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Retaining Women in Tech Companies: Enhancing Diversity through Mentoring

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| C1; C2; etc. | = Category one; Category two; etc. |
| CHRO | = Chief Human Resource Officer |
| CMU | = Carnegie Mellon University |
| DEI | = Diversity, Equality and Inclusion |
| EBT | = Earnings Before Taxes |
| GWC | = Girls Who Code |
| HR | = Human Resources |
| KPI | = Key Performance Indicators |
| MDAX | = Mid-Cap-DAX |
| OD | = Organizational Development |
| PD | = Personnel Development |
| SVP | = Senior Vice President |
| SMART goals | = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable, Time-bound goals |
| TA | = Talent Acquisition |
| TBD | = Task-Based Development |
| VP | = Vice President |

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1 Introduction

1.1 Relevance of study and description of the problem area

The Tech industry is a future-shaping field characterized by innovation and increasing growth. However, women are glaringly absent from the field, especially women of color (cf. US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). Furthermore, women are leaving Tech jobs twice as fast as their male peers which aggravates economic and societal consequences of their low representation, such as the gender data gap (cf. Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 12).

Research points to corporate culture being the culprit for women not choosing or staying in Tech jobs as reports of gender discrimination and sexual harassment have increased in the field. The tenor of corporate studies reviewing the reasons why women leave Tech shows there is a lack of growth opportunities, unequal pay and dissatisfaction with management (cf. Deloitte, 2021). These reasons resonate with scientific literature, pointing to workplace and organizational factors as key reasons for women to leave male-dominated work environments (cf. Davis-Ali, 2017, p. 5; Simard/Gilmartin, 2010, p. 7).

Male-dominated work cultures create barriers for the advancement of women's careers. Gender bias and stereotypes influence the way in which women are perceived as fits to leadership roles (cf. Heilman, 2001, p. 658). They have to prove themselves to be assertive, competent and agentic, which correspond to typical male characteristics (cf. Eagly/Karau, 2002, p. 578).

There are two options to stop the exodus of women in Tech, making parity possible more efficiently: Helping women find greater job satisfaction and helping organizations to change in ways that will make women stay and reach leadership positions (cf. Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 13).

Since its eruption in 1970, Mentoring for women has gained in popularity as a PD and OD tool for creating equal opportunity. Traditional Mentoring programs focused (and still focus) on developing women's leadership skillsets, making these competencies visible and providing networking possibilities. However, there is a recent shift in paradigm in OD, which conceptualizes the change of male-dominated cultures and organizational processes rather than 'fixing the women' (De Vries, 2006, p. 576).

Mentoring programs can have a dual function of fostering women's professional development and changing corporate culture, vital to the success of Mentoring programs and to their long-term effectiveness (cf. De Vries, 2006, p. 575). However, Mentoring programs in practice often show deficiencies, failing to fulfill basic success factors to achieve their predetermined goals (cf. Ziegler, 2009, pp. 12-13). The thesis reviews the efficiency of Mentoring as a tool to retain women in Tech and enhance diversity in the long-term. Special attention will be paid to the topic of diversity due to the impaired representation of diverse women in Tech (cf. US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020).

1.2 Aim of the study and research question

The aim of this work is to address the poor retention of women in the field by examining Mentoring as a PD and OD measure with the goal of enhancing diversity in companies in the long-term. Particular attention is set on factors that influence the retention of women. Much of the research to date is fixated on hiring individuals in order to increase representation but overlooks the fact that gender bias is fostered within 'gendered processes' in organizations. In contrast, the interest of this study is about organizational factors that help understanding women's retention in the industry. Linking organizational factors of companies (e.g. company size, corporate culture) with success factors of Mentoring programs for women in Tech to provide companies with best practices is a niche and opens further research opportunities.

Thus, the efficiency of Mentoring in regard to retaining women in Tech is reviewed through a literature review and empirical research on practical cases. The aim of the research design is to explore methodological success factors in these cases, linking organizational factors to the success of a program and to provide a framework for Tech companies on how to interrupt bias in their implicit and explicit processes.

The research question which arises is: To what extent is Mentoring a suitable measure for Tech companies to retain women when diversity on all hierarchical levels is the goal?

1.3 Delimitation of the subject and classification in feminist research

In this work, there is an underlying comprehension of Mentoring as a form of postfeminist communities, since most of the literature used reflects this strand. Postfeminism is understood as a neoliberal approach to governing feminine identity, expression and women's approaches to the gendered challenges of everyday life (Lewis et al., 2017, p. 475). It is important to note in this context that most Mentoring literature reflects a binary comprehension of gender which is taken up in this work and which however, shaped the need for an intersectional perspective on the topic. Concerning the notion of Mentoring, it can be stated that it builds upon neoliberal capitalist logic in which feminist responses to organizational inequities are pursued through a market-oriented and entrepreneurial approach, empowering women to 'have it all' (McRobbie, 2013, p. 135). Concretely, in the context of workplace inequity, postfeminist communities incorporate 'trickle-down feminism', meaning that their goal is to break the glass ceiling and achieve positions of leadership in companies and politics in order for power to trickle down the ranks and empower all women. Mentoring programs opt for organizing styles which are based on the assumption that increasing the numerical representation of women in a male-dominated workplace can change 'bro cultures' (masculine culture of organizations). In such manner, postfeminist communities address inequity primarily as a quantitative rather than a qualitative issue (cf. Kennedy, 2013, p. 6). 'Trickle-down feminism' has one disadvantage:

It is qualitatively limited as it interprets masculine-typed organizations as male-dominated rather than structured by masculinity (cf. Acker, 1990, p. 145; Britton, 2000, p. 420).

The recommendations for action that will be made in the course of this work are primarily important to companies in German-speaking, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian regions due to the regions' capitalist predominance. When transferring the 'Protestantism-Capitalism Thesis' by Max Weber to the Tech branch, it becomes clear that in Protestant countries, the social meaning of masculinity and the power relations that go with it are linked to an economic capitalist value rather than to religion. This value is largely linked to technology in the context of industrialization (cf. Abbate, 2012, p. 40). Abbate states: "Since technical skills convey power, including prestige, access to well-paying jobs, and the ability to shape the tools used by an entire society-dominant groups in society tend to assert their 'natural' superiority in these areas. Particularly technical expertise has been a vital component of masculine identity in Western culture." (Abbate, 2012, p. 40) In Roman or former socialist countries however, the participation of women in Tech is higher than in capitalist regions. The recommendations which will be made are thus vital for companies in capitalist regions, but still can be beneficial for companies from different regional backgrounds.

2 Overview on the Tech industry and the role of women

The Tech industry is an innovative, future-shaping industry. Today, Tech businesses sell goods and services in electronics, software, computers, Artificial Intelligence, and other products related to information technology (IT) (cf. Investopedia, 2022). Especially the field of emerging Tech like Internet of Things-software, Big Data, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality has seen a 104 % growth prediction from 2018 to 2023 (cf. IDC, 2019, p. 20). According to a prevision by Forbes, the Tech industry shows the most potential to reach trillion-dollar valuations in the next 10 years, multiple Tech companies were at all-time highs in terms of valuation in 2021. This type of value creation will likely lead to more startups rushing to create newer technologies and valuations (cf. Forbes, 2021).

The landscape of US Tech businesses is characterized by 98.2 % small-sized companies with less than 100 employees, 1.6 % medium-sized companies with between 101 and 999 employees and 0.2 % large-scale Tech companies with 1000 employees and more (cf. Statistics of US Businesses, 2021); however, 46 % of the total workforce is employed by the 0.2 % large-scaled companies (cf. Indeed 1, 2021). Among these can be found so-called 'Big-Tech' companies Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Google and Facebook which in 2020, have displaced older industries as the top five S&P 500 companies. The (all male) founders of Big Tech have created the biggest personal fortunes ever seen (cf. The Guardian, 2021).

The industry is future-shaping and fast growing. However, women are glaringly absent from the field.

2.1 The role of women

On a global level, women in Tech represent only 25% of the technology workforce in North America (cf. Jones/Trop, 2015) and 18% in the EU (cf. Eurostat, 2021).

Connecting the share of women in Tech with the organizational variable of company size, it can be stated that the share of women increases with the size of the company as Bitkom e.V. found about German Tech companies, represented in the following figure:

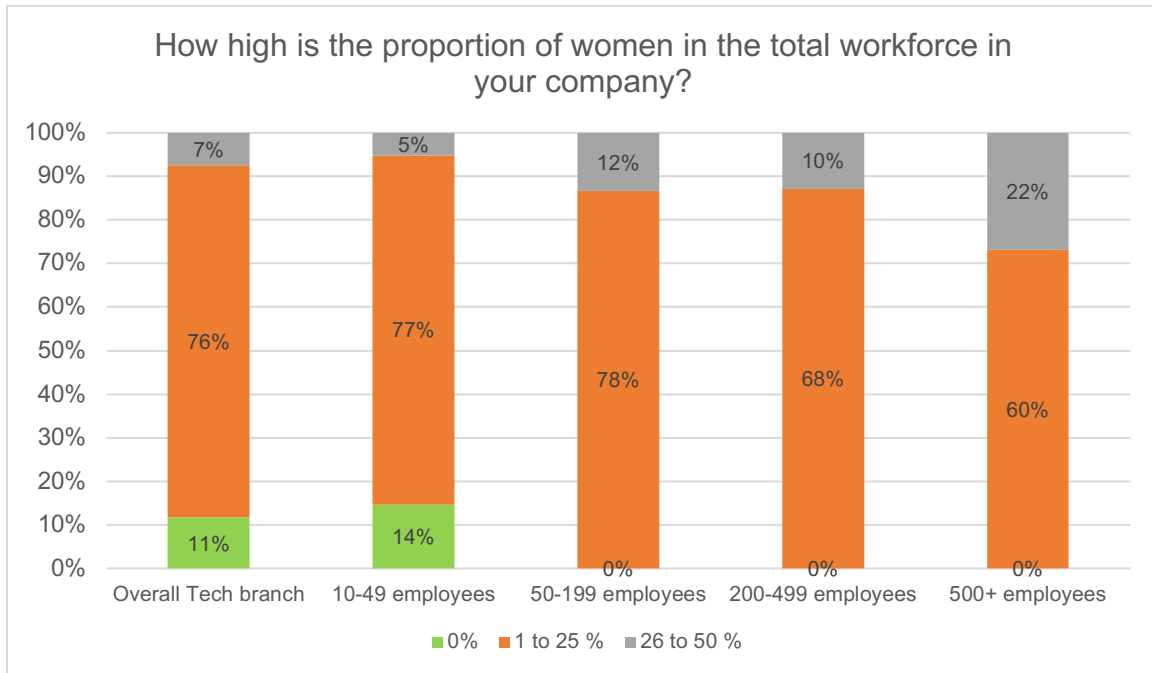


Figure 1: "Share of women in Tech companies by size of company in percent", own representation based on Bitkom e.V. Research, 2022

Analyzing the graph, it becomes clear that 14 % of the smallest companies with ten to 49 employees have no women in their staff. In bigger companies starting from 50 employees however, there are no companies with no women. In addition, on average 76 % of companies in the overall branch have a proportion of women of one to 25 %, so that parity (50 %) is still far away. Companies with 500 employees or more show the highest share of all Tech companies achieving between 26 to 50 % of proportion of women (cf. Bitkom e.V., 2022).

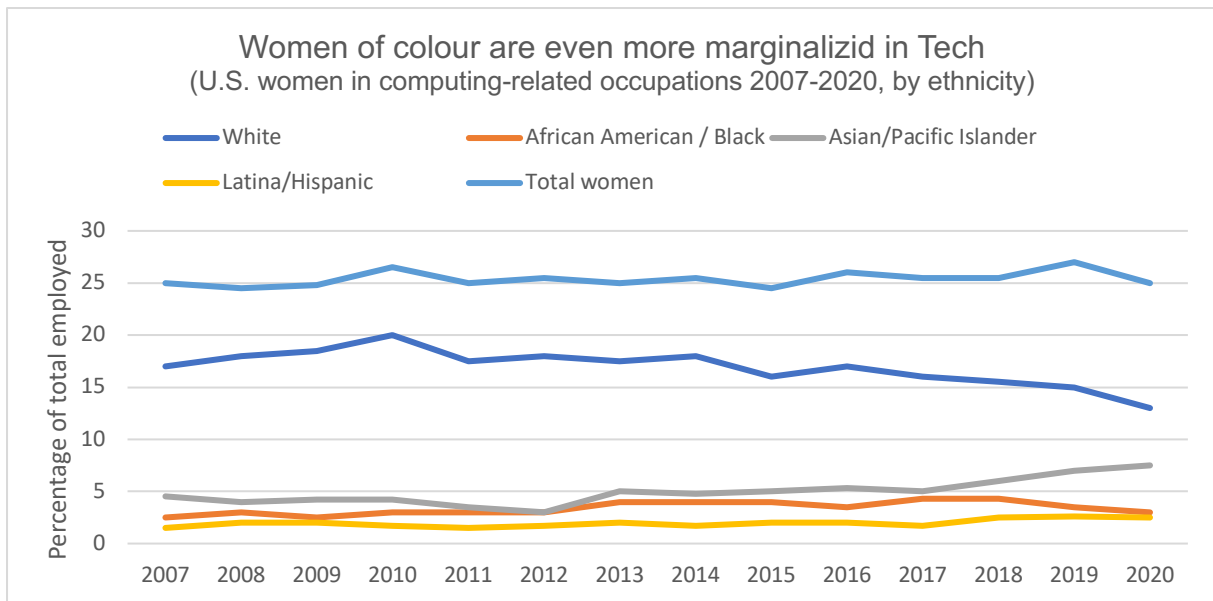


Figure 2: "Women in Tech by ethnicity in percent of total employed", own representation based on US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020

Furthermore, women in Tech are even more marginalized in Tech. Analyzing the figure of U.S. women in computer-related occupations from 2007 to 2020, by ethnicity shown above, it becomes visible that the percentage of women of color in Tech on average hardly breaks the 5 %-mark, so a special focus on diversity sharpens the perspective on the topic of this thesis.

