Research Article • DOI: 10.2478/ijhrd-2025-0003 • IJHRD • 9(1) • 2025 • 19-30

The International Journal of HRD, Practice Policy and Research

Intergenerational Mentoring and Intergenerational Learning: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Baby boomers are currently the smallest generation in the workplace, while millennials make up the largest group (36%), followed by Gen X (31%) and Gen Z (18%). The presence of four generations in the workplace suggests that each cohort possesses distinct characteristics, values, and expectations. It is essential for leaders to develop strategies that promote respect, collaboration, and coexistence, effectively bridging the generational gap. Due to limited understanding and research of the impact in this area, this scoping review will explore two strategies aimed at enhancing collaboration and coexistence: intergenerational mentoring (IM) and intergenerational learning (IL). The following three questions guided this study: What is intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning? How is intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning related and different? What should leaders do to implement intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning approaches? The findings indicate that IM is an IL strategy and is a conduit for intergenerational knowledge sharing, collaboration, and cohesion. Intergenerational mentoring involves creating environments where individuals from various generations participate in reciprocal learning, benefiting their organizations, communities, and society as a whole. Intergenerational mentoring acts as a catalyst for understanding, respect, relationships, collaboration, and cohesion across all generations.

Keywords

intergenerational mentoring • intergenerational learning • relatedness • mentoring

Introduction

For the first time in the United States, there are four generations in the workplace: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z (Campione, 2015). Baby boomers are now the smallest generation in the workplace. Millennials presently are the largest group (36%) in the workplace, followed by Gen X (31%) and Gen Z (18%) (DeMaria et al., 2024). Having four generations in the workplace indicates that each cohort has different characteristics, values, and expectations. For example, baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are considered loyal workaholics with a sense of entitlement and strong work ethics and are in leadership positions and value recognition (Gilley et al., 2015; Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024). Generation X, born from 1965 to 1979, are concerned with career options and may have multiple employers across their career path. They seek skill development and value balance between their professional and personal lives (Gilley et al., 2015; Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024). Additionally, Generation X are independent, prefer working alone, and value flexibility (Prund, 2021). Millennials born between 1980 and 1994 prefer flexible work schedules and work-life balance, constantly seeking career opportunities (Gilley et al., 2015; Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024), and value public recognition (Prund, 2021). Gen Z, born between 1995 and 2015, are dependent on technology, independent, like freedom, and are motivated by daily challenges but want frequent feedback (Prund, 2021; Webber et al., 2020). The above work characteristics highlight that each generation has its values, which may be invisible to all generations (Sruk, 2020) and subsequently result in misconceptions, inability to relate, resentment (Sanner-Steihr & Vandermause, 2017), and conflict (Sruk, 2020). Further, generational differences may also lead to miscommunication, hostility, mistrust, sabotage, and intimidation (Cox, 2001).

The generational shift implicates the overall functioning of organizations because each generation is culture (Pearce, 2024). Thus, value cognizance among the generations is significant to leverage strengths and assets (Satterly et al., 2018) which can create cohesiveness and commitment (Cox, 2001). Accordingly, it is paramount for leaders to create strategies to foster respect, collaboration,

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and co-existence (Rupčić, 2018). Two strategies towards enhancing collaboration and co-existence are intergenerational mentoring (IM) and intergenerational learning (IL). Yet, we do not know much about these strategies and their relatedness and differences. Consequently, this scoping review offers insights. The following questions guide this study:

- What are intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning?
- How are intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning related and different?
- What should leaders do to implement intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning?

Significance

The significance of this scoping literature review is threefold. First, this study will examine IM and IL to understand their relatedness and differences and how they are adopted in different contexts. Having clarity on how IM and IL align and misalign offers researchers and practitioners language to describe each strategy independently and interdependently. With clarity, leaders can better use the IM and IL to create an inclusive organizational culture and policies that support and embrace the unique characteristics of the generations. Second, in examining IM and IL practices in various contexts and the role of leaders, HRD practitioners can benchmark and adopt successful strategies. Thus, the scoping review can provide information that accelerates the usability of IM and IL. Finally, the scoping review can serve as a benchmark for researchers. Although not exclusive, researchers will have a synopsis that they can use to further investigate the application of IM and IL.

Methodology

The purpose of this scoping literature review is to gain clarity about IM and IL. A scoping review helps to examine and synthesize emerging research to provide a well-rounded overview of related topics or concepts. Additionally, a scoping review identifies the type of evidence in a field (Munn et al., 2018). To ensure rigor and transparency, we followed the PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (Munn et al., 2018) which helped our evaluation, synthesis, and reporting. PRISMA-ScR is a scoping review guide and it includes the following: title, abstract, and introduction. Next, the guide includes the method, which comprises eligibility criteria, information sources, search, and selection of evidence sources. Also, the guide references data collection and analysis, results, discussion, conclusion, implications, limitations, and funding (Tricco et al., 2018).

