we have built an argument supporting IGL as a useful intervention to promote knowledge transfer in times of crisis. The merits of the proposed framework are that it meaningfully develops, engages, and retains the age-diversified workforce, and manages the tacit knowledge that resides in an organization. The synthesized literature review helped us identify the need for a framework for knowledge sharing appropriate to NWoW. We believe this is a crucial contribution of this study, especially at the present moment when a large segment of the active workforce is working remotely.

The proposed framework for IGL would help restructure the existing KM interventions by providing an informal and self-driven approach. In the context of the current pandemic, the IGL framework is a fresh way of looking at the knowledge-sharing process and one

that involves all parties, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, or position in an organization, contributing and gaining immensely. It also provides a scalable and sustainable mechanism to share tacit knowledge, which otherwise resides in various system pockets (Busch, Venkitachalam, & Richards, 2008). This resonates with the ideology of NWoW, which promotes diversity and an inclusive culture.

To conclude, we believe that IGL offers a promising future for mentoring by embracing the diversity of the workforce, promoting knowledge sharing, and fostering relationships, especially in a time of uncertainty and crisis, such as that of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

ENDNOTE

¹ RUPT; see <https://www.ccl.org/blog/navigating-disruption-vuca-alternative/>.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

ORCID

Surabhi Singh  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6520-8978>

Nobin Thomas  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3664-0272>

Ranjeet Numbudiri  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0640-2265>

REFERENCES

- Andreeva, T., & Ikhlchik, I. (2011). Applicability of the SECI model of knowledge creation in Russian cultural context: Theoretical analysis. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 18(1), 56–66.
- Arnett, J. J. (2013). The evidence for generation we and against generation me. *Emerging Adulthood*, 1(1), 5–10.
- Aryee, S., Walumbwa, F. O., Seidu, E. Y., & Otaye, L. E. (2016). Developing and leveraging human capital resource to promote service quality: Testing a theory of performance. *Journal of Management*, 42(2), 480–499.
- Ayalon, L., Chasteen, A., Diehl, M., Levy, B., Neupert, S. D., Rothermund, K., ... Wahl, H. W. (2020). Aging in times of the COVID-19 pandemic: Avoiding ageism and fostering intergenerational solidarity. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 76(2), e49–e52.
- Baily, C. (2009). Reverse intergenerational learning: A missed opportunity? *AI & Society*, 23(1), 111–115.
- Baumeister, R. F., Zhang, L., & Vohs, K. D. (2004). Gossip as cultural learning. *Review of General Psychology*, 8(2), 111–121.
- Becker, K. L., Richards, M. B., & Stollings, J. (2020). Better together? Examining benefits and tensions of generational diversity and team performance. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2020.1837708>.
- Bontis, N., Crossan, M. M., & Hulland, J. (2002). Managing an organizational learning system by aligning stocks and flows. *Journal of Management Studies*, 39(4), 437–469.
- Bratianu, C., & Bejinaru, R. (2019). The theory of knowledge fields: A thermodynamics approach. *System*, 7(2), 20.
- Bratianu, C., & Bolisani, E. (2015, September). Knowledge strategy: An integrated approach for managing uncertainty. Paper presented at: Proceedings of the 16th European conference on Knowledge Management (pp. 169–177).
- Breck, B. M., Dennis, C. B., & Leedahl, S. N. (2018). Implementing reverse mentoring to address social isolation among older adults. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 61(5), 513–525.
