

University of Latvia

Faculty of Economics and Management



**Susanna Maria Minder**

**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT'S MARKETING APPROACH FOR  
IMPROVING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION**

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Supervisor,

Dr oec., professor Signe Balina

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## ANNOTATION

In times when organizations in Germany are confronted with constant dynamics of change regarding their working conditions managers understand that human resources are an important driving factor for the overall company's performance. The attractiveness of an organization towards potential and actual employees is therefore an issue which is of broad interest for general management as it plays an increasing role to reach company's aims. In order to create this kind of attractiveness as employer the establishment of substantiated processes of acquiring and retaining employees is necessary. The objective of this dissertation is to assess whether the application of a company's human resource management's marketing approach has an impact on employee satisfaction. Concerning the research methods causal modeling and triangulation of research are used. Quantitative research is applied. Results show that the better a company's human resource management's marketing approach in terms of its quality and performance is, the higher is the employees' perception about their employer's organization as well as the overall employees' satisfaction in terms of a high retention period, a low fluctuation rate and a low absenteeism at a company. Findings also reveal a significant positive relationship between a high quality of human resource management's marketing approach in terms of a high ratio of received applications to offered positions, a high rate of identification between received application and offered position as well as a high retention rate after probation period and employee satisfaction. Furthermore, positive relation between high performance of human resource management's marketing approach in terms of high classification of the instruments of human resource management's marketing approach and the classification of brand awareness of the company on the labor market as well as the classification of the company into an employer of choice is found. Thus, it can be concluded that human resource management's marketing approach is a viable process in the realm of human resource management to steer a company's success through a focus on employee satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Human resource management, employee satisfaction, human resource management's marketing approach

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## INTRODUCTION

In times when organizations in Germany are confronted with constant dynamics of change regarding their working conditions managers understand that human resources are an important driving factor for the overall company's performance. Only human capital – and not real or financial capital – can react to the required changes with the necessary knowledge and experience. The attractiveness of a company towards potential and actual employees is therefore an issue which is of broad interest for general management as it plays an increasing role to reach company's aims. In order to create this kind of attractiveness as an employer the establishment of substantiated processes of acquiring and retaining employees is necessary.

The identification and recruiting of employees target the needs of the actual and potential employees of a company. The same applies to retaining employees. By a successful acquiring and retaining of employees human resource management contributes significantly to improving company's performance. Human resource management's marketing (HRMM) approach – as one subsystem of human resource management - is hereby the function organizations need to focus on. It forms the bases for a successful acquiring and retaining of employees by attractively positioning a company on the labor market as well as significantly driving employee satisfaction within a company.

The *aim* of the thesis is to assess whether the application of a HRMM approach has an impact on employee satisfaction, while focusing on companies and their employees in Germany. Besides, suggestions to general management and human resource professionals concerning the application and improvement of their companies' HRMM approach are presented.

The *research object* are German companies.

The *research subject* is the human resource management's marketing approach.

When analyzing the performance of the HRMM approach of an organization the following indicators are some of the ones considered, for example, how many applications are received per offered positions, how high is the retention rate after the probation period in percentage, how many absenteeism days exist per employee per year, how long is the average retention period within a company per employee in years.

Hereby the following *tasks* have been formulated to reach the research aim:

- to classify HRMM approach as subsystem of human resource management,
- to depict the nature of HRMM approach,
- to analyze theories for approaching the issue of HRMM approach,

- to survey – as organizations' self-assessment - human resource professionals of different companies about the quality of HRMM approach at their organizations as well as the employee-satisfaction at their company,
- to survey – as assessment by others - actual employees of organizations about their conception about their employer,
- to depict implications for management concerning the application of an employee satisfying HRMM approach.

Based on the information above the following *research hypothesis* is raised in the research:

The higher the quality and performance of a company's HRMM approach is, the higher is the employees' perception about their employer's organization as well as the overall employees' satisfaction in terms of a high retention period, a low fluctuation rate and a low absenteeism at a company.

In addition to the research hypothesis, *five theses to defend* are advanced:

Thesis 1: The higher the quality of the HRMM approach in terms of a high ratio of received applications to offered positions, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

Thesis 2: The higher the quality of the HRMM approach in terms of a high rate of identification between received application and offered position, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

Thesis 3: The higher the quality of the HRMM approach in terms of a high retention rate after probation period, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

Thesis 4: The higher the performance of the HRMM approach in terms of a high classification of an instrument of the HRMM approach, the higher is the classification of company brand awareness on the labor market.

Thesis 5: The higher the performance of the HRMM approach in terms of a high classification of an instrument of the HRMM approach, the higher is the classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market.