Eligibility Criteria

We applied the following eligibility criteria in the search process. First, we selected refereed articles that were published in English. The search timeline extended from 2000 to 2023 because in the 2000s, there was a shift from hierarchical mentoring to developmental mentoring resulting in peer-to-peer, reverse, and group mentoring (Higgins & Kram, 2001). We did not restrict the location of the refereed articles to allow a global perspective on IM and IL.

Search Strategy

To identify IM and IL refereed articles we searched the following information sources: *Advanced Search (discovery service)*, *ABNI/Inform Collection*, *Academic Search Ultimate*, *Business Source Complete*, *Medline*, *PubMed*, *Web of Science.* In addition, we reviewed journals, for example, *Human Resource Development (HRD) Quarterly, HRD International, and Advances in Developing Human Resources,* for related articles. We initially applied the terms, *intergenerational mentoring model* and *diversified mentoring*, in our search. Diversified mentoring is a mentor-mentee relationship influenced by various factors, including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and cultural background, all of which hold significance within the organization (Ragins, 2007). Diversified mentoring can promote relationship-building between minority and majority groups (Ragins, 1997) and includes mentors and mentees who vary across one or more categories connected to organizational power (Ghosh, 2018). The results produced 324 and 207 hits, respectively. Next, we searched using the term *intergenerational mentoring model* and used higher education, academia, and university as contexts. This search resulted in eight IM articles related to higher education. Interestingly, when we searched for *intergenerational mentoring model* with the contexts - corporate, business organization, and company, we only received two *corporate* related, four with *business organization*, and four connected to the term *company*. When we searched *intergenerational mentoring model and healthcare, healthcare professionals, medical, and health*, we yielded four, one, 10, and 27 hits, respectively. A second search was conducted with diversified mentoring AND university, education, and business organizations, yielding 40, 14, and nine hits. Diversified mentoring AND healthcare, medical, and health generated three, eight, and 19 hits. The most significant hits of searches were in the combined words, but using the Boolean OR/AND: intergenerational mentoring model OR diversified mentoring AND corporate; intergenerational mentoring model

OR diversified mentoring AND company; intergenerational mentoring model OR diversified mentoring AND healthcare. The total hits based on the entire search yielded 2,378 hits. We searched for IL using reference tracking. Through this search, 19 IL articles were identified.

Study Screen and Selection

After each search, the results were imported into Covidence to initiate the screening process. The Covidence tool promptly removed 460 duplicates, after which the screening began. This process was conducted over three days, with articles screened based on their titles and abstracts. Titles that did not mention mentoring were excluded, and if mentoring was mentioned in the title, the abstract was subsequently read. In the abstract, the researchers used the literature research question as a guide to categorize the article as relevant or irrelevant. The first phase of the screening yielded 1,656 articles deemed irrelevant, while 262 advanced to the second phase of screening. Of these, 249 were excluded due to inappropriate settings (n = 60), study design issues (n = 186), pediatric population focus (n = 1), and incorrect patient population (n = 1). A full-text review was performed in the second phase, assessing the articles for their purpose, methods, data analysis, data collection, results, discussions, and limitations. Thirteen articles were included in the final review, with 19 added from reference tracking, bringing the total to 32. See Figure 1 for an overview of the screening results using Covidence.

Article Management

We created an Excel spreadsheet to manage the data. The first worksheet contained eight columns, which included: (1) publication year, (2) authors, (3) abstract, (4) methodology, (5) database, (6) keywords of the articles, (7) journal, and (8) DOI link. The second worksheet represented two rounds of coding (see Figure 2), leading to the development of three overarching themes for intergenerational mentoring and two for intergenerational learning. Additionally, overarching themes were identified for leaders in intergenerational learning (IL) and intergenerational mentoring (IM), comprising

