



The sticky floor phenomenon a literature review

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Jun 09, 2023

Revised Jun 13, 2023

Accepted Jul 23, 2023

Keywords:

Career Barriers;
Career Obstacles;
Career Advancement;
Sticky Floor.

ABSTRACT

The involvement of women in the world of work continues to increase every year. However, women who occupy top management positions are still very limited. This condition may be caused by the sticky floor phenomenon – the initial obstacle that hinders women's career advancement before women's careers in the glass ceiling phenomenon. This study presents the antecedents of the sticky floor phenomenon in both for-profit and non-profit organizations. An extensive literature review was carried out to get a conclusion about the factors that hinder women's career advancement. The managerial implications and opportunities for further research are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

The sticky floor is an invisible barrier that prevents women from being promoted to executive positions and receiving compensation similar to that of men, even though they work in the same sphere as men. This phenomenon runs systematically and is a form of poor career planning to create barriers to their own success (Shambaugh, 2008). With the sticky floor phenomenon, many women are trapped in entry-level positions in organizations making it difficult to get to higher positions (Lidyah, 2017). In previous studies, the career barrier for women was the glass ceiling (de la Rica et al., 2021), however based on recent research, women have actually experienced a sticky floor beforehand compared to a glass ceiling (Ciminelli & Schweltnus, 2021).

The sticky floor phenomenon is an important concern for female employees in particular because the presence of a sticky floor in women causes women not to actively pursue leadership (Hara, 2018), although, in terms of competence, the ability is not much different from that of men (Merycona Merang, 2015). But the interesting thing about this phenomenon is because there are still many women who sometimes they have the opportunity to move up, but many women have given up first at the entry level stage or when women have been snared by the first obstacle, namely the sticky floor where this obstacle comes from herself.

The potential for sticky floors in Indonesia is quite large, especially since Indonesia can be said to be a country that is quite thick with a patriarchal culture (Nurmila, 2015). Although the involvement of women in the labor market in Indonesia is increasing every year (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019), however, the number of women occupying strategic positions in the company is still very small. For example, 50 best CEO award by The Iconomict in 2022 (Iconomics, 2022). Women who occupy top positions are only 5 people or 10% from the total. This raises the question that there are indications of a sticky floor in Indonesia because even though there are already several women who occupy the highest positions, there are still very few compared to men.

This study will present a literature review on the causes of sticky floors. It is hoped that the results of this research can serve as information and reference material for women who are about to enter the world of work, especially in Indonesia and also as an additional reference that discusses in depth how the sticky floor phenomenon can be created. and this is also in line with Hingle & Barrett (2020) which states that there are still differences between men and women

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The number of Indonesian women working in 2021 is 39.52% or 51.79 million people and this number has also increased by 1.09 million people from 2020. So it can be said that many women are starting to enter the career world. However, after entering the career world, women's steps are not easy. Women still have to face external and internal obstacles. Internal barriers are obstacles that come from themselves so that the meeting is difficult to progress and beyond the entry level or often called the sticky floor.

Barriers in terms of culture are also one of the internal barriers that have been ingrained in a woman, especially in Javanese women. but there are also basic characteristics of women that make them reluctant to achieve the highest leadership, such as women who are gentle, reassuring, reluctant to take risks, and don't really like to negotiate (Deschacht, De Pauw, and Baert 2017) so women prefer to stay in his position without wanting to experience career advancement to reach the highest position, in contrast to men who are always valued as a person who is stronger, independent, willing to take risks, etc. Apart from that for a woman, her life after marriage is the husband's responsibility in supporting her physically and mentally (Setyawati, 2014) makes a woman reluctant to climb to the highest career ladder and chooses to stay in her comfort zone. In addition, women who are considered to have negative characteristics compared to men make it difficult to avoid entry-level positions.

However, we also cannot close our eyes that there are several women who have started to climb the career ladder and occupy the highest positions but the highest positions at the top of the leadership pyramid are still dominated by men, this is also in line with the award made by the Iconomic, there are only 5 person from 50 best CEO (Iconomict, 2022). So that the sticky floor phenomenon itself may be very close to us, but there are still many people who do not realize that they are trapped in this phenomenon.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a literature study by reviewing 25 journals related to the sticky floor and one book that has discussed the sticky floor. The research method uses a systematic literature review. The results of various literature reviews will be used to identify the causes of sticky floors and the potential for sticky floor research in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sticky Floor

The sticky floor is an invisible barrier that prevents women from being promoted to executive positions and receiving compensation similar to that of men, even though they work in the same sphere as men. This phenomenon runs systematically and is a form of poor career planning to create barriers to their own success (Shambaugh, 2008). The term sticky floor itself first appeared in 1992 when the sociologist Catherine White Berheide coined a metaphor to describe the difficulties of women who remained in low-paying positions and low status in government (Noble, 1992). And published in the New York Times. Catherine's colleague Sharon Harlan notes that sticky floors can also be used and applied to areas where women fail to progress well beyond entry-level positions (Levitan, 1993).