Concerning the *research methods* to circumstantiate the developed hypothesis the causal modeling and triangulation of research are used. The philosophy of Karl Popper - critical rationalism – acts as science-theoretical basis. In the case of the thesis a quantitative research

method is applied to accept / dismiss the hypothesis - analog defined indicators within the developed two causal models. To describe the first causal model professionals in the area of human resource management's marketing are interviewed via a standardized questionnaire. To depict the second causal model employees of companies are interviewed. Data sets are analyzed via the statistical computer program SPSS. In addition, a critical discussion of the research results with HRMM professionals is conducted.

The research presents the following scientific *novelties* in the area of management science regarding a HRMM approach focused on an increase of employee satisfaction:

1. A new definition of the human resource management's marketing approach has been developed. It defines HRMM approach as an approach aspiring entrance and retention of employees within the employer's organization by aiming on an increase of company's performance through satisfying employees' needs and demands.
2. A new causal model has been developed that links the quality of a company's HRMM approach to employee satisfaction. The impact of HRMM approach's quality on employee satisfaction has newly been tested - as a company's self-assessment – in the particular context of organizations in Germany.
3. A second causal model has been newly developed and newly tested as an assessment by others. It depicts the relationship between the performance of a company's HRMM approach and the employees' perception about their employer's organization.

Concerning the *approbation* of the thesis as well as its findings and single components ten participations in international scientific conferences exist as well as seven blind-reviewed scientific publications - published in different scientific editions.

Participations in ten different *international scientific conferences* are as follows:

1. International Business and Economics Conference 2012, University of Applied Science Kufstein, Kufstein, Austria, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> August 2012, report presented: "Development of human resource marketing in Germany: Limitations – Approaches"
2. International Scientific Conference "New Challenges of Economic and Business Development – 2013", University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia, 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2013, report presented: "Problems in the deduction of human resource marketing approaches from the generic sales marketing concept"

3. Interdisciplinary Scientific International Conference for PhD students and assistants Quaere 2013, Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic, 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013, report presented: “Two theoretical approaches to the market oriented design of external human resource marketing”
4. International Business and Economics Conference 2013, University of Applied Science Kufstein, Kufstein, Austria, 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013, report presented: “External Human resource marketing in Germany”
5. 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Virtual Conference GV-CONF 2014, Goce Delchev University, Stip, Slovakia, 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> April 2014, report presented: “Generic Sales Marketing as basis for human resource marketing”
6. 8<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference Business and Management 2014, Vilnius Technical University, Vilnius, Lithuania, 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014, report presented: “Literature Review on the German labor market”
7. International Scientific Conference “New Challenges of Economic and Business Development – 2014”, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia, 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014, report presented: “Market-oriented external human resource marketing in Germany – Overview of existing experience and actual situation in Germany”
8. 3<sup>rd</sup> International Interdisciplinary Conference EIIC 2014, University of Maribor, Maribor, Slovakia, 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014, report presented: “Overview of Human Resource Marketing in Literature”
9. 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Virtual Conference GV-CONF 2015, Goce Delchev University, Stip, Slovakia, 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> April 2015, report presented: “Decision making in the realm of human resource marketing,”
10. 3rd Human And Social Sciences at the International Common Conference HASSACC, Academia Romania, Bucharest, Romania, 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015, report presented: “Human resource marketing approach and its possible deduction from the generic sales marketing concept”

Scientific publications are as follows:

1. Minder, S., Balina, S. (2015). “Human resource management’s marketing approach and its contribution towards employee-satisfaction”, in: Expert Journal of Business and Management, vol. 3 (2) 2015, Expert Journals Publishing Division, Sibiu, Romania, ISSN 2344-6781, pp. 194 – 204, RePEc; DOAJ.

2. Minder, S. (2015a). "Human resource marketing approach and its possible deduction from the generic sales marketing concept", in: Proceedings of 3rd Human And Social Sciences at the Common Conference HASSACC, Academia Romania, Bucharest, Romania, ISSN 2453-6075, pp. 86 – 89, CiteFactor.
3. Minder, S. (2015b). "Decision Making in the realm of human resource marketing", in: Proceedings of 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Virtual Conference, Goce Delchev University, Stip, Slovakia, ISSN 1339-2778, ISBN 978-80-554-1003-6, pp. 55 – 58.
4. Minder, S.; Balina, S., (2014). "Literature Review on the German labor market", in: Business and Management, vol. 2014, Vilnius Technical University Press, Vilnius, Lithuania, ISSN 2029-4441 / eISSN 2029-929X, ISBN 978-609-457-650-8 / eISBN 978-609-457-649-2, pp. 580 – 587, Thomson Reuters; Web of Science.
5. Minder, S. (2014a). "Overview of Human Resource Marketing in Literature", in: M. Mokrys, S. Badura, A. Lieskovsky (Eds.), Periodical of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Advanced Scientific Results, vol. 3 (1), Publishing Institution of the University of Zilina, Zilina, Slovakia, ISSN 1338-7871, pp. 121 – 125, SCOPUS.
6. Minder, S. (2014b). "Generic Sales Marketing as basis for human resource marketing", in: Proceedings of 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Virtual Conference GV-CONF 2014, Goce Delchev University, Stip, Slovakia, ISSN 1339-2778, ISBN 978-80-554-0866-8, pp. 113 – 116.
7. Minder, S. (2013). "Two theoretical approaches to the market oriented design of external human resource marketing", in: Proceedings of Interdisciplinary Scientific International Conference for PhD students and assistants Quaere 2013, Palacký University, Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic, ISBN 978-80-905243-7-8, pp. 25 – 30.

