



”Learning from each other: Mentoring relationships as learning opportunities in hybrid spaces for mentees and mentors“

Christina Heßling – A qualitative study with Content Analysis (according to Kuckartz) to understand learning in mentoring relationships

# Study Background

- Company (internal) mentoring program “Women in Leadership” („Frauen in Führung“)
- Catholic social enterprise
- For the first time in 2020
- Aim of the program: Promotion of young female executives
- 13 places for women from the company
- Duration 1 year
- The mentors are experienced executives from different areas of the company and different locations



# Sample & Research Design

- All participating mentees (n=13) were interviewed as part of a preliminary study immediately after the start of the mentoring program (guideline interviews)
- main survey:
- Immediately after the end of the mentoring program, all mentees (n=12, drop-out n=1) were interviewed (episodic interviews).
- The mentors were also interviewed directly after the end of the mentoring program (n=10, 2 mentors declined to participate due to time constraints, episodic interviews)
- The data is analyzed using the qualitative content analysis according to Kuckartz (2018)
- The researcher herself works as a educational advisor in the company, but has not been involved in the implementation of the mentoring program



# Research Questions

- How is the mentoring relationship perceived/experienced (from the perspective of the mentees and the mentors)?
- What are the special characteristics of the mentoring relationship?
- How do the mentees learn (and teach) within the mentoring relationship?
- Which forms of learning can be identified in the context of the mentoring relationship with the mentees and the mentors?
- How do the (ten) tandems differ in their respective perception / design of the mentoring relationship and in relation to the forms of teaching and learning?



# Aim of the study

- To gain insights into the relationship between mentees and mentors and to find out whether the people involved experience the relationship with each other as a (mutual) learning relationship.
- Identification of special characteristics of the mentoring relationship in hybrid spaces
- Gaining knowledge about the teaching and learning forms of mentees and mentors within their mutual mentoring relationship
- Derivation of practical implications for the design of company mentoring programs in relation to mentoring relationships in hybrid spaces



# What is meant by hybrid spaces?

- Originally, the entire mentoring program was planned to be attended, but due to the corona pandemic, digital formats had to be used. The meetings of the mentoring tandems were possible in person at the beginning and end of the program, but the majority of the meetings took place digitally and the relationship developed in the digital space



