

Bridging Generations Through Intergenerational Learning: Understanding Adult Learners' Experiences, Benefits, and Challenges

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Abstract

This study aims to explore how intergenerational learning is implemented in organizational settings and to understand its individual-level impacts on adult learners. The study involved eight adult participants drawn from different generations, consisting of older and younger workers, who were recruited using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in intergenerational learning activities within their organizations. A qualitative research approach was employed, using semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. Interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to learning practices and individual experiences. The findings reveal that intergenerational learning is practiced as a structured and controlled organizational activity. It is characterized by formal learning methods, regulated processes, and identifiable barriers. At the individual level, intergenerational learning generated both positive and negative impacts. Positive impacts included knowledge improvement, knowledge refreshment, soft skill development, experiential understanding, and emotional stability. However, challenges also emerged, particularly in the existence of a fixed mindset, which constrained learning interactions across generations. This study contributes to the intergenerational learning literature by demonstrating that adult learners experience intergenerational learning not only as a mechanism for knowledge exchange. It also shows as a structured organizational practice that simultaneously generates developmental opportunities.

Keywords: generations; intergenerational learning; older worker; qualitative study; younger worker**1. Introduction**

Global demographic change and population ageing have become central concerns in international development and education agendas. The United Nations, through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizes lifelong learning as a key mechanism for promoting inclusive and equitable development, particularly under SDG 4, which highlights learning opportunities across the lifespan (United Nations, 2022). In parallel, the World Health Organization underscores the importance of active ageing and continuous learning as foundations for maintaining productivity across the life course (WHO, 2020). These global priorities reflect a growing recognition that adult learning is a socially embedded process shaped by interaction across generations.

In adult education and workplace learning contexts, interactions among individuals from different generations are increasingly common as organizations respond to multigenerational workforces. Adult learners bring accumulated experiences and generationally transforming learning into a relational and socially situated activity (Ho et al., 2023; Kayi, 2024). Within this landscape, intergenerational learning has gained attention as an approach that enables reciprocal learning among younger and older adults through shared practice and experiential exchange (Franz & Scheunpflug, 2016).

Intergenerational learning is commonly defined as a process through which individuals from different generations learn with, from, and about one another through ongoing interaction (Gerpott et al., 2017; Leon, 2023). In adult and workplace learning settings, such learning often unfolds informally through collaborative problem-solving and everyday work practices rather than through structured instructional programs (Gerpott et al., 2017). Previous studies suggest that intergenerational learning can support knowledge continuity (Gerpott et al., 2016), reduce age-based stereotypes (Lau, 2023), and foster more inclusive learning cultures (Fan et al., 2023). However, much of this literature has primarily emphasized organizational or structural outcomes, leaving the personal experiences of adult learners relatively underexplored.

From an adult learning perspective, learning in adulthood is closely linked to meaning-making across the life span. Adult learners tend to evaluate learning experiences not only in terms of knowledge acquisition but also through their emotional and experiential dimensions (Brunton & Buckley, 2021; Ho et al., 2023). Intergenerational learning offers a distinctive context for such development, as it brings together individuals at different life stages who may hold contrasting values and expectations (Bjursell, 2015). These interactions create opportunities for adults to



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reinterpret prior experiences and develop interpersonal competencies essential for navigating organizational environments (Gerpott & Fasbender, 2020).

Despite its growing relevance in global lifelong learning discourse, empirical research that explores intergenerational learning from the perspective of individual adult learners remains limited. Existing studies often rely on quantitative measures that may overlook the subjective meanings and personal transformations across generational boundaries (Sánchez & Kaplan, 2014). Furthermore, research conducted in Global South contexts is still underrepresented in intergenerational learning scholarship, even though cultural norms may shape intergenerational learning dynamics in unique ways (UNESCO, 2020). Addressing this gap is essential for developing more inclusive and context-sensitive understandings of intergenerational learning. Also, educational approaches that prioritize values-based competencies play a crucial role in promoting lifelong learning, as they equip individuals with the capacity to continuously adapt (Andayanic et al., 2025).