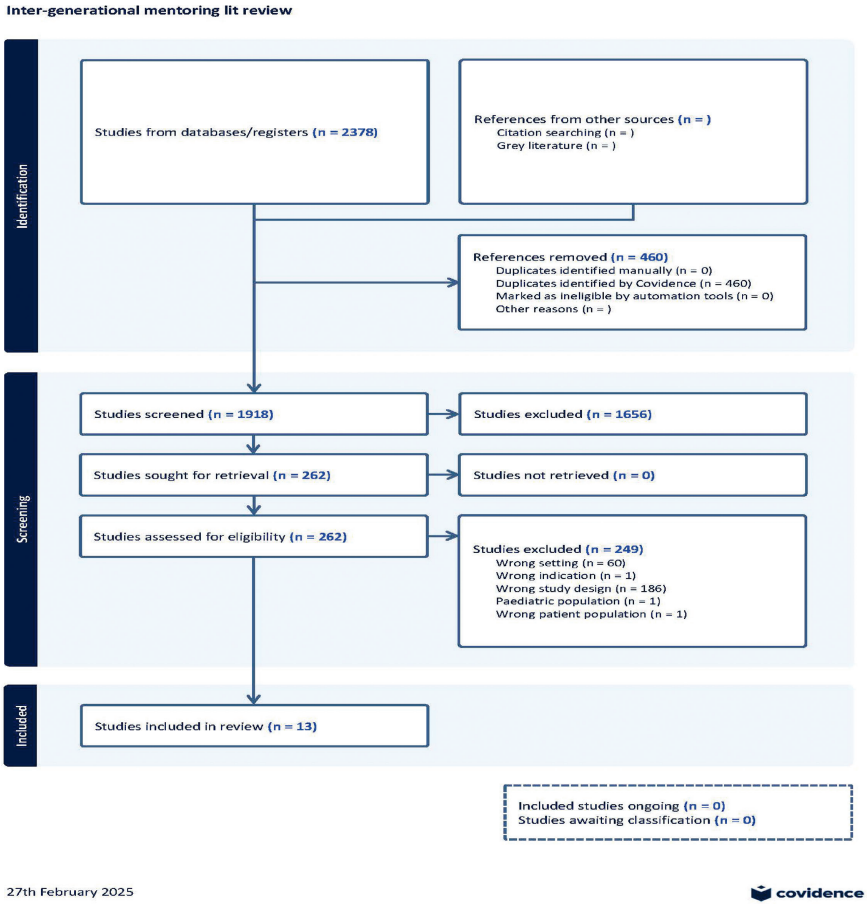
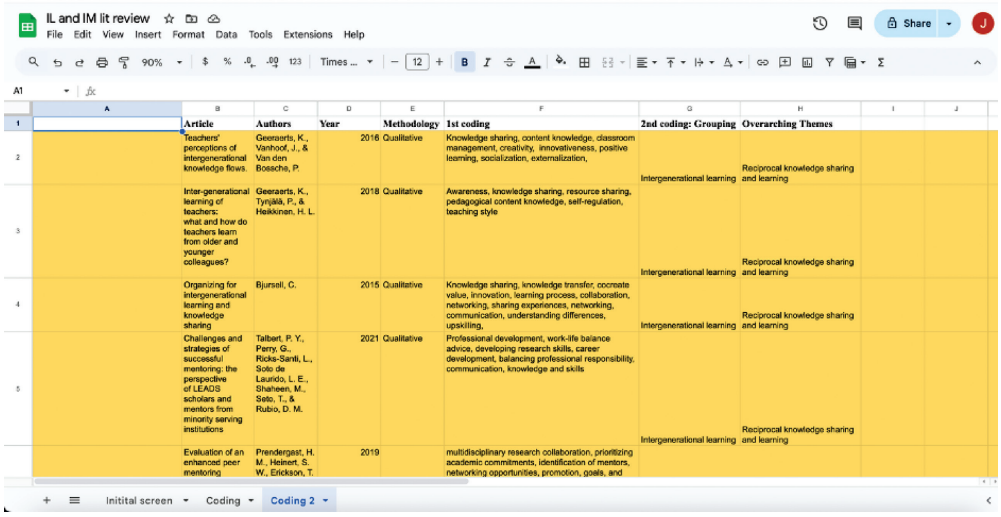


Figure 1. Covidence Results.