- Burdett, J. (2014). Reverse mentoring becomes a two-way street: Case study of a mentoring project for IT competence. *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 28(3), 13–16.
- Busch, P., Venkitachalam, K., & Richards, D. (2008). Generational differences in soft knowledge situations: Status, need for recognition, workplace commitment and idealism. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 15(1), 45–58.
- Calo, T. J. (2008). Talent management in the era of the aging workforce: The critical role of knowledge transfer. *Public Personnel Management*, 37(4), 403–416.
- Cathcart, A., Greer, D., & Neale, L. (2014). Learner-focused evaluation cycles: Facilitating learning using feed-forward, concurrent and feedback evaluation. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(7), 790–802.
- Cegarra-Navarro, J., Eldridge, S., & Sánchez, A. (2012). How an unlearning context can help managers overcome the negative effects of counter-knowledge. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 18(2), 231–246.
- Cegarra-Navarro, J. G., Soto-Acosta, P., & Martínez-Caro, E. (2016). Linking counter-knowledge to goal orientation through an unlearning context—A study from a Spanish university. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 45, 260–267.
- Chaudhuri, S. (2019). Perspectives in HRD—Reverse mentoring: Hallmarks for implementing an intergenerational intervention. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 31(3), 65–71.
- Chaudhuri, S., & Ghosh, R. (2012). Reverse mentoring: A social exchange tool for keeping the boomers engaged and millennials committed. *Human Resource Development Review*, 11(1), 55–76.
- Chen, Y. C. (2013). Effect of reverse mentoring on traditional mentoring functions. *Leadership and Management in Engineering*, 13(3), 199–208.
- Chen, Y. C. (2014). Examining traditional mentoring functioning scale considering reverse mentoring and the work characteristics of millennials. *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management*, 14(3), 205–219.
- Chen, Y. C. (2016). Effect of using the attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction model of learning motivation on the function of reverse mentoring. *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management*, 16(3–4), 161–175.
- Clarke, A. J., Burgess, A., van Diggele, C., & Mellis, C. (2019). The role of reverse mentoring in medical education: Current insights. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, 10, 693.
- Cox, C. B., Young, F. K., Guardia, A. B., & Bohmann, A. K. (2018). The baby boomer bias: The negative impact of generational labels on older workers. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 48(2), 71–79.
- Crossan, M. M., Lane, H. W., & White, R. E. (1999). An organizational learning framework: From intuition to institution. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(3), 522–537.
- Gabriel, A. G., Alcantara, G. M., & Alvarez, J. D. (2020). How do millennial managers lead older employees? The Philippine workplace experience. *SAGE Open*, 10(1), 2158244020914651.
- Gadomska-Lila, K. (2020). Effectiveness of reverse mentoring in creating intergenerational relationships. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 33(7), 1313–1328.
- Gerards, R., de Grip, A., & Weustink, A. (2020). Do new ways of working increase informal learning at work? *Personnel Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-10-2019-0549>
- Gerpott, F. H., Lehmann-Willenbrock, N., & Voelpel, S. C. (2017). A phase model of intergenerational learning in organizations. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 16(2), 193–216.
- Hall, E. T. (1989). *Beyond culture*. New York: Anchor.
- Harrison, A. E. (2017). Exploring millennial leadership development: An evidence assessment of information communication technology and reverse mentoring competencies. *Case Studies in Business and Management*, 4(1), 25–48.

