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A Tale of Two Voices: Demystifying How Gen Z Speaks Up at Work

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Abstrak. Perilaku bersuara penting bagi efektivitas organisasi namun kajian yang menyoroti Generasi Z relatif terbatas. Hal ini menjadi ironi mengingat Gen Z yang semakin mendominasi pasar kerja dikenal berani menyuarakan pendapat di tempat kerja. Penelitian ini mengungkap bagaimana pegawai Gen Z bersuara promotif dan prohibitif yang dipengaruhi masa kerja, posisi jabatan dan gender. Melalui pengambilan sampel berdasarkan kemudahan, penelitian ini mensurvei 270 pegawai Gen Z di Indonesia menggunakan Skala Perilaku Bersuara untuk dianalisa dengan uji t sampel berpasangan, analisis regresi dan moderasi. Hasil menunjukkan skor suara promotif (M = 18,47, SD = 3,67) signifikan lebih tinggi dibandingkan suara prohibitif (M = 18,13, SD = 3,77), t(269) = 2,215, p = 0,028. Masa kerja dan posisi jabatan signifikan memprediksi kedua jenis perilaku tersebut, sedangkan jenis kelamin signifikan memprediksi suara prohibitif. Analisis moderasi menunjukkan pengaruh positif masa kerja terhadap perilaku bersuara lebih kuat pada pegawai laki-laki dan mereka dengan posisi jabatan lebih tinggi. Temuan ini menyimpulkan perilaku bersuara pada Gen Z dipengaruhi faktor motivasional dan organisasional dan berkontribusi pada kajian pengaruh individu dan konteks terhadap perilaku bersuara serta memberikan manfaat praktis dalam membangun iklim kerja yang inklusif dan memberdayakan.

Keywords: Generasi Z, suara promotif, suara prohibitif, teori determinasi diri, teori identitas sosial.

Introduction

Employee voice—the act of expressing constructive suggestions or concerns aimed at improving organizational functioning—has long been recognized as a key contributor to workplace effectiveness and innovation (Morrison, 2023). In today's multigenerational workforce, understanding how different generational cohorts engage in voice behavior has become increasingly important (et al.,

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2016; Weaver, 2022). Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2010, is rapidly entering the labor market with distinct communication preferences, psychological expectations, and work values (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). Despite widespread assumptions about their willingness to speak up (Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021; Sanders, 2019), empirical evidence on how Gen Z engages in voice behavior in professional settings remains limited.

Previous studies have often treated voice as a unidimensional construct, with insufficient attention to the conceptual distinction between promotive voice—expressing new ideas for improvement—and prohibitive voice—raising concerns or preventing harm (Liang et al., 2012). Moreover, most research on employee voice has focused on Western populations or older generations, leaving a gap in understanding how voice is shaped by generational identity in non-Western contexts such as Indonesia (Laksmini et al., 2024). Demographic factors such as tenure, gender, and job position, which may influence access to voice or perceived legitimacy of speaking up, have also been underexplored among younger employees.

This study addresses these gaps by examining how Generation Z employees in Indonesia engage in both promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors, and how these behaviors are influenced by tenure, gender, and job position. Integrating self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) and social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), the study offers a novel framework that links individual motivation with social identity-based positioning. The findings aim to contribute to behavioral science by deepening our understanding of generational dynamics in proactive work behavior and informing strategies to cultivate inclusive, voice-supportive environments in diverse organizational contexts.

Self-determination theory posits that individuals are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors such as voice when their basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are fulfilled (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Tenure, for example, can enhance employees' sense of competence and legitimacy to speak up, especially among younger employees (Crant et al., 2011). Self-determination theory suggests that when Gen Z employees feel capable and autonomous, they are intrinsically motivated to contribute ideas (promotive voice) or raise concerns (prohibitive voice) for the betterment of the organization (Chong & Gagné, 2019; Zhao et al., 2022).

