

**Older workers' perspectives on age and aging: exploring the predictors of
communication patterns and knowledge transfer**

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian population is aging, as is the Canadian workforce. Today, four generations find themselves cohabiting in the workforce together. This may have an impact on workplace collaboration and communication, as both of these processes are influenced by group perceptions. Academic research has focused upon workplace interactions mainly from a younger worker's perspective; hence, the older worker's voice has been overlooked. The objective of this study is thereby from an older worker's perspective, to understand how generations perceive each other in the workplace, and further, understand how these perceptions influence intergenerational communication and collaboration. To do so, we have relied upon Communication Accommodation Theory and Social Identity Theory, and have conducted a survey to measure the influence of ageist stereotypes on communication and its accommodation, in addition to such influences on knowledge transfer. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There is a substantial increase in the aging population in most every nation (Giles et al., 2003). Stuart-Hamilton (2011) finds that “old age is now an experience of the majority and the proportion of older adults in the population is increasing” (p. 9). This statement is particularly applicable to Canada, a country that according to McDaniel and Rozanova (2011), is increasingly aging and thus changing the demographics of the Canadian nation. According to Statistics Canada (2010), the senior population¹ in Canada continues to steadily grow, and by 2017, as a segment of the population, seniors will outnumber children. By extension, the workforce in Canada is also aging, and according to Espinoza, Rusch, and Ukleja (2010), the workforce has seen drastic organizational changes in recent years, where today, four generations find themselves working in tandem; the Builders, the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and the Millennials (De Kerpel, Dries, & Pepermans, 2008; Espinoza et al., 2010; Lester, Schultz, Standifer, & Windsor, 2012).

According to researchers (Haserot, 2001; Le Beau, 2010; Lester et al., 2012), managing the intergenerational workplace can be a challenge, as there can be gaps, otherwise known as differences, in professional workplace communication between persons of different generations, meaning that persons of divergent ages may

¹ The Canadian government and the department of Service Canada recognize the senior population as those persons aged sixty and beyond (Service Canada, 2012).

² A social group is defined as a group of individuals who view themselves as sharing a group membership, as characterized by common social identifications such as culture,

communicate in distinctive ways. Indeed, Giles and McCann (2006) find that workplace intergenerational talk is often influenced by age (among other social criteria), which itself is guided by such elements as individuals' experiences, attitudes, and priorities. Further, Haserot (2001) reasons that differences in workplace communication can be ascribed to age as generational backgrounds construct distinctive ideas of how work should be delegated and accounted for, which influences personal behavioral and communication practices. Haserot (2001) argues that "clashes of generations [within the workforce] have always been a factor, [but] some confrontations and differences in approach and thinking are generally healthy" (p. 11). Similarly, Tempest (2003) finds that a blending of knowledge between diverse actors in the workforce is a more inclusive and optimal approach to maintaining a balanced marketplace. Consequently, it is important to understand how generations co-habit with one-another within the workforce; moreover, it is essential to explore how *perceptions* and *beliefs* around age (and by extension, generational group belonging) may influence the dynamics of the intergenerational workplace. The goal, as Espinoza et al. (2010) state, is to discover how different generations work best together in order to implement these productive practices and ensure the workforce's future vitality.

In the context of this study, in order to understand how to best implement productivity in the intergenerational workplace, we need to first understand how workers view themselves and how workers simultaneously view others, as it is these views, these perceptions, that largely shape human interactions. In the workplace specifically, Buyens, De Vos, Dewilde, and Van Dijk (2009) find that employees' attitudes and perceptions need to be considered as they are of significant importance in the understanding of

workplace relationships and in the implementation of more productive and sustainable workplace practices. This is due to current research that finds gaps between perceived and actual differences amongst generations, which Lester et al. (2012) argue has been known to cause workplace conflict where “the number of perceived differences significantly exceed the number of actual differences [in the workplace amongst generations]” (p. 341).

Perceptions have the capability to influence the construction of stereotypes, which are conceptualized as comprehensive beliefs about social groups² that can be both positive and negative (Myers, 2004). It is the negative stereotypes that influence negative perceptions, and generally lead to discrimination (Myers, 2004). According to Campion and Posthuma (2009), stereotypes are rarely based in truth, as they are mainly constructed from “hearsay, preconceived ideas, or unfounded assumptions” (p. 160). As age is one of the first things a person perceives and takes into account of the other (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002), age is an identifying characteristic (Boich, Bouchard Ryan, & Hummert, 1995; Dorjee & Giles, 2004) that quite obviously drives perceptions and further, interactions. As such, in the workplace, it is not only important to understand how a worker views other workers, particularly those who are divergent in age from them, but it is also important to understand how a worker internalizes how other workers perceive them (again, particularly if the other worker in question belongs to a different age generation). Buyens et al. (2009) find this latter perception is particularly important, as they state that

² A social group is defined as a group of individuals who view themselves as sharing a group membership, as characterized by common social identifications such as culture, age and gender, which in turn, construct normative beliefs, values and behaviors (Burke & Stets, 2000).

the fear of being negatively perceived in stereotypical ways leads to a negative experience for older workers where they endure more difficulty performing to their full potential in the workplace. Lagacé, Laplante, Neveu and Tougas (2008, 2010) delve deeper into this idea, and articulate that older workers who perceive that they are the targets of ageist stereotypes face negative consequences such as psychological disengagement and lowered self-esteem.

In summary, results of previous studies clearly suggest that it is perceptions that guide human interactions (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002), and such includes interactions in the workplace. Indeed, how a worker not only perceives another worker, but also perceives the communication behaviors of that other worker may influence their workplace interactions with them. Returning to the idea of an efficient and productive workplace, it has been argued that to construct such a positive environment, knowledge transfer between and amongst colleagues is essential (Tempest, 2003). Fleig-Palmer and Schoorman (2011) explain that within the workplace, the transfer of knowledge most commonly takes place from more experienced to less experienced workers. Here, it is most common for the older worker to represent the experienced worker, and the younger worker, the less experienced worker. The transfer of knowledge in the workplace holds great value, and according to Ayyavoo, Carran, Liebowitz, Nguyn, and Simien (2007), its utilization is required for the survival and prosperity of organizations. With an increased blending of generations in the workplace where stereotypes run rampant (Campion & Posthuma, 2009), the successful practice of knowledge transfer is of increased importance. Ayyavoo et al. (2007) support this argument and find that cross-generational biases in addition to intergenerational differences influence the practice of knowledge

transfer in the workplace. This is particularly because the transfer of knowledge is first and above all a social relation based upon will (Song & Teng, 2011), where both parties must see that there is an added value to transferring and receiving knowledge to partake in its practice. Perceptions of the other thereby have the ability to influence ones' willingness to transfer knowledge to another. The concepts of perceptions and knowledge transfer are thus intricately tied.

To summarize, older employees are needed in the workforce to stabilize economic growth while younger employees are also an essential resource in the maintenance of a prosperous marketplace (Campion & Posthuma, 2009). Many factors may come into play when different generations find themselves working together and interacting. For example, how each generation perceives one another and how each defines and perceives expertise, experience, productivity, commitment, and so on may differ. How do these factors (amongst others) impact the interactions between younger workers and older workers, particularly in terms of communication? In turn, how does communication influence collaboration between older and younger workers in terms of knowledge transfer?

In the following section, we will explore concepts and theories related to workplace intergenerational communication and collaboration. Precisely, we will turn to concepts such as *ageist stereotypes* and *discrimination*, as well as Howard Giles' *Communication Accommodation Theory* and Henri Tajfel and John Turner's *Social Identity Theory*. As *intergenerational communication* is at the heart of this research, we will start by defining this concept, followed by a detailed description of the four

generations currently cohabiting with each other in the workplace, where *knowledge transfer* plays a key role in the workplace interactions amongst these generations.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Intergenerational Communication and the Workplace:

According to Hummert (2008), “the term “intergenerational communication” applies to interactions involving individuals who are from different age cohorts and age groups” (para.1). Similarly, Nussbaum and Williams (2001) describe intergenerational communication as “what happens when people of vastly different ages and with diverse life experiences meet and talk” (p. 26). On their part, Fox and Giles (1993) simply define intergenerational communication as the communication between individuals belonging to two separate generations. A *generation* is what Espinoza et al. (2010) explain can best be understood as the categorization of people according to their birth year, where people born in the same period of time and history are of similar ages and share similar values. It is these shared values that Crumpacker and Crumpacker (2007) argue construct worldviews, where it is understood that generations commonly share similar worldviews due to exposure to historical and social events occurring during parallel periods of their lives.

Intergenerational communication takes place all around us - in the home amongst family members, in the educational ward between teacher and student, in the streets between strangers, and specific to this study, in the workplace between colleagues. Intergenerational communication in the workplace is on the rise, particularly in today’s

day and age where four generations now find themselves interacting in the workplace and striving towards shared goals (Espinoza et al., 2010; Lester et al., 2012). Although precise definitions of each of the four generations in the workplace differ slightly from study to study, basic understandings of each working generation are similarly defined.

The Builders are the oldest generation in today's workforce. According to research (Espinoza et al., 2010; Lester et al., 2012), a Builder is categorized as a person born between the year 1925 all the way through to the year 1945, at the end of World War II. Espinoza et al. (2010) find that some of the work ethics and values associated with this generation include that Builders value honor, loyalty, and hard work, and are satisfied with delayed gratification.

The next generation known as Baby Boomers, are those people born between years 1946 and 1964. Much like the generation that precedes them, Baby Boomers value diligence and hard work (Espinoza et al., 2010). In fact, Crumpacker and Crumpacker (2007) articulate that Baby Boomers commonly take on the mentality of a "do-whatever-it takes" attitude towards both their personal and professional lives (p. 353).

Generation X follows, and are those individuals born between years 1964 and 1977. A strong reliance on new and upcoming technology, Lester et al. (2012) explain that opposed to face-to-face communication, workers belonging to Generation X prefer technology-based interactions. Due to high levels of competition in the workforce, it is understood that Generation X workers are often skeptical of authority, and thrive on independence (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007).

Finally, the Millennials, understood as the youngest generation employed in the workforce today, otherwise known as Generation Y, are those persons born between the

years 1978 and 1996. Millennials are extremely technologically-driven and value the ability to take on multiple tasks in the workforce at once (Lester et al., 2012). Generally fast-paced, Millennials ooze confidence and see promise in education (Espinoza et al., 2010).

The next generation, not yet adopted into the workforce, are referred to, and will in the future continue to be referred to as the O generation – born beginning in the year 1997, through to today (Espinoza et al., 2010).

From the above descriptions of each generation in the workforce today, it is plausible to believe that differences in values and life experiences of each generation may influence their workplace behaviors and opinions on such things as collaborative learning and working as a team (Mann, 2006). Twenge and Campbell (2008) find that these disparities in generations' values can additionally affect organizational dynamics within the workplace. Keeping all of this in mind, Lester et al., (2012) explain the importance of being mindful of the fact that “many perceptions and assumptions exist for each generational cohort” (p. 342). Still, it is important to consider that differences in personal behavior, including in workplace behavior, according to reputable literature, can stem from a person's age.

Curtailing from this idea, the workplace is quite obviously a very dynamic environment in which to study intergenerational communication. As Giles and McCann (2006) articulate, within the workplace, persons are increasingly aware of their age and of their organizational rank. The combination of these two factors constructs a rich environment in which to examine intergenerational communication and its dynamics in the workplace.

Thus far, Gasiorek and Giles (2011) find that research related to intergenerational communication has primarily focused on how youth interact with older persons. Zuccherro (2010) in addition to Nussbaum and Williams (2001) argue much the same, and find that intergenerational communication research has focused mainly on attitudes of younger persons about older persons. Indeed, the older voice has been excluded from a substantial amount of literature related to intergenerational communication. Some of the literature that has omitted the older voice includes, amongst others, research by Guan (2009), Dailey, Makoni and Giles (2005), Giles et al. (2003), and Choi, Giles, Hajek and Stoitsova (2010). More specifically, Barbeite, Lippstreu, Maurer, and Weiss (2008) find that research related to stereotypes in the workplace have given little or no attention to the older worker. As such, one of the major contributions of the current research is its focus on the better understanding of older workers' perspectives in daily intergenerational communication with their younger colleagues.

Giles and McCann (2006) are amongst researchers whom have actually focused on older workers. They have found that these workers are targets of discrimination specifically because of their age. While research finds that age discrimination is extremely pervasive in all aspects of society, it has been suggested that in comparison to preventative action taken against other forms of discrimination such as sexism and racism, age discrimination, particularly in the workplace, has not been nor is currently given enough focus (Campion & Posthuma, 2009). Chasteen, Kang and Remedios (2012) agree and find that unlike racism and sexism that are considered unacceptable, ageist sentiments are too often readily accepted by both young and old. Such a situation is particularly concerning taking into account, as suggested by Gasiorek and Giles (2011),

that age discrimination can be detrimental to intergenerational communication in the workplace. This being the case, it is important to understand the source of age discrimination. Here, stereotypes based on age can be explored as primary catalysts of such discrimination.