	Article	Authors	Year	Methodology	1st coding	2nd coding: Grouping	Overarching Themes
2	Teachers' perceptions of intergenerational knowledge flows.	Geeraerts, K., Vanhoof, J., & Van den Bossche, P.	2016	Qualitative	Knowledge sharing, content knowledge, classroom management, creativity, innovativeness, positive learning, socialization, externalization,	Intergenerational learning	Reciprocal knowledge sharing and learning
3	Inter-generational learning of teachers: what and how do teachers learn from older and younger colleagues?	Geeraerts, K., Tynjälä, P., & Heikkinen, H. L.	2018	Qualitative	Awareness, knowledge sharing, resource sharing, pedagogical content knowledge, self-regulation, teaching style	Intergenerational learning	Reciprocal knowledge sharing and learning
4	Organizing for intergenerational learning and knowledge sharing	Bjursell, C.	2015	Qualitative	Knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer, cocreate value, innovation, learning process, collaboration, networking, sharing experiences, networking, communication, understanding differences, upskilling,	Intergenerational learning	Reciprocal knowledge sharing and learning
5	Challenges and strategies of successful mentoring: the perspective of LEADS scholars and mentors from minority serving institutions	Talbert, P. Y., Perry, G., Ricks-Santi, L., Soto de Laurido, L. E., Shaheen, M., Seto, T., & Rubio, D. M.	2021	Qualitative	Professional development, work-life balance advice, developing research skills, career development, balancing professional responsibility, communication, knowledge and skills	Intergenerational learning	Reciprocal knowledge sharing and learning
	Evaluation of an enhanced peer mentoring	Prendergast, H. M., Heinert, S. W., Erickson, T.	2019		multidisciplinary research collaboration, prioritizing academic commitments, identification of mentors, networking opportunities, promotion, goals, and		

Figure 2. Coding Worksheet.

four themes for IL and three for IM. The themes are presented in the discussion section.

Data Analysis

To conduct the thematic analysis, we first read the papers for familiarization (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Next, we conducted three levels of coding. First, in alignment with the research questions, we identified initial codes and grouped the codes into themes. This step led to four themes. Next, we discussed the four themes and identified relatedness and meaning, and this refining process led to two themes. In the final step, we combined the themes and created an overall narrative per the research question. See Figure 3 for an overview of the list of articles by publication year and type.

Findings

A total of 32 articles were analyzed for intergenerational learning and intergenerational mentoring. 12 articles in IM and 11 in IL were analyzed to answer question one.

RQ 1: What are intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning?

Intergenerational Mentoring

Intergenerational mentoring is a reciprocal experience where both mentors and mentees from different generations act as learners and teachers, resulting in appreciation for each other's skills and needs in the workplace (Gerpott et al., 2017; McArthur et al., 2017; Satterly et al., 2018; Schlimbach, 2010). The most impactful criterion in IM is the effective pairing of mentor and mentee (Ellis, 2003; Mano, 2007; McArthur et al., 2017; Rogers & Taylor, 1997). The pairing is more than knowledge and skills; there must exist a core commonality between the mentor's and mentee's background. For example, Rogers and Taylor (1997) targeted mentors with the same marginal status as the mentees in their Across Ages programme. Also, McArthur et al. (2017) reported that in their IM programme, the team developed an accurate sense of the programme values and relational commonalities of the mentor and mentees, which, in this case, was an understanding of what socially disadvantaged meant. Therefore, the team understood poverty and its impact on mental health within the context of the mentor and mentee. Therefore, when the mentor and mentee recognize and clarify their relational commonalities they have meaningful gains from the knowledge, skills, experience, and wisdom each possesses. Moreover, the mentor and mentee acquire relational knowledge which helps uncover generational stereotypes (Andreoletti & Howard, 2016). Successful IM also depends on training mentors to further develop their awareness of and empathy for mentees and provide ongoing support and activities that benefit generations (Ellis, 2003; Mano, 2007; McArthur et al., 2017; Talbert et al., 2021). For example, adult mentors were positive role models, exhibited positive attitudes, and engaged well with the mentees (Ellis, 2003; Purcell, 2002; Schlimbach, 2010). In a Belgian secondary school, the mentees expressed trust in the older mentors, an experience they had not previously had (Geeraerts et al., 2016). Therefore, the IM experience led to improved mutual understanding and fostered positive progress and commitment. Subsequently, IM aids in employee development and growth (Gilley et al., 2015; Purcell, 2002),