Furthermore, the main results of the research have been presented and discussed in the following academic discussions:

1. Meeting of scholarship holders for young academics of the Freestate of Bavaria, Germany, University of Applied Science Nurnberg, Germany, 04<sup>th</sup> July 2014

2. Meeting of scholarship holders for young academics of the Freestate of Bavaria, Germany, University of Applied Science Regensburg, Germany, 06<sup>th</sup> December 2014

The thesis is *limited* due to different reasons. The study is elaborating the impact of HRMM approach on employee satisfaction. It is undoubted that also other factors – like leadership, motivation, personal values etc. – have an influence on employee satisfaction. Their impact, however, is intentionally not examined in the thesis to avoid fusion of different influences. In addition, different other researchers have already investigated on the relation between HRMM approach and such other factors.<sup>1</sup> Besides, the study exclusively focuses on human resource management and its marketing approach in Germany. While this decision affects validity - as the results of this promotional work cannot be generalized to other countries - it was necessary to narrow the focus. When researching human resource management and its marketing approach specifics of the countries can arise due to different economic environments, cultural aspects, development trends on the labor market etc. Therefore, an examination of several countries or even a European or worldwide examination was not feasible. In addition, the study examines especially four different employee groups: trainees, assistants, juniors and a forth group including all other employees not belonging to one of the other three employee groups. As HRMM is a continuously developing managerial task and its adoption by human resource management varies by country, the conduction of cross-country studies, even studies with focus on specific industries or other employee groups could be fruitful avenues for further research. Therefore, other scholars are invited to refine, correct or expand the research in the future.

The *thesis consists* of introduction, three chapters, conclusions and suggestions, a bibliography list and appendices. The first chapter gives an overview of the classification of HRMM approach as subsystem of human resource management. It explains the relevance of employee satisfaction in the context of human resource management and its influence on the employer's attractiveness of an organization. Furthermore, relevant concepts and dimensions of human resource management and its marketing approach are described. Three different theoretical approaches to the content and context of HRMM approach are depicted and explained. The typical definitions as well as systematizations used in research are analyzed and the history and development stages of HRMM as a sub-function of human resource management are studied.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples for such researches can be found e.g. at Becker & Gerhart, Harris & Ogbonna, Zhu, Chew & Spangler (Becker & Gerhart, 1996, p. 779f.; Harris & Ogbonna, 2001, p. 744f.; Zhu, Chew, & Spangler, 2005, p. 39f.)

The second chapter models the relationship between HRMM approach and employee satisfaction. It depicts the situation in reality and practice by describing on the one hand the development on the German labor market as driving and influencing factor for HRMM approach. On the other hand the actual aspects of the content of the HRMM approach – as they exist in reality nowadays – are displayed. This is followed by derivation of causal models for empirical testing and characterization and operationalization of the applied indicators. The elaboration of the basic hypothesis, the theses to defend and the propositions conclude the second chapter.

The developed causal models and the stated hypothesis lead to the third chapter. The research objective and methodology of the empirical investigation are described and the research design and procedure are depicted. Following this, the interpretation of the empirical research falls into line. The single indicators and their relations are described in detail via descriptive and inferential statistics. The elaborated hypothesis is evaluated analogous to the developed models and theoretical framework. The results of the empirical research are analysed and considering these results the research aim is answered. In addition, the postulated propositions are defended and / or dismissed.

Following the main conclusions, suggestions are given at the end of the thesis. The total amount of the thesis including the bibliography is 150 pages.

The overall constitution of the thesis is hereby adjusted in such a way that – based on the theoretical framework and empirical findings – conclusions with regard to the application of HRMM approach can be given. Arising from the concept's confrontation with the empirical investigation are outcomes which confirm or modify this specific part of human resource management. Besides, the findings demonstrate the practical relevance of an employee satisfying HRMM approach.

The thesis uses different *sources* from the 1960s to today, both in German and English language. Hereby publications in scientific journals, monographs, miscellanies as well as collections of essays and papers are considered. Furthermore, national statistics of Germany is used which is from the years 2013 and 2014. Most of these figures are extracted from the official German Federal Statistical Office or the German Labor Ministry. In addition, information gathered from human resource professionals from all over Germany and different employees is part of the used sources as well.

