

Effects of the similarity between mentees and mentors on the evaluation of the ‘Mentoring for Migrants Program’

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Abstract

The Mentoring for Migrants Program aims to increase migrants’ chances in the Austrian labour market. Results of the online questionnaire ($N=177$) showed that the program was evaluated positively by the mentored migrants. No relation was found between objective similarity in the sociodemographic background of the mentees and mentors and the program’s evaluation. However, the evaluation of the program also increased with the increasing subjectively perceived similarity. The time mentees and mentors spent together partly mediated this relationship. It is discussed that matching mentees and mentors according to their attitudes could positively influence the program’s success.

Keywords: Mentoring, migrants, labour market, matching, similarity

Introduction

Statistics on the development of the European population show that migration is important in terms of the ageing European population and of the economic growth in European states (Crespo Cuaresma, Huber, Oberdabernig & Raggl, 2015). Without migration in industrial nations, the number of 20–24 year-olds would drop by a quarter (OECD, 2013). However, immigrants’ originally acquired qualifications are often downgraded or not recognised in the immigration country. Additionally, immigrants are less likely to be hired even when they have similar educational qualifications with their non-immigrant counterparts. Thus, immigrants are more likely to be overqualified for their jobs than non-immigrants. This issue specifically concerns immigrants from countries outside of the European Union (Huddleston, Niessen & Tjaden, 2013).

In Austria, migrants, especially those from non-European countries, usually work as blue-collar workers, have a lower household income and are more prone to poverty than non-immigrants (Fassmann & Reeger, 2007). The employment rate of working-aged migrants in 2012 was 66%, which is well below the rate of non-migrants of 74% (Statistik Austria, 2013). However, statistics show that a quarter of Austrian migrants have finished at least secondary school (Statistik Austria, 2013). Furthermore, migrants with a university degree have to apply almost twice as often to get a job, earn less on average in their first job and have more difficulty

in landing a job that corresponds to their education compared with Austrian academics (Verwiebe & Hacioglu, 2014). Not reacting to these developments accordingly can considerably decrease the Austrian economic performance.

Migrants are usually not familiar with the working regulations and customs of their immigration country. They also lack networks that can help them to find appropriate jobs. One reaction in Austria to overcome these problems was the implementation of the Mentoring for Migrants program by the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO), the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF), and the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) in 2008. The program aims to increase migrants' opportunities in the Austrian labour market and to gain the potential of employees with a migration background for the Austrian economy (WKO, 2012). The program targets well-trained people with a migration background and sufficient language skills in German. Mentoring pairs are formed in the program. Each pair consists of a qualified and experienced Austrian professional who functions as mentor and a qualified migrant who is mentored. Mentees should accompany their mentors over a period of six months to gain from the mentors' experiences and networks. During the program, mentees and mentors should develop strategies that should increase mentees' access to the labour market.

The program begins with a training session in which mentees and mentors are prepared for their mentoring partnership and the program's main features and process are explained. During the training session, the preassigned mentoring pairs meet each other for the first time. The pre-assignment is made by the project team, and it focuses on the similarity of the mentees and mentors' vocational backgrounds, assuming that this matching procedure is the most advantageous for the mentoring process. In the further course of the training, mentees and mentors discuss their expectations of the mentoring and their personal goals. In addition, they agree on the intervals, dates, locations and contents of their future meetings. The project team requires mentoring partners to meet for a minimum of five hours per month for the mentoring.

In 2012, the mentors evaluated the program positively (WKO, 2014). Although short program evaluations are conducted after each sequence of the program, an extensive evaluation from the mentees' perspective is missing. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the program from the mentees' perspective. Furthermore, the program is tested to determine if it is equally effective in dealing with different diversity characteristics and if the similarity between mentees and mentors affects the evaluation of the program. In this study, first, mentoring in the working context and the different evaluation categories of the quality of mentoring are introduced. Second, the objective similarity in the sociodemographic background and the subjectively perceived similarity between mentees and mentors are discussed. Third, the relation between the subjectively perceived similarity and the evaluation of the program is assumed to be mediated by the time mentees and mentors spend on the program. The results of the evaluation study are presented subsequent to the theory. The closing discussion presents the results and gives recommendations for future mentoring programs.