Positioning intergenerational learning within the broader frameworks of lifelong learning, this study conceptualizes intergenerational interaction as a resource for adult development rather than merely a mechanism for knowledge transfer. In line with global calls to promote learning environments that support intergenerational solidarity and well-being across the life course (UNESCO, 2020; WHO, 2020), this research seeks to deepen understanding of how intergenerational learning contributes to individual-level development in adult learning contexts. Further, lifelong learning should be viewed through the lens of policy-driven objectives and value-oriented commitment to intellectual development. This perspective underscores the importance of incorporating cultural and religious dimensions into the broader global discourse on lifelong learning (Sholeh et al., 2025).

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore how adult learners experience intergenerational learning at the individual level. This research aims to contribute to the adult learning literature by illuminating the experiential dimensions of learning that remain underexplored, particularly in Indonesian contexts. The research question of this study is: How do adult learners experience intergenerational learning, and what individual-level benefits emerge from these experiences?

This study contributes to the intergenerational learning literature in three ways. First, it provides evidence from Indonesia, a context that remains underrepresented in intergenerational learning research. Second, it demonstrates that intergenerational learning is experienced through both structured organizational practices and individual developmental processes. Third, it highlights that intergenerational learning produces both enabling and constraining experiences, suggesting that learning outcomes depend on how intergenerational interactions are organized.

2. Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative exploratory study using thematic analysis to explore adult learners' experiences of intergenerational learning and to understand the individual-level benefits emerging from such interactions. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as the study sought to capture subjective meanings and lived experiences (Creswell, 2018). By focusing on participants' narratives, this research aimed to explore how intergenerational learning is experienced and constructed by adult learners within real-life learning and work-related contexts.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation of adult learners from different generational groups with direct experience in intergenerational learning activities. The inclusion criteria required participants to be adults actively involved in work environments where interaction with individuals from different generations occurred. A total of eight participants took part in the study, representing both younger and older generations.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which provided participants with flexibility to articulate their experiences while allowing the researcher to explore themes relevant to intergenerational learning. The interview questions were designed to encourage reflection on learning experiences and perceived personal benefits during intergenerational interactions. Interviews were conducted individually and lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy of data representation.

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis procedure, emphasizing an inductive approach that allowed patterns and meanings to emerge from the data (Busetto et al., 2020; Creswell, 2018). The analysis began with repeated reading of the transcripts to achieve familiarity with the data,

followed by initial coding to identify significant statements related to experiences of intergenerational learning. Codes were then compared and grouped into broader themes that reflected recurring patterns across participants' narratives.

To enhance the study's trustworthiness, several strategies were employed (Creswell, 2019). Prolonged engagement with the data and careful documentation of analytic decisions supported credibility. Transferability was addressed by providing rich descriptions of the research context, participants, and analytical process. This stage enables readers to assess the relevance of the findings to other settings. Ethical considerations were carefully observed, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the use of pseudonyms to protect participants' identities (Emiliussen et al., 2021).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1 Adult learners' experiences in intergenerational learning

Adult learners experienced intergenerational learning as a context-dependent process shaped by interactions across age groups. Learning experiences were constructed through everyday role negotiation and shared understanding. It reflects how learners interpreted intergenerational learning within their learning and work environments, as shown in Figure 1.

Theme 1. Learning Methods in Intergenerational Learning

Intergenerational learning in the organization was implemented through specific learning methods that shaped how knowledge was delivered across generations. Participants described learning activities that relied primarily on in-class training formats and conventional classroom arrangements. These methods structured learning as a formal and experience-based activity, providing a common reference point for interaction between older and younger workers.

