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The First International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences - at the University of the Aegean, on the Island of Rhodes, Greece from 18 to 21 July 2006

The Conference

- [Home](#)
- [Welcome](#)
- [Board & Supporters](#)
- [Location](#)
- [When in Rhodes](#)
- [Poster \(Download pdf\)](#)

Content

- [Themes](#)
- [Scope & Concerns](#)
- [Streams](#)
- [Main Speakers](#)
- [Session Descriptions](#)
- [Talking Circles](#)
- [Program](#)

Call for Papers

- [Submit Proposal](#)
- [Presentation Types](#)
- [International Award](#)

Registration

- [Register](#)
- [Options & Fees](#)
- [Accommodation](#)
- [Activities & Extras](#)

Resources

- [Newsletter](#)
- [Journal](#)

Journal Publication

- [Submission Guidelines](#)
- [Submission Timeline](#)
- [Peer Referee Process](#)
- [Publishing Policy](#)

Reference

- [Other Conferences](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Common Questions](#)
- [Links](#)
- [Contact](#)

Edit Your Details

- [Log in](#)



Practices and Attitudes of Female SME Managers: Training, Networking and Mentoring

By:

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To add a paper, [Login](#)



The purpose of this study is to examine the practices and attitudes of female SME managers in family firms on human resource development practices with particular focus on training, networking and mentoring. Research on this particular topic has focused predominantly on large organisations and is largely a new direction for research in SMEs. This study attempts to fill some of the gaps in existing studies by focusing specifically on a few selected Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs).

The objectives of the study are to: determine the challenges females perceive as managers within family owned and managed firms in the SME sector; ascertain the advantages female managers perceive to be derived from working in a family owned/managed SME; understand the importance of qualifications in females achieving their positions within the organisation; understand the occurrence of mentoring in SME's – formally or informally and specific activities and benefits of mentoring; examine whether female managers in family firms have discovered that mentoring and networking has assisted them in achieving their managerial roles; examine the training practices utilised within SMEs; and to understand the dynamics of female managers, family firms and the SME sector, generally, in relation to strategic plans, goals, objectives, future directions (their position in five years), who attends to HR functions in SMEs, where they obtain support and guidance and internal and external influences on SMEs. The study utilised a case study approach with the focus on interview data obtained in six family SME organisations located in the region of Southeast Queensland, Australia.

Keywords: Attitudes, Female Managers, Small and Medium Size Enterprises, Training, Networking, Mentoring
Stream: Economics and Management

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Paper: *A paper has not yet been submitted.*



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Dr. Retha Wiesner is currently conducting a major national and international study on management and organisational change in small and medium size enterprises. Dr Wiesner has published extensively in Australia and overseas. She is still involved as consultant in Australian organisations. She has completed four books during the last four years including two edited books with Bruce Millett, titled Management and organisational behaviour: contemporary challenges and future directions and Human resource management: challenges and future directions. She co-authored the text books Management: an Asia Pacific perspective and Management: 2nd AsiaPacific Edition.

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