During the working process of the thesis lots of people supported me. My special *words of gratitude* are for Prof. Signe Balina. She was my supervisor and gave me lots of advice and support concerning the research idea, aim and process. Where necessary we could arrange the required justifications of the research set-up easily and promptly. Especially this constructive and pragmatic advice enabled the finishing of the thesis while in parallel pursuing my professional career. For personal discussions and advice concerning different parts of the thesis and especially the construction of the causal models my special thanks go to Prof. Josef Neuert. In addition, words of gratitude are paid to Prof. Tatjana Volkova, Prof. Baiba Savrina and Prof. Erica Sumilo who supported me with all advice in form and content necessary to complete this kind of promotional work. Furthermore, I would like to thank the professors, lecturers and academic staff of the University of Latvia, the University of Applied Sciences Kufstein and the Diploma Hochschule München for their support during the coursework of the doctorate studies. Finally, the researcher wishes to thank all organizations and employees who participated in the empirical research. They enabled me to finish the thesis with regard to the needed statistical results.

# 1 CONCEPTS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT'S MARKETING APPROACH

The idea of a HRMM approach that focuses on an increasing employee satisfaction is not completely new. Different authors made an effort to establish and develop different concepts of such HRMM approaches.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the environment of organizations is changing fast and the development on the labor market – as one of the driving forces for the establishment of an employee satisfying HRMM approach as a sub-function in the area of human resource management - is very fast, too, especially in times of fast changing economic challenges as they appear today. This gives way to an actual consideration of the topic of HRMM as empirical approaches from ten to twenty years earlier are not adequate anymore.

In addition - caused for example by the demographic change – a situation arises which leads to an augmented competition of organizations on the labor market for employees. Besides, the increasing demand for employees causes a higher risk for job changes of existing employees. Therefore the importance of HRMM approach raises. Existing employees need to be satisfied to ensure that they remain within the company and potential employees need to be attracted to the organizations and invited to apply. Therefore, on the one hand it is crucial for organizations to establish employee satisfying human resource management processes as employee satisfaction is vital for ensuring the long-term efficiency and effectiveness of organizations. On the other hand it is important for companies to position themselves successfully as a more attractive employer than their competitors - on the one hand on the labor market and on the other hand within the company itself.

As comparable organizations use – more or less – the same financial and material resources for their business but reach different performance levels in efficiency and effectiveness it becomes clear that the driving factor for these differences is in how company's management understands and implements its role in human resource management. Therefore, the managerial influence on employee satisfaction is essential for constant improvement of human resource management processes in an organization. Thus, the two aspects of employee satisfaction and labor market attractiveness of companies positively impact privileged supply of (potential) employees and ensure the business performance of a company.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bleis, 1992, p. 10f; Dietmann, 1993, p. 108f.; Staffelbach, 1995, p. 144; Bartscher & Fritsch, 1992, p. 1747f.; Fröhlich, 2004, p. 17f.

<sup>3</sup> Koppel, 2008, p. 66f.

## **1.1 Human resource management and the context to a human resource managements' marketing approach**

The economic task of human resource management is to ensure the most favorable supply and maintenance of adequately capable and performance-oriented personnel in companies<sup>4</sup>. If this task is completed, the principal relationship of the company towards its organization and its productive forces is fundamentally fulfilled. In this context the relevance of the concept of human resource management as a trigger of positive contributions to the company's success is increasing.<sup>5</sup> The pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency committed to the company's success requires of human resources management an approach which takes into account not only the business conditions but especially the needs of a target group that needs to be acquired and retained by the organization. Marketing research provides fundamental insights and methods with regard to the exchange of scarce resources, such as employees on the labor market. For the conceptualization of human resource management in the context of scarce resources the ideas of marketing management can therefore be used. Concepts and instruments of marketing support those core concerns of human resource management that are related to obtaining and preserving resources in the environment, where scarce labor force may impact the performance results of the companies. The scarce resources on the labor market and at the company need to be targeted in a way that satisfies their needs and prolongs their stay in an organization as much as possible.

Human resource management is on the one hand used as a generic wording for every arrangement of personnel management. On the other hand it is seen as denotation of a specific approach within the human resource management which is identified by different characteristics.<sup>6</sup> According to a narrow understanding companies try to gain competitive advantage by acquiring engaged and capable employees. For their acquisition a set of cultural, structural and personnel oriented techniques is used.<sup>7</sup> For this approach the following three aspects are characteristic: firstly, the reckoning of employees as important and resource, relevant to competitiveness, secondly, the integration of all human resource activities into the corporate strategy and thirdly, the integrative coordination of all human resource-related instruments.