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1997) explains how individuals' group memberships—such as age cohort, gender, or job status—shape their workplace behaviors. Employees who identify with a generational group (e.g., Gen Z) may perceive voice behavior as a means of expressing and reinforcing their group identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Moreover, demographic characteristics such as gender and job position often influence perceived legitimacy and psychological safety in speaking up (Huang et al., 2021). Prior studies indicate that males and those in higher positions are more likely to voice concerns, especially prohibitive ones, due to greater access to power and reduced fear of retaliation (Cheng et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2022).

Voice behavior refers to discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or

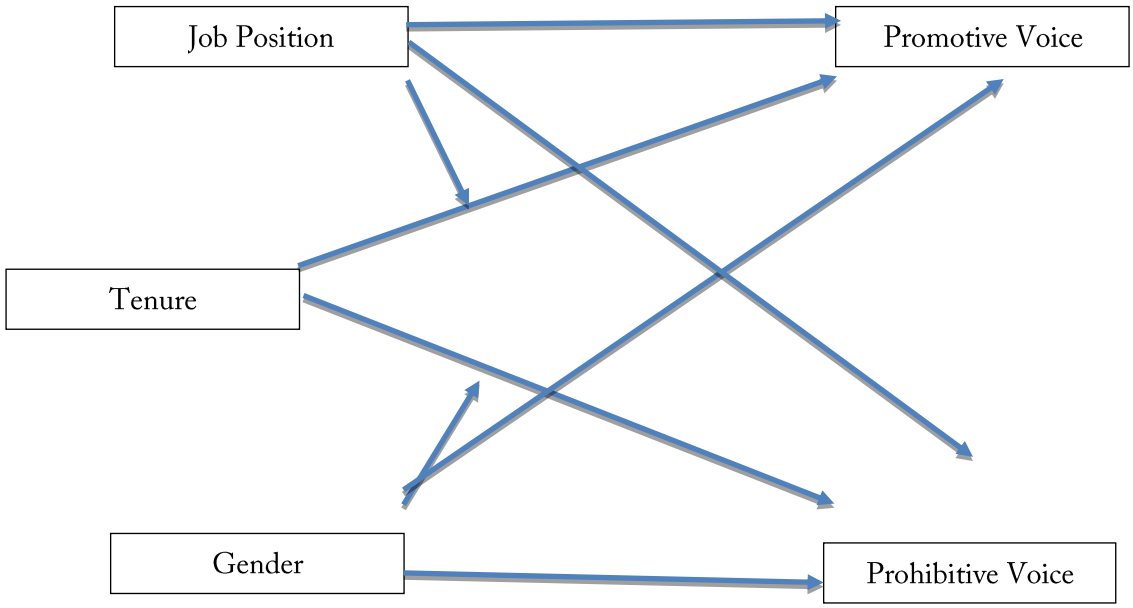
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opinions with the intent of improving organizational functioning (Morrison, 2023). Liang et al. (2012) distinguished between two dimensions of voice: promotive voice, which involves suggesting new ideas for improvement, and prohibitive voice, which entails expressing concerns about practices or issues that may harm the organization. While promotive voice is future-oriented and constructive, prohibitive voice is preventive and often perceived as more socially risky (Maynes et al., 2024). Both forms are critical for innovation and ethical vigilance, yet they may be differently expressed depending on contextual and individual factors.

Research objective of this study is to examine how Gen Z employees in Indonesia engage in promotive and prohibitive voice, and how these behaviors are influenced by tenure, gender, and job position. Specifically, the study tests whether there is a significant difference between the two types of voice behavior, whether demographic factors predict voice behavior, and whether gender and position moderate these relationships.

Figure 1.

Proposed Conceptual Framework



Research Hypotheses

H1. Promotive voice and prohibitive voice differ significantly.

H2a. Tenure positively predicts promotive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H2b. Tenure positively predicts prohibitive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H3a. Job position significantly predicts promotive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H3b. Job position significantly predicts prohibitive voice of Generation Z employees in

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Indonesia.