As previously argued, stereotypes can be either positive or negative (Myers, 2004). Stereotyping is the act of categorizing people into rigid clusters of prototypes that narrowly define them, their abilities, and their worth. For example, the tendency to assume that the social group of the elderly is a homogenous and needy group is common amongst younger generations (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). While this may lead to neglect of the elderly population, it also leads to sympathy and patronization, all of which are prejudicial and oppressive in nature (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). It is important, here, to note that while ageist attitudes are quite pervasive against older adults and the elderly, the old also hold stereotypical perceptions against youth (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). That being said, researchers maintain that because of society's high valuation of youth (Cuddy & Fisk, 2002; Hepworth, 2002), it is plausible to assume that there are more positive stereotypes associated with youth than with the aging population, and simultaneously, that there are more negative stereotypes associated with the aging population than with youth. This is supported by the work of Nussbaum and Williams (2001), who find that "generalized [stereotypes of] older and younger targets tend to yield more negative evaluations of older targets than younger ones" (p. 54-55). Palmore (1990) additionally strengthens this argument in his findings that the aging population is stereotypically viewed as having very little to contribute to society, unlike the younger generation whom are believed to be highly productive. Chasteen et al. (2012) also concur

that older adults are continuously negatively judged more than younger adults. As research repetitively finds that negative stereotypes towards the old and older workers are more numerous than those towards the young and younger workers, this study chose to focus on the older worker's perspective.

There are very specific stereotypes associated with both young and old, and specifically, both young and old workers. According to Nussbaum and Williams (2001), while there are some positive stereotypes associated with older adults, such as that they are a skilled and wise generation, stereotypes against the old are mainly derogatory and encompass negative attributions. In the workplace specifically, Campion and Posthuma (2009) find this to be true as they argue that "most stereotypes ascribe negative characteristics to older workers" (p. 163). Some of the common labels associated with older people include, but are not limited to, "coot, crone, geezer, hag, old buzzard, old crock, old duffer, old fogey, old maid, old fangled, old fashioned, and over the hill" (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001, p. 48). Other stereotypes discussed by Nussbaum and Williams (2001) in relation to older adults include that they are miserable and unhappy with their lives, that they have weak memories and declining cognitive skills, that they embody old-fashioned morality and skills, and that they are a needy group of individuals reliant on younger generations.

More specific to the work environment, Buyens et al. (2009) find that positively, older employees are stereotyped as reliable, experienced, and efficient. Chan, Chiu, Redman, and Snape (2001) find that in comparison to younger adults, older workers are indeed stereotyped as "more loyal, reliable, interpersonally skilled, conscientious, confident and more effective in their jobs" (p. 366). Campion and Posthuma (2009)

contribute to these positive stereotypes of the older worker and argue that they are believed to be honest, stable and committed to their jobs. Negatively, Buyens et al. (2009) find that older employees are stereotyped as inflexible, unwilling to follow any training, moody, inactive, less mentally astute as compared to younger employees, and resistant to change and education. Chan et al. (2001) find much the same, in addition to that older workers are stereotypically less adaptable to technology than younger workers and less able to learn and grasp new ideas in the workplace as compared to younger workers. Sargeant (2010) adds to this negative list of stereotypes and finds that it is a belief that older workers are resentful of younger workers' abilities with new technology. Additionally, Campion and Posthuma (2009) find that older workers are believed to be less motivated and productive than younger workers. In much the same way, Barbeite et al. (2008) find that a pervasive stereotype associated with older workers is that not only are they uninterested in learning and development in the workplace, but they are also unable to learn and develop new ideas in the workplace.

Moving along to the stereotypes of younger workers in the literature, Nussbaum and Williams (2001) find that younger adults are also stereotyped in society, including in the workplace. As with the old, the majority of stereotypes linked to younger adults are derogatory, even if less pervasive than those that relate to older adults. These stereotypes commonly refer to younger adults as immature and naive, and some of the stereotypical terms associated with younger adults include, but are not limited to, "whippersnapper, babe-in-arms, babysnatching, young rake, and, ... child[ish]" (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001, p. 59). Stereotypes associated with younger workers are often made in reference to their inexperience, and other labels associated with younger adults as discussed by

Nussbaum and Williams (2001) include that they are eager to impress in addition to that they are “unworldly, irresponsible, lazy, self-centered, noisy, disruptive, and delinquent” (p. 60).

These stereotypes thrive in the workplace, in addition to some others. Sargeant (2010) finds that positively, younger workers are stereotyped as having high computer experience and enthusiasm, and Giles and McCann (2006) finds that younger workers are believed to be more physically and mentally prepared for the demands of the workforce than are older workers. On the other hand, Sargeant (2010) finds that younger workers are stigmatized as lacking commitment and responsibility on the job, and being more involved in their social lives than in their work. Arnett (2007) adds to this stigmatic list of younger workers’ attributes and finds that it is believed that this social group tends to slack off in the workplace as they are resistant to adult responsibilities. To remind you, while stereotypes exist in relation to both young and old, due to society’s valuation of youth (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002), more positive stereotypes are associated with the young than with the old, and thus it is plausible that the old are the primary targets of ageism.

It is the internalization of stereotypes such as those listed above that leads to discrimination within intergenerational communication (Myers, 2004). This is largely due to the inherent influence that stereotypes have on human behavior, as Gasiorek and Giles (2011) specifically argue in their delineation that “age stereotypes and both parties’ beliefs and attitudes about the others’ communicative styles, play significant roles in mediating [the] process [of intergenerational communication]” (231). Together, stereotypes and discrimination form the basis of ageism, which Nussbaum and Williams (2001) define as “negative attitudes toward, and prejudice against, those who are old” (p.

55). Greenberg, Martens, and Schimel (2002) similarly define ageism as “negative attitudes or behaviors toward an individual solely based on that person’s age” (p. 27).

Unlike other forms of discrimination such as sexism and racism that specifically prejudice against a particular demographic of people such as women or ethnic minorities, Gasioerek and Giles (2011) remark that ageism is a form of discrimination that nearly everyone experiences, eventually much in the same way. Nelson’s (2011) most current research titled ‘Ageism: The Strange Case of Prejudice Towards the Older You’ specifically explores the counterproductive nature of ageism, and works to understand the dynamics of the *prejudice* turning into the *prejudiced*. With this idea kept in mind, it can be understood that while ageism can and does target both young and old (Lester, et al., 2012), it can be contended that as people age, they increasingly struggle against ageist attitudes that work to discriminate against them (Gasioerek & Giles, 2011). As Cuddy and Fiske (2002) articulate, old age is generally approached with dread, and it is this negative stigma that is at the root of ageism and its discriminatory nature.

Research finds that the discriminatory consequences catalyzed by stereotypes in the workplace can act as mediators in behavior, which affects workers personally and organizations professionally (Campion & Posthuma, 2009). This project asks if personally, these stereotypes influence communication behavior, precisely intergenerational communication in the workplace, and how. It also asks if professionally, these stereotypes influence work collaboration, and how. Work collaboration is intricately linked to the concept of knowledge transfer, a key variable in this project and a practice arguably influenced by the dual consequences of stereotypes and discrimination.

Knowledge Transfer and the Workplace

Before defining knowledge transfer as a key concept to this study, it is important to first define the concept of knowledge itself. Davenport and Prusak (1998) have studied the concept of knowledge in great depth, and describe it as the following:

“Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms”
(Davenport & Prusak, 1998, p. 5).

Important to note, here, is that knowledge can be understood as a process or practice - specifically one that takes place in an organizational or workplace setting. By accepting knowledge as a practice, knowledge can be understood as something that is transferable – hence, the concept of knowledge transfer is introduced.

The idea of the transfer of knowledge is derived from the field of Knowledge Management, a field of study that Baskerville & Dulipovici (2006) argue emerged from the amalgamation of prior fields of study such as organizational behavior, organizational performance management, and organizational culture. The common thread to note, here, is that knowledge and its transfer are most commonly associated with the study of organizations, or to use another term more relevant in this context, to the study of the workplace. It is at this point that the connection between knowledge and organizations brings us to a delineation of the term knowledge transfer itself.

Knowledge transfer in the workplace is defined by Fleig-Palmer and Schoorman (2011) as “an exchange of organizational knowledge between a source and a recipient in which the exchange consists of information and advice about resources and relationships” (p. 335). Davenport and Prusak (1998) stress the vitality of knowledge transfer in the workplace. Tempest (2003) similarly asserts that it is important to blend and share knowledge in the workplace between all working individuals. Thus, knowledge transfer, also known as knowledge sharing, is a key component in developing a productive workplace. As argued by Khalil and Seleim (2010), in order for a society to achieve sustainable growth, it must constantly create and transfer knowledge. According to Pinazo-Hernandis (2011), in addition to Tempest (2003), knowledge transfer is often a process that occurs from older, more experienced workers to younger, less experienced workers, and is a means of learning and sharing information through thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In other words, knowledge transfer builds, first and most of all, on a social bond. The question is, whether or not older workers, who presently remain the largest segment of the workforce (Espinoza, et al., 2010), are willing to transfer their knowledge to younger workers, or not.

As argued by Song and Teng (2011), an individual’s willing participation in sharing knowledge with another person is a basic component to successful knowledge transfer. Balasubramanian, Roth, and Siemens (2008) articulate that to be willing to transfer knowledge is to be motivated to transfer knowledge, and the researchers stress that motivation to transfer knowledge is a determining factor in its success. Trust levels between sender and receiver are also important (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Fleig-Palmer & Schoorman, 2011). Allee (2003) agrees and states that, “if people do not trust each

other, they do not exchange knowledge and ideas” (Allee, 2003, p. 619). Amidon and Macnamara (2003) go further and claim that lack of trust erodes the transfer of knowledge. It is at this point and with the influence of this discussion that not only is the extent of older workers’ willingness to transfer knowledge in the workplace to their younger colleagues questioned, but also what factors within the workplace, such as perceptions of the social other, which may lead to stereotypes based on age – influence their modes of communication, and in turn, their willingness to transfer knowledge. These are fair questions, particularly as Matzler and Mueller (2011) find that older workers’ willingness to transfer knowledge to younger workers is undoubtedly influenced by a variety of variables; variables which this study aims to examine.

As previously articulated, ageist stereotypes, as a variable of exploration, can indeed act as major barriers to productive communication in the workplace. The internalization of perceived ageist stereotypes construct ageist sentiments which can decrease trust levels between sender and receiver and as such, threaten the process of knowledge transfer (Song & Teng, 2011). As Lagacé et al. (2010) find, ageist communication in the workplace affects older workers’ productivity in the workplace, through disengagement and lowered self esteem. Barbeite et al.’s (2008) work extends upon this idea, and indirectly makes a connection between the influence of perceptions and its link to ageist stereotypes, communication, and finally, older workers’ willingness to transfer knowledge, particularly intergenerationally. As example, the authors use the illustration of working productively in the workplace in terms of learning and development within the working environment:

Stereotypical beliefs that older workers typically cannot develop and do not want to develop may lower perceptions by older workers that engaging in learning and development [such as through the practice of knowledge transfer] will be intrinsically rewarding or that financial and tangible rewards are linked to that activity. This should impact older workers' perceptions of the value of development behavior [again, such as the behavior of transferring knowledge] to achieving motivationally-important outcomes. Further, to the extent that older workers hold the belief that older employees are generally unable to learn and develop, this should significantly hamper their motivation and interest to engage in that behavior (Barbeite et al., 2008, p. 399).

This excerpt acts as a critical illustration to the possible relationship between ageism, knowledge transfer and intergenerational communication. Knowledge transfer, as a form of communication, is most importantly built on a social bond, and trust between individuals participating in the practice of knowledge transfer is according to researchers (Song & Teng, 2011; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Fleig-Palmer & Schoorman, 2011), essential. To further explore how intergenerational communication and knowledge transfer may be influenced by ageist stereotypes, we will now turn to Communication Accommodation Theory and Social Identity Theory.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) was built upon the postulates of Social Identity Theory (SIT), a theory developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

SIT underlies that individuals are reflexive and organize the world into categories and put people into these categories, also known as social groups (Burke & Stets 2000). Tajfel and Turner (1986), the founding theorists of SIT, argue that people build their social identities around the features of their own social group membership; furthermore, Harwood and Williams (2004) state that individuals develop their identities based on both personal and social identity characteristics which they contrast with those of other social groups. Personal identity characteristics comprise of a person's likes, dislikes, and behaviors, whereas social identity characteristics comprise of the identity one forms out of their belonging to a specific social group. Self-categorization and self-comparison are two important processes within SIT, and these processes lead one to identify with a particular social group, or in-group, where other persons who diverge from that in-group are considered outside of that group, or part of an out-group (Burke & Stets, 2000). Moreover, one of the important postulates of SIT is that generally, people tend to favor their own group more than the groups of others (Burke & Stets, 2000; Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). This favoring of one's own group is a type of defense mechanism that Tajfel and Turner (1986) find enables in-group members to establish and maintain a positive self-concept, or esteem, which is a universal human need. Isobe, Nakashima and Ura (2012) further this point in recent research, and find that individuals work to boost their self-esteem by buffering threats against their identification as an individual and as a collective social group. They do this by esteeming higher value upon the specific factors that they consider formulates their identity and the identity of their collectives within their in-group, and by simultaneously devaluating the identification factors that they

perceive differ from those that construct their social identity and social group identity (Isobe et al., 2012).

