The Impact Of Employee Voices On Leadership Perspectives

Grace Yulianti*
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Kasih Bangsa, Indonesia

Alamat : Jl. Dr. Kasih No. 1, Kebon Jeruk, Jakarta 11530
*Author correspondence: grace@stiekasihbangsa.ac.id**

Abstract. This research explores the phenomenon of heedful challenging in organizational contexts, focusing on the role of organizational culture and leadershipstudy. The term "heedful challenging" describes proactive voice practices by lower-power staff members with the goal of enhancing innovation and corporate decision-making. The review synthesizes recent empirical studies to elucidate how supportive organizational cultures and transformational leadership styles facilitate heedful challenging, enhancing employee empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational adaptability. Key findings highlight the positive outcomes of thoughtful challenge, such as better organizational learning and decision-making procedures. Barriers such as fear of reprisals in hostile situations highlight how important it is to promote transparency and trust. The consequences for practitioners stress how crucial it is to foster inclusive cultures and use transformational leadership techniques in order to encourage employee voice activities.

Keywords : Heedful challenging, Organizational Culture, Transformational Leadership, Employee voice

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of lower-power employees in shaping leadership perspectives has garnered increasing attention in organizational studies. Previous studies on leadership have concentrated on the traits and actions of individuals in positions of authority, frequently ignoring the crucial impact that less powerful workers can have inside companies. However, recent studies have begun to highlight the significant impact that these employees can have on leadership dynamics through practices such as heedful challenging. This research explores how lower-power employees can effectively challenge organizational leaders and contribute to shaping their perspectives, providing valuable insights into the mechanisms and outcomes of such interactions.

To understand the function of lower-power personnel, one must grasp the dynamics of power within companies. The impact of power on behavior and decision-making has been the subject of much research on power dynamics in organizations (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Anderson & Brion, 2014; Kusnanto, E., & Rizal, M. 2024)). Power can have both good and bad effects, which can influence a leader's capacity for feedback and listening (Galinsky et al., 2006; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Organizational behavior is also significantly influenced by the idea of power distance, which describes how lower-power people tolerate and anticipate power to be distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1980). Recent research has emphasized the importance of lower-power employees' voices in organizational settings. For instance,

Kumandang and Hendriyeni (2021) highlight the role of corporate social responsibility and governance in shaping organizational behaviors, including the encouragement of employee voice. Ruslaini et al., (2024) discuss diversity management strategies, emphasizing the need for inclusive environments that support employee contributions. Morrison (2014, 2023) discusses the concept of employee voice and silence, highlighting the factors that encourage or inhibit employees from speaking up. The ability of lower-power employees to influence leadership is contingent on their willingness and ability to engage in what Dutton et al. (2001) describe as "issue selling," where employees advocate for specific issues to gain the attention of higher-ups.

Heedful challenging, as discussed by Barnes, L. Y., et al., (2023) refers to the deliberate and thoughtful ways in which lower-power employees can challenge their leaders. This process involves presenting ideas, feedback, or concerns in a manner that is respectful yet assertive, aiming to prompt reflection and change in leadership perspectives. The effectiveness of heedful challenging is influenced by several factors, including the organizational culture, the openness of leaders to feedback, and the social capital and informal status of the challengers (Agneessens & Wittek, 2012). Ashford et al. (1998) emphasize the role of context and impression management in the success of heedful challenging. Employees need to navigate the complexities of organizational hierarchies and power dynamics to ensure their challenges are perceived as constructive rather than confrontational. The ability to manage impressions effectively can determine whether their input is taken seriously by leaders (Jones, 1964).

The relationship between leaders and followers is a critical determinant of the impact of heedful challenging. High-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships, characterized by mutual trust and respect, can enhance the likelihood of lower-power employees influencing leaders (Aggarwal et al., 2020). Carmeli and Gittell (2009) found that high-quality relationships foster psychological safety, encouraging employees to speak up without fear of retribution. Campbell et al. (2008) discuss the relational ties that bind leaders and followers, suggesting that strong relational ties can lead to charismatic attributions, where followers perceive their leaders as more charismatic and effective. This perception can further facilitate open communication and heedful challenging, as employees feel more comfortable voicing their opinions and leaders are more receptive to feedback.

The role of lower-power employees in shaping leadership perspectives is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of organizational behavior. By providing thoughtful challenges, these staff members can offer insightful criticism that helps organizational leaders develop and become more effective. This qualitative evaluation emphasizes how crucial it is to establish

workplace cultures that value candid communication and provide lower-ranking staff members the confidence to voice their opinions. By doing this, businesses may develop more flexible and responsive leadership and fully utilize the potential of their personnel.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been an increasing interest in organizational research regarding the impact of lower-power employees on leadership viewpoints inside organizations. Research on leadership has typically concentrated on individuals in positions of authority, frequently ignoring the important role that people with less power can play. Nonetheless, new research has started to highlight the ways in which these workers might influence leadership dynamics by using strategies like mindful challenging. This study of the literature looks at how lower-power workers can influence leaders' viewpoints and effectively question them, offering insights into the workings and results of these kinds of interactions.