With the sticky floor phenomenon, many women end up losing money. Many of the female employees are not actively pursuing leadership (Sorkin, n.d.). Even though women have more or equal abilities and skills than men, they sometimes prefer to stay in entry-level positions instead of moving up to the top of the company.

This is due to the fact that there are still women who prefer to stay in a fixed position in their comfort zone and do not want to pursue their leadership too much, even though this is very detrimental to women because, with this, they will not go to the highest leadership. Another consequence of this stereotype is that it makes women's judgments worse and will also have an impact on the glass ceiling phenomenon.

The sticky floor has been described as a barrier early in a career that keeps women from moving forward (Deschacht et al., 2017) so that the chances of women occupying high positions in companies are very few because only a small proportion are able to move up to higher positions (Bjerk, 2008). The sticky floor can also be interpreted as an obstacle that women face much earlier in their career path (Carli & Eagly, 2016). Another definition also says that a sticky floor can be described as a pattern where women, compared to men, are less likely to start climbing the job ladder (Baert et al., 2016) so that the representation of women in the top positions of the company becomes a minority thing (Bjerk, 2008). This then creates a gap in the roles of women and men in companies. This gap in much of the literature is called the sickly floor phenomenon (Baert et al., 2016).

The Women & Work

Over time, economic conditions have changed. The cost of living is getting higher and has an impact on increasingly expensive economic needs, making women no longer play a role in taking care of the family at home (Hara, 2018b). However, participating in helping the family's economy by working. Today's modern women have an important role in supporting the welfare of the family and even the country (Muslim, 2017). Women are no longer just working to help their husbands meet the needs of the family. Instead, they also use work as a suggestion for them to actualize themselves because, according to Lemme (Lemme, 1995) there are three main reasons that make women finally decide to work, namely: urgent economic needs, boredom that exists in women, and the existence of other supporting factors in women themselves. Thus, more and more women are entering the world of work (Halida, 2013).

The Factors That Cause Sticky Floors in Companies

Over time, the sticky floor phenomenon began to be questioned. Does this phenomenon still exist or not at this time? Because there are facts that prove that, currently, there are several women

who are considering filling top-level positions in the company; for example, from the 30 best Indonesian CEOs released by the 2017 Bisnis Indonesia Award, there are three female CEOs, namely Atiek Nur Wahyuni (Trans Corp), Dian Siswarini (XL Axiata), and Marlina Hayati Goestam (Darya Varia Laboratoria Tbk). This also proves that women are starting to consider getting a role in a company's strategic position, which is usually occupied by male employees. Based on the research that has been done related to the sticky floor, it is found that several factors cause the sticky floor to arise, namely work/life balance, culture, gender stereotypes, and low education (Carli & Eagly, 2016), (Shambaugh, 2008), (Booth et al., 2001), (Baert et al., 2016), (Deschacht et al., 2017), (Kee, 2006), (Baker, 2003), (Ahmad & Naseer, 2015), and (Hara, 2018b)

Work/Life balance is the factor that causes the sticky floor to arise in women. For a woman, family is the highest priority. So it is very difficult for a woman to choose and balance between her family and her career because women are domestic workers who take care of the family (Park et al., 2013). Especially in the mind of every woman who wants to remain a good mother to her children, but on the other hand, she also wants to be a good worker and achiever [23]. Not only that, there are several reasons that make women ultimately decide to choose family over career (Smith et al., 2008). Not only that, there are several reasons that make women ultimately decide to choose family over career (Choi et al., 2012).

- Women who work will spend more time in the office, so they are less responsible for their families.
- The uncomfortable work environment for a woman.
- Lack of support from leaders and companies for women workers.

In the end, many women find it very difficult to balance their careers and family (Saadin et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, the cultural factor that causes the sticky floor to arise is because Indonesia, which has 300 ethnic groups, certainly has its own culture that has been instilled since childhood. Culture itself, according to Koentjaraningrat (Koentjaraningrat, 1994), is the whole idea and human work that must be familiarized with learning and the whole of the results of his character. Moreover, in Indonesia, patriarchal culture is still attached. The definition of Patriarchy is a system of grouping social communities that are concerned with the father/male lineage (Nurmila, 2015). Patriarchy can also be explained as the state of society that places the position and position of men higher than women in all aspects of social, cultural, and economic life (Bhasin, 1993). So it is not polite if the wife is taller in the household than the husband.