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<sup>4</sup> Bisani, 1995, pp. 51-79; Huselid, 2005, p. 169; Iles, 2006, p. 133

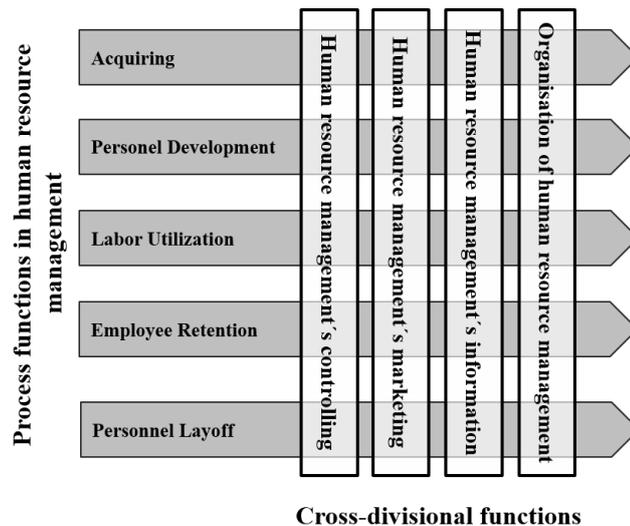
<sup>5</sup> Lado & Wilson, 1994, p. 699f.; Pfeffer, 1994, p. 36ff.; Becker & Gerhart, 1996, p. 1779f.; Delaney & Huselid, 1996, p. 949f.; Youndt & al., 1996, p. 838f.; Harris & Ogbonna, 2001, p.157f.

<sup>6</sup> Boxall, 2008, p. 49; Guest, 1987, p. 505; Storey, 2006, p. 5

<sup>7</sup> Ross, 1981; Storey, 1995, p. 6f.; Legge, 2005, pp. 43-69

The thesis looks at a more generic understanding of human resource management. A conceptual clarification of the study object *human resource management* shows that there is broad agreement defining the subject area as all personnel economic actions within companies. More recent views broaden the concept even further. They transfer the concept to all human resource functional areas and aim at a strategic conformity. Oechsler<sup>8</sup> understands human resource management as the totality of all personnel issues of design, control and development of a visionary and accordingly strategy oriented system.

Based on this, human resource management in the context of this work is defined as a system that copes with all themes related to the staff of an organization.



**Figure 1.1. Processes within the area of human resource management**

Source: Author's creation using work of Thom<sup>9</sup>

As displayed in figure 1.1. this includes all processes in the area of acquiring, personnel development, labor utilization, employee retention and layoff. These main processes are all directly supported by the cross-divisional processes of human resource management's marketing, controlling, information and organization.<sup>10</sup>

Hence human resource management displays not only a conglomerate of single measures but a long-term strategy and is part of a complex interrelationship.<sup>11</sup> By defining HRMM approach as a cross-divisional function of human resource management which influences main process functions of human resource management it is made obvious that HRMM approach is a sub-system of human resource management and not an independent discipline itself.

<sup>8</sup> Oechsler, 2006, p. 353

<sup>9</sup> Thom, 2001, p. 117f.

<sup>10</sup> Analogous to Thom, 2001, pp. 117 – 131.

<sup>11</sup> Fröhlich, 2004, p. 24

As stated above, HRMM approach is defined as one out of four different approaches (human resource management's controlling, information, organization and marketing) within the area of human resource management, which act as cross-divisional functions. From this human resource management is the superstructure of the approach focusing on the marketing orientation of human resource management. According to Thom<sup>12</sup> the HRMM approach supports hereby all process functions of human resource management like acquiring, personnel development, utilization, retention and layoff. Thus, the HRMM approach can influence different aspects in all processes of the human resource value chain.

To distinguish the implemented idea of human resource management – and therefore also HRMM approach - from a pure personnel utilization it is necessary to mention that human resource management is seen as a new form of organizing and approaching human resources. Different ideas of this new form burgeoned during the 1980s and are characterized by a resource-oriented view of all personnel matters.

One of the ideas is human resource management itself - particularly in its normative form.<sup>13</sup> As is also indicated by a number of authors like Legge, Sisson, Blyton and Turnbull<sup>14</sup>, human resource management is differentiated in substance rather than simply by name, from personnel management. Human resource management has its emphasis on the strategic management of employees as rare and valuable resources which decisively contribute to organizational effectiveness and enable competitive advantage.

An important indicator for the conceptualization and the adoption of an employee-satisfying approach in the realm of human resource work is the existing lack of employees on the labor market. This lack is a concrete signal that bottleneck considerations need to be taken into account.<sup>15</sup> Another indicator is a so-called mismatch on the labor market. It means on the one hand an existing unemployment rate and on the other hand lots of vacant positions. It displays a gap between qualified persons available on the labor market and the demand for them as is relevant in Germany today.<sup>16</sup> These indicators give reason for the need and managerial value of an employee-satisfying approach of HRMM approach.