1.1 In-Class Training as the Dominant Learning Format

Intergenerational learning was predominantly implemented through in-class training formats. This format is characterized by learning activities organized in classroom-like settings, using predefined schedules and facilitator-led instruction. Participants described that most training sessions followed formal arrangements, either conducted fully offline or adapted into virtual classrooms with similar instructional structures. Two participants explained:

“Training activities are usually conducted in class, either face-to-face or online, with a fixed agenda and facilitator” (O-04)

“Even when training moved online, the format remained the same as classroom training, just delivered through a screen” (O-03)

The dominance of in-class training shaped interaction patterns during intergenerational learning. Learning sessions were largely facilitator-centered, with communication flowing primarily from trainer to participants. Older workers described their role as listening, following explanations, and responding when prompted. Their statements are:

“Most of the time, the facilitator explains the material, and participants listen” (O-02)

“Questions are usually asked at the end, not during the session” (O-01)

In-class training formats also reinforced conventional learning routines among older workers. Participants emphasized that learning was expected to occur during designated sessions rather than through continuous intergenerational interaction, such as:

“Learning happens during scheduled training, outside of that we return to our regular work” (O-2)

“Intergenerational interaction mostly occurs during training sessions, not as part of daily learning activities” (O-03)

This pattern may emerge because organizations often prefer standardized training formats that are easier to monitor and evaluate. While efficient, such structures may limit spontaneous knowledge exchange across generations.

1.2 Learning Stays in the Classroom: Conventional Formats in IGL

From the perspective of younger workers, intergenerational learning was predominantly practiced through conventional classroom formats. Learning activities were organized as scheduled sessions led by facilitators, with fixed agendas and predefined materials. Some of them explained:

“Most of the learning still happens in a classroom setting, where the trainer explains and we follow” (Y-02)

“Even when it is called intergenerational learning, the format is still like regular classroom training” (Y-04)

The dominance of classroom-based formats shaped interaction patterns during learning. Younger workers described limited opportunities for spontaneous discussion, as communication was structured around presentations and question-and-answer segments at specific times. They mentioned:

“Usually we listen first, and questions are only allowed at the end” (Y-02)

“The session follows slides and explanations, so interaction is quite limited” (Y-03)

Conventional classroom arrangements also bound when and where intergenerational learning could occur. Younger workers perceived learning as confined to formal sessions rather than extending into everyday work interactions. Two younger workers explained:

“Learning is considered done once the class ends; after that, we go back to our tasks” (Y-01)

“Intergenerational interaction mostly happens during training, not as part of daily work” (Y-02).

Theme 2. Learning Processes in Intergenerational Learning

Beyond the methods used, intergenerational learning was characterized by particular learning processes. Participants reported processes marked by tight monitoring mechanisms, mandatory participation, and largely one-way communication patterns. These processes emphasized procedural completion, shaping intergenerational learning as a controlled activity within the organization.

2.1 Concrete Examples as the Primary Entry Point for Learning

Intergenerational learning among older workers was predominantly practiced through concrete examples rooted in everyday work experiences. Learning interactions were commonly framed around real cases and practical demonstrations that reflected familiar work situations, as participants mentioned, *“It’s part of educating them in everyday work lives, too. We offer something, but we’re also teaching them; there’s a learning process involved” (O-02).*

Moreover, older workers engaged with learning when new information was presented through examples that resonated with their accumulated experience. It allows them to anchor learning within known contexts. This practice positioned experiential reference as the main gateway through which learning across generations was initiated, two participants explained:

I had actually done a task before. So, when it was explained, I could relate it directly to my previous experience. That’s how I could better understand it. (O-02)

I usually try to match what is being taught with situations I’ve faced before. If I already have the context, it’s easier to follow and understand. (O-03)

The reliance on concrete examples also shaped the dynamics of intergenerational interaction. Older workers tended to contribute to learning by sharing stories and explaining how similar situations had been handled in the past. These practices reinforced learning as a process of contextual interpretation rather than abstract knowledge exchange. As a result, intergenerational learning was enacted through experience-sharing interactions that emphasized familiarity. The statements of participants are:

I usually explain it by telling what happened before and why we made certain decisions at that time. From there, they can see the logic behind it. (O-03)

When I explain something, I usually use cases I’ve handled before, so it’s easier for them to understand how it works in practice. (O-02)

2.2 Tight Monitoring Process in Learning Implementation

Intergenerational learning was implemented within tightly monitored learning systems that emphasized compliance with procedural requirements rather than flexibility in learning interaction. Older workers described learning processes that were governed by fixed schedules and formal evaluation thresholds, such as:

“There is a time limit given, and if the score is below the passing grade, we have to repeat the training” (O-04)

“Training is audited by the central office to make sure everyone has completed it” (O-01)

This tight monitoring shaped how learning activities were carried out daily. Participants reported that learning tasks were often completed alongside routine work responsibilities, requiring careful time management to meet monitoring requirements. Some statements from participants are:

“Chasing time because the modules must be finished while operational duties are still running” (O-04)

“Even during training hours, employees are sometimes still handling work tasks” (O-02)

The monitoring process also influenced interaction patterns during learning activities. Participants explained that, in tightly controlled online sessions, interaction was often limited to maintain order and ensure the delivery of content. Their statements are:

“We sometimes mute participants to control the session when communicating policy changes” (O-01)

“People attend mainly to make sure their presence is recorded” (O-03)

2.3 Required, Not Chosen: Mandatory Training as an IGL Practice

From the perspective of younger workers, intergenerational learning was frequently embedded in mandatory training arrangements that emphasized attendance. Participants described training sessions as compulsory activities that needed to be followed regardless of individual learning needs or readiness:

“We have to join because it is mandatory, whether we really need the training or not,” (Y-02)

“If we don’t attend, it will be recorded and questioned later” (Y-03)

Mandatory participation shaped how younger workers engaged during learning activities. Rather than actively contributing, participants reported focusing on fulfilling attendance requirements and completing assigned tasks. Their statements are:

“The important thing is to be present and finish the session, so it’s marked as completed” (Y-01)

“Sometimes we just follow the session quietly because the goal is to complete the training” (Y-04)

The compulsory nature of training also influenced intergenerational interaction patterns. Younger workers described limited opportunities to question or discuss with senior participants during sessions. As two participants explained:

“Since it’s a formal training, we just listen and follow the instructions,” (Y-03)

“There’s not much room to talk because the session is already scheduled and controlled,” (Y-02)

Theme 3. Barriers to Effective Intergenerational Learning

3.1 Unspecific Regulations Hinder the Effectiveness of IGL

Intergenerational learning among older workers was practiced in organizational contexts where learning regulations were broad and unspecific. Participants described the absence of clear

guidelines for organizing intergenerational learning, including unclear objectives and interaction patterns across generations:

"There was no specific rule about how learning between generations should be done; we just followed the general training instructions" (O-01)

"We were never told that this was intergenerational learning. It was just considered part of regular training" (O-02)

In the absence of specific regulations, older workers relied heavily on established prior experiences with conventional training to navigate learning situations. This reliance on precedent led to variations in how learning was facilitated, with intergenerational interaction shaped more by individual interpretation than by shared organizational direction. Two participants mentioned:

"Usually, we just do what we've always done in training sessions because there's no different instruction" (O-02)

"There's no clear standard, so everyone understands the process in their own way" (O-03)

Unclear regulatory frameworks also encouraged older workers to adopt a cautious, compliance-oriented approach. Without explicit guidance, participants emphasized following instructions rather than dialogic learning across generations, such as:

"We just follow what is instructed, even if the purpose is not clearly explained" (O-01)

"As long as we attend and complete the training, that's considered enough" (O-03)

3.2 Speaking Up Is Not an Option: One-Way Communication in IGL

Intergenerational learning from the perspective of younger workers was largely characterized by one-way communication patterns, where learning interactions were dominated by instructions from seniors. Younger workers described situations in which communication flowed primarily from older individuals to them. One participant explained that senior colleagues often evaluated current work practices by comparing them to past conditions:

"They always compare how they worked in the past with how we work now, and it feels like there is no space to explain our context" (Y-03)

This framing positioned younger workers as recipients of judgment rather than active contributors in learning exchanges.