Literature review

Mentoring and success factors of mentoring

Most definitions of mentoring describe it as an individual-related effort of a person who functions as a mentor to support someone else in achieving targets and to be successful (Landefeld, 2009). Mentoring in the working context signifies that experienced individuals teach less experienced individuals something about their work, introduce them to contacts and to the customs of the industry or organisation and engage in work-related social and personal issues (Allen, Finkelstein & Poteet, 2009). Therefore, mentoring has advantages for both the experienced individual called the mentor and the less experienced individual called the mentee (Eby 1997, 130; Kram 1985, 7 ff.). On one hand, mentors receive from mentees loyalty, appreciation, information on the organisation and work support (Kram, 1985; Mullen & Noe, 1999; Russel & Adams, 1997) and a good feeling about the experience of helping someone else (Evans, 2005; Kennett & Lomas, 2015). On the other hand, mentees enhance their personal and professional skills, thus increasing their promotion prospects (Kram, 1985; Peters, 2004; Russel & Adams 1997).

Different evaluation categories are applied to measure mentees' perceived success of mentoring programs. The evaluation categories addressed in this paper are the advantages of the mentoring, satisfaction with the program, quality of the training session and effectiveness of the program.

Kram (1985) and Noe (1988) differentiate between the advantages of career functions and the psychosocial functions of work-related mentoring. Career functions include mentees' promotion through coaching, networking and protection. By assigning challenging tasks and the subsequent accomplishment, mentees acquire necessary skills for their work. Psychosocial functions affect the personal enhancements of mentees. Mentors serve as examples and sustain mentees' self-confidence. Moreover, mentors advise their mentees amicably about personal and vocational problems. Career functions are considered crucial in the vocational development of mentees (Blickle & Boujataoui, 2005). However, the portion of the supported functions can differ. Mentoring relationships that exhibit both career and psychosocial functions are characterised by trust and a strong mutual commitment (Kram, 1985).

The success of a mentoring program is positively related to the existence of training programs and their quality (Allen, Eby & Lentz, 2006). High-quality training programs advise participants about the purpose of the mentoring and about their roles and responsibilities during the mentoring. Thus, training programs establish an understanding of the program's aims, help participants to have reasonable expectations of the program and prevents them from having unrealistic beliefs that can compromise the program's effectiveness (Allen & Poteet, 1999; Douglas, 1997; Eby & McManus, 2004 Young & Perrewe, 2000).

Variables influencing the success of mentoring

Mentoring programs should be equally effective for mentees with differing diversity characteristics. No differences in the evaluation of mentoring functions in terms of gender or ethnicity have been found (Eby et al., 2013; Lankau, Riordan & Thomas, 2005; Turban, Dougherty & Lee, 2002). Nevertheless, one study shows that women receive a higher support

in psychosocial functions than men (Noe, 1988). Mentees' age reveals contradicting results. Career functions have positive relations (Noe, 1988), but career functions also have no association with psychosocial functions (Turban et al., 2002).

The matching of the mentoring pairs is crucial for building successful relationships between mentees and mentors (Allen et al., 2009; Hale, 2000; Landefeld, 2009). Matching is usually based on similar sociodemographic backgrounds. Studies on matching present different results concerning the program's success and the received mentoring functions (Eby et al., 2013). A meta-analysis conducted by Eby et al. (2013) shows no positive relation between the similarity in gender and ethnicity and the perceived career and psychosocial functions. However, vocational similarity and receiving career functions are positively related. Ensher and Murphy (1997) show that mentees who have the same ethnic background as their mentors report higher career functions than those whose mentors have a different ethnic background. No difference is found between the two groups in terms of psychosocial functions. In another study, no correlation is found between mentoring functions and similarity in the dimensions of gender, ethnicity, age, terms of employment and education (Lankau et al., 2005). In one study, male mentees received less psychosocial support from female mentors and were less satisfied with the mentoring than all other possible combinations concerning gender (Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