H4a. Gender significantly predicts promotive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H4b. Gender significantly predicts prohibitive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H5a. Job position moderates the relationship between tenure and promotive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H5b. Job position moderates the relationship between tenure and prohibitive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H6a. Gender moderates the relationship between tenure and promotive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H6b. Gender moderates the relationship between tenure and prohibitive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

Method

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the differences between promotive and prohibitive voice behavior among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. The design enabled the analysis of promotive and prohibitive voice as well as demographic variables such as tenure, gender, and job position. The use of established voice behavior scales and demographic predictors supports the empirical investigation of hypothesized relationships

The research was conducted in Indonesia, focusing on young employees from various urban areas who were born between 1995 and 2010, categorized as Generation Z. Participants were recruited from diverse industries such as education, retail, hospitality, finance and creative sectors. The online survey allowed participants from different regions of Indonesia to participate. This broad geographic and industry coverage enhances the generalizability of the findings within the Indonesian Gen Z workforce context.

Participants were recruited in February-March 2025 using purposive sampling to target members of Generation Z who were actively employed in various sectors across Indonesia. The inclusion criteria were: 1) aged 18-28 years old, 2) currently working in a full-time or part-time position, and 3) having a minimum of 2 years of work experience in their current or previous organization to ensure participants had sufficient organizational exposure to express voice behavior. This results in 270 participants.

A priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1 to determine the minimum required sample size for multiple regression analysis. Assuming a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), an alpha level of .05, and power of .95 with up to 7 demographic variables as predictors, the required sample size was 153. A total of 270 valid responses were retained after data cleaning and screening. With 270 valid

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responses, the study exceeded this minimum requirement, ensuring sufficient statistical power for hypothesis testing.

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of two main sections: (1) demographic information, and (2) standardized scales measuring promotive and prohibitive voice behavior. Voice behavior was measured using the voice behavior scale developed by Liang et al. (2012), which distinguishes between two dimensions: promotive voice (5 items, e.g., "I proactively develop and make new suggestions for issues that may influence the unit/organization") and prohibitive voice (5 items, e.g., "I advise other colleagues against undesirable behaviors that would hamper job performance"). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The Indonesian version of the scale was developed using a rigorous forward-backward translation procedure conducted by bilingual experts. A pilot test was conducted with 30 participants to assess clarity, cultural relevance, and item reliability prior to full deployment. The internal consistency of the instrument was excellent, promotive voice Cronbach's alpha=.90 with Pearson's r .77-.89 and prohibitive voice Cronbach's alpha=.92 with Pearson's .84-.92.

The survey used Survey Monkey app and was conducted online using JakPat (Jajak Pendapat), a popular Indonesian mobile survey platform with over one million registered respondents through its app-based interface. An informed consent page was presented at the beginning of the online survey. To encourage engagement, participants were offered the chance to enter a lucky draw, with ten selected participants receiving a mobile credit reward of IDR 50,000 each.

The use of this instrument followed established ethical standards. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows demographic variables comprising of a total of 270 Generation Z employees (134 male, 136 female) employed across various industries including education, retail, finance, creative sectors, and hospitality all over Indonesia. The majority held full-time positions, and all had a minimum of two years of work experience. Job positions were categorized into entry-level, mid-level, upper-level and top-level, ranging in 18-28 years of age (M=24.13, SD=2.90).

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Table 1.

Demographic Variables

	Gender	Marital	Age	Education	Tenure	Position	Industry
Valid	270	270	270	270	270	270	270
Mean	1.50	1.26	24.13	1.75	3.15	1.19	4.63
SD	.50	.45	2.90	.95	1.70	.75	3.12
Minimum	1.00	1.00	18.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	2.00	3.00	28.00	5.00	12.00	4.00	12.00

Table 2 shows correlation among the study variables. A strong and positive correlation was found between promotive voice and prohibitive voice (r = .76), suggesting that individuals who are more likely to speak up with constructive suggestions (promotive voice) also tend to express concerns and warnings (prohibitive voice). Among all demographic variables examined, tenure, job position dan gender emerged as the most relevant correlates of voice behavior, showing statistically significant associations with both promotive and prohibitive voice.

Table 2.