This one-directional communication also shaped how younger workers responded during learning interactions. Several participants described holding back their perspectives despite having alternative views or explanations, such as:

"Actually, I could explain why the situation is different now, but I feel uncomfortable answering because they are my superiors" (Y-03)

"When feedback comes from seniors, we usually just listen and adjust ourselves" (Y-04)

Younger workers described adapting their communication styles to fit senior expectations rather than engaging in mutual knowledge construction. Their statements are:

"We have to carefully prepare how to speak and choose the right words so the message is accepted" (Y-02)

"The challenge is not the task, but how to communicate it properly across generations" (Y-04)

These narratives indicate that one-way communication was not only a structural feature of learning interactions but also a defining characteristic shaping how younger workers participated in intergenerational learning. The dominance of one-way communication may reflect hierarchical workplace norms in which younger employees prioritize respect and compliance over dialogue, reducing opportunities for reciprocal learning.

3.3 Innovation is Not the Priority: Limited Space for New Ideas in IGL

Learning activities tended to prioritize adherence to established procedures rather than alternative approaches, as participants explained:

“Usually, we just follow the existing system, because that’s how it has always been done,” (Y-03)

“There is little space to try new ways during training; we are expected to follow the standard format,” (Y-02)

This limited emphasis on innovation shaped how younger workers positioned themselves within intergenerational learning processes. Participants described being cautious about proposing new ideas, particularly when interacting with senior colleagues or facilitators.

“Sometimes we have ideas, but we keep them to ourselves because we’re not sure they will be accepted,” (Y-03)

“It feels safer to follow what already exists than to suggest something different,” (Y-01)

As a result, intergenerational learning was enacted through repetitive, routine practices rather than through dynamic or exploratory learning processes.

3.4 Emotions Remain Unaddressed: Limited Emotional Support in IGL

Participants mentioned that emotional aspects were not explicitly addressed, for example:

“During training, the focus is on finishing the material, not on how we feel or whether we are comfortable asking questions” (Y-02)

“There is no space to talk about difficulties or feelings; we just follow the session” (Y-03)

Participants described being cautious in expressing uncertainty, confusion, or disagreement, particularly when interacting with senior colleagues. Their statements are:

“Sometimes I don’t understand, but I prefer to stay quiet because I don’t want to be seen as incapable” (Y-02)

“It feels risky to speak up, especially when the seniors are present” (Y-03)

As a result, intergenerational learning interactions were characterized by emotional neutrality rather than relational engagement.