- Harvey, J. F. (2012). Managing organizational memory with intergenerational knowledge transfer. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 16(3), 400–417.
- Harvey, M., McIntyre, N., Thompson Heames, J., & Moeller, M. (2009). Mentoring global female managers in the global marketplace: Traditional, reverse, and reciprocal mentoring. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(6), 1344–1361.
- Hernandez, J. S., Poole, K. G., Jr., & Gryns, T. E. (2018). Mentoring millennials for future leadership. *Physician Leadership Journal*, 5(3), 41–45.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), 2307.
- Joshi, A., Dencker, J. C., & Franz, G. (2011). Generations in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 31, 177–205.
- Kaše, R., Saksida, T., & Mihelič, K. K. (2019). Skill development in reverse mentoring: Motivational processes of mentors and learners. *Human Resource Management*, 58(1), 57–69.
- Keller, J. M. (1983). Motivational design of instruction. *Instructional Design Theories and Models: An Overview of their Current Status*, 1(1983), 383–434.
- Kram, K. E., & Isabella, L. A. (1985). Mentoring alternatives: The role of peer relationships in career development. *Academy of Management Journal*, 28(1), 110–132.
- Leedahl, S. N., Brasher, M. S., Estus, E., Breck, B. M., Dennis, C. B., & Clark, S. C. (2019). Implementing an interdisciplinary intergenerational program using the cyber seniors® reverse mentoring model within higher education. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 40(1), 71–89.
- Malhotra, Y. (2005). Integrating knowledge management technologies in organizational business processes: Getting real time enterprises to deliver real business performance. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 9(1), 7–28.
- Marcinkus Murphy, W. (2012). Reverse mentoring at work: Fostering cross-generational learning and developing millennial leaders. *Human Resource Management*, 51(4), 549–573.
- Martelo-Landroguez, S., Cegarra Navarro, J. G., & Cepeda-Carrión, G. (2019). Uncontrolled counter-knowledge: Its effects on knowledge management corridors. *Knowledge Management Research and Practice*, 17(2), 203–212.
- Meister, J. C., & Willyerd, K. (2010). Mentoring millennials. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(5), 68.
- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. G. (2009). Group PRISMA. 2009. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 151(4), 264–269.
- Mullen, E. J., & Noe, R. A. (1999). The mentoring information exchange: When do mentors seek information from their protégés? *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 20(2), 233–242.
- Nishimura, S., Nevgi, A., & Tella, S. (2008). Communication style and cultural features in high/low context communication cultures: A case study of Finland, Japan and India. Teoksessa A. Kallioniemi (toim.), *Uudistuva ja kehittyvä ainedidaktiikka. Ainedidaktinen Symposiumi*, 8 (2008), 783–796.
- Nonaka, I. (1994). A dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation. *Organization Science*, 5(1), 14–37.
- Peet, M. R., Walsh, K., Sober, R., & Rawak, C. S. (2010). Generative knowledge interviewing: A method for knowledge transfer and talent management at the University of Michigan. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 10(2), 71–85.
- Pruett, C. C. (2020). Intergenerational Mentoring: A Systematic Review of Facilitating Knowledge Transfer in a Multi-generational Workforce (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland University College).
- Ramaswami, A., & Dreher, G. F. (2010). Dynamics of mentoring relationships in India: A qualitative, exploratory study. *Human Resource Management*, 49(3), 501–530.
- Raza, A., & Onyesho, K. (2020). Reverse mentoring for senior NHS leaders: A new type of relationship. *Future Healthcare Journal*, 7(1), 94.
- Richard, O. C., & Miller, C. D. (2013). Considering diversity as a source of competitive advantage in organizations. In *The Oxford handbook of diversity and work* (pp. 239–250). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ropes, D. (2013). Intergenerational learning in organizations. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 37(8), 713–727.
- Sharma, M. K., & Nagi, M. (2018). Factors affecting prevalence of reverse mentoring in India. *International Journal of Business Marketing and Management*, 3(8), 2456–4559.
- Sulopuisto, O. (2020). Reverse mentoring as continuing professional development in higher education: Recommendation for action based on current evidence.
- Suomäki, A., Kianto, A., & Vanhala, M. (2019). Work engagement across different generations in Finland: A qualitative study of boomers, Yers and Xers. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 26(2), 140–151.
- Tempest, S. (2003). Intergenerational learning: A reciprocal knowledge development process that challenges the language of learning. *Management Learning*, 34(2), 181–200.
- Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6), 384.
- Twenge, J. M., Campbell, S. M., Hoffman, B. J., & Lance, C. E. (2010). Generational differences in work values: Leisure and extrinsic values increasing, social and intrinsic values decreasing. *Journal of Management*, 36(5), 1117–1142.
- von Preußen, P. W., & Beimbom, D. (2019). Turning Mentoring Around—A Case-based Analysis of the Outcomes of Digital Reverse Mentoring.
- Wagner, R. K., & Sternberg, R. J. (1985). Practical intelligence in real-world pursuits: The role of tacit knowledge. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(2), 436.
- White, T. (2019). Aflac: The importance of communication and innovation when transforming employee operations. *Strategic HR Review*, 18(6), 250–253.
- Zuccherro, R. A. (2011). A co-mentoring project: An intergenerational service-learning experience. *Educational Gerontology*, 37(8), 687–702.

How to cite this article: Singh S, Thomas N, Numbudiri R. Knowledge sharing in times of a pandemic: An intergenerational learning approach. *Knowl Process Manag.* 2021;28:153–164. <https://doi.org/10.1002/kpm.1669>