Discrepancies in labor demand and supply arise from a variety of reasons such as demographic changes, educational situation and other developments on the labor market as well as nearsighted recruitment policy and omissions in the field of occupational qualification efforts within organizations<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Thom, 2001, p. 117f.

<sup>13</sup> Legge, 1989, p. 37f.

<sup>14</sup> Sisson, 1990, p. 1f.; Legge, 1989, p. 41f.; Blyton & Turnbull, 1992, p. 29f.

<sup>15</sup> Barrow & Mosley, 2006, pp. 13-26

<sup>16</sup> Pflieger, 1994, pp. 45-65; Multhaup, 1996, p. 42f.; Steiner, 2001, p. 39f.; Franz, 2006, pp. 227-234

<sup>17</sup> Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2002, p. 16f.; Kirchengorg & Lorbeer, 2002, p. 31f.; Machlup, 1962, p. 27f.

Companies have numerous scopes of design to improve this staffing situation. For example, they can approach the situation by examining and remodeling options of action in the areas of recruitment, staff management, training and staff development. Besides, they can drive their professionalization of corporate human resources management functions.<sup>18</sup> Current forecasts for the future predict a shortage of employees and support the call for integration of market related processes and requirements in the human resource management policy - as one sub-strategy of the overall company strategy. Otherwise the long-term performance of companies might be endangered.<sup>19</sup> All these issues establish different opportunities for organizations to improve and further qualify their HRMM approach. The topicality of HRMM approach as an employee-oriented approach is obvious.

In addition, the conception of HRMM approaches and systems along the characteristics of a generic marketing approach is based on another important criterion: that it is possible to control the transactions leading to an employee's entrance into and stay within a company. Such a control instrument are procurement efforts by means of a targeted selection of potential employees.<sup>20</sup> This lays the ground for one of the theoretical bases, the decision making process of employees. Besides, to control transactions leading to the entrance and remaining of an employee in an organization, also those indicators which influence the decision making process of employees must be considered.

Bringing together a marketing perspective with the aims and objects of human resource management is possible. It is an obvious act to borrow the marketing discipline's conceptual explanation for the processes in the labor market. Marketing has been a valuable contribution to understanding and managing exchange transfers for a long time. Furthermore, the research literature emphasizes the interdependence of staff management and sales success and describes the status of all employees on the basis of their participation in the exchange processes within the company. Aim of such understanding is the fulfillment of employee and customer needs. Thus, for human resource management and marketing management, a mutual relativity has developed against the backdrop of an increasingly service-based competition of enterprises.

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<sup>18</sup> Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2002, pp. 16 - 49

<sup>19</sup> Simon, 1995, pp. 23 - 54; Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001, pp. 1 - 18; Brown & Hesketh, 2004, p. 30ff.; Feldhoff, 2005, pp. 15 - 19

<sup>20</sup> This occurs due to the existence of two conditions: The company intends to select a pool of suitable persons. This is done e.g. through the highly selective allocation of candidates using elaborate selection procedures. Brown & Hesketh, 2004; Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001. On the other hand, the willingness of the candidates to go through a rigorous selection process and to take advantage of every opportunity to improve their individual position in advance is instrumental. Therefore concepts of radical selection work only in a climate that is characterized by opportunism of the candidates on the one hand and on the other hand by a trust of the companies into the assertiveness of potentials. A detailed description of this mechanism can be found at Scholz, 2003, p. 86ff.; Scholz, 2000, p. 167f.

”The marketing and personnel administration functions cannot be separate in a service-oriented company.”<sup>21</sup>

The provision of human resource management supply according to marketing principles is corresponding to the aim to supply the company with motivated, competent and satisfied employees as well as to fulfill the needs of recipients outside the organization. Important contributions are therefore to be expected from further research combining human resource management with other disciplines like marketing that can lead to an improved effectiveness and efficiency of personnel systems in the context of human resource management.

## **1.2 Relevant concepts and dimensions of human resource management and its marketing approach**

Different concepts have emerged concerning the interaction between human resource and marketing management. HRMM approach represents an integrative approach within the area of human resource management. This integrating approach harmonizes the marketing perspective and operational personnel management. In relation to this approach different priorities have to be considered. For this reason HRMM approach receives special attention. In principle, HRMM approach - as well as human resource management itself - strives to enlarge business success by employing the best possible personnel. All human resource management concepts derive measures for acquisition, control and retention of current or potential employees. Nevertheless, the starting point for the design as well as the used instruments differ. The characteristics of the concepts resulting from an enforced employee satisfaction are described below. HRMM approach refers to the marketing concept and is positioned in its context which creates a basis for the theoretical approaches within the thesis.