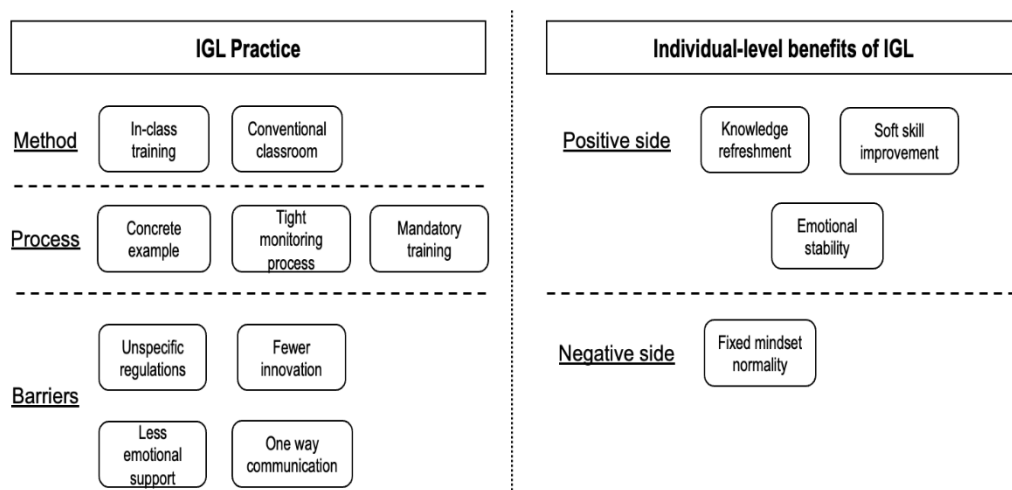


Figure 1. IGL practice and benefits for adult learners

Figure 1 illustrates the overall structure of participants’ experiences. The findings suggest that intergenerational learning operates through three interconnected dimensions: learning methods, learning processes, and learning barriers. These dimensions collectively shape how adult learners experience intergenerational learning and influence the emergence of both positive and negative individual-level outcomes. The figure, therefore, serves as a conceptual representation linking organizational learning practices to learners’ developmental experiences.

3.1.2 Benefits of IGL for Adult Learners

As shown in Figure 1, through these intergenerational interactions, adult learners reported a range of experiences that shaped their personal development in different ways. Participants described both supportive and challenging aspects of learning across generations. These experiences formed the basis for identifying both positive and negative impacts of intergenerational learning on adult learners.

Theme 1. The Areas of Development by IGL: Cognitive, Skill, and Emotion

Adult learners reported that intergenerational learning contributed positively to their personal development in several ways. Participants described how learning across generations supported the refreshment of knowledge, facilitated the development of skills, and fostered greater emotional stability during learning and work interactions. These positive experiences emerged from ongoing engagement with individuals across age groups and shaped how adult learners understood the value of intergenerational learning at the individual level.

1.1 Knowledge Improvement Through IGL

Older workers described intergenerational learning as contributing to the improvement and updating of their knowledge, particularly when interacting with younger colleagues who introduced new perspectives or practices. As two participants explained:

“Through discussions with younger colleagues, I learned new ways of doing things that I wasn’t familiar with before” (O-01)

“They bring new ideas, and from there I can see developments that didn’t exist when I started working” (O-04)

Rather than passively receiving information, participants described comparing new input from younger workers with their prior experiences to assess relevance and applicability.

“I usually compare what they explain with my own experience, then adjust my understanding” (O-03)

“It helps me see things differently and update my way of thinking” (O-01)

Intergenerational learning also enabled younger workers to contextualize knowledge acquired through education or training. Participants described comparing formal knowledge with real-world explanations provided by older colleagues to make sense of complex situations.

“What I learned in training becomes clearer after seniors explain how it applies in real situations” (Y-02)

“Sometimes the theory makes sense only after I hear how they experienced it” (Y-03)

1.2 Learning Beyond Knowledge: Soft Skill Development Among Older Workers

Interaction with younger colleagues required adjustments in how ideas were expressed, explained, and negotiated. Some participants noted:

“I have to be more careful with how I speak, because the way we communicate is different now” (O-03)

“I learned to explain things more clearly so they can understand what I mean” (O-01)

Through repeated interaction with younger colleagues, participants became more attentive to differences in thinking patterns and work approaches.

“Sometimes I realize that their way of thinking is shaped by different experiences, so I try to understand their perspective” (O-04)

“Working with younger people teaches me to be more patient and open-minded” (O-02)

1.3 Becoming More Emotionally Grounded

Younger workers described intergenerational learning as contributing to greater emotional stability when navigating learning and work interactions. Two participants explained:

“At first I felt nervous, but after interacting more with senior colleagues, I became calmer when dealing with tasks” (Y-02)

“I’m not as anxious as before when discussing work with seniors” (Y-04)

Emotional stability also emerged through increased confidence in communication and decision-making.