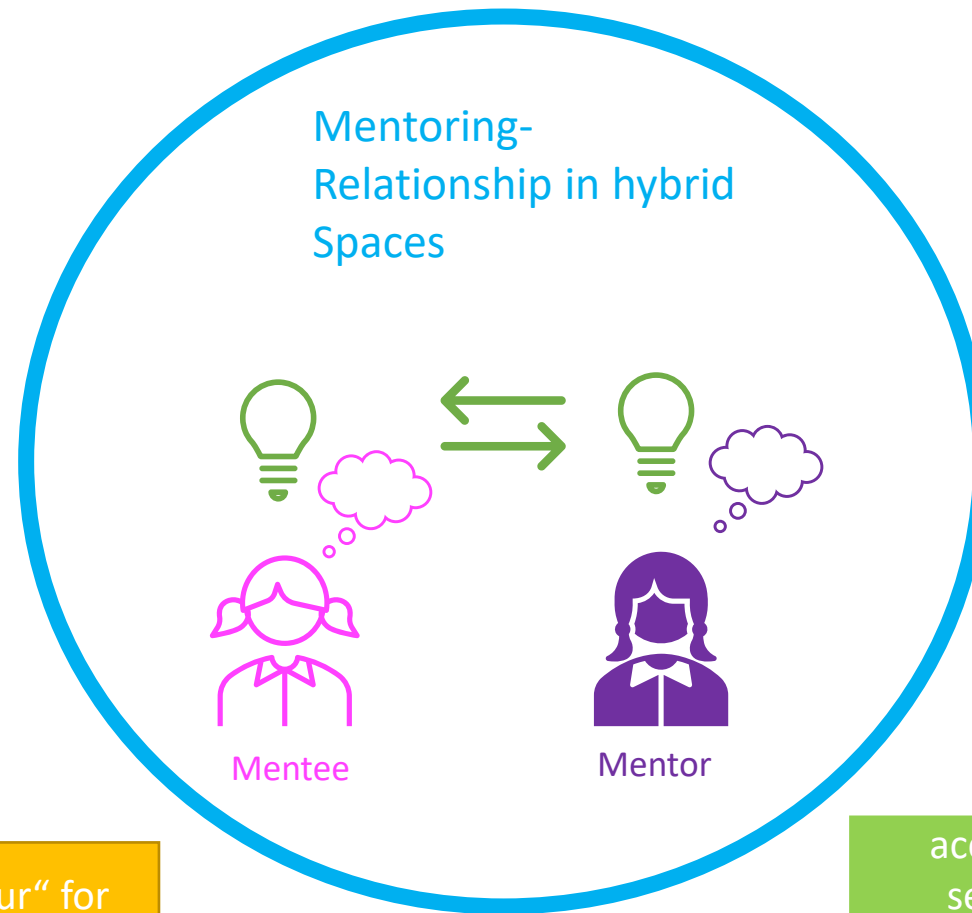
# Mentoring Definition

- Mentoring is defined in the study as:
- "a relatively stable dyadic relationship over time between an experienced mentor and his/her less experienced mentee. It is characterised by mutual trust and goodwill, and its goal is to promote the learning and development as well as the advancement of the mentee" (Ziegler 2009, p. 11).



# The mentoring program and the mentoring relationship as a mutual learning relationship

Mentoring-Program  
„Women in  
Leadership“



„discussion group“ for  
mentees

accompanying  
seminars for  
mentees and  
mentors





# Learning theory connection

- Learning through experience (e.g. Dewey, Kolb, Illeris)
- Learning through feedback
- Learning through reflection (Schuessler)