The gender stereotyping factor that causes the sticky floor is the cultural concept used to differentiate the roles, behavior, mentality, and emotional characteristics between men and women who develop in society (Smith et al., 2008). According to Wijaya in Astuti, women have emotional, subjective, passive, less self-confident, less independent traits, and so on, while men have almost the opposite nature of women, such as not easily emotional, confident, not easy to be influenced, tough and so on. So that women feel that they are not very suitable to lead (Astuti, 2013).

Meanwhile, the low education factor that affects the sticky floor still has a relationship with gender stereotypes because, in society, there are still many who think that it is enough for women to stay at home, so there are still many women whose education is stopped. Although BPS data states that 31.96% of women can no longer continue their education to a much higher level, while for boys, it is 31.88%. This difference is actually not too far, only 0.08% between men and women, but still, women are still below men. Because of this, many companies ultimately prefer to promote men over women (Zagladi et al., 2015).

Previous Researches Related to Sticky Floor

Based on several previous studies related to sticky floors, it can be explained that the research conducted by (Baert et al., 2016), (Baker, 2003), (Deschacht et al., 2017), (Ahmad & Naseer, 2015), (Kee, 2006), (Bjerk, 2008), (Rainbird, 2007), (Tandrayen & Rajeey Pydayya Article, 2015), (Xiu & Gunderson, 2014), and (Sumarto & Permanasari, 2013) have the same background, namely sticky floor occurs because women continue to be on the weak side and are not active in pursuing their leadership, so that very few women occupy top managers and also experience wage differentials with men.

Bjerk used a sample by dividing groups of workers in corporate America, while Baert used a sample from the Flanders labor market by randomly selecting occupations targeting a bachelor's degree (BA) and a master's degree in business economics (MA). Then Baker used a sample of law graduates in 1993. Deschacht uses 622 samples taken from undergraduate business economics programs at western-European universities. Then Ahmad used a sample of 15 people, each from public organizations and private organizations. Kee and Tandrayen used a sample with the same technique as Bjerk, namely dividing workers into groups. Then Helen used a sample of 100 people consisting of low-paid workers, supervisors, managers, trainers, and their union representatives in one local authority. And Xiu uses data from life histories and social change in contemporary china survey.

In previous studies, all researchers used the sticky floor as a research variable. In collecting research data, each researcher uses different methods. The interview method was used by Hmad and Helen. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was used by Bjerk, Baert, Sumarto and Permanasari, Baker, Kee, and Tandrayen. And the experimental method used by Deschendan. Bjerk, in his research, stated that men and women have different promotion opportunities and are influenced by women who are not too concerned about being promoted. Baert states the importance of worker preferences in explaining the sticky floor, namely the pattern in which women are less likely than men to climb the job ladder. Baker stated that the sticky floor phenomenon will continue to exist in women but can be changed if women are able to believe in themselves, as also revealed in Deschendan's research, namely, women who are more risk-averse must have the courage to try to get out of their comfort zone to start pursuing the highest career. Ahmad's research results also state that women are vulnerable to gender discrimination which leads to gender stereotypes in the workplace, both in public and private organizations. Meanwhile, Helen, in her research, states that not all workers want career advancement because this is related to the stage of forming their family, especially if there are small children present in the household, so it has an impact on the phenomenon of a strong sticky floor.

Then Tandrayen also stated in his research that sticky floors could occur because, in the end, women are still the main caregivers for the children at home, even if they are also involved in paid work. So for some women, it is difficult to divide time between work and family. Liu stated in his research results that there are still stereotypes related to the female gender that causes women to be afraid to rise to the top of leadership. And for the last, Sumarto and Permanasari stated that women are very close to role conflict. And women can sacrifice their careers, and as a result, women have less motivation to lead than men.

Based on the previous studies above, several research gaps can be identified. According to Levenson and Sandberg research gap is a problem that has not been thoroughly investigated by previous research (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011). The research gap of a study is generally unique and

makes the difference between one research and another. The following are the research gaps found and identified in this study from various previous studies.