Correlation among the Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
PMV	1.00								
PBV	.76***	1.00							
GEN	-.22***	-.22***	1.00						
MAR	.04	.02	.05	1.00					
AGE	.11	.08	.00	.034***	1.00				
EDU	-.07	-.06	.21***	.13*	.04***	1.00			
TEN	.14*	.13*	-.01	.15*	.28***	.00	1.00		
JOB	.23***	.23***	-.03	.15*	.11	.14*	.10	1.00	
IND	-.11	-.13*	-.03	.00	.06	.10	-.07	-.04	1.00

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ Code: PMV=Promotive Voice, PBV=Prohibitive Voice, GEN=Gender, MAR=Marital Status, EDU=Educational Background, TEN=Tenure, JOB=Job Position, IND=Industry

Hypothesis Testing Results

To examine the study hypotheses, a series of paired-sample t-tests, multiple linear regressions, and moderation analyses were conducted.

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H1. Promotive voice and prohibitive voice differ significantly.

H1 predicted that promotive and prohibitive voice would differ significantly. The paired-sample t-test confirmed this hypothesis: Promotive voice (M= 18.47, SD= 3.67) was significantly higher than prohibitive voice (M= 18.13, SD= 3.77, $t(269) = 2.215$, $p = .028$). Hence, H1 is supported.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics and Paired Samples t-Test Comparing Promotive and Prohibitive Voice

Variable Pair	M	SD
Promotive Voice	18.47	3.67
Prohibitive Voice	18.13	3.77

Test	T	*Df*	*p*
Paired t-tes	2.22	269	.03 *

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

H2a. Tenure positively predicts promotive voice.

H2b. Tenure positively predicts prohibitive voice.

H2a and H2b proposed that tenure would positively predict both types of voice behavior. Regression analysis showed that: Tenure positively predicted promotive voice (β =.14) and positively predicted prohibitive voice (β=.13). Hence, H2a and H2b are supported.

Table 4.

Regression Results for Tenure Predicting Promotive and Prohibitive Voice

Outcome Variable	Predictor	*β*	*p*
Promotive Voice	Tenure	.14	.02
Prohibitive Voice	Tenure	.13	.03

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

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H3a. Job position significantly predicts promotive voice.

H3b. Job position significantly predicts prohibitive voice.

The regression analyses revealed that job position significantly predicted both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior among Gen Z employees. Using entry-level position as the reference category, results showed that Gen Z employees in middle-level and upper-level positions reported significantly higher levels of voice behavior compared to their entry-level counterparts. For promotive voice, both middle-level (β = 2.620, p < .001) and upper-level employees (β = 3.312, p = .011) were significantly more likely to speak up with ideas for improvement. However, those in top-level positions (β = 2.813, p = .141) did not differ significantly from entry-level employees, despite showing a higher mean score. This may suggest that top-level Gen Z employees, while positioned to initiate change, may rely on formal authority rather than upward communication to express their views. A similar pattern was observed for prohibitive voice. Middle-level (β = 2.214, p = .007) and upper-level employees (β = 4.056, p = .002) again exhibited significantly higher levels of voice compared to entry-level employees. However, the difference between top-level and entry-level employees was not statistically significant (β = 1.656, p = .393).

Overall, the findings suggest that position within the organizational hierarchy influences the likelihood of Gen Z employees to speak up, particularly among those in mid- to senior-level roles. Entry-level employees appear more reluctant to voice concerns or suggest improvements, possibly due to perceived power distance or lack of confidence. Hence, H3a and H3b are supported.

Table 5.

Regression Results for Job Position Predicting Promotive and Prohibitive Voice

Outcome Variable	Predictor	β	p
Promotive Voice	Middle-Level	2.62	< .001 ***
	Upper-Level	3.31	.01 *
	Top-Level	2.81	.14
Prohibitive Voice	Middle-Level	2.21	.01 **
	Upper-Level	4.06	.00 **
	Top-Level	1.66	.39

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001 Code: 1= Entry-Level.

H4a. Gender significantly predicts promotive voice.

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H4b. Gender significantly predicts prohibitive voice.

