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**Gender, Leadership and networks in SET**

1. Purpose

Purpose of the paper is to analyse how gender is connected with leadership styles and strategies as well as with successful networking. Basis is an empirical project about women on top in SET.

The University of Wuppertal and the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy cooperated on focussing potentials of innovation, which women in leadership positions can realise and which barriers they experience. The project is part of the German research program: „women to the top“, funded by the German Ministry for Education and Research together with European Social Funds.

2. Design/methodology/approach

Based on several European projects on gender in engineering organisational cultures (Sagebiel 2005; 2007; 2010) and the fact that women at top make only a small percentage in SET the project asks if leading women in science, technology and environmental organisations will have an impact on management and innovation.

To answer the question a qualitative design has been chosen with interviews, focus discussion groups and website analysis. Four types of organisations were investigated, universities, governmental research institutes, companies and political organisations. The following table gives an overview.

**Table: Overview of methods in selected organisation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organisations** | | **Interviews** | | | |
| Interviewed person | | **F** | **M** | **HR** | **EO** |
| **Companies** | **Multinational energy supply holding** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| Waste management company | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| **Universities** | **University departments for science and technology** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| University for science, technology, philosophy,humanities and medicine | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| **Political organisations** | Agency for nature conservation | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| Urban administration of a medium-sized town | **3** | **1** |  |  |
| **Governmental Research institutes** | **Application-oriented research organisation for technology and product design** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| Environmental research center with focus on sustainability | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |

Abreviation: F= female; M= masculine: HR = human resources; EO = equal opportunity.

3. Findings if paper is empirical

Women’s more people oriented understanding of SET is reflected in leadership priorities like communication and relational work (see Fletcher 2001). So organisational culture is influenced their awareness of the great value of information exchange. Men in SET leadership positions tend more to refer on hierarchy and networking for getting information and solving conflicts. And while competition is part of men’s strategic planning and play women at top join the game it is not genuine their play. To show gender awareness openly is ambivalent for women on top in men’s domain SET.

4. Research limitations/implications

Research approach can reflect results only from the view of people on top in SET organisations, hardly anything about the view of employees at the same level or below.

5. Originality/value of the paper

The paper shows high importance of networking for successful leadership in SET organisations. This result has been valid for all different kinds of organisations investigated. Women on top even nowadays experience barriers of being integrated in all men’s networking at working places. Even though they develop their own networks they miss some of the powerful connections und information being restricted to men’s and old boys’ networks with their own rituals, mechanisms and membership rules.