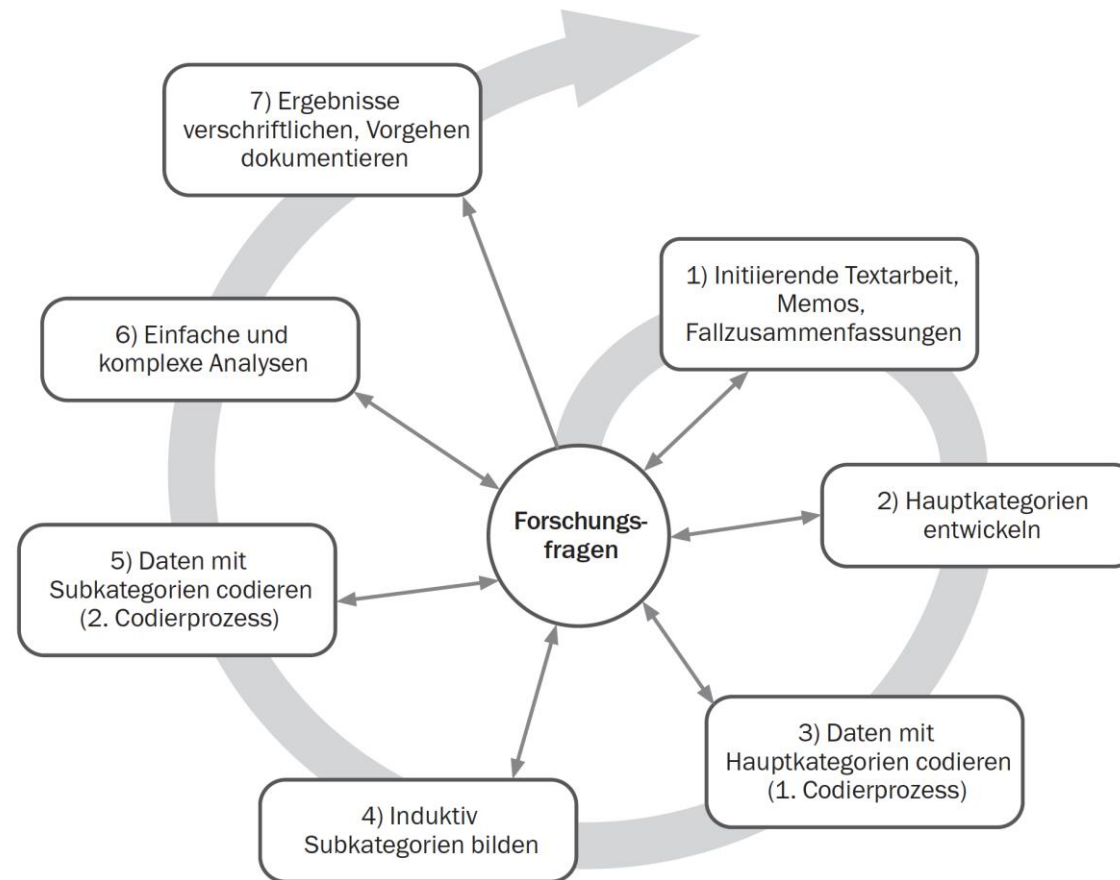


# Research Method

- Qualitative content analysis is a research method used to analyze and interpret the content of qualitative data, such as text, images, or audio recordings. It involves systematically organizing and coding the data into categories and themes in order to identify patterns, relationships, and meanings.
- The goal of qualitative content analysis is to gain a **deeper understanding of the research topic** by examining the underlying meanings and perspectives of the data. This method can be used in a variety of research fields, including social sciences, education, and healthcare. Overall, qualitative content analysis is a powerful tool for gaining insights into complex phenomena and generating new knowledge.



# The phases of qualitative content analysis and my approach



# 1. Initiating Text Work

Übersicht Memos

Alle 382 Memos

Titel	Vorschau	Herkunft	Bearbeitet von	Bearbeitet am	Erstellt von	Erstellt am	Dokument	Code	Dokumentgru...	Dokumentset	Codeset	Anfang	Ende
1_M7	Rahel Wacker ...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:24	Christina	15.03.21 11:17	1_M7		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M9	Ulrike Plail onl...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:24	Christina	19.04.21 18:46	1_M9		Mentee-Intervi...				
2_M11	Pia v. Kolke 01...	Dokument	christina	16.03.23 18:15	Christina	02.10.21 08:24	2_M11		Mentees-Inter...				
Memo 4	Sprachfähiger ...	im Dokument	christina	12.01.23 09:17	Christina	09.10.21 14:42	2_M11		Mentees-Inter...			118	118
1_M4	Manuela Frum...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:22	Christina	09.10.21 18:09	1_M4		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M1	Alisa Riehema...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:22	Christina	09.10.21 18:10	1_M1		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M2	Katja Wörle On...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:22	Christina	09.10.21 18:10	1_M2		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M3	Steffi Kirmis O...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:22	Christina	09.10.21 18:10	1_M3		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M5	Astrid Leps O...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:23	Christina	09.10.21 18:10	1_M5		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M12	Jana Hepperle...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:25	Christina	15.10.21 10:55	1_M12		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M11	Pia Präsenz	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:25	Christina	15.10.21 10:55	1_M11		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M10	Mariella Online	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:24	Christina	15.10.21 10:55	1_M10		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M8	Angelika Bloch...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:23	Christina	15.10.21 10:55	1_M8		Mentee-Intervi...				
1_M6	Jana Hering O...	Dokument	christina	15.02.22 11:23	Christina	15.10.21 10:55	1_M6		Mentee-Intervi...				
2_M12	Jana Hepperle...	Dokument	christina	09.03.23 14:51	Christina	15.10.21 11:13	2_M12		Mentees-Inter...				
2_M10	Mariella Tande...	Dokument	christina	09.03.23 14:53	Christina	20.10.21 13:44	2_M10		Mentees-Inter...				
2_M7	Rahel Wacker ...	Dokument	christina	15.02.23 08:38	Christina	25.10.21 16:05	2_M7		Mentees-Inter...				
2_M1	Alisa Riehema...	Dokument	christina	14.02.23 17:20	Christina	05.11.21 16:28	2_M1		Mentees-Inter...				