In turn, one of the main postulates of CAT, which was developed by Howard Giles and associated in the 1970s, is that such preference for one's in-group leads to modifications in communication patterns (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). Precisely, CAT suggests that human communicative behaviors shift and are accommodated based upon how individuals perceive themselves as well as how they perceive the other's social identity, encompassing factors such as age, culture, and gender (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). According to studies relying on CAT's postulates, *the other* is perceived as an out-group member and the self as an in-group member (Burke & Stets, 2000; Gallois, Giles, & Ogay, 2005; Giles, 2008; Giles & Ogay, 2007; Harwood & Williams, 2004; Nussbaum & Williams, 2001; Tajfel, 1974). Moreover, the sense of belonging to an *in-group* or *out-group* heavily shapes a person's social identity.

As previously outlined, age is a factor that shapes a person's social identity (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). By extension, and building upon the postulates of SIT and CAT, research finds that not only is age central to human identity, but age is also a social marker that influences patterns of communication (Dorjee & Giles, 2004; Harwood & Williams, 2004; Kite & Smith Wagner, 2002), particularly as age is amongst one of the first characteristics that one takes into account about the other (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002). Once more, we are led from this statement, back to the concept of perception. If we are to accept Nelson's (2011) argument that ageist attitudes are activated by stereotypical social perceptions, then we can hypothesize that the internalization of stereotypes, specifically

those related to age, have the capability to influence human communication and its possible forms of accommodation, which we now turn to.

According to Giles (2008), the various forms of accommodation, otherwise known as mechanics of accommodation, are “concerned with how we can reduce and magnify communicative differences between people in interaction” (p. 162-163). Each of the various mechanics of CAT have profoundly different effects on communication - particularly intergenerational communication, as this form of communication sees the interaction of persons who belong to different social age groups. As it has already been articulated, ageist stereotypes are constructed based upon a person’s perceived age. Stereotypes, thus, influentially find means to determine patterns of communication.

The reduction or magnification of social differences and communicative differences between persons, as discussed by Giles (2008), is accomplished by either *converging* or *diverging* one’s communicative style towards or away from the other’s communicative style. Convergence and divergence are two mechanics of CAT. As discussed by Nussbaum and Williams (2001):

Convergence occurs when we make our speech and communication patterns more like that of our partners, and it is typical of many cooperative interpersonal encounters. In general terms, convergence is responded to favorably. Divergence occurs when people communicatively emphasize the difference between themselves and their partners; it is characteristic of many intergroup encounters in which identity is salient and is often negatively attributed and evaluated by recipients (p. 12).

CAT maintains that people converge their communication behaviors when they wish to solidify in-group belonging, much in the same way that people diverge their communicative behaviors when they wish to solidify out-group belonging (Harwood &

Williams, 2004, p. 120). Here, the influential nature of SIT on CAT is apparent.

According to Chartrand, Dijkmans, Horgan, and van Baaren (2004), “when people interact with each other, there is a nonconscious tendency to match each other’s behavior” (p. 453). It should be noted however, that “convergence is not positively evaluated in all situations, and that divergence is not always negatively evaluated” (Gallois et al., 2005, p. 128). Context and motivation are important factors to consider.

Relevant to this project, when an older worker encounters a younger worker in the workplace, the older worker may either converge their communicative behavior to better identify with this younger worker, or to illustrate their willingness to relate to this younger worker, or they may instead choose to oppositely diverge their communicative behavior from this younger worker to demonstrate the differences between them. As example provided by Giles (2008), older workers may diverge their communication style away from younger workers if they feel as though their identity is threatened. In encountering the older worker, the younger worker will also commonly either diverge or converge their communication style and behavior. Whether a person converges or diverges their communicative style in the interaction with another person depends on negative or positive characteristics attributed to that person (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). If negative characteristics are attributed to the other, an individual will generally choose to diverge their communication away from that person, whereas if positive characteristics are attributed to the other, an individual will generally chose to converge their communication towards that person. The perception of these characteristics are often stereotypically driven, as perceptions are themselves simply assumptions (Lester et al., 2012), which are stereotypical. Foreseen consequences and benefits associated with

converging or diverging one's communicative styles are also taken into account by the individual accommodating their communication in the interaction with the other.

Over-accommodation and under-accommodation are additional mechanics associated with CAT that must be addressed. Both are mechanics of accommodation made specifically in response to perceptions of others (Gasiorek & Giles, 2011). Most appropriate to this study, there has been significant research that studies both over-accommodation and under-accommodation in response to a person's age. This is because over-accommodation and under-accommodation are common mechanics of accommodation that take place within intergenerational interactions. Here, research finds that age acts as a primary factor in determining the communication between two persons of contrasting chronological ages (Giles et al., 2003).

To over-accommodate is for a speaker to perceive the need "to exceed or overshoot the level of implementation of communicative behaviors necessary for a smooth and successful interaction" (Gasiorek & Giles, 2011, p. 3). Specific to intergenerational communication, a form of over-accommodation used by younger adults in their communication with older adults or elders is the use of patronizing speech, also known as elderspeak or infantilizing talk (Gasiorek & Giles, 2011, p. 3). Gasiorek and Giles (2011) provide some very current examples of some more common youth to elderly over-accommodation that takes place in communication, which includes "simplified vocabulary and syntax; limited topic-selection; and exaggerated intonation, pitch, and volume" (p. 3). While it may be perceived that over-accommodation socially degrades older adults, Gasiorek and Giles (2011) find debate in literature on whether or not, and how over-accommodation is negatively or positively received by older adults and elders,

and thereby this gap in the literature is worthy of examination. Further, Gasiorek and Giles (2011) articulate a cultural influence of this feature, and argue that what is considered over-accommodation in one culture may not be considered over-accommodation in another. The contours and definitions of various forms of accommodation of communication thereby may alter from culture to culture, or more broadly, from person to person.

Also worth examining is under-accommodation, which according to Barker, Giles, and Harwood (2004) is defined as “failing to be sensitive to the conversational needs of others” (p. 143). Under-accommodation is practiced by young and old adults in different ways, and is a means of using communication, or not, to ignore, neglect and strategize to remove oneself from proximity to the other. An example of how under-accommodation is used in intergenerational communication is provided by Barker et al. (2004). The researchers reference literature that finds that elderly persons have a tendency to divulge personally painful information to younger adults, who may not be comfortable hearing this information and find the divulgence of this information inappropriate. In this example, the older adult is being under-accommodative in their communication with the young adult by failing to understand the communicative needs of the young adult. As Barker et al. (2004) explain, this may lead to reciprocated under-accommodation by the younger adult in their communication with the older adult, who may desire feedback and instead be ignored by the younger adult, who may chose to respond in curt and short phrases. Indeed, Giles et al., (2003) find that younger adults often perceive older adults to be under-accommodating. This, amongst other forms of communication accommodation taking place in the intergenerational workplace in

response to such considerations as perceptions, beliefs, and stereotypes, may lead to difficulties in workplace intergenerational communication (Giles et al., 2003).

Already, it has been argued that intergenerational interactions are increasingly found in the workforce. It is plausible to think that modifications in the communication styles of individuals in the workplace, including convergence, divergence, over-accommodation, and under-accommodation, will influence the process of knowledge transfer between young and old workers.

Previous research (Anas, Bouchard Ryan, & Giles, 2008) has suggested a link between perceptions and stereotypes and their inherent influence on communication and its accommodation between age generations. Some of the limitations of this past study, including that the researchers did not take into consideration social characteristics of their participants including participant gender and ethnic origin, in addition to the limitation of low reliability of examined age stereotypes, initiates a path for this study. Not only does the current study aim to examine the relationship between perceptions, stereotypes and communication, but it aims to go further and explore the link between these factors and knowledge transfer in the workplace, from an older worker's perspective, and while keeping in mind social influences.

To summarize the literature thus far, a hypothetical example is appropriate in order to connect the concepts discussed. It is plausible that when an older worker negatively perceives younger workers to be lazy and disengaged in the workplace, they may modify their communication and be unaccommodating and diverge their communication away from younger workers, which may hypothetically lead to their lack of motivation to transfer knowledge to these younger workers. On the other hand, when

an older worker positively perceives younger workers to be intelligent and competent in the workplace, they may accommodate their communication by converging their communicative behavior towards these younger workers, and hypothetically feel more willing to transfer knowledge to these younger workers within the workplace. Similarly, if older workers feel as though younger workers *perceive them* in positive light, they may be more accommodating and willing to transfer knowledge to them, rather than if they felt as though younger workers perceived them negatively, which could hypothetically lead to their disinterest in transferring knowledge to these younger workers. This discussion, in addition to the literature grounding this study, leads us to the following research questions:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the perspective of older workers:

- a) How do ageist stereotypes influence patterns of intergenerational communication in the workplace?**
- b) How do such patterns impact, in turn, the process of knowledge transfer?**

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Survey research, taking place in the form of a questionnaire, is according to Alreck and Settle (2004) an ideal means of data collection when the purpose of a project is to acquire knowledge based on individuals' perceptions, attitudes and opinions. Moreover, Babbie (1990) finds that survey research is an excellent method to draw conclusions based upon a specific population's behavior. As this project aimed to better understand older workers' beliefs and perceptions about age and aging in the workplace, the formulation and distribution of a questionnaire was a relevant and reliable method of data collection.

Workers aged fifty years old and beyond were recruited to participate in this study. The conceptualization of what constitutes an older worker is not easy, and such a definition is one that differs between researchers. In their studies of older workers in the workplace, Barbeite et al. (2007) in addition to Buyens et al. (2008) define older workers as those aged forty and beyond. In her study however, Fenwick (2012) defines older workers as those aged fifty and beyond, and in his work, Midtsundstad (2011) defines older workers as those aged above sixty-one years. While debate continuously circulates around the definition of older workers, this study was required to select an age cut-off point for participants in order to ensure validity and consistency in results. According to Buyens et al. (2008), the age of fifty comprises the generation of Baby Boomers, of whom represents over half of the population in the workplace today. This study wanted to ensure it reached the largest population of possible participants as possible, and the age of

fifty was thus an appropriate cut-off age for participants. Studies reveal that it is around this age that older workers begin to be perceived as old and by extension, begin to be associated with the stereotypes surrounding old age. With this reasoning in mind, six organizations were approached to participate in this study and garner participants from their list of employees over the age of fifty years. One organization comprised of consultants doing work for the Federal government, while two contributed to work for the Provincial government, and one self-governed as a Municipal office. The final two organizations were privately owned and operated. Once approval was granted by each organization's Human Resources department, older workers were sent an invitation e-mail (see Appendix 1) by Human Resource managers with the intention of recruitment that explained the study in detail and asked for their participation. The invitation included an online link via www.fluidsurveys.com, which led to a consent form (see Appendix 2) and a questionnaire (see Appendix 3), available in both English and in French.

Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants, as outlined in the distributed invitation e-mail and consent form. All data was collected between the months of October 2012 to January 2013. Approximately 300 participants were invited to take part in the study; a total of 167 responses were collected; however, 29 were discarded due to missing data (more than 5%); 138 participants thus represent this study's sample.

Socio-demographic statistics were collected to delineate participants' gender, chronological age, and cultural identification. These statistics are shown in Figure 1.

Of the 138 older workers included in the sample, only one participant did not provide information about gender, nor age. The sample consisted of a slight majority of

men, representing 63.5% of the sample (87 participants). The outstanding 36.5% of respondents were women (50 participants).

Figure 1: Socio-Demographic Statistics			
	Percent (%)	Frequency (# of participants)	Missing data (frequency)
Gender: Male	63.5%	87	1
Gender: Female	36.5%	50	
Age: 50 - 60 years	89.8%	123	1
Age: 61 + years	10.2%	14	
Culture: North American	80.5%	99	15
Culture: Other	19.5%	24	

Examining the chronological ages of participants, 89.8% of workers identified with the age category of 50-60 years (123 participants), and the remaining 10.2 % of workers identified with the age category of 61 years and beyond (14 participants). Originally, results found more detailed findings where 9.5% of workers identified with the age category of 61-70 years (13 participants), and .07% of workers identified with the age category of 71-80 years (1 participant). Due to such minimal percentiles of participants in the upper age categories however, the age categories of the sample were regrouped into two categories, those being 50-60 years, and 61 years and beyond.

A statistical breakdown of the culture with which participants identify reveals that 80.5% of participants identified with North American culture (99 participants) and 19.5% of participants identified with cultures other than North American (24 participants). A total of 15 participants included in the sample did not identify the culture with which they

associate. Originally, results found more detailed findings where 4.9% of participants identified with Aboriginal culture (6 participants), 9.8% of participants identified with European culture (12 participants), 1.6% of participants identified with Asian culture (2 participants), 2.4% of participants identified with African culture (3 participants), and .08% of participants identified with South American culture (1 participant). Due to such minimal percentiles of participants who identified with cultures other than North American however, the culture categories of the sample were regrouped into the two categories, those being participants who identified with North American culture and participants who identified with cultures other than North American.

Participants were invited to fill out a questionnaire, which consisted of 6 sections (in addition to the first section on socio-demographics). Each of these sections is outlined below:

Section 2: Older workers' perception of younger workers (variable: "*Think about young*")

A total of 18 statements were formulated from the direct reference to ageist stereotypes in respect to younger workers, as found in literature by Nussbaum and Williams (2001), Sargeant (2010), Giles and McCann (2006), Arnett (2007), and Campion and Posthuma (2009). The scale was comprised of 8 positive stereotypes and 10 negative stereotypes. Using a Likert-type scale with seven points where 1 signified 'completely agree' and 7 signified 'completely disagree', participants indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to statements starting with the following: "Younger

adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years are: immature, enthusiastic, lazy, etc.” (All statements can be found in Appendix 3).