Moreover, a study conducted by Crédit Suisse in 2019 showed that the gender imbalance is not only found in offices but transfers up the hierarchy to board offices and executive rooms as well. Women in Tech Management positions made up 16 % of such positions in 2019, although only 3 % of women hold CEO positions. The alarmingly low percentage of female CEOs is not only a problem in the Tech industry but is accentuated there (cf. Crédit Suisse, 2019, pp. 13-14). Women are leaving Tech jobs twice as often as their male peers (Gammal/Simard, 2013, p. 23) in an industry where job turnover is already higher than the national average (LinkedIn, 2021).

The low representation of women has economic and societal consequences. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021 by the World Economic Forum, gender gaps have a high chance of occurring in sectors that require disruptive technical skills. For example, in the field of Cloud Computing, women (including non-binary and transgender) make up solely 14 % of the workforce (cf. World Economic Forum, 2021). As the field of emerging Tech is rapidly growing with its strong digitization and data focus, the gender data gap becomes a problem which is even more amplified through technology. Taking Artificial Intelligence as an example, using biased data inherits the danger of increasing prevailing inequalities in healthcare, judicial and policing practices, and HR.

In the broad public, some examples of gender bias in AI have been identified. One of them is Apple's first version of its highly anticipated health application, which could track blood-alcohol level, but not menstruation (Chang, 2019, p. 15).

The societal need for representation of women in Tech, especially in intersectional ways, can be paired with the upcoming desire of women to have a career and a fulfilling domestic life. This can be linked to the postfeminist paradigm which encourages women to 'have it all' (cf. McRobbie, 2013, p. 121). In the past, scientific literature pointed to women leaving corporate life because of family duties. Nowadays, research published in leading economic and management magazines such as Harvard Business Review (2005) confirms that women are leaving companies because of high levels of dissatisfaction, rather than the pull of family obligations.

It has thus to be understood why women move into the field to synchronize how they can be retained and which barriers they face in their careers.

In the interviews which Nicola Marsden and Karen Holtzblatt led in 2021 with women in Tech about reasons for their job satisfaction, among them developers, designers, project leads and user researchers, they found that they are about high-impact and high-profile challenges. These women like working on tangible products, projects which are valuable for the company and the industry or even the world (cf. Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 43).

2.2 The retention of women

Through the creation of the Women in Tech Retention Project by Marsden and Holtzblatt and accompanying studies with women of all ethnicities, ages, household types, job types, career lengths and sexual orientations around product development, they found what keeps women motivated and committed to Tech work. In qualitative interviews, they investigated which factors contribute to success for women and if the absence of those factors led them to leave the job.

In their analysis, they found six key factors retaining women in Tech:

1. "Dynamic, valuing Team
2. Stimulating work
3. Push and support
4. Local role models
5. Nonjudgmental flexibility
6. Personal power"

(Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 9).

These critical factors do also apply to all, but since women leave the field more than men, the Tech work culture does not redeem women with these critical work experiences as constantly as men (Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p.10).

Sources of poor retention

Women face several barriers in Tech, resulting in their poor retention. In “The Future Tech Workforce: Breaking Gender Barriers” report from 2017 by ISACA, the top five barriers experienced by women in Tech were:

- Lack of mentors (48 %)
- Lack of female role models in the field (42 %)
- Gender bias in the workplace (39 %)
- Unequal growth opportunities compared to men (36 %)
- Unequal pay for the same skills (35 %)

(cf. ISACA, 2017)

Complementary to these findings, scientific research points to corporate culture being the culprit for women not staying in Tech jobs as reports of gender discrimination and sexual harassment have increased in the field, but also workplace factors are cited as key reasons (cf. Davis-Ali, 2017, p. 8; Simard and Gilmartin, 2010, p. 3).

Male-dominated culture

Since several years, research has been conducted about the challenges women face in a male-dominated occupational area such as the Tech industry. These status challenges and hostile work environments are often attributed to the men and the masculine cultures of these occupations (cf. Kanter, 2008, p. 22; Dresden et al., 2018, p. 460).

Going more into depth of professional culture in branches dominated by men such as the Tech industry, a certain culture is prevalent which Berdahl et al. (2018) refer to as ‘masculinity contest culture’. This kind of culture comprises:

- Extended work schedules without consideration for a normal private life,
- The ‘open systems’ mentality that glorifies individual technology innovation and outperforming colleagues rather than teamwork
- Unreasonable risks which are part of everyday life at work
- Emphasis on and rewarding of technological rather than social skills

“[M]uch of what simply appears to be neutral practices and what it takes to get ahead at work is actually counterproductive behavior aimed at proving manhood on the job” (Berdahl et al., 2018, p. 424). In these masculinity contest cultures, there is an inequality of power which expresses itself through authority and/or expertise and is typically inherent to white men. This power privileges to push workplace agendas over minorities like women with less workplace power to the disadvantage of both women and men (Bridges/Taylor/Robinson, 2020).

Stereotypes and gender bias

There are three main theories of psychologists about gender-based challenges for women in male working environments, leading people to see women as less qualified than men for male-typed roles.

1. Heilman's (1983) lack of fit model
2. Rudman and colleagues' (2012) status incongruity hypothesis
3. Eagly and Karau's (2002) role incongruity theory

Firstly, the lack of fit model by Heilman states that discrimination against women "[...] stem[s] from a mismatch between the attributes that women are thought to possess, and the attributes seen as necessary for success in male-typed positions and fields. This resulting incongruity forms the basis of negative expectations about women's performance, which thereby biases the processing of information and, consequently, facilitates discriminatory behavior" (Heilman/Caleo, 2018, p. 726).

Secondly, the status incongruity hypothesis proposes that agentic women risk social and economic penalties for acting counter-stereotypically and thus, violating status. Doing so is seen as attacking the gender hierarchy and has backlash effects, aiming to preserve male dominance through double standards of power and control (cf. Rudman et al., 2012, pp. 167-168).

Thirdly, the role incongruity model suggests that the presumed incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles leads to two forms of prejudice:

1. esteeming women as less qualified than men as potential candidates for positions of leadership and
2. rating leaders' behavior less favorably when a woman enacts it.

There are two main consequences: Attitudes are less positive towards female leaders in comparison to male leaders. Also, it becomes more challenging for women to achieve leadership positions and to attain success in these roles (cf. Eagly/Karau, 2002, p. 588).

All in all, women in male-dominated work environments are often not perceived as a fit to leadership roles due to stereotype female gender roles (cf. Heilman, 2001, p. 661), in order to "make it" they have to show themselves to be assertive, competent and agentic which is perceived as typical male characteristics (cf. Eagly/Karau, 2002, p. 588). But once they do, they may receive backlash in the form of social disapproval and negative evaluation (cf. Heilman, 2001, p. 663; Rudman et al., 2012, p. 170) due to incongruity to female stereotypes. Therefore, even when women seek to demonstrate that they have what it takes to fulfill traditionally male positions, they are likely to suffer negative reactions from colleagues (cf. Rudman/Kilianski, 2000, p. 1318).

2.3 The economic advantages of diversity

Still and all, on a microeconomic level, having diversity in corporate teams in terms of "[the] radical difference and diversity of people in their plurality" in categories such as age, impairment, social origin, sex/gender/queer and many more, has shown an increase in the extent of its cognitive and behavioral aptitudes (cf. Bath, 2014, p. 70). In addition, a homogenous team composed of e.g. all-male, same ethnicity and similar backgrounds, is more likely to develop solutions to their experiences and ignore needs of underrepresented populations (cf. Bath, 2014, p. 71). Diverse teams harbor another advantage: They develop more adapted and thus, better products. Social scientist Scott Page's findings on diversity in teams have shown over the years that innovation flourishes when people with different backgrounds, skills, expertise and overall perspectives work together to solve complex problems (cf. Page, 2017, p. 34). Especially in Tech companies, there is a high degree of complexity found within tasks and challenges (cf. Holtzblatt/Marsden, 2022, p. 14).

More so, female leaders present a competitive advantage to their companies. A survey conducted by Catalyst (2004) discovered that among 350 of the Fortune 500 companies, the companies with the most women in key leadership positions had a return on equity that was 35 % higher than those with the least number of women (cf. Catalyst, 2004).

Furthermore, on a macroeconomic level, Jo Stewart-Rattray (Board Director of ISACA and Director of information security and IT assurance at BRM Holdich) states: "Women are vastly underrepresented in the global technology workforce. This is not only a societal concern, but also a workforce problem, given the critical shortage of skilled technology professionals faced by many enterprises." (ISACA, 2017).

All in all, there are two options to stop the exodus of women in Tech, making parity possible more efficiently: helping women find greater job satisfaction and helping organizations to change in ways that will make women stay and reach leadership positions (Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 23). As several studies point to a lack of mentors and role models as a barrier for women to advance in Tech (cf. ISACA, 2017; Deloitte, 2021), Mentoring as a solution is reviewed in the following.

3 Mentoring in the area of conflict between personnel development and process design to effectively retain women in Tech

3.1 Introduction to Mentoring

Since there is no guiding definition of Mentoring, in the following an ideal-typical definition of Mentoring is used. Mentoring is traditionally a dyadic, developmental relationship which can be defined as "(...) an individual learning process in which an experienced person (mentor) accompanies a less experienced person (mentee) over a longer period of time (...)" (Schmid/ Haasen, 2011, p. 14). The experienced person provides advice, counseling

and developmental opportunities. Within the mentor-mentee relationship, Mentoring fulfills two functions:

- (1) instrumental or career support and
- (2) psychosocial support (cf. Eby, 1997, p.126).

Examples of psychosocial issues arising at the workplace can be difficult peer or departmental relationships or personal disputes, difficult work-life balance and cases of sexism and discrimination. The mentor-mentee relationship may foster a sense of competence, cope with disappointment, find courage, and grow as a person (cf. Clark/Corcoran, 1986, p. 20).

Mentoring need to be distinguished into informal and formal Mentoring. Informal Mentoring happens organically between one or several mentors and protégés. Their get-together is based on friendship, mutual respect and admiration for one another. It is usually a long-term relationship. In contrast to that, formal Mentoring programs are developed by an organization. They include a matchmaking process and follow a predetermined cycle. The relationship between mentor and mentee is formally usually short-term. Mentees are assigned or strongly encouraged to participate; mentors are volunteers. Mentee and mentor may or may not voluntarily choose each other (cf. Cotton/Miller/Ragins, 2000, p. 1179).

In the following, the focus of this thesis will lie on formal Mentoring programs as a PD and OD tool. Further, it needs to be distinguished between internal and external Mentoring:

Internal Mentoring

Internal Mentoring is suitable when internal OD is the focus, such as the introduction of new employees, building a culture of trust, developing teams, or retaining organization-specific know-how. For such processes, it is important that mentee and mentor belong to the same organization. In the case of internal Mentoring, the focus is on the development of professional and leadership competence through reflection on one's own organizational culture and access to internal networks (cf. Lukoschat/Kletzing, 2006, p. 90).

External Mentoring

In Cross-organizational Mentoring, the focus is on learning processes that result from the confrontation with different organizational and leadership cultures. Since mentee and mentor belong to different organizations, professional and leadership knowledge is transferred between organizations and cross-organizational networks are formed (cf. Lukoschat/Kletzing, 2006, p. 90).

Overall, Mentoring lacks a guiding definition but fulfills two functions: Career and psychosocial support. There is a variety of options conceptualizing Mentoring programs,

highly depending on the goals and structure of the company. Formal, internal Mentoring programs are the focus of this thesis.

3.2 The advantages of Mentoring for women in Tech companies

Since its eruption in the 1970s (Ziegler, 2009, p. 11), formal Mentoring programs for women have increasingly gained in popularity as a tool to overcome some of the barriers women face in a male-dominated environment. These include the lack of access to informal networks and sponsorship, the absence of appropriate mentors, and a lack of understanding of the political maze (cf. Palermo, 2004). Formal Mentoring programs strive to make informal connections that are particularly accessible to men, reachable for women and other minorities as well. Formal, internal Mentoring programs help develop an understanding of key players in the organization and the politics necessary to succeed (cf. De Vries, 2006, p. 574).

Especially in a fast-paced industry like the Tech industry, Mentoring and networking are the most effective methods for creating behavior change at the speed necessary in today's corporate environment. Given the exodus of women from the Tech industry, the Women in Tech Report 2021 by Trust Radius has found that women in Tech themselves would rate Mentorship possibilities highest as a solution to the leave rate (cf. Trust Radius, 2021).