- GRÜN normale Markierung
- VIOLETT LERNEN
- BLAU Besonderheit den Fall betreffend
- ROT BEZIEHUNG

	1232
	307
	75
	216



# 2. Develop Main Categories und 3. Code data with the main categories

Liste der Codes	
Codesystem	4552
> Zugang zum Mentoring-Programm (I)	25
> Teilnahmemotivation / Ziele / Erwartungen (allg.) (D)	78
> Mentoring-Verständnis (D)	84
> Herausforderungen in der MB (D)	98
> "Gelingensfaktoren" für MB (I)	23
> VER Vertrauen in der MB (D)	123
> MB Mentoring-Beziehung (verstehen und beschreiben) (D)	570
> Gewinn / outcome aus MB (D) NICHT Lernergebnisse MB	25
> Gesprächsthemen zwischen MR und M (D)	234
> (Gestaltung der) Treffen (innerhalb der MB) (D)	149
> Beide lernen etwas / wechselseitige LB (I)	7
> "Lehrformen" / Handlungen der MR u M in der MB (D)	339
> Lernformen MB (D)	236
> Erkenntnisse / Lernergebnisse (allg.) (D)	50
> MB Lernergebnisse (D)	77
> + Rolle MR (I)	202
> Kontakt nach dem Mentoring-Programm (D)	38
> Geschlecht der MR (D)	58



## 4. Form inductive subcategories and 5. Code data with subcategories

- After coding all the data into main categories, the differentiation into inductive subcategories takes place. These were initially very strongly differentiated so that initially up to 50 or 60 subcategories were created in an upper category
- In the next step, the subcategories were condensed and combined, e.g. "dialogue" and "exchange" were combined into one category



# What was encoded? Coding Categories

- Manifest Meaning
  - Refers to the specific, clear, surface contents: words, pictures, images, and such that are easily categorized.
- Latent Meaning
  - Refers to the meaning underlying what is contained in a communication.