A computed score was created through the summation of scores for each statement in this section. A high score indicated older workers’ positive perception of younger workers, and a low score indicated older workers’ negative perception of younger workers. Internal reliability of scale was acceptable (Cronbach’s Alpha at .79).

Section 3: How older workers perceive that younger workers view them

(variable: “*Think about you*”)

A total of 22 statements were formulated from the direct reference to ageist stereotypes targeting older workers, as found in literature by Campion and Posthuma (2009), Nussbaum and Williams (2001), Buyens et al. (2009), Chan et al. (2001), and Sargeant (2010). The scale was comprised of 10 positive stereotypes and 2 negative stereotypes. Using the Likert-scale described above, participants indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to statements starting with the following: “I think younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years think that as a worker, I am: skilled, miserable, old-fashioned, etc.” (All statements can be found in Appendix 3).

A computed score was created through the summation of scores for each statement. A high score indicated older workers’ perception that younger workers positively viewed them, and a low score indicated older workers’ perception that younger workers negatively viewed them. Internal reliability of scale was acceptable (Cronbach’s Alpha at .88).

Section 4: Older Workers' levels of accommodation in their communication with younger workers (variables: "Accommodation", "Non-accommodation", "Respectfully avoidant communication", "Converge/Diverge")

This section comprised of 21 statements, 9 of which were positive and the remaining 12, negative. Using the Likert scale, participants indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to statements starting with the following: "When communicating with younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years: I am supportive, I am helpful, I provide useful advice, etc." (All statements can be found in Appendix 3).

The first 18 of the 21 statements in this section were based upon a scale provided by Giles and McCann (2006). The initial 6 statements measured the levels of accommodation of older workers in their communication with younger workers. A computed score was created through the summation of scores for each statement. A high score indicated older workers' tendency to be accommodative in their communication with younger workers. A low score indicated their tendency to be non-accommodative in their communication with younger workers. Internal reliability of scale was acceptable (Cronbach's Alpha at .873).

Statements 7-10 of this section measured older workers' levels of non-accommodation in their communication with younger workers. A computed score was created through the summation of scores for each statement. A high score indicated older workers' tendency to be non-accommodative in their communication with younger workers. A low score indicated older workers' tendency to not use non-accommodative behavior in their communication with younger workers, and thus be more accommodative. Internal reliability of scale was acceptable (Cronbach's Alpha at .759).

Statements 11-18 of this section measured older workers' levels of using respectfully avoidant communication with younger workers. A computed score was created through the summation of scores for each statement. A high score indicated older workers' high tendency to use respectfully avoidant communication in their communication with younger workers, and a low score indicated older workers' disinterest in using respectfully avoidant communication in their communication with younger workers. Internal reliability of scale was acceptable (Cronbach's Alpha at .711).

The final 3 statements (19-21) in this section were constructed to ask older workers their perceived need to either converge or diverge their communication behavior towards or away from younger workers, which Giles (2008) argues are major processes linked to a better understanding of communication and its accommodation. The scale was comprised of 10 positive stereotypes and 2 negative stereotypes. A computed score was created through the summation of scores for each statement. A high score indicated older workers' tendency to be divergent in their communication with younger workers, and a low score indicated older workers' tendency to be more convergent in their communication with younger workers. Internal reliability of scale was acceptable (Cronbach's Alpha at .734).

Section 5: Older Workers' Willingness and Use of Knowledge Transfer

(variable: "*Knowledge Transfer*")

This section comprised of 8 statements, stimulated from work by Song and Teng (2011) and unpublished work by researchers Ann Beaton, Natalie Rinfret and Francine Tougas (2011). The scale was comprised of 6 positive stereotypes and 2 negative

stereotypes. Using the Likert scale, participants indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to statements starting with the following: “In respect to younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years: I voluntarily transfer knowledge without being asked, I transfer knowledge only when asked, I transfer knowledge because I have to (it is my job), etc.” (All statements can be found in Appendix 3).

A computed score was created through the summation of scores for each statement in this section. A high score indicated older workers’ positive willingness to transfer knowledge to younger workers. A low score indicated older workers’ resilience to transfer knowledge to younger workers. Internal reliability of scale was acceptable (Cronbach’s Alpha at .710).

Section 6: Subjective Age (variable: “*Age Subjective*”)

Finally, Section 6 was comprised of one closing statement derived from work by, Courtney, Eibach, and Mock (2010). After stating that sometimes, people *feel* older or younger than they actually *are*, older workers were asked not what age they were chronologically, but instead, what age they *felt* that they were, which may impact results. According to Keyes and Westerhof (2012), as adults age, it is common for them to tend to feel younger than they actually are chronologically. Moreover, an adult could also feel older than they actually are chronologically. It is this possible gap between subjective and chronological age that could impact individuals’ interactions with other age groups. For this reason, this final statement was included in the questionnaire, to be answered numerically by participants. Later analysis of this statement found that 30% of participants (36 participants) articulated that they felt their age or older, and 70% of

participants (84 participants) articulated that they felt younger than they actually are. Of the sample, 18 participants did not identify the age that they felt subjectively.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed following a four step process: 1) The data was cleaned; 2) descriptive statistics were run, in order to determine central as well as dispersion values for each distribution of variable under study; 3) t-tests were run to determine if significant differences existed between groups (gender, further breakdown of age, culture, and age subjectivity), in respect to each variable; 4) finally, variables were crossed to determine if they were significantly correlated with one another.

The first step of data cleaning included the deletion of 29 of the original sample of 167 returned questionnaires, due to missing data (more than 5%); recoding items was also performed to allow for the creation of computed variables³. In the second step, descriptive statistics were generated: frequencies and measures of central as well as dispersion tendencies.

Descriptive Statistics

Let us remind that the variables under study are the following: 1) *think about you*: how older workers perceive younger workers in terms of workplace stereotypes - both positive and negative; 2) *think about young*: how older workers perceive that younger

³ The questionnaire can be found in full in Appendix 3. Note that all variables that were recoded are marked with an asterisk (*).

workers view them as older workers in terms of workplace stereotypes - both positive and negative; 3) *accommodation*: the extent to which older workers do or do not use accommodative behavior in their communication with younger workers; 4) *non-accommodation*: the extent to which older workers do or do not use non-accommodative behavior in their communication with younger workers; 5) *respectfully avoidant communication*: the extent to which older workers do or do not use respectfully avoidant communication behavior in their communication with younger workers; 6) *convergence/divergence*: the extent to which older workers converge or diverge their communication towards or away from younger workers; 7) *knowledge transfer*: the extent to which older workers are willing to and transfer knowledge to younger workers.

Table 1: All Respondents' Mean & Standard Deviation (SD) Scores		
Variables	All respondents' Mean	All respondents' SD
Think about young	3.86	.668
Think about you	5.03	.779
Accommodation	5.76	.704
Non-accommodation	3.27	1.20
Respectfully avoidant communication	3.85	.872
Converge/Diverge	3.38	1.22
Knowledge Transfer	5.31	.766

Table 1 represents mean and standard deviation scores for all respondents in respect to the seven variables under study. Results suggest that generally, older workers' score is below the neutral point of the scale in respect to their perception of younger

workers (Mean = 3.86), which suggests perception that is slightly negative. Older workers' score is significantly above the neutral point of the scale in respect to their perception of younger workers' perception of them (Mean = 5.03), which suggest perception that is positive. Older workers' score is significantly above the neutral point of the scale in respect to their use of accommodation in their communication with younger workers (Mean = 5.76), which suggests older workers perceive themselves to be accommodative.

Furthermore, older workers' score is below the neutral point of the scale in respect to their use of non-accommodation in their communication with younger workers (Mean = 3.27), which implies that older workers perceive themselves to not be non-accommodative (and therefore, be contrastingly accommodative). In turn, older workers' score is also below the neutral point of the scale in respect to their use of respectfully avoidant communication with younger workers (Mean = 3.85). Older workers' score is again below the neutral point of the scale in respect to their use of convergence/divergence⁴ in their communication with younger workers (Mean = 3.38), which suggests that older workers perceive themselves to be more convergent than divergent. Finally, older workers' score is significantly above the neutral point of the scale in respect to their willing practice of knowledge transfer (Mean = 5.31), to their younger colleagues. Data is

⁴ To clarify, a score above the point of neutrality relative to the variable 'converge/diverge' signified older workers' tendency to be *divergent* in their communication with younger workers, and a score below the point of neutrality relative to the variable 'converge/diverge' indicated older workers' tendency to be *convergent* in their communication with younger workers.

normally distributed with standard deviation values ranging from .668 to 1.22 for all distributions.

Table 2: Gender Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) Score Comparisons				
Variables	Male Mean	Male SD	Female Mean	Female SD
Think about young	3.83	.678	3.93	.653
Think about you	4.93	.802	5.19	.716
Accommodation	5.65	.676	5.95	.724
Non-accommodation	3.43	1.21	2.96	1.13
Respectfully avoidant communication	3.65	.853	4.18	.819
Converge/Diverge	3.42	1.22	3.30	1.25
Knowledge Transfer	5.32	.812	5.27	.693

When looking at the data comparing gender mean and standard deviation scores, Table 2 shows that older male workers view younger workers slightly more negatively than do older female workers (Male Mean = 3.83; Female Mean = 3.93); furthermore, older female workers slightly perceive that younger workers hold a more positive perception of them than do older male workers (Male Mean = 4.93; Female Mean = 5.19). Older female workers also perceive that they are slightly more accommodative than do older male workers (Male Mean = 5.65; Female Mean = 5.95), in addition to slightly more avoidant of non-accommodation than do older male workers (Male Mean = 3.43; Female Mean = 2.96). Alternatively, older male workers perceive that they avoid respectfully avoidant communication slightly more than do older female workers (Male Mean = 3.65; Female Mean = 4.18), whereas older female workers perceive as though

they are slightly more convergent in their communication than do older male workers (Male Mean = 3.42; Female Mean = 3.30). Finally, older male workers perceive as though they are willing and transfer knowledge to younger workers slightly more than do older female workers (Male Mean = 5.32; Female Mean = 5.27). Data is normally distributed with standard deviation values ranging for older male workers from .676 to 1.22, and older female workers from .653 to 1.25 on all variables under study.

Table 3: Age Means and Standard Deviation (SD) Score Comparisons				
Variables	50-60 years Mean	50-60 years SD	61+ years Mean	61+ years SD
Think about young	3.89	.701	3.68	.444
Think about you	5.03	.757	5.06	.801
Accommodation	5.80	.597	5.38	1.02
Non-accommodation	3.21	1.19	3.75	1.66
Respectfully avoidant communication	3.86	.840	3.71	1.36
Converge/Diverge	3.38	1.27	3.39	1.17
Knowledge Transfer	5.34	.747	4.93	.838

When looking at the data of a more thorough breakdown of older workers' age, Table 3 shows that older workers aged 61 years and beyond view younger workers slightly more negatively than do older workers aged 50-60 years. (50-60 years Mean = 3.89; 61+ years Mean = 3.68). Table 3 also shows that older workers aged 61 years and beyond slightly perceive that younger workers hold a more positive perception of them than do older workers aged 50-60 years (50-60 years Mean = 5.03; 61+ years Mean = 5.06). Further, older workers aged 50-60 years perceive that they are slightly more

accommodative than do older workers aged 61 years and beyond (50-60 years Mean = 5.80; 61+ years Mean = 5.38), in addition to slightly more avoidant of non-accommodative communication than do older workers aged 61 years and beyond (50-60 years Mean = 5.03; 61+ years Mean = 5.06). Alternatively, older workers aged 61 years and beyond perceive that they avoid respectfully avoidant communication slightly more than do older workers aged 50-60 years (50-60 years Mean = 3.86; 61+ years Mean = 3.71). To continue, older workers aged 61 years and beyond perceive as though they are only very slightly more convergent in their communication than older workers aged 50-60 years (50-60 years Mean = 3.38; 61+ years Mean = 3.39). Finally, older workers aged 50-60 years perceive as though they are willing and transfer knowledge to younger workers slightly more than are older workers aged 61 years and beyond (50-60 years Mean = 5.34; 61+ years Mean = 4.93). Data is normally distributed with standard deviation values ranging for older workers aged 50-60 years from .597 to 1.27, and older

Table 4: Culture Means and Standard Deviation (SD) Comparison

Variables	North American Mean	North American SD	Other cultures Mean	Other cultures SD
Think about young	3.88	.697	3.83	.614
Think about you	5.11	.777	4.90	.669
Accommodation	5.85	.622	5.64	.739
Non-accommodation	3.13	1.15	3.72	1.47
Respectfully avoidant communication	3.75	.856	4.11	.969
Converge/Diverge	3.23	1.29	3.80	.999
Knowledge Transfer	5.37	.734	5.20	.843

workers aged 61 years and beyond from .444 and 1.66 on all distributions.