Mutual trust, sympathy and appreciation are essential elements in the mentor-mentee relationship (Schneider & Blickle, 2009). A positive relationship between mentees and their mentors is important for the success of mentoring programs (Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Lankau et al., 2005; Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000). Mentees' perceived similarity to their mentors regarding personality, interests and values has a positive effect on the perceived career and psychosocial functions (Eby et al., 2013; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Lankau et al., 2005). However, similarity judgments in other aspects (e.g. intelligence, ambition, approach to work, etc.) do not show these positive effects (Høigaard & Mathisen, 2009). The literature states that with mentees' increasing influence on the matching process, their commitment and subsequently their evaluation of the program's success also increase (Allen et al., 2006; Clutterbuck, 2004). Accordingly, if mentees can choose their mentors, they are assumed to prefer mentors with similar attitudes (Gray, 1988 cited in Allen et al., 2006).

The more time mentees and mentors spend together on a program, the more career and psychosocial support the mentees receive (Eby et al., 2013; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Lankau et al., 2005; Waters, McCabe, Kiellerup & Kiellerup, 2002). However, this positive relation is not found consistently (Noe, 1988). Sympathy and commitment are important preconditions motivating mentors and mentees to invest time and energy in the relationship (Lankau et al., 2005). These results and assumptions indicate a mediator effect of the time spent together on the positive relation between the subjectively perceived similarity and the program's success.

In the current study, the Mentoring for Migrants program is evaluated from the mentees' perspective in the evaluation categories of career functions, psychosocial functions, satisfaction with the program, quality of the received training and effectiveness of the program. Moreover, the program is analysed whether or not it is equally successful for mentees with differing diversity criteria. A positive relation is hypothesised between the objective similarity in the sociodemographic background and the subjectively perceived similarity of the mentoring pairs.

Additionally, the duration of the time mentees and mentors spend together is assumed to mediate the positive relation between the subjectively perceived similarity and the single evaluation categories. The assumed mediation model is presented in Figure 1, and it consists of the following assumptions: (i) the subjectively perceived similarity positively affects the evaluation categories, (ii) the subjectively perceived similarity increases the duration of time mentees and mentors spend together, (iii) the duration of time mentees and mentors spend together positively affects the evaluation categories and (iv) the duration of time mentees and mentors spend together mediates the positive effect of the subjectively perceived similarity and the evaluation categories.

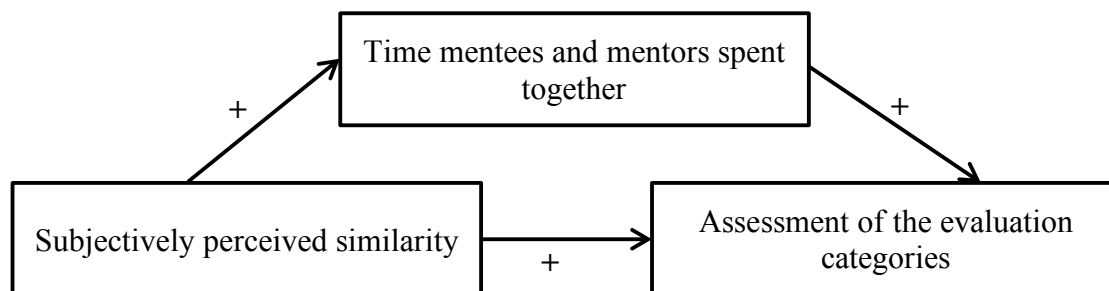


Figure 1 - Relationship between subjectively perceived similarity and assessment of the evaluation categories mediated by the time mentees and mentors spent together

Method

Procedure and participants

By February 2014, a total of 902 migrants (59% females) participated in the Mentoring for Migrants program. In February 2014, an email with the link to the online questionnaire and the request to answer it was sent to the 863 (96%) available email addresses of former mentees.