Comprehending the role of employees with lower power in an organization requires an understanding of power dynamics inside that organization. While Anderson and Brion (2014) emphasized the wider viewpoints on power in companies, Anderson and Berdahl (2002) discovered that power effects behavior and decision-making. Hofstede (1980) proposed the idea of power distance, which has a significant impact on how organizations behave as well as how much people with less power tolerate and anticipate unequal power distribution. The significance of the voices of lower-power employees has been highlighted by recent study. Morrison (2014) introduced the concept of employee voice and quiet while discussing the elements that either encourage or restrict employees from speaking up. Morrison (2023) also went over similar themes again, offering a ten-year perspective on employee voice and quiet. Dutton et al., (2001) investigated "issue selling," in which staff members promote particular concerns to get superiors' attention. They emphasized the significance of context and impression management in this procedure.

Barnes et al., (2023) introduced the concept of heedful challenging, describing it as a thoughtful and deliberate way for lower-power employees to challenge their leaders. The success of heedful challenging depends on factors such as organizational culture, leaders' openness to feedback, and the social capital of the challengers. Ashford et al., (1998) emphasized that employees must navigate organizational hierarchies and power dynamics to ensure their challenges are constructive rather than confrontational. Agneessens et al., (2012) highlighted the role of social capital and informal status in the effectiveness of heedful

challenging. They found that employees with strong social networks and informal influence are more likely to succeed in challenging leaders.

One important factor that influences the effectiveness of thoughtful confronting is the relationship between leaders and followers. The possibility of lower-power employees influencing leaders can be increased by high-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships that are marked by mutual trust and respect (Aggarwal et al., 2020). High-quality connections create psychological safety, which encourages staff members to speak up without fear of retaliation, according to research by Carmeli and Gittell (2009). In their discussion of the relationships that link leaders and followers, Campbell et al. (2008) make the case that close relationships might result in charismatic attributions, in which followers believe their leaders to be more effective and charismatic. Because leaders are more open to feedback and employees feel more comfortable stating their thoughts, this perception can further encourage open communication and thoughtful challenging.

3. METHODS

This literature review aims to explore the impact of lower-power employees on organizational leaders through heedful challenging. A qualitative approach is chosen for its ability to provide deep insights into the complex, context-dependent nature of social interactions and power dynamics within organizations (Creswell, 2013). This approach is well-suited for capturing the nuanced ways lower-power employees influence leadership perspectives, reflecting the richness of their experiences and strategies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The data for this review is gathered from a comprehensive search of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference proceedings relevant to heedful challenging, organizational culture, and leadership. Sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research questions. Thematic analysis is used to systematically examine the literature, identifying and reporting recurring themes and insights related to the influence of lower-power employees on leadership (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

4. RESULTS

The analysis of the selected literature reveals that heedful challenging, wherein lower-power employees thoughtfully and constructively challenge leadership decisions, plays a critical role in organizational dynamics. This behavior is often a means through which employees exercise their agency, contribute to decision-making processes, and influence

organizational outcomes. The effectiveness of heedful challenging depends significantly on the organizational culture and the receptiveness of leaders to employee input (Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 1999).

Heedful challenging has been shown to positively impact leadership decisions and foster organizational change. Studies indicate that when lower-power employees engage in this behavior, they can provide unique insights and perspectives that might otherwise be overlooked by higher-ups (Detert & Treviño, 2010). For instance, research by Ashford et al. (2009) demonstrates that employees who voice their concerns and suggestions can lead to improved decision-making processes by introducing diverse viewpoints. This, in turn, can enhance organizational adaptability and innovation (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Several factors influence the effectiveness of heedful challenging by lower-power employees. One key factor is the leadership style. Transformational leaders, who are more open to feedback and supportive of employee participation, tend to facilitate an environment where heedful challenging can thrive (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Conversely, authoritarian leadership styles may stifle such behaviors, leading to a lack of employee engagement and potential resistance to change (Detert & Burris, 2007).

Another critical factor is the organizational culture. A culture that values open communication, trust, and mutual respect is more likely to encourage employees to voice their concerns and challenge the status quo (Edmondson, 1999). In contrast, a culture of fear or retribution can deter employees from speaking up, thereby limiting the potential benefits of heedful challenging (Milliken et al., 2003).