When looking at data comparing results of mean and standard deviation scores relative to the culture with which older workers identify, Table 4 shows that older workers who identify with cultures other than North American view younger workers slightly more negatively than do older workers who identify with North American culture (North American Mean = 3.88; Other cultures Mean = 3.83). Table 4 also shows that older workers who identify with North American culture slightly perceive that younger workers hold a more positive perception of them than do older workers who identify with cultures other than North American (North American Mean = 5.11; Other cultures Mean = 4.90). Further, older workers who identify with North American culture perceive that they are slightly more accommodative than older workers who identify with cultures other than North American (North American Mean = 5.85; Other cultures Mean = 5.64), in addition to slightly more avoidant of non-accommodative communication than older workers aged 61 years and beyond who feel this way (North American Mean = 3.13; Other cultures Mean = 3.72). Alternatively, older workers who identify with North American culture perceive that they avoid respectfully avoidant communication slightly more than do older workers who identify with cultures other than North American (North American Mean = 3.75; Other cultures Mean = 4.11), in addition to slightly more convergent than these same older workers who identify with cultures other than North American (North American Mean = 3.23; Other cultures Mean = 3.80). Finally, older workers who identify with North American culture perceive as though they are willing and transfer knowledge to younger workers slightly more than do older workers who identify with cultures other than North American (North American Mean = 5.37; Other

cultures Mean = 5.20). Data is normally distributed with standard deviation values ranging for older workers who identify with North American culture from .622 to 1.29, and older workers who identify with cultures other than North American from .614 and 1.47 on all variables under study.

Table 5: Age Subjective Means and Standard Deviation (SD) Comparison				
Variables	Feel Own Age/Older Mean	Feel Own Age/Older SD	Feel Younger than Age Mean	Feel Younger than Age SD
Think about young	3.97	.630	3.78	.713
Think about you	4.90	.688	5.10	.778
Accommodation	5.72	.689	3.07	.613
Non-accommodation	3.71	1.28	3.07	1.16
Respectfully avoidant communication	4.06	.938	3.84	.833
Converge/Diverge	3.37	1.31	3.43	1.21
Knowledge Transfer	3.97	.630	3.78	.713

Finally, we generated data in respect to the variable ‘subjective age’ in comparison to older workers’ chronological age (see Table 5). To remind you, it was found that 70% of older workers feel younger than their age chronologically, and that the remaining 30% felt their age or older. That being said, results suggest that older workers who feel younger than their age view younger workers slightly more negatively than do older workers who feel their age or older (Feel Age/Older Mean = 3.97; Feel Younger Mean = 3.78). Table 5 also shows that older workers who feel younger than their age slightly perceive that younger workers hold a more positive perception of them than do

older workers who feel their age or older (Feel Age/Older Mean = 4.90; Feel Younger Mean = 5.10). Further, older workers who feel their age perceive that they are significantly more accommodative than older workers who feel younger than their age (Feel Age/Older Mean = 5.72; Feel Younger Mean = 3.07). Contradictorily however, data finds that older workers who feel younger than their age perceive that they are slightly more avoidant of non-accommodative communication than older workers who feel their age or older (Feel Age/Older Mean = 3.71; Feel Younger Mean = 3.07). Slightly above the point of neutrality, older workers who feel their age or older perceive as though they use respectfully avoidant communication slightly more than they do not, whereas slightly below the point of neutrality, older workers who feel younger than their age perceive as though they avoid respectfully avoidant communication slightly more than they do not (Feel Age/Older Mean = 4.06; Feel Younger Mean = 3.84). To continue, older workers who feel younger than their age perceive that they are slightly more convergent in their communication with younger workers than older workers who feel younger than their age (Feel Age/Older Mean = 3.37; Feel Younger Mean = 3.43). Finally, older workers who feel their age or older perceive as though they are slightly more willing than older workers who feel younger than their age to transfer knowledge to younger workers (Feel Age/Older Mean = 3.97; Feel Younger Mean = 3.78). Data is normally distributed with standard deviation values ranging for older workers who feel their age or older from .630 to 1.31, and older workers who feel younger than their age from .613 to 1.21 for all distributions.

Differences between groups: t-tests

Following descriptive analysis, a series of t-tests were conducted to determine the extent to which differences between groups (based on age/perception of age, gender and culture) are statistically significant.

As can be seen below, results of the t-test for the control variable of 'gender' suggest that older male workers and older female workers are significantly different on the variables of accommodation, non-accommodation, and respectfully avoidant communication, as shown:

accommodation: $\bar{X}_{\text{male}} = 5.65; \bar{X}_{\text{female}} = 5.95$ ($t = -2.32; p < .05$)

non-accommodation: $\bar{X}_{\text{male}} = 3.43; \bar{X}_{\text{female}} = 2.96$ ($t = 2.15; p < .05$)

respectfully avoidant communication: $\bar{X}_{\text{male}} = 3.65; \bar{X}_{\text{female}} = 4.18$ ($t = -3.30; p < .05$)

Such results suggest that older female participants tend to rely more than older male participants on accommodation as well as respectfully avoidant types of communication, whereas older male participants tend to rely more than older female participants on non-accommodative communication.

Results of the t-test for the control variable of 'age' suggest that there are no variables in which older workers aged 50-60 years and older workers aged 61 years demonstrate significantly different results.

In regards to the control variable of 'culture', t-test results show that older workers who identify with North American culture and older workers who identify with cultures other than North American are significantly different on the following variables:

non-accommodation: $\bar{X}_{\text{NorthAmerican}} = 3.13; \bar{X}_{\text{othercultures}} = 3.72$ ($t = -2.02; p < .05$)

converge/diverge: $\bar{X}_{\text{NorthAmerican}} = 3.23$; $\bar{X}_{\text{othercultures}} = 3.80$ ($t = -1.98$; $p < .05$)

In other words, older workers who identify with cultures other than North American tend to rely more than older workers who identify with North American culture on non-accommodative communication. Results also demonstrate that older workers who identify with North American culture tend to be more convergent than older workers who identify with cultures other than North American.

Finally, in respect to the control variable of ‘age subjectivity,’ results suggest that older workers who feel their age or older and older workers who feel younger than their age are significantly different on the variable of non-accommodation:

non-accommodation: $\bar{X}_{\text{feels age/older}} = 3.71$; $\bar{X}_{\text{feels younger}} = 3.07$ ($t = -2.55$; $p < .05$)

This means that older workers who feel their age or older tend to rely more than older workers who feel younger than their age on non-accommodative communication.

Bivariate Correlations

The final step of data analysis was meant to determine if perceptions of stereotypes based on age are associated with patterns of communication and if such patterns are also linked with the process of knowledge transfer. This was done through correlation analysis.

Table 6

Correlations

	thinkabyoungcompute	thinkabyoucompute	thinkabyoucompute	acomcompute	nonacomcompute	respectavoidcompute	divergecompute	transferAcompute
thinkabyoungcompute	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 120	.421** .000 101	.062 .521 108	-.088 .359 110	-.130 .184 106	-.331** .000 110	.022 .820 108
thinkabyoucompute	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.421** .000 101	1 .000 109	.443** .000 103	-.386** .000 104	-.224* .027 98	-.428** .000 102	.413** .000 103
acomcompute	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.062 .521 101	.443** .000 109	1 .000 103	-.338** .000 121	.140 .136 115	-.130 .155 120	.341** .000 119
nonacomcompute	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.088 .359 110	-.386** .000 103	-.338** .000 123	1 .000 121	.120 .197 118	.292** .001 122	-.263** .003 122
respectavoidcompute	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.130 .184 106	-.224* .027 98	.140 .136 115	.120 .197 118	1 .000 116	.330** .000 116	.390** .000 116
divergecompute	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.331** .000 110	-.428** .000 102	-.130 .155 120	.292** .001 122	.330** .000 116	1 .000 124	-.242** .008 120
transferAcompute	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.022 .820 108	.413** .000 103	.341** .000 119	-.263** .003 122	-.390** .000 116	-.242** .008 120	1 124

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above table (Table 6) demonstrates correlation patterns between variables⁵. An analysis of correlations reveals that there are several variables that are significantly correlated, as marked by yellow stars in the table.

In summary, Table 6 shows that the more older workers have a positive view of younger workers, the more they perceive that younger workers also have a positive view of them (.421), and the more likely they are to converge towards rather than diverge their communication away from younger workers (-.331). Further, the more an older worker feels as though younger workers positively perceive them, the more they will be accommodative in their communication with younger workers (.443) and avoid non-accommodative communication (-.386) and respectfully avoidant communication (-.224). They will simultaneously be more likely to converge towards rather than diverge their communication away from younger workers (-.428), and the more likely they will be to transfer knowledge to these same younger workers (.413). To continue, the more an older worker is accommodative in their communication with younger workers, the less likely they will be non-accommodative in their communication with younger workers (-.338), and the more likely they are to be willing to transfer knowledge to younger workers (.341). Moreover, the more an older worker is non-accommodative in their communication with younger workers, the more likely they are to diverge their communication away from rather than converge their communication towards younger workers (.292), and the less likely they are to be willing to transfer knowledge to younger

⁵ Note: Condensed names of variables have been used where, thinkabyoungcompute = think about young; thinkabyoucompute = think about you; accomcompute = accommodation; respectavoidcompute = respectfully avoidant communication; divergecompute = converge/diverge; trasnferAcompute = knowledge transfer.

workers (-.263). Additionally, the more older workers use respectfully avoidant communication in their communication with younger workers, the more likely they are to diverge their communication away from rather than converge their communication towards younger workers (.330) and the less likely they are to be willing and transfer knowledge to younger workers (-.390). Finally, the more older workers diverge their communication away from younger workers, the less likely they are to be willing to transfer knowledge to younger workers (-.242).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study had the objective to better understand intergenerational communication in the workplace, from an older worker's perspective. Specifically, this study aimed to examine how perceptions of age, which may or may not be stereotypical, can influence workplace intergenerational communication in terms of accommodation (or non-accommodation). By extension, this study aimed to examine how patterns of communication (as derived from perceptions of the other) can influence older workers' willingness to transfer knowledge to their younger colleagues.

This study falls in continuity with previous work by Nussbaum and Williams (2001), Campion and Posthuma (2009), Buyens et al., (2009), Giles and Gasiorsek (2012), Arnett (2001), Giles and McCann (2006), Chan et al. (2001), Sargeant (2010), and Barbeite et al. (2008), amongst others, who hypothesized that age is a marker of social identity that can be used to stereotype. Results of the current study suggest that this is particularly true in the workplace, specifically from an older worker's perspective.

In the following, we will explore six main conclusions derived from in-depth data analysis. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings will be discussed in conjunction. Let us remind that these conclusions were compiled from an analysis of a combination of statistical tests performed on data, including descriptive statistics, t-tests, and correlations. These derived findings are as follows:

1. Older workers perceive younger workers slightly more negatively than they do positively.

2. Older workers perceive that younger workers view them more positively than they do negatively.
3. Older workers perceive that they are more accommodative than non-accommodative in their communication with younger workers.
4. Older workers perceive that they are more willing than not to transfer knowledge in the workplace to younger workers.
5. The majority of older workers subjectively feel younger than their actual chronological age, which may account as an influence in the results of this study.
6. Social influences including gender, more specific breakdown of older workers' age, the culture with which older workers identify, in addition to their subjective age, play minor influential roles in the results of this study.

Perceptions & In-group Bias

To explore the results of this study, the instrumental roles of the theoretical groundings of this study will periodically be revisited; those being SIT and CAT. As research has found in the delineation of SIT, an individual's perceptions are influenced by their social group membership (Harwood & Williams, 2004). Such a membership is in turn, influential to one's social identity, which Harwood and Williams (2004) argue is built around both personal and social characteristics; personal characteristics encompassing an individual's preferences and behaviors, and social characteristics embracing defining elements of individualism such as a person's age, cultural group identification, gender, socio-economic standing, etc. One of the main postulates of SIT is that individuals have a tendency to favor their own social group (Burke & Stets, 2000;

Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). This in-group preference is conceptualized as an *in-group bias* (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Findings 1 and 2 of this study can collectively be interpreted to support the model of SIT's in-group bias. Specifically, this study observes that older workers hold a slightly negative perception of younger workers, and simultaneously perceive that these same younger workers nourish a positive perception of them. Using the language of SIT, it can be said that older workers hold a positive in-group bias of their social group of older workers, and a slightly negative out-group bias of those belonging to the social group of younger workers.

This in-group bias held by older workers was concretely reflected in the negative stereotypes they attribute to younger workers. Older workers slightly agreed rather than disagreed that younger workers lacked workplace values such as productivity and commitment, and much like Nussbaum and Williams (2001) stated in their work, many of the stereotypes that older workers linked to younger workers in their responses to this study's questionnaire, were relative to their inexperience. While most participants did acknowledge that they perceive younger workers to be technologically knowledgeable in the sense of holding high computer and technology experience, as Sargeant (2010) points out is a critical positive stereotype often denoted to younger workers, the majority of negative stereotypes associated with younger workers rated higher in scoring than those that were positive. This study can thus conclude that the negative stereotypes attributed to younger workers are in fact, more readily accepted by older workers than those that are positive, even if only slightly more so; slightly, as represented by a mean value of 3.86, which is marginally above the point of neutrality where a high score relative to this variable indicated a negative overall perception.