“When seniors explain things patiently, I feel more confident and less afraid of making mistakes” (Y-02)

“Their experience helps me feel more stable because I know what to expect” (Y-01)

Theme 2. Fixed Mindset Normality in IGL as The Challenges

Participants described a fixed mindset as a recurring challenge that constrained intergenerational learning at the individual level. The example of participants' statements is:

“Sometimes they already believe that their way is the correct one, so new ideas are not really considered” (Y-02)

“It feels like there is an assumption that what has worked before should continue to be used” (Y-03)

Participants described situations in which differing viewpoints were acknowledged but not actively explored, thereby limiting meaningful dialogue about learning. Two younger workers reflected:

“Even if we explain a different approach, it doesn’t always lead to discussion because the decision is already fixed” (Y-02)

“Suggestions are heard, but not necessarily followed, because the senior perspective is considered final” (Y-04)

3.2. Discussion

As populations age globally and societies become increasingly age-segregated, intergenerational learning has gained recognition as a mechanism to bridge generational divides (Woodward & Vongswasdi, 2017) and combat ageism (Cheung et al., 2023). Previous research has noted that adult learners experience intergenerational learning (IGL) as a bidirectional, interactive process in which individuals from different age groups jointly construct knowledge, skills, and values (Gerpott et al., 2017; Ropes, 2013). This experience typically shifts from a traditional "source-recipient" model, in which older adults are the sole teachers, to a "mutual exchange" model in which both generations serve as senders and receivers of information (Gerpott & Fasbender, 2020; Ng & Parry, 2016).

However, the experience of IGL is driven by different internal motives depending on the learner's life stage. Frequently, older learners are motivated by generativity or the desire to guide the next generation and ensure institutional memory is not lost (Gerpott & Fasbender, 2020; Ropes, 2013). People in this age group seek mental stimulation, social inclusion, and help with the transition to retirement (Gonçalves et al., 2016). In the workplace, older people tend to have more work discipline and attention than other groups (Hartono et al., 2023). Intergenerational learning also enabled older workers to refine and reorganize their existing knowledge frameworks (Fasbender & Wang, 2017). Rather than passively receiving information, they compare new input from younger workers with their prior experiences to assess relevance and applicability (Axelrad, 2022; Taylor et al., 2016).

On the other hand, younger learners are desired by development-driven efforts, focusing on achievement and career advancement (Gerpott & Fasbender, 2020). They value learning and communication skills, understanding intergenerational dynamics, and also gaining access to the older generation's professional networks (Gerpott et al., 2017; Gonçalves et al., 2016). In fact, younger workers described limited opportunities for spontaneous discussion, as communication was structured around presentations and question-and-answer segments at specific times (Ho & Yeung,

2021). Specific situations in the workplace could add more stress for younger people, that pushed them to use strategic coping in their daily life (Sudarji et al., 2022).

The distinction between these two groups creates a gap in intergenerational learning practices, especially within organizations. This gap is not merely technical in nature but is also shaped by generational perspectives on what constitutes meaningful learning in the workplace. Older workers described intergenerational learning as extending beyond the acquisition of technical knowledge to include the development of interpersonal and communication skills (Billett, 2023; Caines et al., 2020).

The compulsory nature of training programs was also found to influence patterns of intergenerational interaction significantly. Structured and mandatory learning environments may limit the spontaneity and reciprocity that typically characterize effective knowledge exchange between age groups (Bjursell, 2015). In such contexts, participation is often driven by compliance rather than intrinsic motivation, which can reduce opportunities for meaningful dialogue and mutual learning.

From the perspective of younger workers, intergenerational learning tends to be practiced in organizational settings where innovation is not positioned as a central priority, thereby shaping their perception of learning as routine and less dynamic (Kwong & Yan, 2023). Consequently, younger employees may experience intergenerational interactions as less engaging or transformative, particularly when opportunities for the integration of new ideas are limited.