The regression analysis demonstrated that gender significantly predicted both promotive and prohibitive voice among Gen Z employees. Using male employees (coded as 1) as the reference group, results showed that female employees (coded as 2) reported significantly lower levels of both types of voice behavior. For promotive voice, the coefficient was negative and statistically significant (β = -1.622, p < .001), indicating that female employees were, on average, 1.622 points lower in promotive voice compared to their male counterparts. Similarly, for prohibitive voice, the regression coefficient was also negative and significant (β = -1.639, p < .001), suggesting that female employees were also less likely to engage in prohibitive voice behaviors. Hence, H4a and H4b are supported. These results imply that male Gen Z employees are more likely to speak up—both to suggest improvements (promotive voice) and to raise concerns or warn against harmful practices (prohibitive voice)—compared to their female peers. The findings may reflect underlying gender norms, confidence disparities, or perceived psychological safety differences in organizational settings.

Table 6.

Regression Results for Gender Predicting Promotive and Prohibitive Voice

Outcome Variable	Predictor	β	p
Promotive Voice	Gender	-1.62	< .001 ***
Prohibitive Voice	Gender	-1.64	< .001 ***

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001 Code: 1 = Male.

H5a. Job position moderates the relationship between tenure and promotive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

H5b. Job position moderates the relationship between tenure and prohibitive voice of Generation Z employees in Indonesia.

Table 7 presents the results of the moderation analysis examining whether job position moderates the relationship between tenure and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior. For promotive voice, tenure had a significant positive effect (β = 4.366, p < .001), suggesting that employees with longer tenure are more likely to engage in promotive voice. Job position (dummy coded as 1 = Entry-Level) also showed a significant positive effect (β = 17.531, p < .001), indicating that entry-level employees, on average, reported higher promotive voice compared to those in other positions. Most notably, the interaction between tenure and job position was significant and negative (β = −4.208, p < .001), supporting the idea that the effect of tenure on promotive voice was stronger

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among entry-level employees than their higher-level counterparts. Similarly, for prohibitive voice, both tenure (β = 4.299, p < .001) and job position (β = 16.936, p < .001) were significant predictors. The interaction between tenure and job position was again significant and negative (β = −4.082, p < .001), indicating that entry-level employees show a more pronounced increase in prohibitive voice as their tenure grows, compared to those in middle, upper, or top-level positions. Hence, H5a and H5b are supported.

These findings demonstrates that job position significantly moderates the effect of tenure on both forms of voice behavior. The results suggest that among entry-level Gen Z employees, longer tenure is particularly empowering, increasing both their willingness to suggest improvements (promotive voice) and to raise concerns (prohibitive voice).

Table 7.

Regression Results for Job Position Moderating the Relationship Between Tenure and Voice

Outcome Variable	Predictor	β	p
Promotive Voice	Tenure	4.37	< .001 ***
	Job Position (1=Entry-Level)	17.53	< .001 ***
	Tenure x Job Position	-4.21	< .001 ***
Prohibitive Voice	Tenure	4.30	< .001 ***
	Job Position (1=Entry-Level)	16.95	< .001 ***
	Tenure x Job Position	-4.08	< .001 ***

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001 Job Position dummy code: 1= Entry-Level, 2=Middle-Level, 3=Upper-Level, 4=Top-Level

H6a. Gender moderates the relationship between tenure and promotive voice.

H6b. Gender moderates the relationship between tenure and prohibitive voice.

The results presented in Table 8 provide strong evidence that gender significantly moderates the relationship between tenure and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior among employees. For promotive voice, tenure had a significant positive effect (β = 4.800, p < .001), indicating that employees with longer tenure were more likely to engage in promotive voice. Gender was also a significant predictor (β = 18.437, p < .001), with males reporting higher promotive voice behavior. Importantly, the interaction between tenure and gender was significant and negative (β = −4.542, p < .001), suggesting that the positive effect of tenure on promotive voice was stronger among male

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employees than their female counterparts. Similarly, for prohibitive voice, tenure remained a significant positive predictor (β = 4.708, p < .001), and gender was again positively associated with prohibitive voice (β = 18.179, p < .001). The interaction between tenure and gender was also significant (β = −4.473, p < .001), further confirming that tenure had a more pronounced effect on prohibitive voice among males. Hence, H6a and H6b are supported.