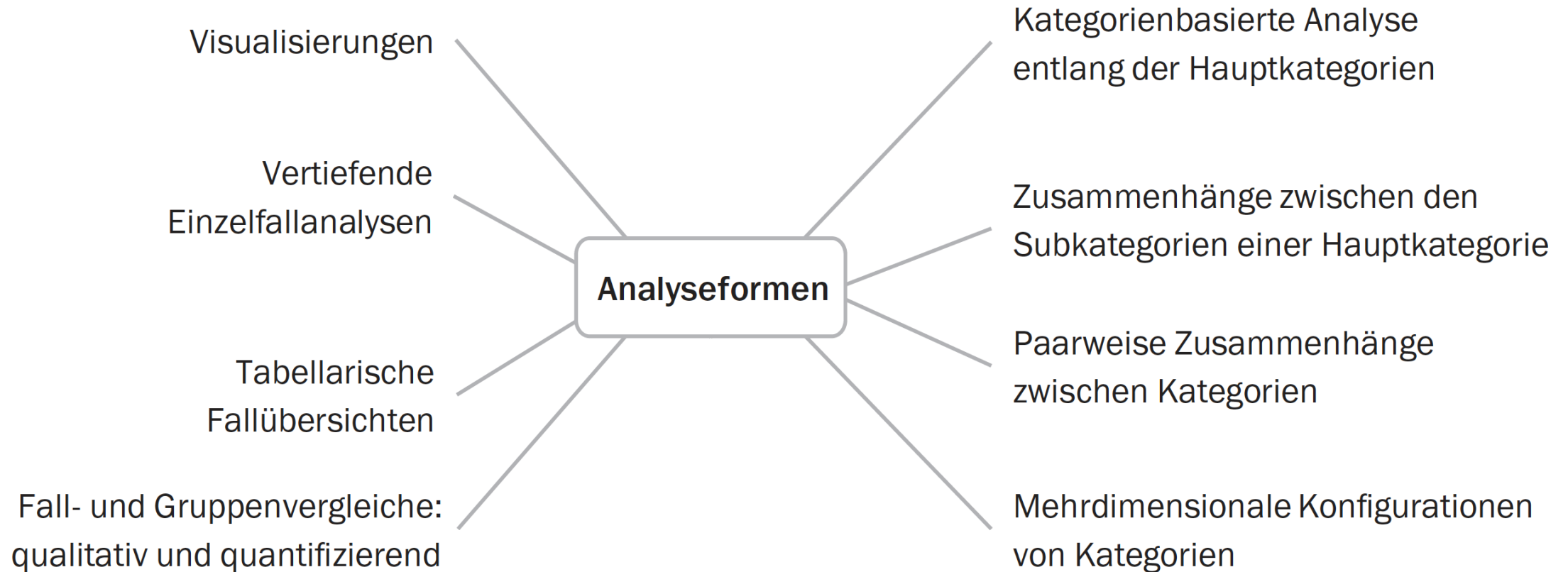
# Example of inductive subcategories

▼ ● Herausforderungen in der MB (D)	0
● Herausforderungen für M und MR (gleich)	0
● es gab keine Herausforderungen	15
● Umgang mit Herausforderungen in der MB (I)	11
▼ ● Herausforderungen für MR in der MB	0
> ● eigene Rolle als MR	3
● MR Frust M stellt nicht die Fragen	1
● Projekt der M war schnell beendet und die Gespräche damit auch	1
● Schwierige berufliche Situation der M wg. Corona	1
● Das Nichtmelden der M nicht auf sich zu beziehen	1
● M meldet sich längere Zeit nicht	2
● durch das Digitale nicht so in die Tiefe der Themen gegangen	1
● Stress der M im Beruf	2
● sind schwer in eine Regelmäßigkeit der Termine gekommen	2
● Corona Distanz	1
● gutes Miteinander zu finden (digital / analog)	1
● Bauchgefühl im digitalen Raum zu entwickeln	1
● Mentee-Projekt hat M Stress verursacht	2
● MR hat andere Meinung/Haltung als M in einer Sache	1
● M muss Termine wg. Beruf absagen	1
● Mißverständnisse zwischen M und MR	1
● M vergisst Termine	1
● Loyal zum Verband zu sein und gleichzeitig Lösungswege finden	1
● MR hätte sich mehr "Energie" von M gewünscht	2
● MR stellt sich immer wieder die Frage ob er das richtig macht	1
● Unsicherheit am Anfang	1
● Digitale Treffen waren Schwachstelle in der MB	1
● M kommt "zu spät" mit ihren Themen zur MR	1
● MR denkt M nimmt Mentoring nicht ernst	1
● M hält Termine nicht ein (I)	0