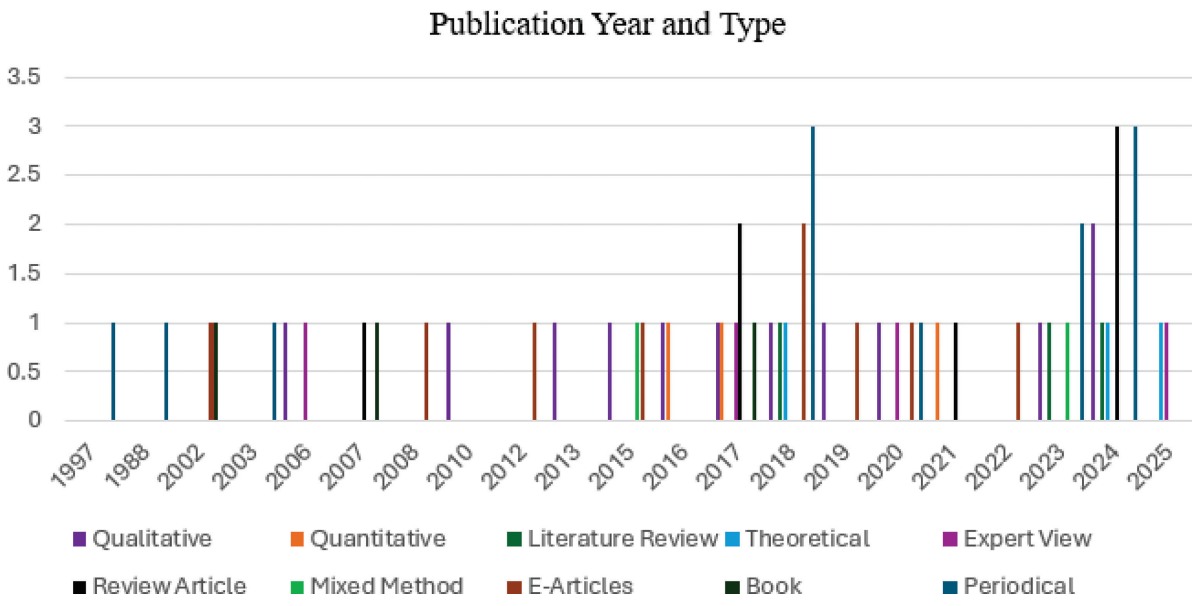


Figure 3. List of Articles by Publication Year and Type.

influencing formal and informal relationships that help create a positive work environment benefiting individuals and the organization (Satterly et al., 2018). Through IM, a social network is formed, and older mentors, through their engagement, prevent social isolation and exclusion as they interact with peers and with younger mentees (Schlimbach, 2010).

Intergenerational Learning

Intergenerational learning, while related to IM, is focused broadly on unstructured pairing and involves reciprocal knowledge sharing and learning (Geeraerts et al., 2016; Rupčić, 2018; Talbert et al., 2021). The central premise of IL is intergenerational relationships and the preservation, development, and sharing of explicit and tacit knowledge and experiences that involve two or more participants from different generations (Bjursell, 2015; Kuyken et al., 2018; Rupčić, 2018). The interaction is crucial between and within generations for effective problem-solving (Rupčić, 2018). As knowledge transfer occurs, participants recognize new ways of solving tasks and problems by looking at the experiences and strategies of other age groups (Schlimbach, 2010). For example, a senior teacher shares knowledge about the organization guidelines and classroom best practices, and a younger teacher reciprocates by sharing new ways of teaching in the classroom (Geeraerts et al., 2018). In investigating the type of knowledge exchanged among generations and how the IL process changed over time, Gerpott et al. (2017) found that the different age groups have expert, practical, social, and metacognitive knowledge. However, the participants do not share the knowledge types simultaneously. Gerpott et al. (2017) found that participants acquire expert and practical knowledge at the beginning of IL. Once participants get acquainted, they assimilate, and it is during this stage that social and metacognitive knowledge becomes more relevant, while expert knowledge is less relevant (Gerpott et al., 2017). In the last stage, detachment, the generations focus more on exchanging social knowledge (Gerpott et al., 2017).

Intergenerational learning can occur via coaching, training, workshops, mentoring, volunteering, social networks, tutoring, job shadowing, and practice communities (Batista et al., 2024; Leon, 2023; Rupčić, 2018). Of these strategies, mentoring, storytelling, workshops, and mixed-aged teams were the most relevant for IL (Leon, 2023). In conducting IL, generations leverage their strengths and decrease generational stereotypes (Andreoletti & Howard, 2016; Ihara et al., 2024) because they realize that ageing is a lifelong process in which all generations are involved (Schlimbach, 2010). Also, the mentoring experience challenged the myth that all older adults are the same (Ihara et al., 2024).

Intergenerational learning also helps to strengthen respect, relationships, and cohesion, which improves personal and professional lives (Andreoletti & Howard, 2016; Batista et al., 2024; Ihara et al., 2024; Ronzi et al., 2018; Ropes, 2013; Rupčić, 2018). Similarly, IL can assist with succession planning, upward mobility, retention, and upskilling (Rupčić, 2018). Organizations with a strong sense of community typically foster robust intergenerational relations, creating strong bonds among employees, which enables knowledge

transfer (Rupčić, 2018). In turn, knowledge transfer helps internal mobility because employees acquire knowledge and practices that give them visibility and improve their performance. Senior employees play a vital role in the internal mobility of new employees because they offer 'just in time' knowledge by answering questions as junior employees navigate the organization (Rupčić, 2018).