Overall, 231 migrants filled in the questionnaires, but only 177 completed questionnaires (21% rate of return) were used for the analysis. Among the participants, 72% were women, 43% were individuals younger than 35 years and 88% were academics. In terms of country of birth, 33% indicated a European Union country, 35% indicated a European country not part of the EU and 32% were born in countries outside of Europe. Before the start of the mentoring program, only 11% of the participants were employed.

Material

The online questionnaire consisted of questions on sex, age, country of birth and vocational background of mentees and their mentors. Mentees were asked about their professional life before they participated in the mentoring program. The monthly average time spent with the mentor was indicated (1 = less than two hours, 2 = between two and four hours, 3 = between four and six hours, 4 = between six and eight hours and 5 = more than eight hours).

To measure career and psychosocial functions, questions based on the mentoring function scale (Noe, 1988) and on Kram's (1988) description of the mentoring functions were used. The career function scale contained 10 items (e.g. 'My mentor always gave me frank feedback'), and the psychosocial function scale consisted of nine questions (e.g. 'My mentor motivated me to try new things'). The answering format for these questions used a four-stage answering format ranging from 1 = 'does not apply at all' or 'not helpful at all' to 4 = 'fully applies' or 'very helpful'.

Four self-constructed questions measured mentees' satisfaction with the program (e.g. 'I am satisfied with the results of the program'). Eight questions concerned the assessed quality of the training (e.g. 'I knew from the beginning what I could and could not expect from the program'), and six questions examined the program's efficiency (e.g. 'Because of the program, I discovered abilities that I did not know before'). Questions on the quality of the program and the program's efficiency were based on Allen et al.'s (2006) considerations on training quality and on the communicated aims of the program (WKO, 2012), respectively. The answering format of these questions ranged from 1 = 'does not apply at all' to 4 = 'fully applies'.

Basing on Lankau and colleagues (2005), three questions on the perceived similarity between the mentees and the mentors were developed (e.g. 'My mentor matched personally with me'). The answering format was 1 = 'does not apply at all' to 4 = 'fully applies'.

The concluding questions asked whether or not the mentoring program increased mentees' opportunities in the job market and whether or not they found a job through the program. The answering format was dichotomous ('yes' and 'no').

All questions with a four-staged answering format also included the possibility of the participant answering a 'no opinion' about the subject. The means, standard deviations, medians and Cronbach's α values of each scale and the correlations among the evaluation categories are indicated in Table 1.

Results

Evaluation of the Mentoring for Migrants program

The main aim of the program is to increase migrants' opportunities in the Austrian job market. As 64% of the sample answered 'yes' to the question of whether or not the program increased their opportunities in the job market and only 31% answered 'no', the program's aim seems to have been achieved.

To further evaluate the program, different evaluation categories were used. The means of the scales of career functions ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.85$), psychosocial functions ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.90$), program satisfaction ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.66$), quality of the training ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.66$) and program efficiency ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.93$) show that the program was mainly perceived positively. The significant and high positive correlation among the evaluation scales ($r = .71$ to $.91$) also indicates that the migrants who evaluated one category positively also evaluated the other categories positively (see Table 1).

Program evaluation regarding the objective and subjectively perceived similarity between mentees and mentors

To determine whether or not mentees with differing diversity characteristics evaluated the program differently, multivariate analyses of variance with the evaluation categories as the dependent variables and the diversity characteristics (sex, age, country of birth and education) as the independent variables were conducted. Due to the sample size interaction effects were suppressed. The analysis showed no differences (sex: $F(5,168) = 0.42, p = .84$; age: $F(5,168) = 0.87, p = .50$; country of birth: $F(10,328) = 1.34, p = .21$; education: $F(5,168) = 0.68, p = .51$). Thus, no differences were found in the evaluation of the program in the different diversity characteristics.¹

	M	SD	Md	Career functions	Psychosocial functions	Program satisfaction	Training quality	Program efficiency	Subjectively perceived similarity
Career functions	2.59	0.85	2.60	.95					
Psychosocial functions	2.81	0.90	3.00	.90**	.96				
Program satisfaction	2.70	0.98	3.00	.81**	.75**	.94			
Training quality	2.92	0.66	3.00	.78**	.75**	.75**	.84		
Program efficiency	2.45	0.93	2.50	.81**	.71**	.91**	.73**	.94	
Subjectively perceived similarity	2.46	0.84	2.67	.71**	.81**	.58**	.57**	.59**	.78