Thus, 'good' Mentoring programs can positively influence job satisfaction and employer satisfaction (cf. Richardson, 2022, p. 28). Developmental Mentoring builds capability in both the mentee and mentor and increases growth opportunities through the allocation of support to evaluate and strategize the next career steps and through an increase in self-esteem (cf. Ziegler, 2009, p. 10). Conducting education training to improve the mentees' skills, e.g. in public speaking or negotiation, creates the possibility to fairly compete with men. It assures the successful incubation and execution of the new leadership profile on a day-to-day level, providing real-time feedback (cf. Ely/Meyerson, 2000; Lewis et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Mentoring contributes to health and wellbeing through its psychosocial support. The Wellbeing Lab 2020 Workplace Report found that women experience increased wellbeing and improved performance when they feel psychologically safe to bring up problems and talk honestly about points of improvement with each other (Center for the Advancement of Well-Being, 2020, p. 29). A Mentoring program can create a protected space through exchange and support among "like-minded" people. A trusting Mentoring relationship provides role models (cf. Lukoschat/Kletzing, 2006, pp. 91-92) and can thus play a key role in retaining women in an industry where representation is low. Mentoring contributes to retaining women in the field as seen in the Women in Tech Retention Project (see chapter 2.2, p. 6).

Overall, Mentoring programs can contribute to opening up informal networks for women and thus, have an impact on a male-dominated work culture. It offers developmental opportunities for women to fairly compete with men. Mentoring programs create an own, formal network where trusted relationships can be fostered, functioning as psychosocial support for women.

In order to positively influence employee retention, Mentoring programs need to be effective. Thus, a question arises: What defines the quality of Mentoring programs and what makes them effective?

3.3 Success factors of Mentoring programs revisited in favor of retaining women

In contrast to the advantages of Mentoring as a PD tool, Mentoring in practice shows deficiencies. Ground-laying strategies to ensure effective Mentoring have to be applied, since the lack of those is one of the biggest deficits in Mentoring practice (Ziegler, 2009, p.12). The following are examples for deficient areas:

- Appropriate training or at least aptitude testing of mentors (cf. Jucovy, 2001; Miller, 2007)
- Individual and thorough matchmaking of the mentors and mentees (cf. Eby et al., 2000)
- Appropriate and sufficient duration of the program (cf. Allen/Eby, 2007)
- Measures to develop the quality of the relation between mentor and mentee (cf. Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997)
- Supervision of the quality of the program (cf. Eby et al., 2000)

Specifically Mentoring programs for women in male-dominated industries must alleviate different forms of discrimination against women to be successful (cf. Vinnecombe/Singh, 2003). In recent literature, an emerging success factor of Mentoring can be found which deems itself effective in this regard: Structural changes and changes of corporate culture within the company.

From the best practice case of CMU which successfully implemented gender equity in enrolling, sustaining, and graduating women in computer science, several lessons can be deducted and in a next step transferred to a corporate context.

Their efforts were focused on adopting a cultural approach instead of a gender difference approach. Thus, they wanted to establish and sustain programs with the goal of leveling the playing field without making women feel like a separate species. CMU defines culture as "[...] a dynamic process; shaping and being shaped by those who occupy it, in a synergistic diffusive process." (Frieze/Quesenberry, 2019, p. 25)

Four main takeaways derive from this conception:

1. Cultural change is key, starting at a micro-level

2. Institutional support is essential
3. Cultural factors defy gender differences
4. Cultural interventions are necessary for change

(cf. Frieze/Quesenberry, 2019, pp. 24-25).

Firstly, CMU dropped the pre-requirement of having experience in programming or Computer Science and put the emphasis on leadership skills when selecting applications.

Secondly, CMU's example shows that cultural change needs institutional support, especially in a male-dominated field like Computer Science. The success of CMU relied on institutional investment, providing funding, guidance, and endorsement for programs developed through Women@SCS, a faculty of Carnegie Mellon University. They strengthened the image of women in Computer Science and challenged stereotypes about who is a 'fit' to the field (Frieze/Quesenberry, 2019, p. 24).

Thirdly, in their research about women's motivations to move into the field, CMU has found out that measures to accommodate culture-specific differences in learning or interests between boys and girls, risk widening the gender divide. Thus, they have defied this logic and prioritized the underlying culture. They influenced attitudes and opportunities for equality, supported by scientific research about the motivations of women moving into Computer Science. It is to be noted that these vary from country to country (cf. Frieze/Quesenberry, 2019, p. 24).

Lastly, CMU thus conceptualized a cultural approach which examined a variety of factors beyond gender as constituents of women's participation in Computer Science such as "[...] stereotype threat, opportunities for engagement in CS, opportunities for leadership, confidence levels, gender ratios, implicit bias, myths and stereotypes." (Frieze/Quesenberry, 2019, p. 25)

To sum up, an analysis of the CMU case from an OD perspective shows a clear paradigm shift. The focus has shifted from developing and changing the individual (e.g. inciting women to present themselves as more assertive), to allowing diversity through process redesign and communication of the specific traits of the aspired culture on all hierarchical levels (De Vries, 2016, p. 573). Newer research shows that Mentoring programs can have a dual function of fostering women's professional development and changing the corporate culture, vital to the success of Mentoring programs and to its long-term effectiveness (De Vries, 2006, p. 575).

However, these success factors of Mentoring are in most cases not met in practice (cf. Ziegler, 2009, pp. 12-13). Four major disadvantages impact the efficiency of Mentoring as an instrument to retain women in general and specifically concerning the Tech industry:

Firstly, Mentoring lacks methodological standards. In its scientific research, it needs systematic condition variations and qualitative research to elaborate these methodological standards (cf. Ziegler, 2009, p. 12).

Secondly, recent studies in STEM-related fields have highlighted the importance of sponsorship in the career advancement of women and other underrepresented groups along this professional career path (cf. Ayyala et al., 2019, p. 95). Mentors offer their protégés useful advice on career-related issues, while sponsors nominate and promote them for career-advancing opportunities, inviting them into their networks. Sponsorships can derive organically from Mentoring programs, but in practice, programs lack measures to improve the quality of mentor-mentee relationships (cf. Jamison-McClung, 2022, p. 183).

Thirdly, although there is a rising number of Mentoring programs for women in Tech, the number of marginalized groups such as African/black or LatinX women, has hardly improved over the course of 20 years (see figure 2, p. 5); Mentoring however erupted in the 1970s.

Fourthly, while postfeminist communities such as the entity of participants in a Mentoring program successfully cultivate supportive groups organizing around shared concerns related to gender inequalities, strategies focused on changes on individual-level hardly contribute to disrupting organization-level gender inequities (cf. Adamson, 2017, p. 327; Lewis et al., 2017, p. 481). Newer research shows that changing processes in a company changes behaviors incremented in corporate culture. Rethinking practices to interrupt bias is thus a question of process design (cf. Bohnet, 2016, p. 61).

All in all, formal Mentoring programs need to fulfill certain success factors in order to be effective. Then, they can have a dual function of developing women and inducing corporate culture change, vital to interrupting bias within male-dominated work cultures. Nevertheless, research points to the lack of disruption by Mentoring programs in practice in regard to the organizational entity. Therefore, the redesign of processes and corporate culture with the goal of interrupting bias is reviewed in the following.

3.4 Strategies of redesigning corporate processes to enhance diversity

Changing corporate culture and processes within a company is essential when there is a predominance of a masculine culture, typically found in Tech organizations and corporate processes. Processes that foster gender differences and reproduce hierarchies are called 'gendering processes' (cf. Acker, 1990, p. 146). Gendering processes manifest themselves on different levels: They "[...] reflect and reproduce gender divisions (e.g. separations in space and in tasks) through policies and formal practices (e.g., defining criteria for promotion and recruitment); organizational culture that influences beliefs and behaviors (e.g., through gender typing of occupations or tasks); and through everyday interactions

among employees and identities of organizational members (e.g., professional identities).” (Holgerson/Romani, 2020, p. 650)

Going more into detail on how masculine organizational cultures can be changed in a corporate context and how stereotypes and bias can be defied, the focus must be set on understanding inequality regimes first.

Acker (2006) defines inequality in organizations as “[...] systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations.” (Acker, 2006, p. 443)

As research on egalitarian feminist organizations has shown, all types of organizations have inequality regimes, even when they follow explicit equality and diversity goals (cf. Scott, 2000, p. 785). Inequality regimes are defined as “[...] loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations.” (Acker, 2006, p. 443) Inequality shows itself through the correlation of hierarchy and pay, e.g. when people in leadership such as managers or executives have more power and higher pay than secretaries and production workers.

These regimes do not defy external societal, political, historical and cultural inequalities, but they can differ in organizations and/or subunits depending on their respective practices and processes (Acker, 2006, p. 443).

There are different dimensions that shape the degree of inequality in companies, one of them being steep hierarchies. The steepest hierarchies are found in traditional bureaucracies in contrast to organizations with flat hierarchies, enhancing structures in which responsibilities and decision-making authority are distributed among employees to some extent (cf. Acker, 2006, p. 445). Every year, Forbes’ Fortune 500 list points to the fact that top leadership positions are still widely held by white men in the United States and European countries, especially in large-sized, influential organizations (cf. Forbes, 2020). Work itself is designed for men by default, given that women take up 75 % more care tasks in comparison to men all over the world (cf. Bouée et al., 2019, p. 25). Working eight hours continuously, arriving on time, with no responsibilities for children or family demands other than earning a living, working long hours if necessary, is a predominant design of work which corresponds to a traditional gender role distribution (Jacobs/Gerson, 2004, pp. 28-30).

When inequality regimes are challenged or changed, the biggest hurdle is the invisibility of inequalities to those with privilege. Furthermore, often there is a voluntary or involuntary wish to keep ownership, managerial class interests and power to the detriment of those

who experience inequalities (cf. McIntosh, 1995, p. 35). Scientific research points to the complexity of motives of (white) men hindering organizational change in favor of abolishing inequalities, even when top management is at the initiative of organizing such change (cf. Cockburn, 1991, p. 54).

In the past, 'successful' change of inequality regimes within companies has included the intervention of state regulations such as affirmative action campaigns by federal governments in the US. They regulated the augmentation of intersectional employment opportunities regarding men and women of all races in organizations and jobs in which they were hardly represented. Moreover, social movements have fostered changes in terms of civil rights. Nowadays, antidiscrimination laws have made their way to organizations. However, gendered aspects of work organization are not ostensible and overall, there is an absence of social movements (cf. Acker, 2006, p. 457).

From a practical point of view, the analysis of a change project, conducted by Ely and Meyerson in 2000, showed the gendered identity of women perceived by people in privileged positions: A company had difficulty retaining women in leadership positions as well as raising the ratio of women in upper management. As the researchers and change agents found, the underlying problem was the cultural and organizational practices at the executive level which rewarded stereotypically male "heroic" problem-solving behaviors, deprecated women's efforts to fit in trying to be heroes and did not reward practical tasks of regular organizational life mostly done by women. In interviews with their male colleagues, it was found that they linked the low representation of women to their individual skills and character instead of system processes (cf. Ely/Meyerson, 2000, pp. 150-151).

In order to overcome resilience to process changes in masculine-typed corporate cultures, Marsden and Holtzblatt (2022) suggest a framework of process design to interrupt bias and overcome stereotypes in favor of retaining and promoting women in Tech. Having conducted feminist living labs in which they worked with women in German Tech companies over a three-year period, they 'sneak in' day-to-day techniques to enhance diversity for managers and team members (cf. Ahmadi et al., 2018, p. 241).

Interrupting bias in day-to-day activities within the company

As bias has been identified as the biggest hurdle for women to move into positions of leadership, especially in masculine-typed companies, the focus is set on finding ways to interrupt bias. In several disciplines, namely gender studies, software development, Scrum, social psychology, and organizational culture, improving processes is about identifying and differentiating between explicitly and implicitly defined processes (cf. Farnsworth/Holtzblatt, 2016, p. 1078).

The Scrum Matrix Analysis by WITops can help teams and organizations to identify how Scrum, or any core process, may impair women's participation on teams. It equally depicts

the relationships between and among categories, with a special emphasis on explicit and implicit processes within a group or individual dimension (cf. WITops, 2022). Marsden and Holtzblatt, the founders of WITops, elaborated the following Matrix:

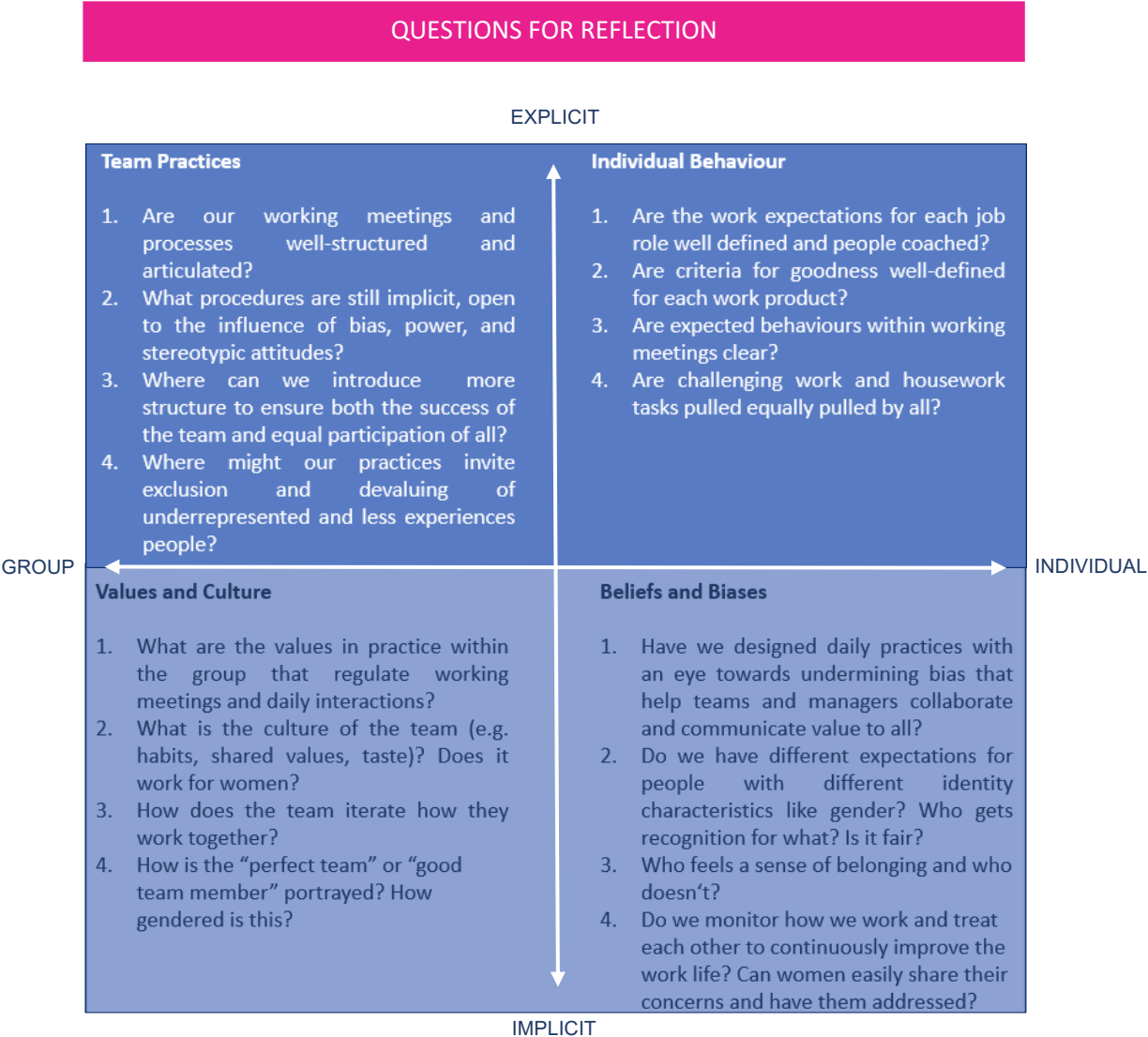


Illustration 1: Scrum Analysis Matrix, own representation based on Marsden and Holtzblatt, 2022

The Matrix shows four different categories in order to review Team Practices, Individual Behavior, Values and Culture as well as Beliefs and Biases within the team. It provides guiding questions concerning the four categories and introduces four dimensions. These range from explicit to implicit processes, as well as group-related or individual. This way, companies can effectively uncover implicit processes but also analyze explicit ones with a gender equality lens.

The team level: Measures for managers to retain women

Team Onboarding

Studies have found that 58 % of employees are more likely to stay at a company after three years if they have gone through a structured onboarding process (Bauer, 2013, p. 3). Especially in the Tech industry, making women feel socially accepted through the Onboarding process is a key factor of successful retention (Bauer et al., 2007, p. 711). Onboarding needs to provide support so that new hires settle in, develop a positive attitude towards the job and become active (Bauer, 2013, p. 5).

Taking into consideration onboarding practices from literature, specializing on the need to make women feel welcome in Tech, Marsden and Holtzblatt (2022) developed onboarding checklists for companies for certain timeframes within the process ('before first day', 'first days', 'first weeks' and 'launch'). These checklists focus on creating a connection with collaborators (managers, buddies, team and network) and providing everything to make the new hire successful (tools and infos, team culture, job role and projects) throughout the different time frames (cf. Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 131-133).

Feedback culture

The feminist living lab by Marsden (2018) provided that 80 % of women in a maker industry such as the Tech industry are discouraged by the way continuous feedback is delivered (cf. Ahmadi et al., 2018, p. 247) An effective feedback culture is crucial to the development of Tech products as well as increase of product excellence, and women's participation is needed to reach these goals. Therefore, various measures to improve feedback culture in Tech companies have been implemented: Primarily, structuring team feedback sessions through establishing clear goals, roles, processes and expected outcomes reduces interpersonal conflicts (cf. Allen/Lehmann-Willenbrock/Rogelberg, 2015, p. 23). When held online, these need even more structure through agendas, timed discussions, specified roles, tools to share content and strong participation techniques (cf. Ahmadi et al., 2018, p. 248). The meeting owner should set the expectations from the beginning of the meeting, underlining the review as product improvement and not a personal evaluation. The reviewers are asked to give feedback politely and objectively according to feedback rules, and to acknowledge the rules of participation. Structuring feedback sessions will give minorities the sense of being heard and make them feel valued (cf. Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 153).

Evaluating behaviors and characters within the team

Explicitly defining appreciated and non-acceptable characters and behaviors within a team can lead to valuing minorities in organizations, especially when there are moments of interpersonal friction. The solution provided tackles women's feeling of isolation in "bro cultures" (Happe /Buhnova, 2021, p. 63). Based on field interviews with men and women, Marsden and Holtzblatt (2022) developed propositions of characters and behaviors which stimulated the feeling of worth within a team and those who represented "jerk" behaviors.

Identified Valuing characters were among others the Champion who advocates ideas and achievements of employees to upper management, challenging an employee to build their presence and push their careers.

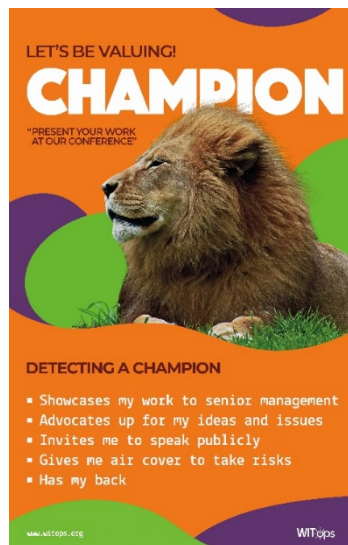


Illustration 2: Valuing character 'Champion', WITops, 2022

Speaking times in meetings

A study showed that in meetings where men outnumbered women, women participated about 25 % less often than their male counterparts (cf. Allen/Lehmann-Willenbrock/Rogelberg, 2015, p. 43). The solution to the problem is to start track talking time in meetings. If there are people dominating the conversation, talking to them in private about this concern is a suitable solution for managers. This strategy can be complemented by creating and enforcing a policy for interruptions, since men tend to interrupt women more than vice versa (cf. Hancock/Rubin, 2015, p. 50). Similarly, when majority-group members are being given credit for ideas that women and people of color originally offered, it needs to be addressed. Furthermore, if someone is taking notes when they could contribute with their expertise, it is important to ask them for their contribution (cf. Williams/Mihaylo, 2019).

The organizational level: Measures for companies to retain women

Setting metric goals

In 2020, Accenture and GWC conducted surveys and analyses about strategies to retain women in Tech. The report shows cultural practices to attract and retain more women in Tech. The study claims that by adopting these practices, Tech businesses worldwide could ensure retaining up to 1.4 million young women in US Tech roles by 2030. Endorsing female role models at the top of company leadership is of great importance to them since it allows women to self-identify and see a long-term future for themselves at a company. Accenture and GWC have found that in more inclusive workplace cultures, the probability of women

being promoted to manager and beyond by age 30 increases by 61 %; for women of color, it even increases by 77 %. Thus, SMART goals for diversity in the leadership team helps retaining women. Recommended metrics include diversity hires goal (%), percentage of women hired in technical roles, or creating a diversity council (cf. Accenture/GWC, 2020, p. 17).

Talent Acquisition

Research has shown that unconscious bias plays a significant role in hiring and promotion decisions, resulting in the low number of women in key positions (cf. Johnson/Hekman/Chan, 2016, p. 2).

Research shows that the likelihood of hiring a woman is 79 times higher if there are at least two women in the final selection, while a non-white applicant is 194 times more likely to be hired if there are at least two minority applicants in the final selection (cf. Center for Work & Family, 2020, p. 2).

Furthermore, there is a need for standardization in objective hiring criteria and culture fits in order to reduce 'like-me' hiring. This comprises clarifying objective criteria for any specific positions, redefining culture fit and rating all applicants according to these standards. This defies bias in assessing people. A study by PayScale found that 66 % of women's reviews included comments about their personalities, but only 1 % of men's reviews did. These double standards can have a direct influence on hiring women, but also promoting them (cf. PayScale, 2022). Additionally, in interview situations, it is advised to ask the interviewees the same questions and ensure that each question links to the fitting knowledge and skills which have been outlined in hindsight.

Moreover, referral hiring plays into 'like-me' hiring and thus, fosters gendered processes within a company. It is thus advised to limit referral hiring. Google solves this through partnering with Hispanic-serving institutions and universities, as well as historically black colleges and universities (cf. Williams/Mihaylo, 2019).

Internal mobility

According to the 2018 study by Indeed about reasons for women to leave Tech, providing internal mobility can help retain women too. In the study, 61 % said that at some point in their careers they have wanted to switch to a different position within their enterprise.

Among these women who stated they wanted to switch jobs internally, 80% expressed they would be more likely to stay if there was a transparent trajectory to do it.

Due to the high demand for internal mobility among women in Tech, a solution could be publicizing the process, retaining the 6 in 10 women who are interested in experiencing other jobs within the company. Communicating these possibilities is key for employers, while managers should provide support (cf. Indeed 2, 2018).

Equity in maternal and paternal leave

Already in the 1990s, researchers have pointed out the work-life imbalance of women, especially in IT, due to familial duties (cf. Igarria/Chidambaram, 1997, p. 65). One option to cope with this are family-friendly working hours. However, on average, women have less free time in a day than men and do 75 % of all unpaid care work (cf. Bouée et al., 2019, p. 25). So, challenging typical gender roles through putting forward paternal leave within corporate culture can have positive consequences on retaining women. This measure is most effective in terms of inclusion when the majority of parents make use of maternity and paternity policies as well as role models such as senior managers leading by example (cf. Accenture/GWC, 2020, p. 26).

Rescheduling events and meetings

Networking is an important part of career building. Networking opportunities like after-work drinks or weekend sports events are inconvenient for some women to attend due to their schedule. Companies deliberately scheduling events within working hours could create a more inclusive workplace and foster a sense of belonging to the company and the team. Furthermore, this also applies for meetings. Holding meetings at hours which help attend employees with children is an inclusive measure to take (cf. Accenture/GWC, 2020, p. 27).

4 Empirical research

In the following paragraphs, the researcher provides information on which sampling methods were used, what selection criteria were picked out and how the data was collected, analyzed, and coded to answer the research question: To what extent is Mentoring a suitable measure for Tech companies to retain women when diversity on all hierarchical levels is the goal?

4.1 Research design

To answer the research question above, a qualitative research method has been applied. Qualitative methods are usually chosen to provide a phenomenological depiction of a multifaceted reality and not statistical evidence. The advantage of selecting a qualitative method is the opportunity for flexibility (cf. Lenger, 2019, p. 950), beyond delivering new understandings of the research topic. Moreover, it also raises broader and advanced questions to remove any uncertainties on the matter and create a detailed but holistic overview (cf. Lenger, 2019, p. 951).

Case studies

Case studies are assigned to the qualitative research paradigm (cf. Dyllick/Tomczak, 2009, p. 65; cf. Brüsemeister, 2008, p. 56).

Nonetheless, they do not have a clear definition in research. Ragin and Becker (2005), for example, define case studies as "[...] research strategy that aims to investigate a certain phenomenon by means of one or more objects in a 'natural' context, i.e., basically in the wild." (Ragin/Becker, 1992, p. 35) Meyer distinguishes between two different types of cases: "In business administration, case studies are used to illustrate particularly noteworthy (teaching case study) or exemplary (best practice cases) entrepreneurial circumstances." (Meyer, 2001, p. 342).

According to Yin, the design of a case study should consider the following five points:

1. the research question
2. the theoretical hypotheses
3. the units of analysis (groups, persons, decisions, etc.)
4. the logical relation between assumptions and data, and
5. the criteria for the interpretation of the results.

(cf. Yin, 2003, pp. 151-152).

Furthermore, there are several variants of case studies. These are categorized according to the object of investigation ("single-case-study" vs. "multiple-case-study"), use in teaching or research ("teaching case studies vs. research case studies"), as well as within that according to the research goal ("exploratory vs. confirmatory") (cf. Kittel-Wegner/Meyer, 2002, pp. 43-46).

Expert interviews

Experts are determined by the specific research interest and the social representativeness in society (cf. Bogner/Menz/Littig 2014, p. 11). In this context, the term expert describes "the specific role of the interview partner as a source of special knowledge about the social issues to be researched" (Gläser/Laudel, 2010, p. 12). Experts have "[...] (a) specialist professional or technical knowledge and (b) knowledge of organizational procedures and processes, but also (c) interpretive knowledge about their field of activity" (Littig/Pöchhacker, 2014, p. 1088).

Furthermore, Bogner et al. (2014) differentiate between exploratory, systemizing or theory-generating interviews (cf. Bogner/Menz/Littig, 2014, pp. 35-36).

Concerning interview guides, Bogner et al. take the position that interview guides in the context of social research are always semi-structured interviews, regardless of their position in the research process. They serve a double function: on the one hand they structure the subject area of the investigation, on the other hand they provide a concrete aid in the survey situation (cf. Bogner/Menz/Littig, 2014, p. 45). The interviewees need to

have prior knowledge or experience on the phenomenon to provide relevant data, as per Bluff (2005).

Course and aim of the case studies

The following work contains a multiple-case study of a largely exploratory nature, which can be categorized as research case studies.