Engaging in heedful challenging can have significant outcomes for lower-power employees themselves. Positive outcomes include increased job satisfaction, a sense of empowerment, and personal growth (Morrison, 2011). Employees who feel that their input is valued are more likely to experience higher levels of organizational commitment and motivation (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Empirical studies provide concrete examples of heedful challenging in action. For instance, research conducted by Detert and Treviño (2010) highlights cases in healthcare settings where nurses successfully influenced patient care policies by voicing their concerns and suggestions to management. Similarly, a study by Liang et al. (2012) in the manufacturing sector found that employees who engaged in constructive challenging helped identify inefficiencies and contributed to process improvements.

The thematic analysis of the literature reveals several key themes 1) the critical role of organizational culture: a supportive and open culture is essential for enabling heedful challenging; 2) leadership style: transformational leadership is conducive to employee voice

and influence; 3) outcomes for organizations and employees: positive impacts on decision-making, innovation, job satisfaction, and employee empowerment. 4) risks and barriers: potential negative consequences if challenges are not well-received, highlighting the need for receptive and adaptive leadership.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this literature review highlight the paramount importance of organizational culture in enabling heedful challenging among lower-power employees. A supportive and open culture fosters an environment where employees feel safe to voice their concerns and suggestions without fear of retribution. This aligns with Edmondson's (1999) concept of psychological safety, which posits that employees are more likely to engage in learning behaviors and contribute to decision-making processes in environments where they feel secure. Similarly, Milliken, Morrison, and Hewlin (2003) found that organizations with a culture of openness and trust had higher levels of employee voice, as employees felt more comfortable speaking up about issues and ideas.

Comparatively, Ashford et al. (2009) emphasize the importance of organizational culture in their study on the leadership dynamics of voice in organizations. They argue that a culture that encourages open communication and values employee input can significantly enhance the effectiveness of heedful challenging. This is echoed by Morrison (2011), who notes that organizational culture is a critical antecedent of employee voice behavior. In organizations where the culture supports employee participation, employees are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors such as heedful challenging.

The literature consistently points to the pivotal role of leadership style in facilitating heedful challenging. Transformational leaders, who inspire and motivate employees through a vision and support for personal development, are particularly effective in this regard (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These leaders create an environment where employees feel valued and empowered to voice their concerns. Detert and Burris (2007) found that transformational leadership behavior is positively associated with employee voice, as employees perceive their leaders as open to feedback and supportive of their input. In contrast, authoritarian leadership styles, which are characterized by a top-down approach and limited employee involvement in decision-making, tend to stifle heedful challenging. Employees were more likely to voice their concerns and suggestions when they perceived their supervisors as open and supportive (Detert and Treviño, 2010)

Heedful challenging has been shown to have significant positive outcomes for organizations. One of the primary benefits is the improvement in decision-making processes. When employees at all levels of the organization are encouraged to voice their concerns and ideas, it leads to a more comprehensive evaluation of options and potential outcomes (Detert & Treviño, 2010). This aligns with the findings of Van Dyne and LePine (1998), who noted that employee voice behaviors contribute to organizational learning and innovation by introducing diverse perspectives and ideas. Ashford et al. (2009) further illustrate the benefits of heedful challenging by highlighting how employee voice can lead to improved problem-solving and adaptability. In their study, they found that organizations that encouraged employee input were better equipped to identify and address issues, leading to enhanced organizational performance. This is consistent with the findings of Liang et al. (2012), who demonstrated that proactive voice behaviors contributed to process improvements and increased organizational efficiency. Engaging in heedful challenging also has significant positive outcomes for employees. One of the key benefits is increased job satisfaction. When employees feel that their input is valued and that they can influence organizational decisions, they are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Morrison, 2011). This is supported by the findings of Van Dyne and LePine (1998), who noted that employees who engage in voice behaviors are more likely to feel empowered and motivated.

Additionally, heedful challenging can lead to personal growth and development for employees. By engaging in these behaviors, employees can develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which can enhance their career prospects and opportunities for advancement (Detert & Burris, 2007). This finding is echoed by Edmondson (1999), who noted that employees who engage in learning behaviors, including voice, are more likely to develop new skills and competencies.

Despite the numerous benefits of heedful challenging, there are also potential risks and barriers that need to be considered. One of the primary risks is the potential for negative repercussions if leaders do not respond favorably to challenges. Burris, (2012) found that employees who engaged in voice behaviors in unsupportive environments were more likely to experience negative outcomes, such as reduced job satisfaction and increased stress. This underscores the importance of supportive leadership and a conducive organizational culture. Another barrier to heedful challenging is the fear of retaliation. Milliken, Morrison, and Hewlin (2003) found that employees were often reluctant to speak up due to fears of negative consequences, such as being labeled as troublemakers or facing retribution from supervisors.