RQ 2: How are intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning related and different?

To answer question two, some articles were counted in question one. Therefore, only two additional articles are counted.

Relatedness

Both IM and IL involve generational representation and reciprocity in learning and focus on the development and growth of the participants. Both strategies depend on participants co-creating conversations and new realities. Hence, how leaders support the implementation of IM and IL is critical because both strategies depend on individuals working together and exchanging knowledge freely without gate keeping and preconceived notions of generational preferences (Kuyken & Costanza, 2025). Hence, IM and IL are more art than science because their occurrence is about co-creation and generativity. Subsequently, the time and resources that leaders devote to selecting, training, and supporting participants matters (McArthur et al., 2017; Rogers & Taylor, 1997). For example, in a study that combined IM and document sharing, Geeraerts et al. (2016) found that senior teachers offered junior teachers more content knowledge and classroom management skills. In contrast, the junior teachers displayed teaching creativity and innovative information and communication technology skills. Plus, the senior teachers portrayed differing behaviours, for example, easygoing, conservative, and self-confident, while the junior teachers were enthusiastic and had close relationships with students. Both groups of teachers expressed that the IL that occurred during the IM was rewarding. Similarly, Bjursell (2015), in implementing IL between students and entrepreneurs, found that the entrepreneurs shared business knowledge and broadened their perspectives, allowing for collaboration and networking between the generations. Students understood the importance of communication across generations and contributed knowledge and skills in technology. In using IL, participants accelerate their cultural and organizational knowledge about their professions as well as the nuances of their work. Thus, IL helps to create generational knowledge (Gadomska-Lila, 2020). With IM and IL, participants enter a discourse with different strengths and expertise levels; through reciprocal learning, participants develop and grow (Ihara et al., 2024).

Difference

The findings revealed that IL is a broad descriptor for learning across generations, while IM is a strategy to realize IL. Hence, IL can occur via different strategies, some unstructured, while IM is a structured relationship between a mentor and mentee whose instrumentalities matter. Unlike IL, the pairing of mentor and mentee is significant in IM. The pairing must have an established thread between the participants; for example, for Rogers and Taylor (1997) and McArthur et al. (2017) the threads were marginal status and socially disadvantaged, respectively. While participants share tacit and explicit knowledge, IL strongly focuses on going beyond the transfer of knowledge and skills to developing a relationship. Geeraerts et al. (2018) found that the interaction and relationships between the younger and older generations of teachers led to dialogue, which facilitated respect for the participants' knowledge and resources. For example, Geeraerts et al.'s (2018) perception of teachers on intergenerational learning further revealed that senior teachers were experts in content knowledge and classroom management skills, and younger teachers had more creativity, innovativeness, and tech-savvy. Based on their generational characteristics, senior teachers have a strong work ethic and are in leadership positions. The characteristics of younger generations are that they are motivated and dependent on technology, which can relate to their creativity and enthusiasm. Geeraerts et al. (2018) stated that interaction and relationships created between the younger and older generations of teachers were beneficial in creating dialogue and facilitating an equal attitude in knowledge sharing and resources between the experienced and less experienced teachers.

RQ 3: What should leaders do to implement intergenerational mentoring and intergenerational learning?

Seven articles were analyzed to answer question three.

To pinpoint what leaders should do, it is important to first address the preferred leadership style of each generation. According to Ramírez-Herrero et al. (2024), baby boomers are hard workers, loyal to employers, seek job security, are highly competitive, have a sense of entitlement, pursue career advancement, and are authoritative. Consequently, they embrace authoritative, autocratic, directive, and paternalistic leadership styles. Gen X seek personal satisfaction, job satisfaction, quality of life, job challenges, fast promotions, freedom, and flexibility. They are loyal to their abilities, like working alone and being pragmatic. Therefore, leadership styles to complement Gen X are: transactional, empowerment, transformational, ethical, democratic, and service. Millennials are about self-improvement, social status, digital with 24-hour connectivity, continuous recognition, innovation, seeking promotional and accelerated mobility. This generation seek leadership styles that are technological, relational, responsible,

