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**THE "GLASS CEILING" AND THE PHENOMENON OF  
"SCISSORS", WOMEN IN ACADEMIA**

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***Abstract***

The article presents the persistence of the phenomenon of gender inequality towards women in academia. The question is why despite the integration of women in academia; only a few of them are in senior academic research positions. The answer is that there is no change in the social structure and power relations between men and women; Women are oriented towards socialization to study of non-scientific subjects, and therefore fewer women attend to the faculties of the natural sciences, more than that women who succeed in integrating into academia do not receive assistance or relief that can help them complete academic tasks because of their absence to the corresponding of family commitment. In addition it was found that women are excluded from information and social networks about new jobs and opportunities in the academic market (Mandel, 2013), these reasons make it difficult for women to develop careers in academia. Not appreciating the qualitative research makes it difficult for women to recognize their academic abilities. The result is the departure of some of the women from academia, which entails damage and loss for the society and the academia in the inability to express the feminine qualities and experiences that can contribute to new standards and gender innovation. The solution is in the hands of the academia which must establish new regulations against discrimination of women and affirmative action for women's.

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**Keywords:** Gender inequality, scissors phenomenon, qualitative research, glass ceiling.



## **1. Introduction**

People's awareness and knowledge of the characteristics of the existing political, economic and social forces and their influence on their lives has grown since the middle of the last century and paved the way for formulating unique approaches and theories such as the feminist approach and the postcolonial approach. New research have allowed us to present the reality in which social groups live and introducing new knowledge that confronting the existing characteristics of knowledge (Breitzman, 2000). According to Abbot & Wallace (1997) the new studies have reflected the female perspective and sought to express women's experience to understand their point of view and to expose biases in existing knowledge about women. The new research concepts have shown that women's perspective on reality is different from that of men and it does not act only in a neutral and objective way to examine reality. In order to express the new theories like the feminist theory, additional research methods were used, including the qualitative research method that based on postmodern philosophy and emphasizing the heterogeneity of human experience and the presentation of the connection between culture and the shaping of reality. It has been found that many women researcher especially in the social sciences choose to engage in this kind of research, this may causes the slow development of their academic career; this phenomenon will be presented later in the article. Another point of view to be presented in this article is the inequality status of women in the academia, although women are the majority of students in schools and universities, men are still constitute the majority of researchers and managers in the faculty. According to Balahure & Balahure (2010) vertical segregation is directed to the proportions of women's inventions in senior research and the academic management positions. According to the authors, 55% of the students are women, 59% are university graduates and the same number of women and men have a doctorate, however fewer post-doctoral women hold senior research and managerial positions than men. Similar data were presented by the European commission (2012), 55% of the students in Europe are women and 59% are university graduates with academic degrees, but only 40% are members of the Senior Staff in the academia. In Israel more than half of the graduates of BA, MA and PhD degrees are women, but only 29% of them are in the senior academic staff (Council for Higher Education- Israel, 2015). If so, this article will present two complementary phenomena and explanations that relate to the situation of women researchers in academia: A. The phenomenon of "scissors" indicates that the higher the academic level, the lower the percentage of women in the academic staff. B. The effect of qualitative research on the "glass ceiling" (a barrier that cannot be seen), women's that focus on qualitative research experience barriers in their ability to progress in the academic track.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The main issue of our approach is the persistence of the phenomenon of gender inequality towards women in academia.

### 3. Research Questions

Why despite the integration of women in academia; only a few of them are in senior academic research positions?

### 4. Purpose of the Study

We intend to show that even today there are a small number of women compared to men in the senior academic staff at universities around the world and in Israel.

It has been found that throughout the career of women their representation is declining in parallel with the rise in academic level, this situation was described in this article by presenting the phenomenon of "scissors" which is a mirror image of the gaps and barriers facing women in the development of the academic career.

### 5. Research Methods

The article presents a phenomenon that is based on review of studies that conducted on the phenomenon of gender inequality in academia around the world and in Israel (Creswell, 2014).

### 6. Findings

The organizational and structural patterns in the academia are an expression of both, visible barriers to women's progress and hidden barriers that allow the continuation of the "academic glass ceiling" phenomenon. The result is departure of some of the women from academia, which entails damage and loss for the society and the academia in the inability to express the feminine qualities and experiences that can contribute to new standards and gender innovation.

**Table 01.** The "glass ceiling" and the phenomenon of "scissors", women in academia

Column Heading	Column Heading	Column Heading	Column Heading
visible barriers to women's progress	hidden barriers to women's progress	"academic glass ceiling" phenomenon	express the feminine qualities and experiences that can contribute to new standards

### 7. Conclusion

Even today there are a small number of women compared to men in the senior academic staff at universities around the world and in Israel. It has been found that throughout the career of women their representation is declining in parallel with the rise in academic level (Zastrow, 2007), this situation was described in this article by presenting the phenomenon of "scissors" which is a mirror image of the gaps and barriers facing women in the development of the academic career. A new angle that describes this phenomenon is the characteristics of qualitative research done by many women researchers and that is a marker for the "glass ceiling" experienced by women. Women in academia are in a closed circle, gender barriers lead to low expectations of the academic system from women and this contributes to women's low

expectations on their own. In this condition it is not possible for women to bring their feminine qualities and their experiences manifested and contribute to standards, innovation and create new ideas.

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