Overall, these findings support hypothesis 6a and 6b, highlighting gender as a significant moderator in the relationship between tenure and voice behavior. The results suggest that as male employees gain more tenure, they are more likely to speak up—both to promote positive change and to challenge problematic practices—compared to female employees. A significant interaction was found between tenure and gender in predicting promotive voice behavior (β = −4.542, t = −13.406, p < .001), indicating that gender moderates the relationship between tenure and promotive voice. Specifically, the positive effect of tenure on promotive voice was stronger among male employees compared to their female counterparts.

Table 8.

Regression Results for Gender Moderating the Relationship Between Tenure and Voice

Outcome Variable	Predictor	β	p
Promotive Voice	Tenure	4.80	< .001 ***
	Gender (1=Male)	18.44	< .001 ***
	Tenure x Gender	-4.54	< .001 ***
Prohibitive Voice	Tenure	4.71	< .001 ***
	Gender (1=Male)	18.18	< .001 ***
	Tenure x Gender	-4.47	< .001 ***

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001 Gender dummy code: 1 = Male, 0 = Female

The results of hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 9. As shown, most hypotheses were supported, including the predictive effects of tenure, job position, and gender on voice behavior. While gender did not significantly predict promotive voice (H4a), it did significantly predict prohibitive voice (H4b). Moderation analyses revealed that both job position and gender significantly strengthened the positive relationship between tenure and prohibitive voice (H5b and H6b), whereas no significant interactions were found for promotive voice (H5a and H6a).

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Table 9.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

H	Statement	Decision
H1	Promotive voice and prohibitive voice differ significantly	Supported
H2a	Tenure positively predicts promotive voice.	Supported
H2b	Tenure positively predicts prohibitive voice.	Supported
H3a	Job position significantly predicts promotive voice.	Supported
H3b	Job position significantly predicts prohibitive voice.	Supported
H4a	Gender significantly predicts promotive voice.	Supported
H4b	Gender significantly predicts prohibitive voice.	Supported
H5a	Job position moderates the relationship between tenure and promotive voice.	Supported
H5b	Job position moderates the relationship between tenure and prohibitive voice.	Supported
H6a	Gender moderates the relationship between tenure and promotive voice.	Supported
H6b	Gender moderates the relationship between tenure and prohibitive voice.	Supported

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study investigated how tenure, job position, and gender influence two distinct types of employee voice—promotive and prohibitive voice—among Indonesian Gen Z employees. The results provide strong empirical support for all proposed hypotheses and offer several important theoretical and practical insights. First, as hypothesized, promotive and prohibitive voice significantly differed, reinforcing the notion that these two types of voice behavior represent distinct yet complementary constructs. This supports prior work suggesting that promotive voice (suggesting improvements) and prohibitive voice (raising concerns) are driven by different motivational mechanisms and may be expressed differently across individuals and situations.

Both tenure and job position were found to be significant predictors of voice behavior. Longer tenure was associated with higher levels of both promotive and prohibitive voice, suggesting that as Gen Z employees gain experience, they become more comfortable and confident in expressing themselves. Job position also significantly predicted voice, with employees in higher-level positions engaging in more voice behavior—likely due to increased access to decision-making and greater perceived psychological empowerment. Gender also played a role, with male employees reporting significantly higher levels of prohibitive voice than females. This finding may reflect gender-based differences in assertiveness norms or in perceptions of psychological safety within the workplace. Crucially, the study found that both job position and gender moderated the relationship between tenure and voice. The positive effect of tenure on voice was stronger among male employees and those in higher-level positions. This suggests that while tenure helps build confidence to speak up, the

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benefits of accumulated experience are amplified when employees already hold a more privileged structural or social position in the organization.