Expert interviews are conducted to assess to what extent Mentoring in practice fulfills success factors and in what way Mentoring is used as a measure to retain women in Tech. The experts have been classed as suitable due to their specialist professional knowledge, knowledge of organizational procedures and processes and interpretive knowledge about their field of activity (Littich/Pöchhacker, 2014, p. 1088).

To collect data, semi-structured expert interviews have been used. In order to ensure comparability, the same semi-structured interview guide has been used as an aid for case studies one and two. For case study three, different semi-structured interview guides have been used due to their difference in expertise concerning the project (e.g. project lead/ working in OD, mission lead/ working in TA). The interview guides comprise questions of an exploratory nature. They mostly contain open questions, which are due to the exploratory nature of the interview, and some confirmatory questions to check the applicability of the determined potential for success or failure.

The aim of this choice of course of the case studies is to critically review measures to achieve gender equality. Within the expert interviews, there is the aim to compare their approach to the different inductive categories made (e.g., structural changes in combination with Mentoring, success measurement) and if or how Mentoring contributes to retaining women in Tech. The choice of enterprises/Mentoring programs makes it possible to compare a program with intersectional features to a non-intersectional one and review differences or similarities regarding their organizational factors such as size. The third case study depicts a best practice Tech company implementing a culture of equality as an alternative to Mentoring programs. In alignment with the findings of the theoretical part, the effectiveness of Mentoring as a retention tool is compared to the effectiveness of the gender equality project, reviewed in terms of the extent of structural changes made. Equally in this case, diversity and organizational factors are being reviewed. Due to the inductive approach of qualitative content analysis, there are no hypotheses used.

Relating the insights from the theoretical part to the empirical part, it can be assumed that Mentoring can only have a long-term impact on a company in terms of diversity and thus, retain women, when it is conducted according to the widely researched success factors, topped by structural changes of processes within the company. The following graphic represents the criteria for the interpretation of the three case studies after Yin (2003):

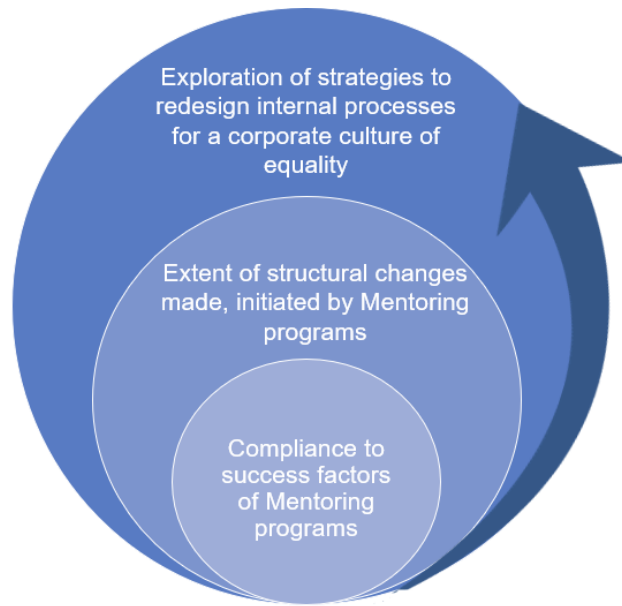


Illustration 3: Research criteria of the case studies, own representation

Sampling

The criterion set to find interview partners was a position of responsibility of an internal Mentoring program for women in a large Tech company or a position of responsibility of having participated/participate in an external Mentoring program for women as a small to mid-sized Tech company. This is due to the identification of patterns within the theoretical part as well as within the research for interview partners. Large companies tend to develop their own Mentoring programs whereas small to mid-sized companies rather do not engage in Mentoring for women at all or they participate in external programs by universities or registered associations. Other factors of the search for interview partners were the visibility of the programs as well as their notoriety. These factors contribute to conveying 'success' which is being critically reviewed in the thesis. Due to the findings of the theoretical part that structural changes within companies are essential when diversity at all hierarchical levels is the goal, the search has been enlarged to companies with projects inducing change in corporate culture and/or company processes to achieve (gender) equality at the workplace. Equally as for the Mentoring programs, a person of responsibility within the project was looked out for in order to receive the most input about the organizational practices of setting up such a project or program.

In order to find interview partners, first of all, personal contacts have been used due to their proximity. In this way, four large Tech players with internal Mentoring programs have been contacted, of which two agreed to an interview. Furthermore, one large company with a gender equality project has been contacted for an interview to which it agreed.

Concerning the small to mid-sized companies, several approaches have been used, contacting:

- University Mentoring programs for women and initiatives like Komm mach MINT
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Mentoring (German Association of Mentoring)
- Europäische Akademie für Frauen in Politik und Wirtschaft Berlin e.V.
- Global Digital Women GmbH
- A Mentoring "Community builder" and her contacts on LinkedIn
- Kompetenzzentrum Technik-Diversity-Changengleichheit e.V.
- Wirtschaftsregion Heilbronn-Franken
- Personal mentor from the online Mentoring program "Women in Tech"

However, due to the low number of small to mid-sized Tech companies engaging in Mentoring for women, the representation of small to mid-sized companies in this work is limited. Yet, this finding provides valuable insights for further research and is being considered in the discussion (see p. 47).

Due to confidentiality, nor the names of the companies nor their Mentoring program name will be mentioned. Personal pronouns used will be "they".

4.2 Qualitative content analysis as per Mayring (2010)

In order to interpret the expert interviews in regard to the research question, the qualitative content analysis according to Mayring is used.

Regarding the definition of qualitative content analysis, it is important to note that "[...] content analysis and qualitative content analysis in particular can be understood as an evaluation technique, as a form of data analysis and text interpretation" (Mayring/Brunner, 2007, p. 670). Qualitative content analysis as an investigative tool "[...] aims to analyze texts systematically by processing the material step by step with category systems developed theory-guided on the material." (Mayring, 2010, p. 114).

The qualitative content analysis as per Mayring follows eight steps:

1. Determination of the material
2. Analysis of the context of the material
3. Formal characterization of the material
4. Direction of analysis
5. Theory-based differentiation of the research question
6. Determination of the appropriate analysis technique
7. Definition of the units of analysis
8. Execution of the analysis according to process model under use of the category system

(Mayring, 2010, p. 60)

In the following, the eight steps as per Mayring (2010) are put into practice in this present work.

Firstly, the experts have all agreed to the recording of the interviews. The material of case study 1 and 2 comprises two recorded and transcribed expert interviews of a duration of 30 to 45 minutes, representing Mentoring programs for women of two large companies in the Tech sector. This selection from a larger quantity of material has been made due to a specific sampling model as specified in Sampling (see p. 25), the selection according to predetermined quotas. The third case study consists of three expert interviews of the same duration. All expert interviews have been transcribed with the software "f4 transcription".

Secondly, the context of the material needs to be determined, by whom and under which conditions it has been produced. The interviewer is the author of the thesis, a master's student at the Berlin School of Economics and Law, originally from Heilbronn.

The interviewee of the first case study has been recommended by an intermediary working at the Hochschule Heilbronn, establishing contact between the two beginning of June 2022. The interviewee is an employee in OD (HR) at the company and part of the diversity committee, running the Mentoring program. The interview has taken place on June, 22nd 2022 via an online videocall of 45 minutes. The semi-structured interview guide has been sent beforehand for the interviewee to prepare. Regarding the language of the interview, the mother tongue of interviewer and interviewee has been used, German, which is generally regarded as the option of choice in qualitative interviewing for German-speaking researchers (cf. Resch/Enzenhofer, 2012, p. 80).

The interviewee of the second case study has been found thanks to a hint of the first examiner of the thesis. Their position at the company is project manager within the CEO office, equally being the head of a Mentoring program. The interview partner has been contacted on LinkedIn on June, 3rd 2022 and the interview of a duration of 35 minutes has taken place on June 17th, 2022 via an online videocall. The interview language was English. The semi-structured interview guide has not been sent in advance in order to receive unbiased answers, however, this prevented the interviewee from being able to judge beforehand to what extent the questions could be answered from their side. For the following interviews, the strategy has been changed.

The interviewees of the third case study have been found through the contacts of the personal mentor of the interviewer at their company. Two of them are organizers of the project, the mentor themselves was part of two missions of the project and the fourth interviewee is part of the DEI department of the company and has a background in TA. The interviews took place between the 5th and 18th July 2022 via online videocalls and took each 30 to 45 minutes. The interview language was English. The interview guide has been sent in advance.

As in any semi-structured interview process, coding will be used in this research thesis as a preparation to the analysis of the results. At the center of qualitative content analysis is a system in which the goals of the analysis are specified within categories. Particularly important is the Category construction and justification (cf. Mayring, 2010, p. 59). In the analysis there are three different procedures, whereby also an analysis with more than one technique is conceivable. First, as a special qualitative technique the summary has to be mentioned. The purpose of summarizing content analysis is to reduce the text to its essential contents of texts and to create a reduced picture, which corresponds to the basic material. Another basic form is explication, which serves to increase the understanding of unclear passages by adding material. The third approach is structuring, which allows for an organization of text units according to established criteria (cf. Mayring, 2010, p. 65). The author has chosen the technique of structuring and inductive category formation. Inductive category formation "derives the categories directly from the material in a generalization process without referring to previously formulated theoretical concepts" (Mayring, 2010, p. 83). This technique of qualitative content analysis proves to be most suitable for the evaluation of explorative interviews.

The model of summary and inductive category formation according to Mayring provides for the following process model:

1. Determination of the units of analysis
2. Paraphrasing of the text passages that are important for the content
3. Determination of the targeted level of abstraction, generalization of the paraphrases under this level of abstraction
4. First reduction by selection, deletion of paraphrases with the same meaning at the targeted level of abstraction
5. Second reduction by bundling, construction, integration of paraphrases at the paraphrases at the targeted level of abstraction.
6. Compilation of the new statements as a system of categories
7. Back-testing of the summary category system on the source material

(Mayring, 2010, p. 68)

The units of analysis are any complete statement the expert made. An inductive category formation is most suitable to answer the research question from a practical point of view has been chosen due to the variety of options of designing Mentoring programs seen in chapter 2.1 (see p. 10). Furthermore, literature on Mentoring especially for women is not extensive, especially in regard to the Tech branch. Moreover, a structuring content analysis

helps work out the statements of the text material in condensed form (cf. Mayring, 2020, p. 70).

4.3 Case study 1: Discovering the Mentoring program for women of a large German Tech company

4.3.1 Company analysis and presentation of the Mentoring program for women

The enterprise is a German publicly listed company in the MDAX. The MDAX contains the 50 largest companies by market capitalization below the DAX stocks (cf. Deutsche Börse Group, 2022). The enterprise is active in the fields of IT e-commerce and IT system house and managed services (cf. Annual Report, 2022, p. 2). The company in question is a subsidiary of a bigger group and has around 800 employees (cf. Company Website 1, 2022).

Diversity is part of their Sustainability Strategy 2030 with the focal points of employer attractiveness, diversity and equal opportunity, and health and safety (Annual Report, 2022, p. 4). Analyzing the 40 photos taken of employees in the report, it can be stated that 19 of those depict women, and 38 depicted employees are white. Within the report, diversity at the company is being promoted as having employees from 100 different nations (cf. Annual Report, 2022, p. 68).

As of December 2021, the enterprise had around 3,600 female employees (2020: 3,300), a share of about 28.2 % of the total workforce (2020: 27.4 %) (cf. Annual Report, 2022, p. 70). For many years, the company has been applying various measures to promote women internationally: Girls’ Days, Future Days and Mentoring programs. In 2021, a cooperation with Dell has been established. This initiative included seminars on personal branding, network, resilience and was open to all women who work for the company (cf. Annual Report, 2022, p. 122).

Analyzing the ratio of women on the Supervisory Board in 2021, it can be stated that 33.3 % were female. However, all Executive Board members and Executive VPs are men, and women are underrepresented at the higher executive levels. Therefore, the Supervisory Board has set targets to raise the ratio by January 2025 (cf. Annual Report, 2022, p. 70). The table below shows the proportion of women in executive management positions as of 2020, 2021 and their targets for 2025:

| | Target | 2021 | 2020 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Supervisory Board | 30 % according to law | 33.3 % | 33.3 % |
| Executive Board | One person | 0 % | 0 % |

| | | | |
|---|------|-------|-------|
| First executive level under the Executive Board | 22 % | 0 % | 0 % |
| Second executive level under the Executive Board | 25 % | 7.8 % | 8.7 % |

Table 1: Proportion of women in supervisory and senior functions as of December 2021, own representation after the Annual Report 2021.

The efforts within the company are represented on their digital media: On the website and on LinkedIn you can find information about events and other diversity initiatives, for their Mentoring program they even have a frame around their profile pictures in the colors of the logo of the program (cf. LinkedIn, 2022).

4.3.2 Qualitative content analysis of the expert interview

Hereafter, the subsidiary conducting the Mentoring programs is designated “the company”, whereas the corporate group is designated “the group” due to confidentiality reasons.

C1: Success factors and best practices of the two Mentoring programs

C1.1: Success factors

The company has two Mentoring programs for women in Tech, an inhouse program which has been launched in May 2022 and a cross-organizational Mentoring program in which they participate together with other big players since 2018. The inhouse program follows a community format whereas the cross-organizational Mentoring program is specifically designed to promote women to their next career step. It is organized by an external provider specialized in Mentoring for women. Both of them are destined to female employees of the company. This division of programs could give a hint that cross-organizational Mentoring might be more effective when the promotion of women to leadership positions is the goal.