In a similar way, older workers perceive that their younger colleagues hold more positive than negative perceptions in their regard (to remind you, a mean value of 5.03 was derived for this variable, where a high score indicated positive overall perception), which could be interpreted as a way for older workers to protect the reputation of their social group through in-group bias. Indeed, results suggest that older workers believe that younger workers view them to be reliable, skilled, experienced, and honest, amongst others traits. Let us remind you that older workers are particularly targeted when it comes to negative stereotypes based on age (Chasteen et al., 2012; Palmore, 1990), and as such, being aware of such threats to their identity, they may chose to rely on in-group bias to precisely protect the reputation of their group. Perhaps more than a choice, this in-group bias is more importantly, an expressed *need* for the social group of older workers. This idea is quite conceivable, particularly as older workers are so pervasively discriminated against in the context of an ageist society (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001; Giles & McCann, 2006; Chasteen et al., 2012). Tajfel and Turner (1986) elaborate on this need, and find that the maintenance of an in-group preference is an internalized practice of self-preservation that enables in-group members to maintain or recover a positive self-esteem. By positively evaluating themselves and negatively evaluating others, researchers explain that social groups buffer threats against their social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Isobe et al., 2012). The threat of ageism against older workers – the threat of encountering and coping with stereotypes in the workplace on a regular basis, may as a result, influence older workers to rely on an in-group preference. This may be more likely to occur when older workers find themselves contrasting their own abilities to those of their younger cohorts, a social group whom as we now know, are generally more valued by society and

represented much more positively than older workers (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Hepworth, Chasteen et al., 2012).

This idea is demonstrated in recent work by Calasanti, King, and Sorensen (2012), where the researchers unearth that even though older workers hold a positive in-group bias, they are aware of the pervasive and negative stereotypes of which they are categorized. This awareness has potential consequences and can affect older workers both personally and professionally. These consequences were discovered by the researchers through interviews, where it was found that participants of their study, of whom comprised of nineteen male and female workers between the ages of 42 to 61 years, correlate the notion of aging to concepts of negativity such as decline, death, disengagement, inactivity, deterioration in physical activity, and lack of control, amongst others things. In summary, the researchers explain that the majority of participants define aging similarly as “an unacceptable nuisance or constraint” (Calasanti et al., 2012, p. 28). Such denotes that older workers are without a doubt aware of the negativity that surrounds them in ageist stereotype form, even if as a means of self-preservation, they choose to maintain a positive in-group bias. Chasteen et al. (2012) support this idea and claim that older adults are indeed aware of the negative stereotypes that circulate so pervasively about them in society, even if they try to ignore them, as this study evidently found. Based upon this finding by Chasteen et al. (2012), and upon the listed findings of this study, it is plausible to assume that a main reason as to why older workers slightly degrade younger workers is to strengthen their in-group bias in addition to their social group’s self-concept as a whole. Taken together, these findings can be interpreted as a defense mechanism that older workers rely on: being aware of the negative stereotypes

and ageist attitudes that surround them, prompts these workers to protect the reputation of their group by a) negatively evaluating out-group members, but b) simultaneously thinking that out-group members view them in a positive manner. As such, the awareness of negative stereotypes, also known as perceptions of stereotype threat (Inzlicht & Schmader, 2011), can be said to play conceivably powerful roles in the interactions amongst intergenerational colleagues, particularly from an older worker's perspective.

The threat of stereotypes is actually recognized as a theory, academically referred to as the *theory of stereotype threat*. This theory can be connected to SIT's concept of in-group bias. Inzlicht and Schmader (2011) define stereotype threat as the fear of being judged based upon the negative reputation associated with one's social group. Further, a stereotype threat is the intimidating feeling of not only fearing negative stereotypes, but also validating the negative stereotypes associated with one's social group by general behavior and actions (Inzlicht & Schmader, 2011). As example, one stereotype commonly denoted to the elderly that Inzlicht and Schmader (2011) recognize is that of memory decline. By accepting the postulates of the theory of stereotype threat, older workers are plausibly aware of this negative stereotype, and may be afraid of thus failing in a workplace task that requires the use of their memory.

In the context of an ageist society, the social group of older workers are faced with the task of coping with stereotype threat on a regular basis. In this regard, Chasteen et al. (2012) explain that there is an intimate positive relationship between the process of aging and the internalization of stereotype threat, meaning that as one ages, they internalize stereotype threat to a heightened degree. Case studies that have demonstrated this relationship include those by Kite, Stockdale, Whitley and Johnson (2005), and

Chasteen et al. (2012). Studies that have more broadly explored the implications of stereotype threat on other social groups include: Steele and Aronson (1995) – whom have found that stereotype threat contributes to lowered performance of African Americans; Croizet and Millet (2012) – whom have found that stereotype threat contributes to the poor's lowered performance in standardized testing measuring achievement and ability; Gonzales, Blanton and Williams (2002) – whom have found that stereotype threat contributes to lowered performance of Latinos; Logel, Peach and Spencer (2012) – whom have found that stereotype threat contributes to women lowered performance in math and science; and Chalabaev, Harrison and Stone (2012) – whom have found that stereotype threat contributes to whites lowered performance in athletics. Results of these studies suggest that the fear of being negatively stereotyped and devalued may contribute to older workers' psychological disengagement from the workplace and lowered self-esteem. This drawn conclusion is reflected in work by Lagacé et al. (2008; 2010), who find that the fear of being negatively stereotyped and devalued may indeed contribute to older workers' lowered self-esteem, which can potentially lead to their disengagement in the workplace; a disengagement in their performance in the workplace.

In summary, and in light of results of previous studies, we can argue that a reason as to why older workers hold an in-group bias in the workplace is because they are aware of the negativity that discriminates against them due to their age, they perceive the need to be defensive in response to these stereotypical threats, and thus their perceptions, which construct an in-group bias, are shaped by these internalized stereotype threats of ageist discrimination.

How do these perceptions, then, influence older workers' communication and transfer of knowledge to younger workers? In short, findings of this study discover that older workers hold a positive perception of their intergenerational communication with their younger colleagues, in addition to a positive perception of their willingness and engagement in the practice of transfer knowledge. More specifically, findings 3 and 4 outline that older workers perceive that they are more accommodative than non-accommodative in their workplace communication with younger workers, and that they also perceive that they are more willing than not to transfer knowledge in the workplace to their younger colleagues.

Reaction to Stereotype Threat and its Influence on Older Workers' Communication

Perceiving themselves to be accommodative in addition to willing to transfer knowledge to their younger workplace cohorts can be hypothesized as a practical reaction to stereotype threats that consistently impend older workers. Here again, it is plausible to suggest that in response to ageist sentiments that circulate so pervasively about them in society, older workers, as defense mechanism, feel the need to make sure that their younger colleagues positively perceive them. In order to ensure this positive perception, older workers may self-describe as more willing to be accommodative and transfer knowledge to their younger colleagues, as it is plausible that these actions will make younger workers like them more, in response to their accommodative nature. This perceived positivity might make older workers feel valued by their younger colleagues and thus more respected in the workplace environment. Keeping this positive perception of their social group intact ensures that older workers, as a social group, are able to

maintain the positive social identity that they so assumedly desire. This positive social identity can work, in turn, to boost their collective self-esteem.

Speaking more specifically to this study and its garnered results, some of the accommodative communication patterns, as defined by Giles and McCann (2006), that older workers were found to perceive that they engage in with their younger colleagues include, amongst others, being supportive, being helpful, and being complimentary. Strengthening their perception of being accommodative in workplace, it was additionally found that older workers perceive that they avoid modes of non-accommodative communication. Some of these avoided non-accommodative communication behaviors, as defined by Giles and McCann (2006), include ordering their younger co-workers to do things, acting superior, and articulating that they know more than their younger co-workers. As much as they perceive themselves to be accommodative in their communication with younger workers, in addition to willing to engage in the practice of knowledge transfer, this study also found that older workers perceive that they are more convergent than divergent in their communication with younger workers; convergence and divergence being two important mechanics of CAT (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001).

Communication Patterns and Subjective Age

It is not surprising that if older workers perceive as though they are accommodative in their communication with younger workers, that they also self-describe as convergent in their communication with younger workers, and willing to transfer knowledge to these same younger workers, as the two concepts are closely associated. However, as it has already been discussed that older workers hold an in-group

bias and a negative out-group perception of the social group of younger workers, it is thought provoking that older workers do not use more divergent modes of communication with their younger colleagues. This is a logical consideration to contemplate, because according to Nussbaum and Williams (2001) in addition to Harwood and Williams (2004), divergence is a means of articulating difference between one's own social group and the social groups of others, in order to substantiate an in-group preference. The fifth major finding of this study, that being that the majority of older workers subjectively feel younger than their actual chronological age, may assist in explaining this contradictory situation.

As the majority of older workers *feel* younger than they actually are chronologically, a motive why older workers may be more prone to converge their communication towards the social group of younger workers, is because as CAT implores, converging one's communication is a means of better relating to members of another social group (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). To remind you, convergent communication patterns are commonly practiced amongst members of the same social group as it magnifies their similarities and thus strengthens their sense of belonging to their social group (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001). If older workers subjectively *feel* younger than they actually are chronologically, they may arguably in some ways themselves identify with the social group of younger workers. They may by extension, perceive as though when communicating with younger workers, they are actually communicating with members of their own social group. By identifying with a younger social group whom are socially valued much more than their own social group (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Hepworth, 2002), older workers may not feel quite as threatened that they

will be associated with negative stereotypes that pervasively continue to define and discriminate against them, due to their age. To remind you, this study understands that older workers are indeed aware of the ageist sentiments that surround them. If they are also aware that more positive than negative stereotypes are associated with the younger community (Palmore, 1990; Chasteen, et al., 2012), they may desire to be a part of this social community who plausibly do not face stereotype threat to the extensive degree that the social group of older workers do.

Such a raised implication could also stand to reason why older workers as a whole are found by this study to be very willing to transfer their knowledge to their younger colleagues. Perhaps this can be comprehended by once more revisiting the concept of older workers' positive self-perception, as a social group. Perhaps it is the combination of feeling younger than their chronological age, in addition to feeling the need to defend their social group as older workers that influences older workers in their accommodative communication patterns and willing practice of knowledge transfer with their younger colleagues. If older workers feel a positive sense of self, they plausibly believe that as workers, they have an abundance of knowledge. As some of the more positive stereotypes commonly associated with older workers include that they are reliable, effective on the job (Buyens et al., 2009), and committed to their employment (Campion & Poshuma, 2009), older workers may feel responsible to pass on their knowledge to their co-workers, whom they hold a more negative perception of in comparison to themselves. They may perceive as though their knowledge would be beneficial to their younger colleagues, and their reliability and commitment to their job may push them to willingly transfer this knowledge that they have built and maintained over their many

years as professionals, to their younger colleagues. Taking into consideration that the majority of older workers surveyed were aged between 50-60 years (encompassing 89.8%), meaning they comprise predominantly of the generation of Baby Boomers (Espinoza et al., 2010), this particularly group of older workers have not yet reached their senior years, as defined by Service Canada (2013). There may thereby be many ageist stereotypes reflective of the old that they may yet to be associated with. It is this 'in-between' phase of being young and old that may influence these workers to rather be associated with a more valued social group. When they do however, encounter stereotype threat, these older workers not only protect their current reputation by holding an in-group bias, but they also protect their group as aging adults in the future.

Other Social Influences

Additional (and potential) sources of influence on perceptions of in-group, out-group as well as intergenerational communication and knowledge transfer, were also tested. Precisely, t-tests were conducted in order to determine if gender, chronological age, and self-identification with a particular culture, in addition to the subjective age *felt* by older workers, had an impact on the above process.

Descriptive statistics, which reveal older workers' general tendencies, enable us to better appreciate the true patterns and significant differences of variables found by an analysis of t-tests. To begin with the variable of gender, while descriptive statistics found that older workers as a whole generally perceive younger workers slightly more negatively than positively, t-test results of this study discovered that older female workers perceive younger workers slightly more positively in this negative scope than do older

male workers. Additionally, in respect to their communication patterns with their younger colleagues, older female workers were found to be significantly more accommodative, more prone to using respectfully avoidant modes of communication, and less prone to being non-accommodative than were older male workers. It is plausible to assume that older female workers are more accommodative in their communication with younger workers than are older male workers because of their more positive perception of the social group of younger workers. This finding coincides with earlier work by Henzl and Turner (1987), who find that often, women are more accommodative than men, as reflective in their higher willing engagement in utilizing creativity to solve problems, their tendencies to vocalize their troubles more willingly than men, and their keen interest in playing supportive roles in society. On a similar spectrum, recent work by Bredow, Huston, and Schoenfeld (2012), whom examined expressions of love in marriages, find that women exert less antagonistic behaviors than do men, which consequentially leads to their use of more accommodative communication. Bredow et al. (2012) find that more generally, “compared with men, women are more likely to report behaving in a caring, helpful, or self-sacrificial manner” (p. 1399), all of which behaviors are accommodative in nature. Strengthened by t-test results, specific to communication patterns, gender can be understood as a significant social variable influential to the results of this study.

Moving along to the variable of a more thorough breakdown of older workers’ chronological age, as reflective in the findings section of this study, no significant results, as defined by t-tests, were discovered between the comparison of older workers grouped into two categories: workers aged between 50-60 years old, and workers aged 61 years old and above. Still, minor differences between the two age categories and their

perceptions, communication patterns, and willingness to transfer knowledge to their younger colleagues were found in an analysis of descriptive statistics, even if not at a significant differentiation level as defined by t-tests. In order to introduce and resume discussion of t-test results in relation to the variable of age subjectivity, however, let us now touch in more detail upon these descriptive results.