This fear can be exacerbated in organizations with authoritarian leadership styles, where employee input is not valued, and dissent is not tolerated.

Comparing the findings of this literature review with eight empirical studies provides further insights into the dynamics of heedful challenging in organizations. Detert and Burris (2007) found that leadership behavior is a critical determinant of employee voice. Transformational leaders were more likely to foster an environment where heedful challenging could thrive, while authoritarian leaders stifled such behaviors. Edmondson (1999) highlighted the importance of psychological safety in enabling employee voice. Organizations with a culture of trust and openness were more likely to encourage heedful challenging. Ashford et al. (2009) emphasized the role of organizational culture in facilitating employee voice. A culture that values open communication and employee input was associated with higher levels of heedful challenging. Morrison (2011) identified organizational culture as a critical antecedent of employee voice behavior. Employees were more likely to engage in heedful challenging in supportive and participative cultures. Burris (2012) demonstrated the potential risks of heedful challenging in unsupportive environments. Employees who engaged in voice behaviors in punitive environments were more likely to experience negative outcomes. Detert and Treviño (2010) found that employees were more likely to voice their concerns when they perceived their supervisors as open and supportive. Transformational leadership was positively associated with employee voice. Liang et al. (2012) showed that proactive voice behaviors contributed to process improvements and organizational efficiency. Employees who engaged in heedful challenging helped identify inefficiencies and suggest solutions. Van Dyne and LePine (1998) highlighted the positive outcomes of employee voice for both organizations and employees. Voice behaviors contributed to organizational learning and innovation, while also enhancing job satisfaction and employee empowerment.

Synthesizing the findings from this literature review and the comparative analysis of empirical studies, several key themes emerge. First, organizational culture and leadership style are critical determinants of heedful challenging. A supportive and open culture, coupled with transformational leadership, creates an environment where employees feel safe and empowered to voice their concerns and suggestions. Second, heedful challenging has significant positive outcomes for both organizations and employees. For organizations, it leads to improved decision-making, adaptability, and innovation. For employees, it enhances job satisfaction, empowerment, and personal growth. However, these benefits are contingent on the presence of a supportive environment and receptive leadership. Third, there are potential risks and barriers to heedful challenging, including the fear of retaliation and negative repercussions in

unsupportive environments. Addressing these barriers requires a concerted effort to foster a culture of trust and openness and to develop leadership behaviors that encourage and value employee input.

6. CONCLUSION

This qualitative literature review underscores the critical role of organizational culture and leadership style in facilitating heedful challenging among lower-power employees. The review reveals that a supportive and open organizational culture, coupled with transformational leadership, creates an environment where employees feel safe and empowered to voice their concerns and suggestions. Such an environment enhances organizational decision-making, adaptability, and innovation while simultaneously increasing job satisfaction, empowerment, and personal growth for employees. The analysis of various empirical studies highlights several key themes: 1) a culture that promotes trust, openness, and employee participation is crucial for enabling heedful challenging. Transformational leadership, characterized by support and inspiration, further enhances this environment, encouraging employees to engage in proactive voice behaviors; 2) heedful challenging contributes to improved decision-making, organizational learning, and innovation. For employees, it leads to greater job satisfaction and personal development, fostering a sense of empowerment and motivation; 3) Despite its benefits, heedful challenging can be hindered by fears of retaliation and negative repercussions in unsupportive environments. Addressing these barriers requires fostering a culture of trust and developing leadership behaviors that value and encourage employee input.

The findings of this review provide valuable insights for both practitioners and researchers. Practitioners can enhance organizational performance and employee satisfaction by fostering supportive cultures and developing transformational leadership. Researchers are encouraged to explore the dynamics of heedful challenging across various organizational contexts and to develop strategies for overcoming barriers and mitigating risks.

7. LIMITATION

While this literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing heedful challenging, several limitations should be acknowledged. The review primarily focuses on studies conducted in specific organizational contexts, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore heedful challenging in diverse organizational settings to validate and extend the current understanding. This review synthesizes qualitative findings, which may not fully capture the quantitative aspects of heedful

challenging. Incorporating quantitative studies could provide a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The comparative analysis is based on a limited number of empirical studies. Expanding the scope to include more studies would provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of heedful challenging.

Despite these limitations, this literature review contributes to the understanding of heedful challenging by highlighting the critical role of organizational culture and leadership. It provides a foundation for future research and practical implications for fostering environments that support employee voice behaviors. Future research should continue to explore the conditions under which heedful challenging is most effective. Examining the impact of different organizational cultures, leadership styles, and industry contexts can provide deeper insights into the factors that facilitate or hinder lower-power employees from influencing leaders. Additionally, longitudinal studies can help to understand the long-term effects of heedful challenging on organizational outcomes and leadership development.

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