From several statements by the interviewed person, offering networking opportunities for women is one of the main success factors to break up the glass ceiling through Mentoring. According to them, this can mainly be achieved through the quality of the mentor-mentee relationships which are matched internationally within their inhouse program. Respectively, the matches are made cross-company within the cross-organizational Mentoring program. The focus lies on matching mentees with mentors fitting their (career) aspirations. In both programs, sponsorship came up organically, but is limited to certain mentors.

Moreover, providing developmental opportunities to level the uneven playing field is crucial to women’s advancement according to the interviewee. They provide seminars for self-development, e.g. in personal branding. The participants of the program function as multipliers and increase the impact of the Mentoring program on the company when recruited from all hierarchical levels. The underlying comprehension of supporting women

is their enhanced visibility through the Mentoring program, connecting them and increasing thus the impact of the program through a bottom-up approach.

Moreover, the interviewee mentions different forms of achieving visibility: "First and foremost, of course, it's about working with the female employees and managers who are already there and developing them, but at the same time, of course, it's also about creating a high level of awareness with regard to the topic of recruiting new women for the company." (Interview A) With the help of other statements, two forms of solutions can be deduced: Firstly, Mentoring programs helps giving women the skills and the assertiveness to become more visible and step up for higher roles. Secondly, on a corporate level, creating awareness in regard to unconscious bias and the phenomenon of the glass ceiling is a success factor. Both of them are addressed through Mentoring influencing recruitment and retainment.

At the same time, the interviewee acknowledges the importance of the attention and support of Top Management on the success of the Mentoring program in order to being able to increase diversity all over the company: "If we look at the topic of diversity, then of course a lot can happen on the topic of top management and management, of course we need the attention up there [...]" (Interview A)

C1.2 Best practices

Several best practices have been identified for the organization of a Mentoring program.

First of all, a long-term strategy with clear goals and responsibilities needs to be the base for the choice of format. The fact that the interviewed company chooses to develop an own program for women for the purpose of community and participates in a program for women by an external provider to promote more women in leadership positions shows just two examples of a variety of organizational formats of Mentoring. Not determining a long-term strategy can lead to the following scenario: "The [first try of setting up the Mentoring program] lost a bit of momentum because there was no sustainability in the structure and you didn't know exactly who was taking care of it." (Interview A)

Secondly, the case study shows that close communication with supervisors of the mentees helps monitoring progress and provides the opportunity for the responsible of the program to intervene, i.e. when a part-time employee only receives the administrative tasks instead of more 'challenging' tasks.

Thirdly, the matchmaking process majorly defines the success of the two Mentoring programs. The internal program provides a questionnaire about the experiences and expectations from both mentors and mentees, filtering matches beforehand and then offering a selection to mentees to choose from. In the community format, mentors are mostly female. In contrast to that, mentors in the Cross-organizational Mentoring program

are evenly female and male suiting the career-focused goals. Matches are made by experience, hierarchical level and by company.

Fourthly, crafting a cycle with different checkpoints can ensure the quality of the Mentoring program. Within the Cross-organizational Mentoring program, a cycle consists of three modules, the first one being Learning sprints, the second one being Mentoring and coaching and the third being project work. Within this cycle, in both programs there is a point where the match of the mentor and mentee is reviewed by both after a certain time of getting to know each other.

Fifthly, they favor inclusive meeting hours for the program, so that part-time working employees and employees with children can attend as well.

All in all, the creation of a community connects the positive effects of increased networking, visibility, leading to more representation and thus attracting more women. Their approach of women empowering women can be anchored in postfeminism. Cross-organizational Mentoring seems to be a more effective when the goal is advancement of women's careers.

C2: Measurement of success

In order to measure and define success of the Mentoring program, the interviewee mentioned the quality of the mentor-mentee-match measured by questionnaires. It reviews to what extent the expectations of both parties are met. At the end of the cycle, another qualitative review of the program is done by mentors and mentees through evaluation forms.

Further KPIs to rate the influence of the Mentoring program on the company are the fluctuation rate of women within the company compared to men, the consistency in the ration of men and women, women's quota on all hierarchical levels and the quota of women having participated in the Mentoring program reaching their career goal or the next hierarchical step.

Moreover, recommendations have been named as a success metric. This metric has not yet been elaborated but could be expressed through the number of new people interested in the program in a certain timeframe.

However, in order to already quantify success metrics, the inhouse Mentoring program's creation has taken place too recently. To the date of the interview, it has existed for about one month. The only KPI in use was thus the quality of the matchmaking.

All in all, it can be stated that success factors, best practices and measurement of success do comply with those derived from literature.

C3: Need for Mentoring within the company

"[...] The program [...] had its first run-up in 2018 when our Head of Corporate Communications specifically approached women in leadership, she wanted to make the world better for women at our company; to support them in becoming visible, to also dare to do more and to walk in the first row for once and not just stay in the second row." (Interview A) The goal behind empowering women seems to be a need for women to prove themselves to be more assertive within the company. "Walking to the first row" can be interpreted as moving to roles of leadership, indicating a responsibility of women themselves to do so. Staying in the second row could be linked to less responsibility, less pay and less visibility through the lack of assertiveness. This conception reflects a male-dominated work culture and seems to not take up newer research on Mentoring for women where the focus lies on creating an inclusive work culture instead of changing the women. Furthermore, the interviewee states that women at the company can experience a lack of work-related challenges and that career opportunities for women can be restricted. This is due to direct managers, but also a lack of self-esteem to demand challenges. Among the reasons women are leaving Tech, a lack of growth opportunities due to bias is the most cited reason in literature. The interviewee confirms this phenomenon and names the gender pay gap as well, indicating an inequality regime in which the need for process redesign does not seem to have established itself.

Newer research suggests that cultural and structural change is more likely to attract and retain women than self-development measures, so Mentoring as a retaining instrument and structural changes are being analyzed in the following.

C4: Mentoring as a retaining instrument

Both Mentoring programs are not used as a strategic, direct retaining instrument due to the potential enhancement of gender inequality: "We do a lot for our employees, but not specifically for the issue of women, because we don't want to create a big gap between the sexes." (Interview A)

Yet, indirectly, their Mentoring programs could retain women through supporting career transitioning.

More specifically, filling the position of responsibility of the Mentoring program with people from HR can have a positive impact on retaining women when close communication with employees and supervisors is given as part of the Mentoring program. It can ensure:

- Targeted approaching of potential participants
- Close communication about career plans
- Provision of concrete career or work options at the company
- Consultation in work-life balance-related topics

- Mediation of expectations between mentees and supervisors. A specific example was named: "I've already had conversations with one or the other gentleman to say that employees didn't hand in their skills and abilities at the door just because they work part-time or have had a child." (Interview A).

C5: Structural changes in combination with Mentoring

In the company, they have an open, familiar culture, which has already been confirmed to them by externs such as the Cross-organizational Mentoring provider. The interviewee is of the opinion that this a positive ground for empowering and supporting women. Their approach to further shape the open, familiar culture consists of sensibilization for topics affecting women at the workplace, i.e. barriers, glass ceiling and unconscious bias. In this context, the execution of the Mentoring program triggers changes on two different levels: Firstly, it influences recruiting processes due to mentees' and mentors' qualitative evaluations of the program and feedback. Thus, the company has started to improve their inclusive language of job postings. Secondly, the Mentoring program induces HR to create and adapt methods and tools to raise awareness for diversity topics at the entire company through e-learning formats, round tables with Top Management and targeted lectures to managers. The personnel-related overlap of HR and the Mentoring program and the close contact with Top Management is yet again beneficial for shaping those processes. Together, they talk through solutions and plan them out.

All measures taken by HR affect the recruitment of women and indirectly, their retention. The changes are not disruptive but shape the corporate culture to a certain extent. The interviewee states that the company is in a state of rethinking what is acceptable behavior in day-to-day business which would be an ideal turning point of defining processes explicitly.

C6: Organizational factors influencing the success of the program

The case study shows that the company has an own, international, interdisciplinary diversity committee with members from different units and countries. The interviewee is of the opinion that this is beneficial since it can increase the outreach of the Mentoring programs, their content and thus, their success all over the corporate group.

Moreover, the size of a company matters: As seen in figure 1 (see p. 2), DAX-listed companies in Germany have legal requirements in regard to equality, especially at executive level. This can partly be an explanation for SMEs rarely having Mentoring programs nor addressing the lack of equality through corporate entities with clear responsibility to achieve it.

Furthermore, the interviewee acknowledges that the male composition of Top Management increases the need to address unconscious bias towards women by the diversity committee

and the Mentoring program. This follows the lines of 'trickle-down feminism': The more women are in leadership positions, the more increases the likelihood of other women to follow.

In addition, the degree of regional decentralization influences the impact of Mentoring programs on company-wide practices such as inclusive scheduling for employees with children. The interviewee states: "[Centralized, inclusive scheduling] is not given, so it really differs from unit to unit. Decentralization is simply the fact. It is that there are different handlings [in each unit]." (Interview A) Consequently, regional decentralization, distinctly inherent of companies in a globalized world, hinders Mentoring program in their efforts to achieve gender equality.

C7: Diversity within the program

Within the program, they define diversity as a variety of nationalities, work-related or private qualifications, living conditions, expertise fields, unified by gender. Characteristics such as age, ethnicity, religion or sexuality do not especially play a role in any of the Mentoring activities, unless there were certain expectations either from mentor or mentee. The way diversity within the program is defined is probably due to different factors. First of all, there might not be a need for ethnical-specific activities incited by the Mentoring program since the ratio of women of color could be almost non-existent according to the depicted employees in the Diversity Report 2021. Indeed, there are no official statistics published about people of color, but about women at the company.

Furthermore, the interviewee states: "What does diversity mean to us? That is the variety at different levels." (Interview A) The underlying assumption and goal which can be deducted from this statement is the usefulness of Mentoring as a tool to achieve diversity at all hierarchical levels.

All in all, increasing diversity is part of the corporate strategy and the company has a diversity Charta which does not allow discrimination. Enhancing diversity is not a goal of the Mentoring programs.

4.4 Case study 2: Exploring an intersectional Mentoring program with the purpose of highlighting women at a large German Tech company

4.4.1 Company analysis and presentation of the Mentoring program

The company is active in the field of corporate software and has around 109,000 employees. Their total turnover equaled around 27 billion € in 2020.

In their Diversity and Inclusion Report 2021, they state that around 34 % of the total workforce are women, and that around 28 % of managers are women. The executive board is composed of five men and two women (cf. Diversity and Inclusion Report, 2021).

According to them, “[...] for real impact, companies need to embrace a diversity definition that tackles more than one type of discrimination. True diversity and inclusion in the workplace address institutional racism, xenophobia, gender bias, ageism, homophobia, and other forms of marginalization.” (Company Website 2, 2022). Within their product pallet, a software for reducing biases and embedding diversity, inclusion, and equity directly into HR processes, can be found. It is directed to HR professionals, managers, and employees (Company Website 3, 2022).

The company is known for fostering minority-friendly initiatives and networks in terms of LGBTQIA+, Afro-American/Black employees and women in Tech. In a video series posted on the company websites featuring diverse, female voices of the enterprise, they display different measures to support them, such as flexibility of working hours (e.g. 75 %-jobs) and possibilities for further education, e.g. Formation to Agile Coach (Company News Center, 2021).

On the topic of Mentoring, there is an overarching initiative hosting different pillars, among them also the program in question. The overarching initiative was created in 2017 and achieved around 33 % female speakers on their corporate stages in 2021, hosted 31 events and reached around 2,500 participants throughout the events and over 976,000 people with social media posts. (Company website 4, 2022).

The Mentoring program for young Africans has three pillars:

1. Learning: There are monthly sessions hosted by the participants in the program where African women speak on different topics. They target specifically young Africans to grant the opportunity to get inspired by them and grow together. Their content that they publish comprises exclusive interviews, collaborations with speakers inside and outside the company, Ask Me Anything sessions, workshops, and more.
2. Growing: Through Mentorships, they offer their young African mentees a chance to get guidance and support from experienced African mentors from the Tech industry, but also others.
3. Uniting: Through quarterly networking sessions, they foster exchange, inspiration, motivation and a sense of community.

(Company website 5, 2022).

In the following analysis of the expert interview, the Mentoring program is examined further.

4.4.2 Qualitative content analysis of the expert interview

C1: Success factors and best practices of the initiative/Mentoring program

C1.1: Success factors

According to the interviewee, increasing women's visibility puts them in a role model function and increases attractiveness of the branch for others. "[O]ur vision is that by twenty thirty women will look back and be astonished that it wasn't completely natural to pick peers and employers, regardless of educational background or training, and that is something else we focus on." (Interview B) Highlighting the diversity in educational backgrounds and trainings within the industry equally leads to a higher attractiveness of the company and the branch in general for women, allowing women with non-technical backgrounds to consider a Tech workplace as well.

Another success factor is the use of cross-organizational Mentoring with mentors and mentees from other companies. Moreover, the program provides networking opportunities in a regular manner, which is supported by literature about success factors of Mentoring.

Furthermore, there is another factor supported by Mentoring literature: the quality of matchmaking. In order to provide qualitative matches, they examine the goals of mentees and mentors in advance, have them written down and endorse tangible goals. The company sets their focus on the individuality of the matches, matching expectations of the mentee to expertise and background of the mentor. They also let them both review the match in order to be able to rematch in case at least one of them is not satisfied.

In addition, support by Top Management for a Mentoring program to be successful and to be able to make changes within the company is essential. The overarching initiative to which the Mentoring program is attributed is led by a woman of the Supervisory Board who helped the interviewee grow their Mentoring program to a big scale. It can be deduced that women at a supervisory board-level might enhance the creation of initiatives and programs for women. The support and experience of the female supervisory board member as head of the initiative helped the young employee to create her own program.

