Digital Communications in the Workplace

How do technological advances affect communication and collaboration in the intergenerational workplace?

Subsidiary Questions:

- Do digital communications improve collaboration among generationally diverse team members?
- What are the effects of generational faultline activation on team communication and collaboration in intergenerational groups?

Study Motivation

Today’s Aging & Changing Workplace

- By 2019, over 40% of Americans aged 55+ will be employed, making up over 25% of the US labor force (US Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- Members of age diverse groups have dissimilar work values which may lead to miscommunication and less collaboration (Cennamo & Gardener, 2008; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002)
- Organizational investment in new technology is rising, with as much as 50% of all new capital investments in technology (US Bureau of Economic Analysis)

Mixed Effects of Age Diversity and Few Studies on the Impact of Technology

- Age diverse teams experience more problems in decision making, lower team performance, and higher turnover rates (Knight et al., 1999)
- Teams with high age diversity experienced less overall conflict (Pellet et. al., 1999)
- Current technology studies define “technology” broadly and focus on its impact on individual employees (Stein et. al., 2013, Elias et. al., 2012)

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