As stated above HRMM approach is part of the widespread complex of human resource management which itself is a subpart of the company strategy.<sup>22</sup> Miles and Snow go even further and argue that human resource management integrates itself into the market or business strategy.<sup>23</sup> According to Thom<sup>24</sup> HRMM approach is a cross-divisional function of human resource management and is governed and coordinated by the human resource management.

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<sup>21</sup> George, 1990, p. 68. Hereby *service-oriented* also includes employee satisfaction as this is one of the services an organization is offering its employees.

<sup>22</sup> Scholz, 2000, p. 205

<sup>23</sup> Miles & Snow, 1984, p. 36f.

<sup>24</sup> Thom, 2001, p. 117f.

HRMM approach also has a lot in common with the culture-excellence literature of the 1990's of Peters, Waterman and Austin<sup>25</sup>. They state that a marketing perspective is evident in the focus on how organizations gain competitive advantage by targeting market niches and creating special organizational conditions. These organizational conditions are supposed to lead to an emotive commitment of the employees towards the company, increase their satisfaction and establish a behavior that leads towards superior levels of company performance.

Therefore - although presented as a self-contained concept - HRMM approach has a clear affinity with other human resource management related ideas, particularly in terms of three key themes: Firstly, the increasing view of human resource strategies as complementary to business strategies and of personnel as a key source of competitive advantage, secondly, the emphasis upon decentralized and flexible structures and thirdly, the preoccupation with developing and maintaining homogeneous and sharply-focused organizational cultures.

This affinity to other human resource management related ideas reflects itself in the development of HRMM approach in the managerial and economical discussion. Long time HRMM approach was not in the focus of management at all. Only in 1962 the term *Human resource marketing* was brought into managerial and academic discussion by Schubert.<sup>26</sup> Publications regarding this topic flourished but then decreased dramatically in the middle of the 70's. Since the end of the 80's the discussion intensified again.<sup>27</sup> Strutz<sup>28</sup> states that the strategic importance of HRMM approach is – in the light of the increasing demand of employees on the labor market – beyond controversy.

Thereby the development of HRMM approach must be seen in the context of generic sales marketing.<sup>29</sup> In Germany the idea of HRMM approach has its roots in the early 1970's.<sup>30</sup> Due to the beginning lack of employees on the labor market a transmission of the generic sales marketing and its concepts and instruments into the human resource area took place.<sup>31</sup> The basic idea of this expansion of the marketing idea is that not only within the classical marketing range (the distribution of products and services by economical enterprises) tradeoffs exist - for which appropriate methods should be used. In that line of thought Hempelmann<sup>32</sup> states that marketing can be reasonable and essential with regard to other transaction initiators (e.g. nonprofit enterprises), objects (e.g. opinions) and transaction partners (e.g. coworker).

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<sup>25</sup> Peters, 1989, p. 47f.; Peters & Austin, 1986, p. 54f.; Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 42f.

<sup>26</sup> Schubart, 1962, p. 59f.; Reich, 1995, p. 5

<sup>27</sup> Bleis, 1992, pp. 10, 38; Dietmann, 1993, p. 102; Süß, 1996, p. 11

<sup>28</sup> Strutz, 1992, p. 22

<sup>29</sup> Ibid p. 23

<sup>30</sup> Rastetter, 1996, p. 105

<sup>31</sup> Ibid p. 106

<sup>32</sup> Hempelmann, 1995, p. 745

This view of marketing asserts that the employment relationship is a form of transaction. This is clear in Berry's<sup>33</sup> statement that "the exchange that takes place between employees and employer is no less real than the exchange that takes place between consumers and companies. Whereas customers exchange economic resources for goods and services, employees exchange human resources for jobs that provide, among other things, economic resources. Just as consumers can choose Honda automobiles over Ford automobiles, so employees can choose to work for an airline rather than a bank, or for one bank instead of another."

Such an expansion of marketing as asserted by Berry<sup>34</sup> can be found in the definition of HRMM approach: Objects are jobs, transaction partners are existing and future employees (resp. employers). An exchange of work offer and work demand is caused by analog marketing strategies and instruments. According to Simon this definition of HRMM approach includes the entire human resource management strategy and defines human resource marketing as a comprehensive thinking and action plan.<sup>35</sup> Subsequently, according to Simon's definition, HRMM approach would be the super-structure including a derived human resource management strategy. However, on the contrary, HRMM approach is seen – as stated above – as a sub-system of human resource management and can therefore only contribute to human resource management strategy. These different attitudes of human resource management and its marketing approach visualize once more disputes in the academic discussion of the system-logical derivation of HRMM approach within human resource management.

In this context it is obvious that a critical acclaim of the term *HRMM approach* is not easy as different explanations can be found in literature. For example states Wiegran<sup>36</sup> that HRMM approach is a company's mindset that orientates itself on the conception and contribution of potential and existing employees and puts the employee more and more in the focus of its endeavor. Also different other authors<sup>37</sup> make an effort to systematize the different approaches and sharpen the term *HRMM approach* (see table 1.1.). Thus it appears that the understanding of HRMM approach is by no means uniform.