Descriptive statistics found that the younger category of older workers surveyed (those aged 50-60 years) are in comparison to older workers aged 61 years and beyond, more accommodative, more respectfully avoidant, and less non-accommodative, while simultaneously more convergent in their communication with younger workers. Such results are intriguing when returning to the concept of age subjectivity, where it was discovered at a significant level, as determined by t-tests, that older workers who feel their chronological age or older tend to rely more on non-accommodative communication behaviors than do older workers who feel younger than their chronological age. Feeling younger than one's chronological age is according to Teuscher (2009), correlated to better life satisfaction in addition to a behavioral tendency to enjoy learning new things. Let us remind you that some of the negative stereotypes that pervasively discriminate against older workers include that they are old-fashioned (Nussbaum & Williams, 2001), resistant to change, inflexible (Buyens et al., 2009), and not very adaptive to technology (Campion & Posthuma, 2009; Sargeant, 2010). These stereotypes can directly be associated to the concept of *not* being willing to learn new things. As feeling younger than one's chronological age is associated oppositely to *learning* new things, older workers who subjectively *feel* younger than their chronological age may plausibly behave more against the grain in response to these negative stereotypes – such being an

explanation as to why older workers who feel younger than their chronological age are found by t-tests to be significantly more accommodative than older workers who feel their chronological age or older.

We can now discuss the final potential source of influence of this study – that being the culture with which participants identify. T-tests revealed two significant statistical differences in results comparing this variable. Firstly, it was found that older workers who identify with cultures other than North American tend to rely more than participants who identify with North American culture on non-accommodative communication. Secondly, it was discovered that older workers who identify with North American culture tend to be more convergent than participants who identify with cultures other than North American. Significant differences in such communication patterns could plausibly stem from cultural influences. Matsumoto (2005) argues that an individual's culture has the potential to guide behaviors, while Lahey, Trant, Verderber, and Verderber (2005) argue that culture can additionally guide perceptions, which by extension influence such components as values, attitudes and beliefs. Other important defining features of culture, including a culture's concept of power (be their culture high or low powered), a culture's level of individualism or collectivism, in addition to a culture's level of uncertainty avoidance, according to Hickson (2010), also stand as influential markers of cultural behavior. Keep in mind that we do not have detailed information regarding the category of cultures 'other' than North American, thereby, the divergent communication patterns found to be appropriated by this group could stem from a lack of understanding of these 'other' cultural groups. Additionally, this study did not collect information relative to the length of time older workers who self-identify with

cultures other than North American have lived and worked in Canada, thereby these older workers' experience as cultural others could arguably shape their communication patterns in the workplace.

Limitations

While results of this study raise important points and implications, some limitations must be underlined. Firstly, it is acknowledged that similar to all methodologies, survey-based research does have its limitations. As Alreck and Settle (2004) explain, surveys are certainly not the only means of acquiring information about people's perceptions, experiences and attitudes. Other methodologies including interviews and focus groups could have garnered on their own, or in conjunction with this study's quantitative methodology, more descriptive results that could have enabled the analysis of more rich data. In respect to sampling, this study's recognizes its limitation that its selection of participants was non-random, due to convenience of participants available at organizations contacted. Generalizations related to the results of this study must thereby be made with caution. In specific reference to the complex variable of culture, as noted above, some important information that may have affected results were not asked of participants. This included the length of time participants have lived in Canada, their experience of the North American workplace as a whole, the degree to which they practice their culture and its teachings, and their religious affiliation. Another limitation is that the results of this study did not take into consideration job status of participants. Although it was requested of participants surveyed to provide their job status, limited responses to this inquiry prevented further analysis. Finally, due to a

relatively small sample, category groupings of a more thorough breakdown of age and cultural identification were required to be limited in order to fairly analyze results with large enough comparable samples. Results must therefore be interpreted with caution. In respect to this notion, perhaps the utilization of other methodology may have afforded more rich results relative to the social influences that emerged in this study.

Directions for Future Research

This study and its results open the field of academia to directions for future research. Thus far, this study has acted as an introductory examination of intergenerational communication in the workplace, from an older worker's perspective. Future studies may wish to examine communication in the workplace between colleagues of various workplace statuses. For instance, the examination of communication within the workplace between management and associates; between CEOs and trainees, etc., may be worthwhile. How do perceptions of job status and power influence workplace communication, in addition to workplace collaboration, particularly in terms of knowledge transfer? Would ageist perceptions still exist amongst these interactions? If so, how would these ageist perceptions impact workplace communication between such colleagues? Would similar social influences including a thorough breakdown of chronological age, subjective age, gender, and culture, amongst others social influences, impact results? These questions, amid others, are some raised following the analysis of this study's findings.

Another future direction of research relative to this study is to examine younger workers' opinions of the results of this study. Do they feel as though results of this study

are indeed reflective of older workers' workplace communication with them – such that older workers perceive themselves to be accommodative, convergent, and willing to engage in the practice of knowledge transfer? Is there alternatively a discrepancy, and if so, what are implications of possible discrepancies?

From another more general angle, more research from an older worker's perspective is needed in relation to intergenerational communication research broadly, and intergenerational communication research in the workplace more specifically. Further exploration of workplace interactions between various social age groups in the workplace would also be beneficial to communications research in addition to gerontology research, and even psychological research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the changing environment of the workplace that is aging in addition to becoming increasingly more diverse intergenerationally, this study's objective was to examine how possible ageist stereotypes influence patterns of intergenerational communication in the workplace, and how in turn, the process of knowledge transfer is impacted by such influences and possible accommodations in communication patterns.

Findings of this study have discovered that ageist sentiments indeed do exist in the workplace. These stereotypes are found to be influential of older workers' perceptions of their younger colleagues, in addition to their perceptions of how these same younger colleagues view them, as older workers. While we discovered that older workers hold a slightly negative perception of their younger colleagues, we also found that older workers hold the perception that these same younger colleagues positively view them as workers. These perceptions influence the intergenerational communication patterns of older workers positively, where their in-group preference leads them to both be accommodative and convergent in their communication with younger workers, while simultaneously being willing to engage in the practice of knowledge transfer with their younger colleagues. Social variables, such as gender, chronological and subjective age, as well as self-identification with culture have also impacted results of this study. For example, in respect to gender, results reveal that older female workers are more accommodative, less non-accommodative, and more respectfully avoidant than older male workers. In respect to subjective age, results reveal that older workers who feel chronologically younger than

their age avoid non-accommodation significantly more so than older workers who feel their chronological age or older. In respect to self-identification with culture, results reveal that older workers who identify with cultures other than North American tend to rely more than older workers who identify with North American culture on non-accommodative communication, and older workers who identify with North American culture tend to be more convergent than older workers who identify with cultures other than North American.

Practical implications of these findings concur that regardless of the perception of social others, the maintenance of a positive in-group perception is most crucial to positive intergenerational communication in the workplace, from an older worker's perspective relative to their communication with younger workers. Future workplace training practices, while teaching more fair and positive views of other social age groups in order to combat ageist sentiments, could thereby focus upon the maintenance of high self-esteem and self-concept in the workplace. This study most importantly found that valuation of one's age group leads to a positive desire to collaborate and transfer knowledge in the workplace - a process essential to the continued development and sustainability of the workplace.

APPENDIX 1:

INVITATION E-MAIL

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

You are being invited to participate in a study carried out by Sarah de Blois, a Communication MA student at the University of Ottawa, under the supervisor of Dr. Martine Lagacé, chair of the Communication program at the University of Ottawa.

The title of this study is **Older worker's perspectives on age and aging: exploring predictors of communication patterns and knowledge transfer.**

To participate in this study, we ask only that you are currently working in the workforce and are currently fifty years in age or beyond.

The purpose of this study is to explore how ageist beliefs and stereotypes mediate communication and knowledge transfer in the workplace. This project will be conducted from an older worker's perspective and will compare the two linguistic groups of English and French Canadians.

Please follow the two links to act as participant in this new and exciting study! This first link will lead you to more detailed information about the study, and includes a consent form, which you will be asked to agree to before you will be able to continue. The second link will lead you to www.fluidsurvey.com, where you will be asked to fill-out a questionnaire which should take you between 15-20 minutes and can be completed at a location most convenient for you.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated and works to advance knowledge in the field of Communication research.

Thank-you so much in advance for your participation!

COURRIEL D'INVITATION

Chère Madame, cher Monsieur,

Vous avez été invité à participer dans une étude menée par Sarah de Blois, une étudiante de M.A. en communication, à l'Université d'Ottawa, laquelle recherche est supervisée par Dr. Martine Lagacé, directrice du programme de Communication de l'Université d'Ottawa.

Le titre de ce projet est: **Les Perspectives des ouvriers plus âgé(e)s sur l'âge et le vieillissement: une exploration des facteurs qui influencent les modes de communication et le transfert des connaissances.**

Pour participer dans ce projet, nous demandons que vous soyez actuellement dans la main d'œuvre et que vous soyez âgé(e)s de cinquante ans ou plus.

Le but de cette étude est de faire une exploration des croyances et stéréotypes âgistes qui influencent la communication et la transfert de la connaissance dans la main d'œuvre. Ce project sera conduit d'une perspective des ouvriers âgé(e)s et comparera les deux groupes linguistiques des Canadiennes françaises et anglaises.

Veuillez suivre les deux liens suivantes pour participer dans cette étude passionnante! Le premier lien vous mènera à plus d'information détaillées au sujet de l'étude, et inclut une forme de consentement, cela qui doit être en accord avec pour continuer. La deuxième lien vous mènera vers www.fluidsurveys.com, où vous serez demandé de compléter une questionnaire qui devrait prendre entre 15-20 pour accomplir à un endroit qui est commode pour vous.

Votre participation dans cette étude est considérablement appréciée, et aide à l'avancement universitaire dans la domaine de la recherche en Communication.

Merci de votre précieuse participation!

APENDIX 2

CONSENT FORM

Title of the study: Older worker's perspectives on age and aging: predictors of communication patterns and knowledge transfer.

Name of Researcher: You have been invited to participate in a study carried out by Sarah de Blois, a Communication MA student at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Martine Lagacé, chair of the Communication program at the University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to explore how ageist beliefs and stereotypes mediate communication and knowledge transfer in the workplace. This project will be conducted from an older worker's perspective and will compare the two linguistic groups of English and French Canadians.

Participation: Participants are asked to currently be working in the workforce, and be aged fifty years and beyond. Participants are asked to follow the link in their invitation e-mail to a survey available through www.fluidsurveys.com. This survey will ask participants questions related to the intergenerational communication with younger workers within the workplace aged eighteen to twenty-four years. The survey should take between 15-20 minutes to complete at a location that is convenient for participants.

Risks: Risks are very minimal, if at all. The questions in the survey do however, relate to ageism in the workplace, which may create a sense of discomfort in response. The researcher provides assurance that every effort has and will continue to be made to minimize these risks, and advises participants to contact the **Mental Health Helpline** (1-866-531-2600) or the **Crisis Line** (within Ottawa: 613-722-6914, or outside Ottawa: 1-866-996-0991), should they feel the need.

Benefits: The benefits of this project include the advancement of knowledge in the field of Communication research, and participants' knowledge that they are aiding this process. It also provides participants, particularly older workers, with the opportunity to have their voices heard and their needs and modes of communication in the workforce studied. It also provides participants with the time to reflect on their communication with younger workers within the workplace, and better understand their role in this communication.

Confidentiality and anonymity: You have the right to withdraw from participation at any point during the survey process without any negative consequences. You are assured by the researcher and the supervisor that the information that you share as participant in this study will remain strictly confidential. All collected data will be used only for the purpose of this project in the better understanding of intergenerational communication in

the workplace. No information provided will enable you to be identified as the data will be analyzed collectively in order to protect your anonymity.

Conservation of data: The data collected via participation in the survey will be kept secure. Data will only be available to the researcher and the researcher's supervisor, and will be protected by lock or password in password-enabled, work e-mail accounts, in addition to in a www.fluidsurveys.com account. Any and all hard data will be kept and locked in Dr. Martine Lagacé's office, on the University of Ottawa's campus during the full conservation period. This conservation period will be of five years, and will begin upon completion of data collection. After five years, all data will be destroyed. Only the final report will remain.

Voluntary Participation: Participants have the right to withdraw from participation in the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions without any negative consequences.

Acceptance: I agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Sarah de Blois, which research is under the supervisor of Dr. Martine Lagacé. By filling out and submitting the questionnaire, I consent to participate in this study.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT

Titre du projet: Les Perspectives des ouvriers plus âgé(e)s sur l'âge et le vieillissement: une exploration des facteurs qui influencent les modes de communication et le transfert des connaissances.

Nom du chercheur: Nous vous invitons à participer à une étude effectuée par Sarah de Blois, candidate à la Maîtrise en communication à l'Université d'Ottawa; cette étude est supervisée par Dr. Martine Lagacé, Directrice du département de communication de l'Université d'Ottawa.