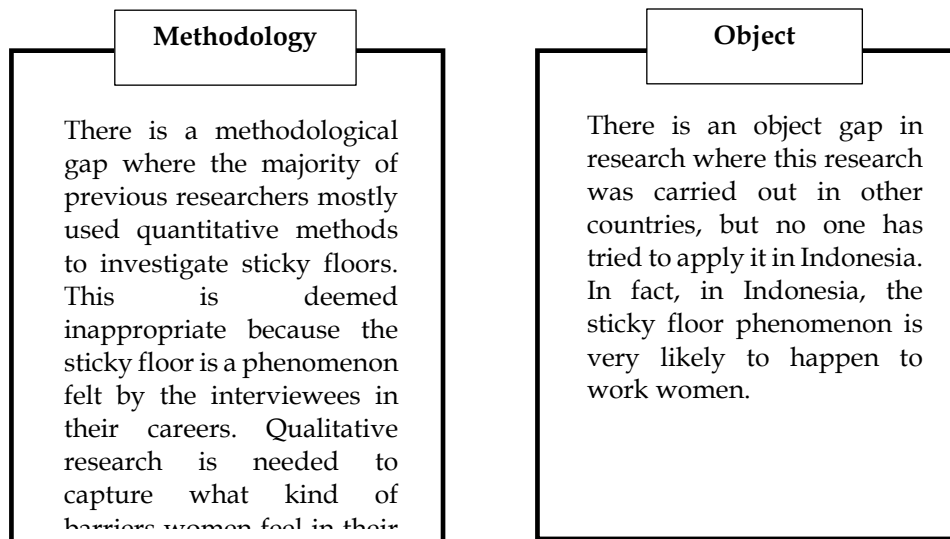


Figure 1. Research gap

CONCLUSION

From various previous studies, it can be concluded that the factors that cause sticky floors are Work/Life Balance because for a woman, family is the highest priority. So it is very difficult for a woman to choose and balance between her family or her career because women are domestic workers who take care of the family (A. Park et. al, 2013). Especially in the mind of every woman who wants to remain a good mother for her children, but on the other hand she also wants to be a good and accomplished worker (Noor, 2004). Until in the end, many women choose to remain housewives instead of having to work for their families and children or women prefer to work with light jobs without heavy burdens and stress so that women can still be good mothers and good wives in their families. Then the other reason is Culture because Indonesia has 300 ethnic groups, certainly has its own culture that has been instilled since childhood. Culture itself, according to Koentjaraningrat, is the whole idea and work of humans that must be accustomed to learning together. the whole of his morals. Moreover, in Indonesia, patriarchal culture is still attached. The definition of patriarchy is a social grouping system that emphasizes the lineage of the father/male. Patrilineal is a hereditary relationship through the lineage of male or paternal relatives (Sastryani, 2007). Patriarchy can also be explained where the condition of society places the position and position of men higher than women in all aspects of social, cultural and economic life and also Stereotip Gender make an impact to sticky floor because The Women's Studies Encyclopedia states that gender is a cultural concept that is used to distinguish roles, behaviors, mentalities, and emotional characteristics between men and women who develop in society. According to Wijaya (1991) women have characteristics that are emotional, subjective, passive, lack of confidence, lack of independence, and so on, while men have characteristics that are almost the opposite of women such as not easily emotional, self-confident, not easy to influence, tough. and so forth. Other researchers also said that the characteristics of women and men are indeed different, especially women who

have very sensitive, loyal, shy, cheerful, and so on, while men have a soul as a leader, dominant, ambitious, independent and so on. . Although not all of the traits possessed by men are good and not all of the characteristics possessed by women are bad, men seem to be more suitable to be leaders from the traits they possess. And the last is Low Education because the problem of education is one of the classic problems that has not been able to be resolved until now. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (2015) there are still 4.9 million children who are unable to continue their education due to various factors, such as economic factors and geographical factors. This disadvantage is felt more by women because as many as 31.96% of women can no longer continue their education to a much higher level, while for boys as much as 31.88%. This difference is actually not too far, only 0.08% between men and women, but still women are still below men. Because of this many companies ultimately prefer to promote men than women. (Djasmoredjo, 2004) But women can avoid Sticky Floors, from the based on the research that has been done by previous researchers regarding sticky floors, there is one way offered by Shambaugh to avoid the emergence of sticky floors, namely starting to dare to take a step, trying to pinpoint where your weaknesses are, and most importantly trying to balance your career and family, so you don't get too bad at it. The only way that these methods can reduce obstacles for women in carrying out their careers is to be able to occupy the highest positions.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research is expected to be able to apply sticky floor research in Indonesia. There are still many fields that can be used as objects of research on the sticky floor phenomenon, both profit, and non-profit organizations or government organizations and private organizations. Because the sticky floor phenomenon is still very rarely studied in Indonesia compared to the glass ceiling phenomenon. In fact, the potential for sticky floors to occur in Indonesia. Future research should also use mixed methods a method of research so that the results obtained are more valid and complete.

LIMITATIONS

This research is only a literature journal, so it is only based on previous research without any direct research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge Miranty Putri for their contributions and support this research study.

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