Note: Cronbach's alpha values are depicted in the diagonal of the correlation table; ** $p < .01$;

Table 1- Descriptive statistics, reliabilities and correlations of the evaluation category scales and of the scale on subjectively perceived similarity between mentees and mentors

To analyse the objectively identifiable sociodemographic similarity between mentees and mentors, the equivalences in sex, age, country of birth and vocational background were counted. The new variable objective similarity consisted of the 'no or one similarity', 'two similarities' and 'three or four similarities' categories and was included in the multivariate analysis of variance as the independent variable. The dependent variables were the evaluation categories of career functions, psychosocial functions, program satisfaction, quality of the training and program efficiency. As the multivariate results were not significant ($F(10,336) = 1.27, p = .24$), the objective similarity in the sociodemographic variables did not positively affect the program's evaluation (see Table 2).

However, a correlation analysis showed that subjectively perceived similarity had a significant positive relation with all the evaluation categories. Career functions ($r = .71, p < .01$), psychosocial functions ($r = .81, p < .01$), program satisfaction ($r = .58, p < .01$), quality of the training ($r = .57, p < .01$) and program efficiency ($r = .59, p < .01$) were evaluated more positively the more similar the mentees assessed themselves to their mentors (see Table 1).

¹ The results of the evaluation categories regarding mentors' diversity characteristics also did not show any significant differences.

	Career functions			Psychosocial functions		Program satisfaction		Training quality		Program efficiency	
	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Sex											
Male	50	2.59	0.84	2.80	0.88	2.74	0.97	2.92	0.79	2.42	0.98
Female	127	2.58	0.86	2.81	0.91	2.69	0.98	2.92	0.60	2.47	0.92
Age											
<= 35 years	76	2.67	0.81	2.83	0.85	2.83	0.92	2.97	0.56	2.55	0.87
> 35 years	101	2.53	0.88	2.78	0.93	2.61	1.02	2.88	0.72	2.38	0.98
Country of birth											
EU	55	2.71	0.85	2.92	0.91	2.94	0.94	3.05	0.62	2.62	0.92
Europa without EU	60	2.57	0.88	2.78	0.96	2.70	1.04	2.91	0.66	2.54	0.95
Outside Europe	57	2.49	0.82	2.78	0.83	2.54	0.93	2.82	0.67	2.24	0.89
Education											
Academic education	155	2.57	0.84	2.78	0.90	2.67	0.99	2.92	0.64	2.42	0.92
No academic education	22	2.73	0.91	2.96	0.85	2.98	0.87	2.93	0.77	2.67	0.98
Number of similarities concerning the sociodemographic background											
No or one similarity	67	2.55	0.88	2.71	0.92	2.58	0.97	2.85	0.63	2.39	0.92
Two similarities	68	2.47	0.89	2.73	0.99	2.7	1.04	2.87	0.74	2.42	1.01
Three or four similarities	42	2.7	0.72	3.01	0.69	2.86	0.87	3.05	0.54	2.53	0.81

Table 2 - Evaluation categories of the program regarding sex, age, country of birth and education and the number of similarities in the sociodemographic background

Mediation effect of time spent together

The correlation between the subjectively perceived similarity and the individual evaluation categories is assumed to be mediated by the amount of time mentees and mentors spent together. These mediation effects were analysed as suggested by Barron and Kenny (1986). The duration of the time spent together was the mediator. However, the categorical variable had to be dichotomised to be included in the analyses. As the program required mentees and mentors to meet for at least five hours per month, the dichotomised variable consisted of the categories of 'less than four hours per month' and 'more than four hours per month'. The scale subjectively perceived similarity was the independent variable, and the five evaluation categories were the dependent variables in the single analyses. A mediation analysis was performed for each of the five evaluation categories, and accordingly the significance level was reduced to .01 (i.e. Bonferroni correction).