But de l'étude: Le but de cette étude est de mieux comprendre comment les croyances et les stéréotypes âgistes influencent la communication et le transfert des connaissances en milieu de travail. Nous souhaitons connaître particulièrement la perspective des ouvriers plus âgé(e)s sur cette question et du coup, comparer cette perspective d'un point de vue francophone et anglophone.

Participation: Le seul critère requis pour participer à l'étude est d'être un ouvrier plus âgé(e) de cinquante ans ou plus. Pour ce faire, vous n'avez qu'à cliquer sur le lien suivant, qui vous conduira au sondage ainsi qu'à d'autres informations, notamment sur le consentement : www.fluidsurveys.com. Le sondage comprend des questions qui touchent à la communication entre les générations au travail, particulièrement avec les travailleurs âgés de 18 à 24 ans. Le sondage prendra environ 15-20 minutes de votre temps et peut être complété à un endroit qui vous convient.

Risques: Les risques sont très minimaux, voire inexistants. Certaines questions portant sur l'âgisme au travail pourraient vous rendre mal à l'aise. Nous vous assurons que tout a été fait pour minimiser ces risques. En cas de malaise, nous vous invitons à communiquer avec la **Ligne d'aide sur la santé mentale** (1-866-531-2600) ou la **Ligne de Crise** (ville d'Ottawa: 613-722-6914, ou à l'extérieur d'Ottawa: 1-866-996-0991), si nécessaire.

Bienfaits: Cette étude permettra sans contredit de faire avancer les connaissances dans le domaine de la Communication et vous, comme participants, allez contribuer à cet avancement. L'étude donne aussi une voix aux ouvriers plus âgé(e)s, quant à leurs besoins et leurs modes de communication. Enfin, cette étude offre aux ouvriers plus âgé(e)s l'occasion de réfléchir sur leurs façons de communiquer avec leurs plus jeunes collègues.

Confidentialité et anonymat: Vous pouvez, à tout moment, vous retirer de ce projet sans aucun risque de représailles. Vous avez l'assurance du chercheur et de son superviseur que l'information que vous partagerez demeurera strictement confidentielle. Toutes les données recueillies ne seront utilisées qu'aux fins de cette étude dont le but est de comprendre la communication entre les générations en milieu de travail. Aucune donnée recueillie ne permettra de vous identifier et les analyses se feront en mode groupé, protégeant ainsi votre anonymat.

Conservation des données: Les données recueillies seront conservées de façon sécuritaire et seuls le chercheur et le superviseur y auront accès. Ces données seront protégées par le biais de mots de passe dans les comptes courriels du chercheur et du superviseur et dans le compte de www.fluidsurveys.com (aussi protégé par mot de passe). Toutes les données papiers seront conservées sous clef dans le bureau du superviseur, Dr. Martine Lagacé, sur le campus de l'Université d'Ottawa, cela pour la durée de la période de conservation des données, soit cinq ans, laquelle débutera dès la fin de la collecte de données. Après cette période de cinq ans, toutes les données seront détruites. Seulement le rapport final de l'étude sera conservé.

Participation volontaire: Les participants sont libres de se retirer en tout temps et/ou de refuser de répondre à certaines questions, sans aucun risque de représailles.

Acceptation: J'accepte de participer à cette étude, effectuée par Sarah de Blois, candidate de Maîtrise en communication à l'Université d'Ottawa, laquelle étude est supervisée par Dr. Martine Lagacé. En complétant et en soumettant le questionnaire, je consens à participer à cette étude.

Pour toutes questions quant à l'aspect éthique de cette étude, je peux m'adresser au Responsable de l'éthique en recherche, Université d'Ottawa, Pavillon Tabaret, 550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154, ou ethics@uottawa.ca

APPENDIX 3 :
QUESTIONNAIRE:

Section 1:

Socio-demographic information:

1. My gender is:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. I identify with the following age category (please click on one category only):

- ☐ 50-60 years
- ☐ 61-70 years
- ☐ 71-80 years
- ☐ 81+ years

3. Which cultural group do you identify with the most (ex: South Asian, South American, African, etc.): _____

Professional Information:

1. My job title is as follows: _____

Section 2

In this section, we want to know what you think about younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years. Using the following scale, please answer the following:

Completely Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Agree Completely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years are...

1. Immature*: _____
2. Experienced: _____
3. Naïve*: _____
4. Eager to impress*: _____
5. Worldly: _____
6. Lazy*: _____
7. Responsible: _____
8. Self-centered*: _____
9. Committed: _____
10. Delinquent*: _____
11. Have a high degree of knowledge with technology: _____
12. Disruptive*: _____
13. Enthusiastic: _____
14. More involved in their social lives than in their work*: _____
15. More physically prepared for workforce demands than older workers: _____
16. (Tend) to slack off*: _____
17. More mentally prepared for workforce demands than older workers: _____
18. Resistant to adult responsibilities*: _____

Section 3

In this section, we want to know how you think younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 view YOU. Using the following scale, please answer the following:

Completely Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Agree Completely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I think that younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years think that as a worker, I am:

1. Skilled: _____
2. (have) a weak memory*: _____
3. Miserable/Unhappy with my life*: _____
4. Wise: _____
5. (have) declining cognitive skills*: _____
6. Honest: _____
7. Needy/Reliant on younger generation*: _____
8. Reliable: _____
9. Experienced: _____
10. Less mentally astute as compared to younger employees*: _____
11. Interpersonally skilled: _____
12. Unwilling to follow training*: _____
13. Effective on the job: _____
14. Old-Fashioned*: _____
15. Stable: _____
16. Resistant to change*: _____
17. Inflexible*: _____
18. Confident: _____
19. Lazy*: _____
20. Committed to my job: _____
21. (don't) adapt much to technology*: _____
22. Resentful of younger workers*: _____

Section 4

In this section, reflect on your daily interactions with younger adults aged 18-24 in the workforce. Using the following scale, please answer the following:

Completely Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Agree Completely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When communicating with younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years:

1. I am supportive: _____
2. I am helpful: _____
3. I provide useful advice: _____
4. I am complimentary: _____
5. I use kind words: _____
6. I am considerate: _____
7. I order them to do things: _____
8. I act superior: _____
9. I know more than they do: _____
10. I am better than them: _____
11. I speak in a respectful manner: _____
12. I am obliged to be polite: _____
13. I do not criticize: _____
14. I wait until asked to speak: _____
15. I avoid certain topics: _____
16. I remain silent if my opinions conflict with theirs: _____
17. I hold back my opinions: _____
18. I restrain myself from arguing with them: _____
19. I need to change my typical communication behaviors to better relate to these workers: _____
20. I need to change my typical communication behaviors to indicate my authority over these workers: _____
21. I do not feel the need in any way to change my typical communication behaviors*: _____

Section 5:

In this section, reflect on younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years. Using the following scale, please answer the following:

Completely Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Agree Completely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In respect to younger adults in the workforce aged 18-24 years...

1. I voluntarily transfer knowledge without being asked: _____
2. I transfer knowledge only when asked*: _____
3. I transfer knowledge because I have to (it is my job)*: _____
4. I transfer knowledge because I am happy to: _____
5. I have the intention to transfer knowledge more frequently: _____
6. I always do my best to share my knowledge: _____
7. I feel as though younger workers have a lot to learn from older workers: _____
8. I feel as though younger workers need the experience of older workers: _____

Section 6:

Many people sometimes feel older or younger than they actually are.
What age do you feel at this moment?

At this moment, I feel_____ years old.

Thank-you very much for participating in this survey.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Section 1:

Information démographique

1. Je suis :

- ☐ une femme
- ☐ un homme

2. Je m'identifie avec le groupe d'âge suivant (ne cliquez qu'un seul groupe):

- ☐ 50-60 ans
- ☐ 61-70 ans
- ☐ 71-80 ans
- ☐ 81+ ans

3. Avec quel groupe culturel vous identifiez-vous le plus? (ex: Asiatiques du Sud, Sud Américains, Africains, etc.):

Information Professionnelle:

1. Indiquez le titre de votre poste:

Section 2

Dans cette section, nous voulons connaître votre perception des plus jeunes travailleurs, âgé(e)s de 18-24 ans. Indiquez votre réponse à l'aide de l'échelle ci bas.

Tout à fait en désaccord	En désaccord	Légèrement en désaccord	Ni en accord ni en désaccord	Légèrement en accord	En accord	Tout à fait en accord
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Les travailleurs âgé(e)s de 18-24 ans...

1. sont immatures*: _____
2. ont de l'expérience: _____
3. sont naïfs*: _____
4. veulent impressionner*: _____
5. ont une grande connaissance du monde: _____
6. sont paresseux*: _____
7. sont responsables: _____
8. sont égocentriques*: _____
9. sont dévoués: _____
10. sont délinquants*: _____
11. ont beaucoup de connaissances technologiques: _____
12. sont dérangeants*: _____
13. sont enthousiastes: _____
14. sont plus engagés dans leur vie sociale que dans leur travail*: _____
15. sont plus préparés au plan physique pour répondre aux besoins de la main d'œuvre que leurs collègues seniors: _____
16. ne sont pas rigoureux*: _____
17. sont plus préparés au plan mental pour répondre aux besoins de la main d'œuvre que leurs collègues seniors: _____
18. sont réticents à assumer des responsabilités adultes*: _____

Section 3

Dans cette section, nous vous demandons de réfléchir à la façon dont vous pensez que les travailleurs âgé(e)s de 18-24 ans, vous perçoivent. Indiquez votre réponse à l'aide de l'échelle ci bas.

Tout à fait en désaccord	En désaccord	Légèrement en désaccord	Ni en accord ni en désaccord	Légèrement en accord	En accord	Tout à fait en accord
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Je pense que les travailleurs âgé(e)s de 18 à 24 ans me perçoivent comme travailleur...

1. compétent: _____
2. ayant peu de mémoire*: _____
3. malheureux/peu satisfait de ma vie*: _____
4. sage: _____
5. dont les habiletés cognitives diminuent*: _____
6. honnête: _____
7. exigeant /demandant beaucoup des plus jeunes générations*: _____
8. fiable: _____
9. ayant de l'expérience: _____
10. moins alerte au plan mental que les plus jeunes*: _____
11. qui a des habiletés interpersonnelles: _____
12. peu intéressé à faire de la formation*: _____
13. efficace au travail: _____
14. désuet*: _____
15. stable: _____
16. résistant au changement*: _____
17. rigide*: _____
18. confiant: _____
19. paresseux*: _____
20. dédié à mon travail: _____
21. qui s'adapte peu à la technologie*: _____
22. amer à l'égard des jeunes travailleurs*: _____

Section 4

Dans cette section, nous vous demandons de réfléchir à vos interactions quotidiennes avec vos collègues âgé(e)s entre 18-24 ans. Indiquez votre réponse à l'aide de l'échelle ci bas.

Tout à fait en désaccord	En désaccord	Légèrement en désaccord	Ni en accord ni en désaccord	Légèrement en accord	En accord	Tout à fait en accord
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Lorsque je communique avec collègues plus jeunes...

1. Je les appuie: _____
2. Je suis aidant: _____
3. Je leurs donne de précieux conseils: _____
4. Je les complimente: _____
5. J'utilise des mots aimables à leur égard: _____
6. Je suis attentionné: _____
7. Je leurs ordonne de faire certaines choses: _____
8. J'agis en supérieur: _____
9. Je sais plus qu'ils n'en savent: _____
10. Je suis meilleur qu'eux: _____
11. Je leurs parle de façon respectueuse: _____
12. Je me sens obligé d'être poli: _____
13. Je ne les critique pas: _____
14. J'attends jusqu'à ce que l'on me demande de parler: _____
15. J'évite certains sujets: _____
16. Je reste silencieux si mes opinions sont différentes des leurs: _____
17. Je n'énonce pas mes opinions: _____
18. J'évite d'avoir des arguments avec eux: _____
19. Je dois changer ma façon habituelle de communiquer pour mieux entrer en contact avec eux: _____
20. Je dois changer ma façon habituelle de communiquer pour marquer mon autorité: _____

21. Je ne sens pas du tout la nécessité de changer ma façon habituelle de communiquer*:

Section 5

Dans cette section, nous vous demandons de réfléchir de nouveau aux ouvriers plus âgé(e)s de 18 à 24 ans. Indiquez votre réponse à l'aide de l'échelle ci bas.

Tout à fait en désaccord	En désaccord	Légèrement en désaccord	Ni en accord ni en désaccord	Légèrement en accord	En accord	Tout à fait en accord
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Pour les travailleurs âgé(e)s de 18-24 ans...

1. Je transfère volontiers mes connaissances sans qu'on me le demande: _____
2. Je transfère mes connaissances seulement si on me le demande*: _____
3. Je transfère mes connaissances parce que je dois le faire (c'est mon travail)*: _____
4. Je transfère mes connaissances parce que je suis heureux de le faire: _____
5. J'ai l'intention de transférer mes connaissances plus fréquemment: _____
6. Je fais toujours de mon mieux pour partager mes connaissances: _____
7. Je pense qu'ils ont beaucoup à apprendre des travailleurs plus âgés: _____
8. Je pense qu'ils ont besoin de l'expérience des travailleurs plus âgés: _____

Section 6:

Beaucoup de personnes se sentent parfois plus âgé(e)s ou plus jeunes qu'ils/qu'elles sont réellement. Quel âge considérez-vous avoir en ce moment ?

_____ ans.

Merci de votre précieuse participation à cette étude!

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