This study found that participants were more familiar with in-class learning. This type of learning is characterized by structured activities conducted in classroom-like settings, where learning processes are organized according to pre-defined schedules and guided by facilitator-led instruction (Irie, 2022). The dominance of in-class training within organizational contexts consequently shapes the patterns of interaction observed during intergenerational learning. In many cases, learning sessions become predominantly facilitator-centered, with communication flowing in a largely unidirectional manner from the trainer to participants, rather than emerging through reciprocal dialogue among learners of different age groups (Ho et al., 2023). This dynamic may constrain the potential for rich intergenerational exchange, as opportunities for sharing diverse experiences and tacit knowledge are not fully optimized.

Furthermore, learning interactions were commonly framed around real cases and practical demonstrations. This activity allows participants to connect abstract concepts with concrete experiences encountered in their daily tasks (Desouza, 2007). This emphasis on contextualized and experience-based learning created a more meaningful learning environment. In this regard, older workers demonstrated a stronger engagement with learning processes when new information was presented through examples that resonated with their accumulated professional and life experiences, as such approaches align with principles of adult learning that emphasize relevance, applicability, and experiential grounding (Knowles et al., 2015).

In addition, a fixed mindset was reflected in participants' tendency to rely heavily on established ways of thinking and working. This way of thinking is often accompanied by a limited openness to alternative perspectives introduced by members of other generations (Nurani, 2022). This orientation suggests a preference for stability and familiarity over exploration, which can hinder the dynamic exchange of ideas that is essential in intergenerational learning contexts.

Consequently, learning interactions did not effectively encourage critical reflection, perspective-taking, or mutual adjustment among participants. Instead, these interactions tended to reinforce existing beliefs, routines, and established ways of working. As a result, the learning process maintained the status quo rather than fostering transformative learning or enabling adaptive change (Lau, 2023).

Some limitations were addressed for this study that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study relies on a specific organizational context, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other industries, cultural settings, or types of organizations with different learning environments. Also, the categorization of participants into generational groups (e.g., older and younger workers) may oversimplify the complexity and heterogeneity that exists within each generation. It potentially overlooks individual differences such as educational background, job roles, and prior learning experiences.

Future research is encouraged to address these limitations by expanding the scope and methodological approaches used to examine intergenerational learning. Studies involving multiple organizations across different industries and cultural contexts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how intergenerational learning manifests in diverse settings. Additionally, employing mixed-method or quantitative designs could complement qualitative insights and allow

AI Declaration

This article is the original work of the authors without using AI-tools for writing sentences and/or creating or editing figure in this manuscript.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: First Author, Second Author; **methodology:** First Author, Second Author; **investigation:** First Author, Second Author; **writing—original draft preparation:** First Author, Second Author; **writing—review and editing:** First Author, Second Author; **visualization:** First Author, Second Author. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

Authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

Data availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

for the examination of relationships between variables such as learning outcomes, engagement, and organizational performance.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that intergenerational learning within organizational settings tends to be enacted as a structured and regulated process, which influences adult learners' experiences in multifaceted ways. At the practical level, such learning is largely delivered through formal approaches and the presence of identifiable constraints, all of which shape the nature of interactions between different generational groups. At the individual level, these structured practices give rise to both beneficial and challenging experiences, including gains in knowledge, skill enhancement, and emotional stability, as well as difficulties such as the persistence of fixed mindsets.

The findings further imply that organizations need to move beyond viewing intergenerational learning solely as a formalized activity. Learning designs that overly depend on classroom-based formats and unidirectional communication may constrain the potential for meaningful knowledge exchange. Therefore, organizations are encouraged to develop learning environments that integrate both structure and flexibility, while also offering emotional support to learners of different age groups. Efforts such as clarifying learning policies, increasing opportunities for dialogic and reciprocal interaction, and valuing experiential knowledge as a shared asset can contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of intergenerational learning for both older and younger employees.

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