The first mediation analysis included career functions as the dependent variable. The results showed a significant positive relation between the subjectively perceived similarity and career functions ($\beta = .71, p < .01$). The relations between the subjectively perceived similarity and time spent together ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) as well as the relation between time spent together and career functions ($\beta = .47, p < .01$) were significant and positive. When time spent together was included as mediator, the positive correlation between the subjectively perceived similarity and career functions was reduced ($\beta = .63, p < .01$). The Sobel test also showed the mediation effect ($z = 3.62, p < .01$). The result suggested that time spent together partly mediated the correlation between the subjectively perceived similarity and career functions.

The mediation analysis with psychosocial functions as the dependent variable showed a significant relation between the subjectively perceived similarity and psychosocial functions ($\beta = .81, p < .01$). Similar to the previous analysis, the subjectively perceived similarity has a significant positive relation to time spent together ($\beta = .31, p < .01$). The positive correlation between time spent together and psychosocial functions was also significant ($\beta = .40, p < .01$). In this analysis, the correlation between the subjectively perceived similarity and psychosocial functions was reduced when time spent together was included as mediator ($\beta = .76, p < .01$). The Sobel test supported the partial mediation effect ($z = 3.38, p < .01$).

Program satisfaction was the dependent variable used in the third mediation analysis. Significant positive relations were found for subjectively perceived similarity and program satisfaction ($\beta = .58, p < .01$), subjectively perceived similarity and time spent together ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) and time spent together and program satisfaction ($\beta = .42, p < .01$). The relation between subjectively perceived similarity and program satisfaction was reduced to $Beta = .50$ ($p < .01$) by including the mediator. The Sobel test revealed that time spent together partly mediated the correlation between the independent and dependent variables ($z = 3.46, p < .01$).

Quality of the training was the next dependent variable included in the mediation analysis. The correlations between subjectively perceived similarity and quality of the training ($\beta = 0.57, p < .01$), subjectively perceived similarity and time spent together ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) and the time spent together and training quality ($\beta = .35, p < .01$) were significant and positive. The partial mediation effect was shown through the reduction of the correlation between

subjectively perceived similarity and quality of the training when the mediator was included ($\beta = .51, p < .01$) and through the significant Sobel test ($z = 3.22, p < .01$).

In the last mediation analysis, program efficiency was used as the dependent variable. The positive relations between subjectively perceived similarity and program efficiency ($\beta = .59, p < .01$), subjectively perceived similarity and time spent together ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) and time spent together and program efficiency ($\beta = .39, p < .01$) were again significant. The reduced correlation between subjectively perceived similarity and program efficiency through the mediator variable ($\beta = .52, p < .01$) and the significant Sobel test ($z = 3.37, p < .01$) suggested a partial mediation effect. The results of the mediation analyses are presented in Table 3.

Dependent Variable (DV)	<i>Beta</i> subjectively perceived similarity and DV		<i>Beta</i> subjectively perceived similarity and DV when mediator is included		<i>Beta</i> subjectively perceived similarity and mediator and DV		<i>Beta</i> subjectively perceived similarity and mediator	
Career functions	0.71	**	0.63	**	0.47	**	0.31	**
Psychosocial functions	0.81	**	0.76	**	0.40	**	0.31	**
Program satisfaction	0.58	**	0.50	**	0.42	**	0.31	**
Training quality	0.57	**	0.51	**	0.35	**	0.31	**
Program efficiency	0.59	**	0.52	**	0.39	**	0.31	**

Note: ** $p < .01$;

Table 3 - Regression coefficients of the subjectively perceived similarity and the evaluation categories mediated by the time mentees and mentors spent together

Discussion and conclusions

The Mentoring for Migrants program was positively evaluated from the mentees' perspective in terms of the evaluation categories of career functions, psychosocial functions, program satisfaction, quality of the received training and program efficiency. The sociodemographic characteristics of mentees had no effect on the program's evaluation. Moreover, no correlation was found between objective similarity in the sociodemographic background of mentees and mentors and the program's success. However, the more mentees perceived themselves to be subjectively similar to their mentors, the better they evaluated the program in all evaluation categories. The time mentees and mentors spent together partly mediated these relations.

