

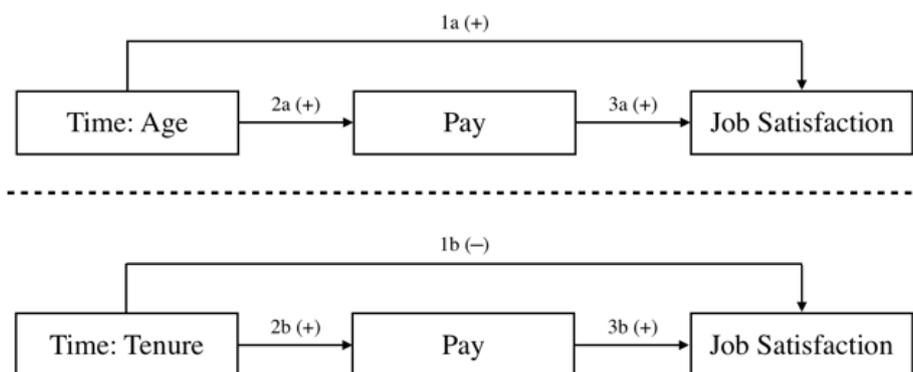
Does Job Satisfaction Increase with Time?

Key Finding: The paper distinguishes between two concepts of time—age and tenure—and shows that age and tenure affect job satisfaction in opposite directions (positively and negatively, respectively) after taking their effects on pay into account.

Executive Summary: Organizational researchers have long discussed how different metrics of time affect job satisfaction. Given the lack of simultaneous consideration of different time metrics, the question has remained unanswered. Tenure’s effect, in particular, has been subject to dispute, with studies providing conflicting evidence on the direction and shape of its relationship with satisfaction. In an effort to resolve this dispute, the paper provides empirical evidence indicating the existence of the relationships illustrated in the figure below.

When distinguishing between age (a) and organizational tenure (b), the paper finds that both metrics of time have positive indirect effects on job satisfaction, as both tend to increase pay (2a and 2b), which in turn tends to increase job satisfaction (3a and 3b). However, the main finding of the paper is that age and tenure have opposing direct effects. The direct effect of age (1a) is to make employees more satisfied with their jobs. Explanations might include changes in work values and expectations with age, the possibility that older people have more attractive jobs or are simply inherently more satisfied, or a selection bias in the data.

More controversially, the direct effect of organizational tenure (1b) is to make employees less satisfied with their job. The most obvious explanation may be that longer tenure tends to increase boredom due to a lack of learning opportunities.



Note: Adapted from Riza et al. (2016).

What are the practical implications for my organization?

- As job satisfaction declines as organizational tenure increases, managers should consider offering employees opportunities that mimic the novelty of organizational shifts, such as job rotation or relocation assignments.
- When managing generationally diverse workforces, managers should recognize that older employees are likely to be more satisfied regardless of their tenure.
- Individuals can use the insights provided in the paper to adjust expectations and as inputs in career decision making by, for instance, planning periodical organizational shifts.

Summary of: Riza, S. D., Ganzach, Y., and Liu, Y. (2016), Time and Job Satisfaction: A Longitudinal Study of the Differential Roles of Age and Tenure, *Journal of Management*, 1-22.