Table 1. Benefits of Intergenerational Mentoring and Intergenerational Learning

Individual	Group	Organization
1. Engagement	1. Knowledge sharing	1. Supports lifelong learning culture
2. Better understanding	2. Mutual learning	2. Supports workplace civility (respect, appreciation across generations)
3. Improved communication	3. Improved collaboration	3. Employee retention
4. Positivity	4. Invites creativity and innovation	4. Inclusive culture
5. Commitment	5. Reciprocal relationship building	
6. Improved listening skills	6. Enhances team dynamics	
	7. Enhances employee adaptability	
	8. Strengthens group cohesion	
	9. Career awareness	
	10. Strengthens problem-solving	

charismatic, and authentic. Gen Z seek work-life balance, a collaborative learning environment, hybrid work, high self-esteem, a sense of respect, fast promotion, and real identity in social networks. They identify with sustainable leadership styles, e-leader, nueroleader, and happy leader. Ramírez-Herrero et al. (2024) noted that to manage such diverse groups, there is a need for a new leadership style.

Hence, to implement IM and IE, leaders may need to adopt an intergenerational leadership style (ILS) (Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024). Intergenerational leadership means fostering fairness, flexibility, creativity, and innovation while displaying transformational, participative, and servant leadership values. (Apolonio and Jubac Jr., 2025 Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024). A leader displaying an ILS empowers, is authentic, values input, and provides autonomy, which creates collaborative energy among the generations (George et al., 2024; Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024; Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017).

An intergenerational leader (ILD) is significant given the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) because knowledge and skill transfer relating to AI among generations is essential for the competitiveness of organizations (Kuyken & Schropp, 2023; Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024). Thus, with the acceleration of AI, an ILD, through the implementation of IM and IL, and as a mediator, can foster communication, listening, belonging, and respect, creating a culture of lifelong learning (Batista et al., 2024; Geeraerts et al., 2018; Ng'ang'a., 2024; Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024; Ronzi et al., 2018). Additionally, an ILD can engage in effective and open communication, exhibit genuine interest, practice patience, address challenges, stay informed about trends, and encourage common interests (George et al., 2024; Melnikova & Šakytė-Statnickė, 2024). Leaders also need to be flexible and adapt their style based on generational needs to foster inclusive work environments germane to generativity. For example, Melnikova & Šakytė-Statnickė (2024) found that school leaders observed work habits, communication, and adaptation to change as generational differences among teachers. Using the differences, leaders were able to mediate between the generations for mutual understanding and respect. An ILD may also consider creating flexible and inclusive work environments where the generations have options for remote and flexible work schedules (Agrawal et al., 2023; Kuyken & Costanza, 2025). George et al. (2024) noted that while knowledge sharing and mentoring are vital for connecting these generational groups, cultural best practices and organizational policies can enhance inclusivity. For instance, George et al. (2024) reported that their training and onboarding efforts reflected the motivation and strengths of the generations in the workplace, which resulted in 83 per cent having flexible work. Given the flexibility, Baby Boomers, Gen X parents, and millennials engaged in bridge employment, while Gen Z felt supported through customized work processes. Moreover, 94 per cent of respondents mentioned that sharing diverse experiences fostered a positive outlook of generational groups (George et al., 2024).

Hence, IM and IL depend on leaders having knowledge about the generations in their workplaces and providing the time, space, and resources (Batista et al., 2024; Geeraerts et al., 2016) for learning and generativity. Generative spaces at the individual, group, and organization levels are important because just as the generational presence in the workplace shifts, so is the nature of work and working (Kuyken & Costanza, 2025). Table 1 provides an overview of what leaders can achieve when applying IM and IL at the individual, group, and organizational levels.

Discussion

Intergenerational mentoring is considered among the most befitting interventions for intergenerational knowledge sharing (Leon, 2023). The scoping review showed that IM is

a structured intervention where mentors and mentees from different generations engage in a reciprocal experience. In implementing IM, reciprocal learning occurs among and between participants (Gerpott et al., 2017; McArthur et al., 2017; Satterly et al., 2018; Schlimbach, 2010). Participants, through their shared wisdom, experience, and expertise, upskill, reskill, or enhance perspectives that strengthen relationships and performance. For example, Geeraerts et al. (2016) shared that in their IM programme, senior teachers' knowledge focused more on pedagogy, classroom management, and student attitudes, while junior teachers shared creative and innovative teaching strategies using technology. Thus, via IM, bi-directional knowledge transfer occurs, which enables learning, strengthens problem-solving and decision-making, and accelerates growth and development (Schlimbach, 2010).

The reciprocal nature of IM also strengthens collaboration. During IM, participants, through reciprocal conversations, engage in affirmative inquiry, learning about and appreciating each person's strengths. Moreover, participants fuel generative inquiry, which results in the emergence of ideas and solutions. Kuyken and Schropp (2023) emphasized that intergenerational knowledge transmission has shifted from one-directional to co-constructive. Consequently, through conversations, participants shift beliefs and assumptions, narratives, and actions. In essence, during IM, participants interact and organize differently, thereby bolstering collaboration. Therefore, in doing IM, collaboration emerges, creating communities for action (Gilpin-Jackson, 2013).