Sponsorship is not officially part of the program strategy but happens organically through the networking sessions and other events. Mentors can naturally become sponsors for women through the participation in a Mentoring program.

All in all, they identify cross-organizational Mentoring, quality of matchmaking, support of Top Management, organic sponsorship and networking as the factors leading to achieve their goals, the visibility of women and their promotion.

C1.2: Best practices

To begin with, they regularly organize events for their visibility, inviting anyone interested in. The online format of most of the events allows access of a broader public. It is thus much more than a company-internal program to support women, but rather like a platform for African/black women to shine destined to all people interested. In order to highlight these women, they included their participants of the program within the search

functionality for speakers at the company which makes them searchable for people all over the company.

Concerning the organization of the program, they predefine pillars upon which the Mentoring program is based content wise and predetermine a cycle for the three pillars, e.g. networking session every quarter in pillar three. Setting a timeframe for the Mentorship period with continued assessments plays into the success factor of matchmaking quality, as well as monitoring the mentorship and assessing it constantly.

In addition, the responsible of the Mentoring program is in contact with Diversity and Inclusion in the U.S. creating synergies and exchange. This helps cross-promoting activities between Diversity and Inclusion and the program resulting in leverage.

All things considered, open formats, predefining time frames of Mentoring and events and creating synergies with other departments have been identified as best practices.

C2: Measurement of success

Since the confidentiality regulations of the company didn't allow the interviewee to share KPIs, the following KPIs have been deducted from the statements made.

The success metrics of the program are in line with company's long-term goals of achieving a ratio of women at the company of 50 %. Furthermore, the interviewee indicates that the Mentoring pillar of the program is growing: This could be translated through the KPI of "Increase in number of participants within a certain time frame".

As mentioned in the section "C1.1: Success factors", an assessment of the quality of the matchmaking and the mentorship takes place by mentor and mentee. The interviewee "checks in" regularly with the mentees to assess the quality of the matchmaking.

Concerning outreach of audience outside the company, the interviewee states: "[...] I wanted to make sure that there is not only a spotlight black female colleagues at the company, but those ones outside as well in order for us to have a bigger reach and to be able to reach audience outside of the company." (Interview B) Since they hold public events where everyone is welcome, a possible KPI could be the ratio of audience from outside or inside the company to see which measure attracted whom the most and which target audience brings in more interested people. Furthermore, measures can be taken either to increase the impact/ representation internally or externally.

C3: Need for the initiative/ the program within the company

Analyzing the motivations for creating this program, it can be stated that the interviewee wanted to empower fellow African/black and represent them more through giving them a platform. The creation of the program responds to the underrepresentation of women in

the branch and especially black women. The interviewee remarked that there are no speakers of color at public events by the company.

C4: Mentoring as a retaining instrument

No statement has been made regarding this topic, partly due to confidentiality regulations. It could be deduced that Mentoring at this program is not strategically used to retain (intersectional) women.

C5: Structural changes in combination with Mentoring

No statement has been made regarding this topic. It can be deduced that little to no changes have resulted from the creation of this program in 2017, but there might be changes made through the overarching initiative where a different person is in charge.

C6: Organizational factors influencing the success of the program

The interviewee states that there are no collaborations with other teams or departments apart from the contact to US DEI which hints to a low awareness level of the program within the company. The localization of the program within the company is to be found at the CEO office together with the overarching initiative. The composition of the Supervisory Board points to an increase in initiatives of gender equality due to the presence of a woman. The proximity of the Mentoring program to the CEO office is a positive ground for inducing process changes at the company, yet, the size of the company and the lack of awareness hinder these goals.

Generally, the corporate culture at the company is already quite diversity-focused with incremented community opportunities, e.g. black employee network across different regions.

C7: Diversity within the program

When describing diversity in the Tech industry, the interviewee puts it this way: "You know we have people in the tech industry that have studied psychology or studied to be teachers. It's very diverse and it's a place that everyone belongs in and there's something for everyone." Thus, diversity in Tech includes different educational backgrounds and different fields of expertise, offering positions for all kinds of these backgrounds. Furthermore, the creation of the program itself was dedicated to promote several intersections: African/black (ethnicity), different genders (gender) and young mentees (age). However, the impact on overall processes within the company seems highly restrained.

4.5 Case study 3: Building a corporate culture of gender equality at a US High-Tech company

4.5.1 Company analysis and presentation of the project

The company was founded in 2011 and is a private company in the field of e-commerce, using technologies such as AI and cloud computing. In 2021, the company was on the Forbes' Cloud 100 ranking which features world's top private cloud Tech companies judged upon growth, sales, valuation and culture (cf. Forbes, 2021). After ten years of existence, in 2021, the company had around 830 employees and is valued at 1.4 billion \$ (cf. Craft 1, 2022).

The CEO and key executives team consists of ten men and two women (cf. Craft 2, 2022). Since a private company is legally not obliged to publish an annual report which does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about KPIs concerning e.g. the women's quota. These will be drawn from the expert interviews.

The program of establishing a culture of equality at the company has started in January 2022. In terms of OD, the chosen moment of launch is planned in November 2022 if the CEOs validate the propositions. To the date of the interview, the project was halfway done.

4.5.2 Qualitative content analysis of the expert interview

C4.2 Identified points to improve at the company

One of the main reasons the project lead created the project was the gap in employee engagement between men and women according to their internal employee engagement survey. Furthermore, having worked in different Tech corporations, the project lead finds a low commitment and low representation of women especially in High Tech.

Moreover, they state a difference in gender representation in technological departments versus female-typed departments such as Marketing, HR or Customer Success Management. The Sales department is equally "heavily male", at least in the US, which indicates that most profit-generating departments are male-dominated. Furthermore, major gender imbalance can be found within hierarchy. VP and SVP levels are mostly male. However, on manager and director levels the company almost has achieved parity between men and women.

Overall, the goals of the project are thus to improve women's engagement, gender balance in departments where there is an imbalance, promoting more women to VP and SVP levels.

C5.1 Composition of the team

The team working on the project consists of 17 women, mostly from HR, but also from R&D, Legal or Marketing. The project lead has 16 years experience in OD. They are all at different hierarchical levels and locations, focused on making the company a leading employer for women.

C4.1 Working areas of the project:

Through internal data, qualitative expert interviews, podcasts, and experience in OD, the project leads have defined six pillars which build upon and influence each other. The focus hereby lies on gender diversity. The titles and contents of the six working areas are summarized in the following.

1. Talent Acquisition: Redesigning of job postings with correct phrasing, articulation of posting itself and process of interviewing
2. Promotions and Internal Moves: Redesigning representation at different organizational levels and the process of decision-making
3. Parental Leave: Providing psychological safety grounds for taking maternity leave, returning to the office, and offering benefits for women throughout the pregnancy, making the information on possibilities clear and accessible
4. Work-life Balance: Creating a balancing experience for caregivers
5. Physical Workplace: Physical environment which is comfortable to women and supports them
6. Community-building: Creating an experience of sisterhood internally, sponsorship through an internal network

At the point in time when the interviews were conducted, July 2022, half of the project's missions were elaborated.

C1: Process of inducing change

For each pillar, there are different people in charge according to their company background. Their management methods to organize teamwork are based on Scrum, an Agile method. Scrum comes from software development and implies the clear designation of roles and responsibilities in a design process. This process is organized in sprints and uses early feedback from users.

Firstly, pillar one was elaborated with the goal to provide a set of recommendations how to increase the number of women who will join the company. Through their interviews and data on New Joiner experiences, they found action items to deploy in the future when recruiting New Joiners of any hierarchical position:

- Update branded images to more inclusive pictures on site, LinkedIn, career pages, etc.
- Diversify interviewers: Include at least 1 male and 1 female in the interview process (outside of HR representatives)
- Address parental issues: Openly inclusively speak about parental topics in the interview process

When asking TA about their hiring practices and processes, they uncovered implicit processes and developed explicit action items for recruitment processes:

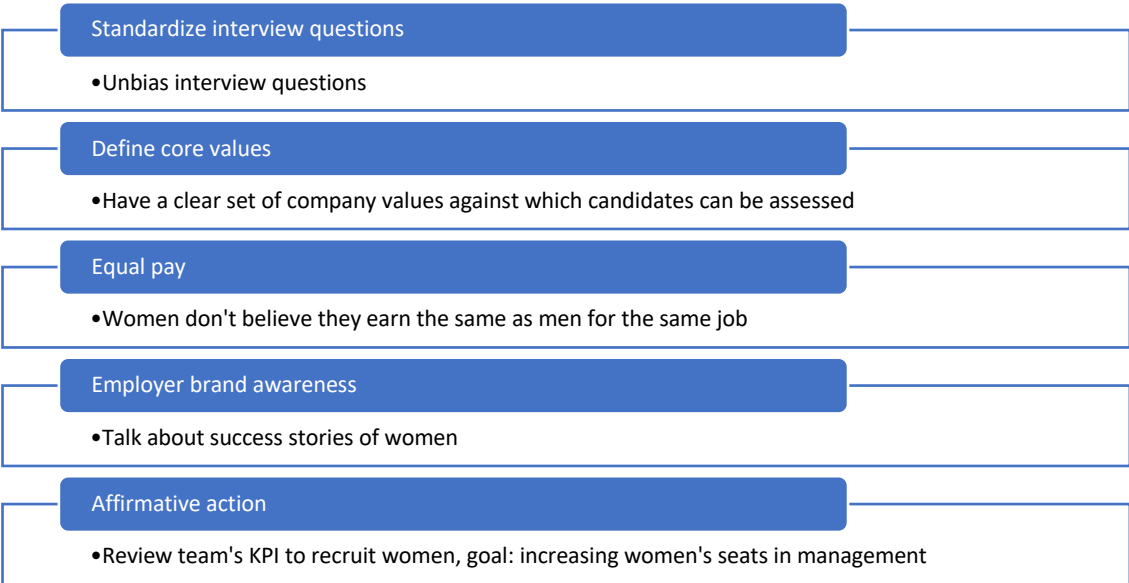


Illustration 5: Explicit action items for recruitment processes, own representation based on internal documents, 2022

When auditing the linguistic inclusivity of their job postings, they found which gendered words appeared most in their job posts. Examples are 'analytical', 'superior' and 'strong'. Deriving action items comprised the removal of all gendered language, replacing gendered pronouns with "they/them" and showcasing examples of women currently in hard-to-fill, or traditionally male, positions.

Furthermore, a bottleneck has been identified: gender data collection legal restrictions in different countries. They thus provide two options to the CEOs with the suggestion of applying these to corporate DEI standards, making them part of a new gender equality policy.

Secondly, pillar two has been elaborated with the goal of providing a set of recommendations to the promotions and internal move process, that will enable higher rate of moves for women. The methodology to uncover implicit processes in this pillar is about:

- Interview managers about decision making processes around promotions and internal moves
- Interview newly promoted managers about process and onboarding
- Interview women who were offered a promotion and declined the offering

Guiding questions in these interviews are about implicit gender biases, identifying barriers hindering them from promoting more women and elements supporting promotions of women.

A need which arose from interviewing newly promoted managers was measurable goals and management buy-in in order to advance to higher levels in all departments. Resulting from this learning, the company plans to design new training modules for managers during their first six months to build an understanding of the value of different communication and management styles, holding round tables with leaders, and rewarding and recognizing women with salaries and bonuses especially in departments where advancement opportunities are scarce.

Their qualitative interviews have shown the following:

- Women having declined a promotion see the need for a clear growth plan for all departments, ensuring that open roles are always being communicated to encourage internal applicants.
- Women having been promoted internally stated that there was a need for a clear process to be defined once an internal move is initiated and a need for openness to discuss new terms such as salary.
- Hiring managers pointed to different needs the company has when promoting women especially or making internal moves possible: Since there is a lack of visibility for a career path above senior management, a global framework for promotions and internal mobility needs to be developed with transparency into why a candidate is up for promotion.

Concretely, the next steps consist of developing metrics (e.g. x % of candidates considered for promotion are women), ensuring parity in pay when women move or get promoted, pairing male leaders with women when evaluating candidates for promotion or move, bias training for male leaders especially in some departments with the fewest women quota, creating a community for women at and above director level, and defining career paths for the different departments.

C2: Success factors of the process

The success factors of creating a culture of equality identified by the company are:

- Using a data-driven approach: Discovering needs through qualitative interviews and setting metrics using Scrum as a working method
- Involving people from different departments as soon as possible within the process to get early feedback
- Critically reviewing the current corporate culture and processes
- Networking with experts
- Listening to employees' needs
- The hype of diversity which is thriving all of a sudden within the company
- Budget for use of new tools, e.g. software to analyze job postings

- Planning actions to spread the change: Hackathons, consultation options, ongoing research

C6: Organizational factors influencing the project

The interviewee shared her thoughts on the correlation of the composition of founders, board and leadership positions and the birth of equality projects. Since the company is led by six male board members having invited their friends and colleagues into the company, makes it very likely to be a male-typed company culture. Indeed, the female CHRO asked the interviewee to review the topic and take ownership, so it can be assumed that a higher quota of women in leadership positions can increase the efforts in creating equality.




Furthermore, the interviewee finds that reaching the size of the company they have now leaves room for gender equality topics. Until recently, setting up the business was the focus, finding investors, growing fast. Now, there is time for corporate culture. They proceed to link company size and age to the role of women in Tech: "Young, fast-growing companies do not have the time to wait for the qualified, knowledgeable female candidates, because of the growing demand on the customer side whereas huge corporations have patience to find the right female candidate" (Interview C). In their OD experience, the interviewee equally stated that the size of the company matters to the complexity of inducing change which would hardly be possible in large corporations, partly due to complex regional decentralization.