# 6. Simple and complex analyses with MAXQDA

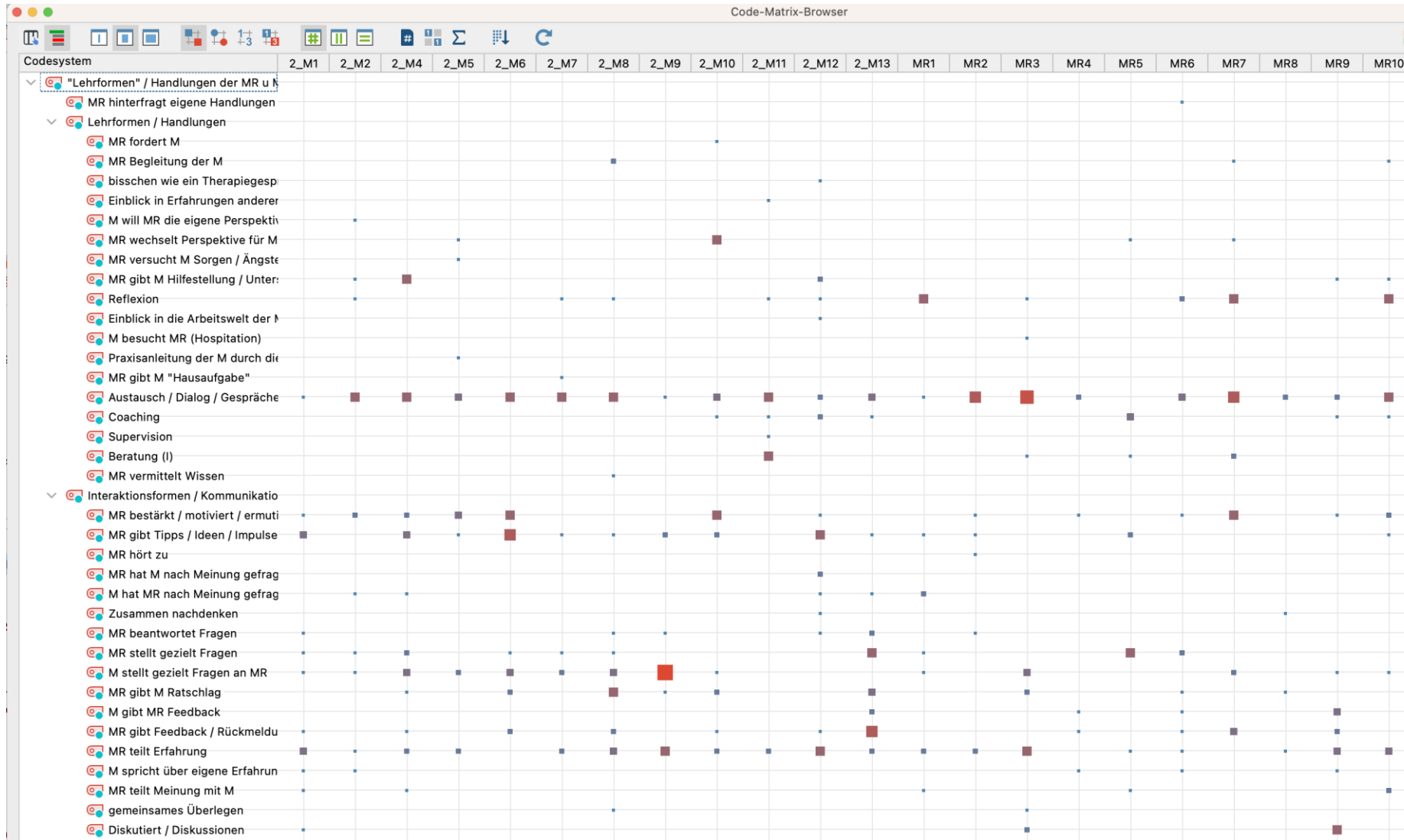


# 6. Relationships between main and subcategories

- Visual Tools → Code Matrix Browser and Code Relations Browser
- I use the Code Matrix Browser to find out, for example, which forms of teaching and which forms of learning the mentees and mentors have perceived in the mentoring relationship



# Code Matrix Browser



# 6. Group Comparisons with MAXQDA

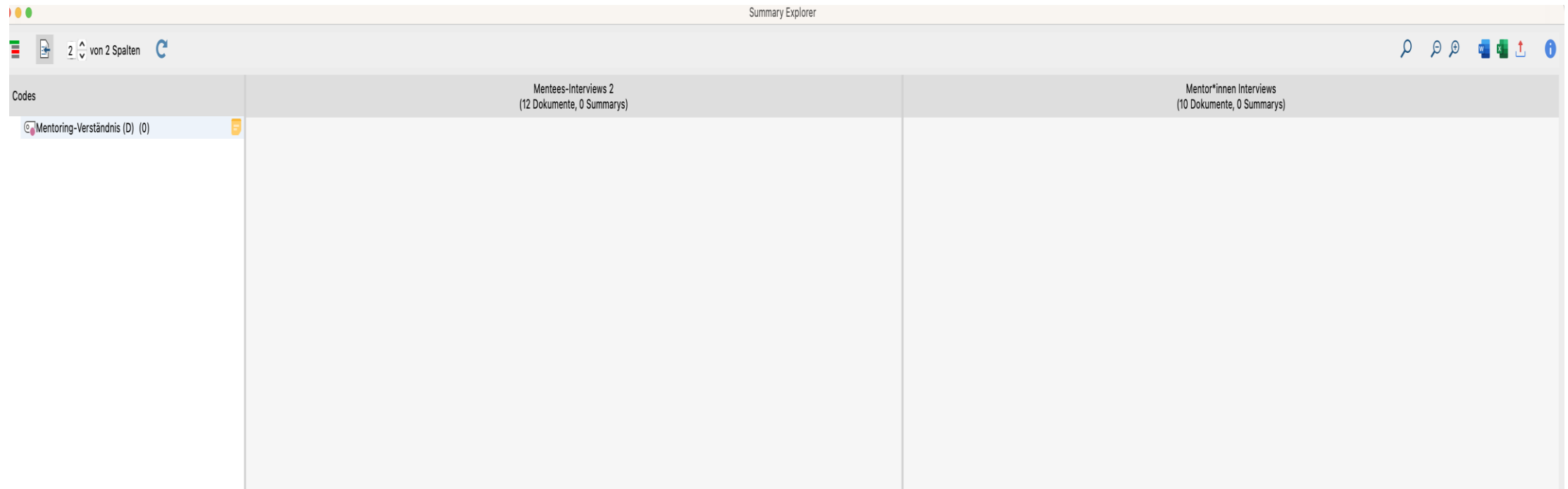
The screenshot displays the MAXQDA software interface, titled "Interaktive Segmentmatrix". The interface is divided into three main sections:

- Codes (Left Panel):** A hierarchical list of codes. The selected code is "Lernformen M (0)", which includes sub-codes "M durch Reflexion des MR (3)" and "Lernformen MR (0)". The "Lernformen MR (0)" code further includes the sub-code "MR durch Reflexion (4)".
- Mentees-Interviews 2 (Top Middle Panel):** A header for the first column of the matrix, indicating 12 documents and 0 coded segments.
- Mentor\*innen Interviews (Top Right Panel):** A header for the second column of the matrix, indicating 10 documents and 0 coded segments.

The main area of the matrix is currently empty, showing a grid structure for comparing the selected code across the two groups of interviews.



# 6. Summary Function



# First Findings

- The study by Kram (1985) names the psychosocial and career-related functions of a mentoring relationship

- ▼ ● ☞ Funktionen der MR für die M (Kram) (D)
  - ▼ ● ☞ Karrierebezogenen Funktionen (D)
    - ☞ Sponsorship / Türöffner
    - ☞ Exposure & Visibility / Exposition und Sichtbarkeit
    - ☞ Coaching
    - ☞ Protection / Schutz
    - ☞ Challenging Assignments / Herausfordernde Aufgaben
  - ▼ ● ☞ Psychosoziale Funktionen (D)
    - ☞ Role Modeling / Rollenvorbild
    - ☞ Acceptance & Confirmation / Annahmen & Bestätigung
    - ☞ Counseling (Beratung)
    - ☞ Friendship / Freundschaft



# First Findings

- The mentoring functions according to Kram (1985) are only partially suitable for the knowledge gained
- First of all, it is not completely understandable what exactly Kram means by "mentoring function", whether she means the role of the mentor, the goals or the actions



# First Findings

- Therefore the following categories were formed
- Role of the mentor (coded with self-attributions of the mentors and external attributions of the mentees)
- Actions / forms of interaction or communication (what have mentees and mentors actually experienced / done)
- Motivation and goals (why did the mentees and mentors take part)
- Learning outcomes (what have mentees and mentors learned from each other)





# First Findings

- A connection can be seen between the perception of the role of the mentors (self-ascriptions by the mentors and external ascriptions by the mentees), the actions within the mentoring relationship and the goal of the actions



# More insights

- The mentoring relationship can be understood as a mutual learning relationship
- Learning through shared experience, both by mentors and mentees, is a main form of learning in mentoring relationships in hybrid spaces
- The mentoring relationship in hybrid spaces is characterized by various features (more detailed interpretation of the results is still pending)
- The mentoring relationship runs in different phases (more detailed interpretation of the results is still pending)



Thanks for your attention



# References

- <https://www.qualitativeinhaltsanalyse.de/images/Abb-20-Analyseformen-inhaltlich-strukturierende-qualitative-Inhaltsanalyse.png>
- <https://www.qualitativeinhaltsanalyse.de/images/Abb-16-Ablauf-inhaltlich-strukturierende-qualitative-Inhaltsanalyse.png>
- Ziegler, A. (2009): Mentoring: Konzeptionelle Grundlagen und Wirksamkeitsanalyse <https://www.psycho.ewf.uni-erlangen.de/mitarbeiter/ziegler/publikationen/Publikation13.pdf>
- All MAXQDA photos are screenshots from the MAXQDA program 2022