Intergenerational mentoring triggers meaning-making, which helps to foster cohesion. Cohesion occurs because participants unveil their humanism as they engage in reciprocal learning, creating new realities (Andreoletti & Howard, 2016; Batista et al., 2024; Ihara et al., 2024; Ronzi et al., 2018; Ropes, 2013; Rupčić, 2018). For IM, for example, the mentor and mentee have common lived experiences that accelerate relational knowledge and skills. Subsequently, these common lived experiences between the mentor and mentee, for example, disadvantaged backgrounds, allow for a deeper connection because when issues of family history, religion, gender, race, or sexuality, for example, intertwine, participants develop emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual capacities (Cheung-Judge, 2001; Schlimbach, 2010). This holistic experience leads to stereotype elimination, generational inclusiveness, and general age-related friendliness and respect (George et al., 2024; King & Bryant, 2017; Schlimbach, 2010). Given that IM implicates inclusivity, cohesion, and knowledge sharing, it is in leaders' best interests to ensure the effective enactment of IM. Leaders can assess the breadth and impact of their IM initiatives. How many of their IM initiatives create spaces for intergenerational meaning-making? Moreover, leaders can determine how their leadership style supports the implementation of IM. For IM, resources are insufficient; the leader's authenticity, fairness, and inclusive mindset matter (George et al., 2024; Ramírez-Herrero et al., 2024; Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017). Additionally, leaders need to ensure intergenerational representation, voice, and engagement. Hence, leaders must rely on their reflexivity to gauge their personal generational biases and assumptions.

Lastly, this scoping review showed that IM discourse primarily exists in educational settings that focus on teacher programmes (Batista et al., 2024; Gerpott et al., 2017; Leon, 2023; McArthur et al., 2017; Rupčić, 2018; Satterly et al., 2018). In addition, the review shows that researchers have investigated IM primarily using qualitative designs. Given that in the United States, baby boomers are the smallest generation, and millennials are the largest group in the workplace (DeMaria et al., 2024), it is timely to broaden IM's research context and methodologies.

Conclusion

In summary, this scoping review showcases that intergenerational mentoring (IM) is about creating spaces where people from different generations engage in reciprocal learning for the good of their organizations, communities, and society. Intergenerational mentoring is a catalyst for stimulating understanding, respect, relationships, collaboration, and cohesion among the younger, older, and those in between. The review also shows that most of IM's research is episodic and qualitative and primarily exists within the educational context.

Implications

Implications for Research

In the articles reviewed for this study, IM is primarily rooted in educational settings, and the studies are qualitative and episodic. This review indicates a gap in understanding of IM across diverse contexts, for example, business and industry. Given that IM emphasizes the power of relationships across generations, in a longitudinal study, HRD researchers can capture the language and narrative shifts during the emergence of relationships among participants. In addition, a longitudinal study can capture how the common humanistic threads between the mentor and mentee (i.e., socially disadvantaged, poverty) align with cohesion across generations. The significance of these studies lies in capturing the most impactful in-betweens, which leaders can anticipate and access as they implement IM. Given that the in-betweens may be context-dependent, together, they can enrich relational knowledge and skills, which may bolster the success and impact of IM.

Additionally, HRD researchers can investigate the similarities and relatedness between IM and reverse mentoring. Lastly, intergenerational leadership needs operationalization because it remains primarily conceptual. Human resource development researchers can conduct mixed-method studies which can strengthen related constructs and showcase how ILD is similar to and possibly different from transformational and servant leadership.

Implications for HRD Practice

This study signifies that IM is an engagement strategy for any organization with a multigenerational workforce. Through intergenerational mentoring, employees become visible and valued while the organization yields potential for problem-solving, creativity, and innovation. Hence, HRD professionals can nurture the context where IM can thrive by including effective selection, pairing, training, and support. In addition, HRD professionals can use this study to design effective IM experiences. While mentoring is a recurrent intervention, this study offers insights to differentiate IM from other forms of mentoring. HRD professionals can also leverage this study to prepare leaders in supporting IM because all leaders belong to a generation and practicing reflexivity and clarifying generational stance and biases are essential. Finally, HRD professionals can use IM to accelerate artificial intelligence acumen across generations.

Limitations

This study is limited to specific keyword searches and databases; therefore, we may have omitted some related studies.

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