Taken together, these findings highlight that Gen Z's voice behavior is not only driven by individual motivation (e.g., tenure-based growth in confidence), but also by structural and social positioning within the organization. Employees in entry-level roles or from underrepresented groups may need additional support to feel empowered to speak up, even as they gain experience. Voice is not only about having something to say—it's also about knowing that it will be heard.

While this study provides valuable insights into Gen Z's voice behavior, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality. Although significant relationships were found between tenure, job position, gender, and voice behavior, the directionality of these effects cannot be definitively established. Future research using longitudinal or time-lagged designs could clarify how voice behavior evolves as tenure increases or job roles change. Second, the reliance on self-reported measures may have introduced common method bias and social desirability effects, particularly in a culturally sensitive context like prohibitive voice. Although anonymity was assured, future studies should consider using multi-source data (e.g., supervisor ratings or behavioral observation) to increase validity.

Third, while dummy coding for gender and job position enabled clear moderation testing, it also simplifies the complexity of structural power and identity in the workplace. For instance, our finding that tenure's effect is stronger among higher-level and male employees suggests that structural privilege may amplify behavioral gains. Future studies should explore these dynamics more deeply, possibly through intersectional or qualitative approaches. Lastly, the study focused on Indonesian Gen Z employees, which may limit generalizability to other cultural contexts. Given Indonesia's relatively high-power distance and collectivist values, the meaning and expression of voice may differ in more individualistic or egalitarian settings. Cross-cultural replication is needed to validate and expand upon these findings.

This study contributes to behavioral science by offering new insights into how individual development (tenure) interacts with social structures (gender and job position) to shape proactive behavior among Gen Z employees. The findings affirm that employee voice is not solely a function of individual motivation but also depends on one's location within the organizational hierarchy and sociocultural context. First, by confirming that the positive effect of tenure on voice is stronger among male and higher-level employees, the study highlights how structural privilege amplifies behavioral expression. This aligns with behavioral science perspectives emphasizing the role of power, perceived safety, and social reinforcement in shaping who speaks up—and who holds back.

Second, the differentiation between promotive and prohibitive voice reinforces the importance of analyzing voice behavior as multidimensional. These two forms of voice may be driven by different psychological mechanisms, and their expression may be differentially influenced by gender roles, authority structures, and perceived consequences. Third, the findings support the idea that voice is a

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learned and context-sensitive behavior. While tenure enables Gen Z employees to develop greater confidence over time, this growth is not equally translated into voice behavior across all groups. Behavioral scientists should therefore consider how organizational signals of inclusion and safety can either unlock or suppress voice among emerging employees.

Finally, this study suggests that promoting employee voice—especially among structurally less empowered groups—requires more than time or experience. It calls for intentional interventions informed by behavioral science, such as feedback culture, inclusive leadership, and psychological safety programs that actively reduce structural barriers to voice. In sum, the study advances the behavioral science of proactivity by illustrating how developmental trajectories intersect with power dynamics, shaping how and for whom voice emerges in the modern workplace.

This study provides robust evidence that tenure, job position, and gender are significant factors influencing promotive and prohibitive voice behavior among Gen Z employees. Tenure positively predicted both forms of voice, suggesting that workplace experience plays a crucial role in developing the confidence and motivation to speak up. Importantly, the findings revealed that job position and gender not only predict voice behavior directly but also moderate the effect of tenure. The positive impact of tenure on voice was stronger among male employees and those in higher-level positions, indicating that structural and social power amplifies the benefits of experience. In contrast, entry-level employees and female employees may face more barriers, even as they gain tenure.

These results underscore the need to view voice behavior as both a developmental and a context-dependent process. While Gen Z employees become empowered over time, organizational context still matters. Simply gaining experience is not enough—organizations must also address power imbalances and create environments where all employees feel psychologically safe and structurally supported to speak up. In sum, this study contributes to behavioral science by illuminating how individual growth and organizational structures interact to shape proactivity. To harness Gen Z's potential for innovation and continuous improvement, organizations must go beyond tenure and invest in inclusive voice climates that support every employee, regardless of position or identity.

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