The corporate culture is characterized by intense working hours, own responsibility for scheduling, high competition in regard to other companies in the field, a stressful environment, the unspoken expectation to take up more work than your predefined role and the need to be a strong person according to the interviewee. However, there is no judgment for family duties. The difficulty of this work environment lies within juggling a highly intensive, demanding and yet flexible environment.

C7: Diversity within the project

Diversity within the company is identified through voluntary questionnaires of New Joiners which the project team uses for research. The focus of the program mainly lies on gender equality; however, the process redesign does enhance diversity. Exemplary for that is the presentation of more diverse photos on the career pages, resulting in more candidates from diverse and intersecting categories. The standardization of job requirements is another example of enhancing diversity at companies due to the interruption of bias in implicit processes.

4.6 Comparison of case studies

| | Case study 1 | Case study 2 | Case study 3 |
|--|---|---|---|
| Goals of the program/project | Visibility of women, networking | Visibility of black women | Culture of gender equality |
| Form of Mentoring | Dyadic mentor-mentee relationship, online and in-person meetings | Dyadic mentor-mentee relationship, online meetings | Unknown, rather sponsorship |
| Compliance to success factors of literature review | | | |
| Success factor 1 Networking | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Success factor 2 Appropriate training of mentors | ✗ | ✗ | — |
| Success factor 3 Individual and thorough Matchmaking | ✓ | ✓ | — |
| Success factor 4 Appropriate and sufficient duration of the program | ✓ | ✓ | — |
| Success factor 5 Measures to develop the quality of the relation between mentor and mentee | ✓ | ✓ | — |
| Success factor 6 Supervision of the quality of the program | ✓ | ✓ | — |
| Success factor 7 Extent of structural changes (already made or in progress) |  |  |  |
| Settlement of the program/project in the company | PD/OD (HR) | CEO office | OD (HR) |
| Success metrics | Quality of matchmaking | Quality of matchmaking | Data-driven approach: Success metrics for every mission |
| Organizational factors influencing success | | | |
| Company size | ~800 employees | ~105,000 employees | ~830 employees |
| Founders/ Composition of executive board | All male | Five men, two women | All male |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Measures of retaining women | Point of contact for career transitioning | | Creating a gender equitable work environment |
| Diversity notion | Professional background, gender, age, hierarchical position at the company | Professional background, gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, hierarchical position at the company, | Gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, professional background |

The two Mentoring programs fulfill basic success factors, except for the training of mentors, which makes them prone to succeed in their terms. Their goals are both fixated on visibility of women which in case study one expresses itself through PD, giving the woman self-esteem and competencies to advance, as well as raising awareness for gender topics within the company. In case study two this expresses itself through imparting women as speakers at internal or external events. Since their recent creation, up to date, they measure their success solely by tracking the quality of matchmaking.

In contrast to these findings, the third case study's goal is to establish a culture of gender equality. They defined concrete missions and goals for every mission. To do so, they use a data-driven approach in order to uncover bias at the company and interrupt it. The approach in case study three can be interpreted as more holistic and result-based with an increased likelihood of creating a diverse, intersectional workforce.

Moreover, there seems to be a correlation between size of the company and the extent of structural changes made, providing the assumption that enhanced regional decentralization makes it more difficult for Mentoring responsables to incite change, even if the settlement within the company is at the CEO office as in case study two. Although their notion of diversity is multi-faceted and shows a strong intersectional focus, the Mentoring program fails to incite change in processes due to the size of the company, but also due to its program design. The first case study shows that the Mentoring program creates educational measures and tools with the goal of changing corporate culture through sensibilization of the employees for equality-related topics. Due to the connection to OD (HR), some changes are implemented in company processes (e.g. obligatory e-learning sessions) which receive companywide recognition. Yet, their notion of diversity does not imply ethnicity nor other categories.

Furthermore, the two Mentoring programs are not actively designed for retaining women, but case one has several indirect retaining effects due to the proximity to HR. This can ensure:

- targeted approaching of potential participants
- close communication about career plans
- provision of concrete options at the company

- mediating expectations, e.g. more growth opportunities, by mentees to their superiors

All in all, the comparison of case studies brings out possible correlations of organizational factors affecting the success of Mentoring and gender equality projects and thus, their long-term impact on diversity.

5 Discussion

5.1 Summary and discussion of the research findings

Overall, Mentoring programs for women have risen in popularity since the eruption of the topic in the 1970s as a cost-effective tool for companies to promote women in leadership positions. Thus, they offer developmental and networking possibilities for women to level an uneven playing field (cf. Ziegler, 2009, p. 13).

This is especially needed in the Tech industry where women are glaringly absent, especially women of color. Not only are women poorly represented, they also leave the industry twice as often as their male counterparts (cf. Gimmard/Simard, 2013, p. 23). Research on reasons for the low representation of women in the field point to its work culture. Male-dominated cultures are characterized by long working hours, competitiveness, and gender bias. The sources of this kind of culture lay in organizational factors such as composition of leader board, resulting in gendered processes.

Gendered processes are the main source of reproduction of bias and stereotypes in companies with male-dominated cultures. Since eliminating bias is impossible due to the link of societal stereotypes and their impact on corporate culture (Acker, 2006, p. 444), interrupting bias within processes is estimated the best option for Tech companies to attain and retain not only women, but an ultimately more diverse workforce.

Process changes have emerged as a success factor in recent Mentoring literature (cf. Frieze/Quesenberry, 2019, p. 24). Mentoring programs can serve a double function of offering developmental opportunities as well as inciting change within the company (De Vries 2006, p. 574). However, research on Mentoring programs in practice shows that their level of disruption on male-dominated work cultures and organization-level gender inequities is limited (cf. Adamson, 2017, p. 327). In practice, Mentoring programs hardly fulfill basic methodological success factors (cf. Ziegler, 2009, p.12).

The conducted case studies show that the extent to which process changes within the company are made highly depend on organizational factors. One expert interview hinted to the fact that large companies face legal requirements in some countries in regard to women in leadership. It can be deduced that the resources allocated to Mentoring and/or process changes are clearly dependent on the size of a company. Large companies have resources, budget, established values and responsibilities and clear hierarchies, leaving

room for topics such as gender equality, whereas small to mid-sized companies hardly engage in Mentoring or diversity at all. One interviewee of case study three confirms this statement, arguing that with the start-up rapidly growing in size and their presently achieved financial stability, the focus can only now lay on corporate culture change.

Furthermore, a correlation of company size and settlement of Mentoring programs within the company can be made. Mentoring program one is settled within OD (HR) in a company of 800 employees, Mentoring program two at the CEO office in a company with over 105,000 employees. In regard to fulfilling success factors, it can be stated that both Mentoring programs fulfill most success factors. However, their extent of structural changes made differs largely. The combination of settling Mentoring within OD and the size of 800 employees seems to have a positive effect on structural changes due to the expertise in OD, but also shows indirect retention measures. The company can thus position itself as a point of contact for career transitioning for women.

However, the most structural changes were achieved by case study three which does not engage in Mentoring at all. Their approach corresponds to the best practices provided by literature, which are the following:

1. Uncovering biased implicit processes at the company
2. Elaborating strategies to make them explicit through standardized company guidelines
3. Implementing changes through the involvement not only of Top management, but also employees

There is one peculiarity about the form in which process changes are elaborated: They base their project management on Scrum, an Agile method which comes from software development. Scrum involves a clear designation of roles and responsibilities within a design process. The projects are organized in sprints of several weeks, in which the steps are defined exactly. Using Scrum allows early feedback from users or clients, in this case, work groups outside of the group leading the project. Scrum itself is a management method in which processes are made more explicit which makes this form of project management suitable to not only Tech companies, but also companies from other fields. The iterative approach of including work groups for feedback can also be classified as a success factor in overcoming the 'male' resilience which can be typically seen in male-dominated work cultures as per Acker (2006). Furthermore, their data-driven approach sets the tone for a long-term assessment of their success. Therefore, case study three shows the most holistic approach in interrupting bias at the company by addressing change on an organizational level as well as in day-to-day interactions within a team; yet, it is also the most resource intensive option.

Overall, the ultimate goal of enhancing diversity in the Tech industry through interrupting bias, attracting and retaining more women in the field, can be most achieved by case three. If Mentoring programs were to widely induce change compared to this project, certain requirements would be needed, according to the analysis of the three case studies: Mid-size of company, clear goals with a program design reflecting these, approval of executive board, a data-driven approach to measure success and resources in terms of budget, personnel and time.

5.2 Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research

The present thesis is subject to limitations. Reducing the breadth of the thesis, intentional delimitation has resulted in excluding certain facets regarding the research phenomenon (cf. Price/Murnan, 2004, p. 66). According to Price and Murnan (2004), there are two types of limitations: Internal and external validity. Internal validity is about the accuracy of measurement, reducing bias and systematic error. External validity reviews the reproducibility of the research, projecting the results on the entire target population. The requirement for findings to be externally valid is the internal validity of the study (cf. Litwin/Fink, 2003, p. 123). Internal validity also requires the presence of psychometric properties, referring to the reliability (consistency) and validity (accuracy) of a selected research instrument (cf. Litwin/Fink, 2003, p. 147). In the present study no reliability or validity test has been conducted.

Some questions of the interview guide targeted sensitive internal data which influences the information given in the interviews: The personal openness or closedness of the individuals influenced the course of the conversation (cf. Ernst, 2010, p.110). As part of qualitative research, case studies are not generally representative due to their lack of transferability to the entire field of research. The generalizability of the cases is thus limited, as case studies cannot provide a "statistical generalization" for the population of cases (cf. Yin 2003, p. 47).

Furthermore, the inductive categorization, analysis and interpretation of expert interviews is highly based on context and subjective interpretations of underlying senses and structures which can lead to false facts (cf. Mayring, 2010, p. 238).

Formulating a perfectly valid theory has not been the objective of this thesis. Due to the recency of the creation of the Mentoring programs and the gender equality project, propositions and assumptions have been formulated on how success could develop. This may function as a base for further qualitative or quantitative research with a longer timeframe.

Due to the low number of small to midsized Tech companies engaging in Mentoring for women, the representation of small to midsized companies in this work is limited but does provide valuable insights for further research. Thus, the research process has evoked the

influence of organizational factors on the success or the existence of Mentoring within organizations. These factors comprise size of the company, location of the Mentoring program within the company structure and corporate culture. This could lead to the prospect of researching these organizational factors in more detail in a mixed methods follow-up research.

Complementary to the topic of challenging masculine-typed corporate cultures is the topic of changing corporate culture through Change Management, framing masculine-typed corporate cultures within a framework of research on change in a larger sense. Kotter's theory of cultural change can be used as a base. Specifically, a methodological framework could be elaborated of Mentoring programs for women inducing change within a company, supported by feminist literature. The present work depicts aspects of intersectionality, however, due to gender binary data, further intersectional research with corresponding methods needs to be conducted.

6 Conclusion

All in all, Mentoring can partly respond to retaining women in Tech. It can increase job satisfaction and tackle barriers for women through opening up growth opportunities, accessing formal and informal networks and developing a heightened sense of self-esteem (cf. Ziegler, 2009, pp. 12-13).

However, Mentoring in practice shows deficiencies in reaching its goals due to the incongruity of basic methodological success factors such as appropriate training of mentors (cf. Jucovy, 2001; Miller, 2007) or measures to develop the quality of the relation between mentor and mentee (cf. Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997).

In Mentoring literature, there is an emerging success factor contributing to the long-term effectiveness of Mentoring programs: Process redesign (cf. Frieze/Quesenberry, 2019, p. 24). As processes in male-dominated work cultures are highly gendered (cf. Acker, 2006, p. 445) such as in the field of Tech, there is a need to interrupt bias in implicit and explicit processes within the company (cf. Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 134). Mentoring can have this dual function of PD and inducing change within the company (cf. De Vries, 2006, p. 575); nonetheless, organizational factors largely influence the impact of Mentoring programs. Within the empirical part of this study, company size as an organizational factor has found to be an important factor on the extent to which corporate changes can be induced by Mentoring programs: The bigger the company, the lesser impact Mentoring has on its structures and processes (see chapter 5.1).

Furthermore, research confirms that Mentoring for women in practice tends to not have a disruptive impact on gendered processes within the organizational entity (cf. Adamson, 2017, p. 327). Companies have an interest in putting forward their diversity initiatives in order to present themselves as attractive employers (cf. Marsden/Holtzblatt, 2022, p. 45).

however, given the low rate of women of color at Tech, Mentoring programs seldomly show an intersectional approach.

Overall, it is an inclusive work culture which attracts and retains minorities in Tech (cf. Frieze/Quesenberry, 2019, p. 25). This is why the interruption of gender bias in male-dominated work cultures is essential together with de-gendering processes in companies. This work provides a variety of recommendations for companies and managers on how to redesign processes. It starts with uncovering implicit processes on a day-to-day basis at different levels of the company, specifically bearing in mind the retention of women in Tech (cf. WITops, 2022). Transitioning implicit processes then into explicitly defined processes, challenges the values of corporate culture. Especially the third case study provides a framework for Tech companies to induce process change in their organization using Scrum.

It can be concluded that Mentoring programs for women in theory can retain women in Tech if the goals of the program include process change as a success factor. In practice, they lack methodological standards and are thus not a suitable measure to retain women in Tech, also due to organizational factors such as company size and composition of executive board.

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