Consistent with previous evaluation studies on mentoring programs (cf. Allen et al., 2006; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Lankau et al., 2005), the current study found that the single evaluation categories were positively correlated. Accordingly, mentees who were generally satisfied with the program were assumed to also be satisfied with the received career- and psychosocially related functions, the training of the program and efficiency of the program.

The objective similarity of the mentoring pairs regarding sex, age, country of birth and vocational background had no positive effect on the program's evaluation. This finding partly contradicts those of previous studies, which found a positive effect of ethnic (Ensher & Murphy, 1997) or vocational similarity (Lankau et al., 2005) of mentees and mentors on the received career functions and/or psychosocial functions. However, as the sample in the present study consisted of experienced Austrian professionals as mentors, the ethnic and vocational similarity between mentors and mentees could be too small to have a positive influence on the evaluation of the program's success.

As expected from the literature (Eby et al., 2013; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Hale, 2000; Lankau et al., 2005), subjectively perceived similarity had a positive influence on career and psychosocial functions. Moreover, the other evaluation categories showed positive relations with the subjectively perceived similarity. These results indicate that the future matching process of mentees and mentors should rather be based on similarities in subjective attitudes than on the sociodemographic background. Accordingly, mentees' and mentors' attitudes could be surveyed independently before the program starts, and individuals with a high similarity could be matched as a mentoring pair. Consulting mentees for the matching process could increase the program's success (Allen et al., 2006, Clutterbuck, 2004) because they are likely to choose mentors with similar attitudes (Gray, 1988 cited in Allen et al., 2006). Therefore, in the future, not only mentees but also mentors should have an opportunity to influence the matching process.

On one hand, sympathy and commitment (e.g. through subjectively perceived similarity) influence the expenditure of time for the mentoring (Lankau et al., 2005). On the other hand, the expenditure of time of mentees and mentors also influences the received career and psychosocial functions (Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Lankau et al., 2005; Waters et al., 2002). According to these findings, the current study shows that the positive relation between subjectively perceived similarity and the evaluation categories is partly mediated by the

duration of the time mentees and mentors spent together. When selecting mentees and mentors in the future, having enough time resources for the program should be considered to further increase the positive effect of subjectively perceived similarity. However, time spent together was measured only dichotomously in this study. Therefore, future research should analyse how much time mentees and mentors should spend together at least to have a positive effect on the program's evaluation.

The indicated results originate from the self-reports of mentees. These reports may contain socially desirable answers. Therefore, future evaluations of the program should also contain objective data, for example, information about the vocational status of the former participants. Furthermore, the sample's representativeness in the population of all previous participants of the program could not be verified, as only the distribution between the sexes was known. Proportionally, more women than men participated in the study. This deviation between the sample and the population could influence the results. In future evaluations, more men should be motivated to answer the survey. Moreover, only a German version of the questionnaire was available. Although sufficient knowledge of the German language was necessary to participate in the program, some of the participants could have faced problems in answering the questions. This language barrier could be responsible for the high cancellation rate or for mentees' resistance to even start answering the questionnaire. Therefore, future evaluations of the Mentoring for Migrants program should give the participants the choice to fill in the questionnaire in their mother tongue.

The current study has other limitations that affect vocational evaluation research (Hujer, Caliendo & Radić, 2004). First, participants were not randomly assigned and no control group was established, thus reducing the results' explanatory power. Second, many qualitative aims and objectives of the program were not included in the evaluation. Third, no cost-benefit analysis was conducted because data were not available. These limitations should be considered in future research on vocational evaluation.

Basing on the results of this study, the Mentoring for Migrants program can be assumed to have a positive influence on the integration of migrants into the Austrian labour market. However, to create an even more effective program, the matching of mentees and mentors should consider the subjectively perceived similarity of mentees and mentors, and mentees and mentors should be motivated to spend more time together.

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