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<sup>33</sup> Berry, 1984, p. 33f.

<sup>34</sup> Berry, 1984, p. 34f.

<sup>35</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 13

<sup>36</sup> Wiegran, 1993, p. 9

<sup>37</sup> Bleis, 1992, p. 10f; Dietmann, 1993, p. 108f.; Staffelbach, 1995, p. 144; Bartscher & Fritsch, 1992, p. 1747f.; Fröhlich, 2004, p. 17f.

**Table 1.1. Systematizations of HRMM approach**

<b>Interpretation of HRMM approach</b>	<b>Managerial task</b>	<b>Integration into human resource management</b>	<b>Example for tasks of HRMM approach</b>
<b>According to Bartscher &amp; Fritsch</b>	Employee-oriented staff management in all company departments Company has to serve the employee → Primacy of employee orientation.	HRMM approach as independent management function → Set equally to human resource management → Specific orientation of human resource management instruments to demands of employees.	Instruments and measures for key market <i>Employees</i> : → Attraction of workplace via e.g. promotion to potential and actual employees.
<b>According to Bleis</b>	Companies and managers need to create workplaces according to demands of employees. Economic targets subordinated.	HRMM approach as sub-function of human resource management.	Long-term, systematic approach to acquire potential employees and adhere existing ones.
<b>According to Staffelbach</b>	Design of managerial and employment conditions that are more attractive to employees than the competitors' ones.	Systematic composition of an ideal, employee-oriented marketing approach within the area of human resource management.	Complete usage of the HRMM mix <sup>38</sup> ; for example support indirect and direct candidate / employee search.
<b>According to Dietmann</b>	Maximum orientation on requirements of employees and HRMM approach as staff management task for the whole company. → Mindset and managerial action plan → Oriented on existing and potential employees to solve staff issues.	HRMM approach as comprehensive human resource management concept with the aim to reach company targets.	HRMM approach includes all actions for acquiring, retaining, developing, and utilizing employees.
<b>According to Fröhlich</b>	No focus on any managerial tasks. → HRMM approach does not require special management attention.	HRMM approach does not exist as independent function in the area of human resource management.	Single focus on recruiting

Source: Author's creation using works of Bartscher & Fritsch, Bleiss, Staffelbach, Dietmann, Fröhlich<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> A detailed overview and definition of the mix of HRMM approach is given in table 1.2.

<sup>39</sup> Bartscher & Fritsch, 1992, p. 174f.; Bleis, 1992, p. 10ff.; Dietmann, 1993, p. 108f.; Fröhlich, 2004, p. 17f.; Staffelbach, 1995, p. 144f.

As displayed in table 1.1. different authors' systematization of HRMM approach varies in its characterizations. This explains the still ongoing academic discussion of whether HRMM approach is a sub-function of human resource management or an independent process and managerial field. Here further research needs to be conducted to come to a sound decision for or against the positioning of HRMM in the realm of human resource management or not.

However, by displaying HRMM approach as a sub-function in the area of human resource management as stated in the thesis, the approach needs to orientate itself on the employees' needs and demands. By positing the notion that organizations have to orientate themselves and their associated forms and conditions of employment to actual or potential employees HRMM approach draws attention: Firstly, to the obligations of employers in the employment relationship and secondly, to the link between the way in which employees are treated by employers and how employees subsequently behave in the workplace. As example Cappelli and Michaels et al.<sup>40</sup> state that today the labor force change between different companies is seen as an expression of market-oriented relations between employee and employer as well as a quality indicator for the HRMM approaches of single companies.

HRMM approach copes with the human resources' procurement market of the organization within which labor supply is considered as bottleneck. From the perspective of HRMM approach labor markets develop from a market dominated by the employer to markets dominated by employees respectively candidates. This perspective reflects that HRMM approach is carried by a bottleneck-oriented understanding of the conditions on the labor market. Analogous to the meaning of a buyer's market – a situation with supply surplus and therefore a relative huge market power of consumers – companies need to make strenuous efforts to attract as well as retain employees to the positions offered by them and keep them satisfied. The employer ensures this by respective personnel-political decisions such as e.g. compensation, development opportunities and work content.<sup>41</sup>

As stated HRMM approach is not defined by one single doctrine but by different characteristics with different aspects. However, what all different systematizations have in common is an implicit classification on the basis of different criteria. Analogous to Bartscher and Fritsch<sup>42</sup> as well as Dietmann<sup>43</sup> approaches are distinguished by the criteria of the reference group, meaning if internal (existing) or external (potential) labor force is addressed. Other criteria often used are different targets, e.g. profit optimization versus employee orientation or the timeframe in which HRMM approach agitates (strategic versus tactical HRMM approach).

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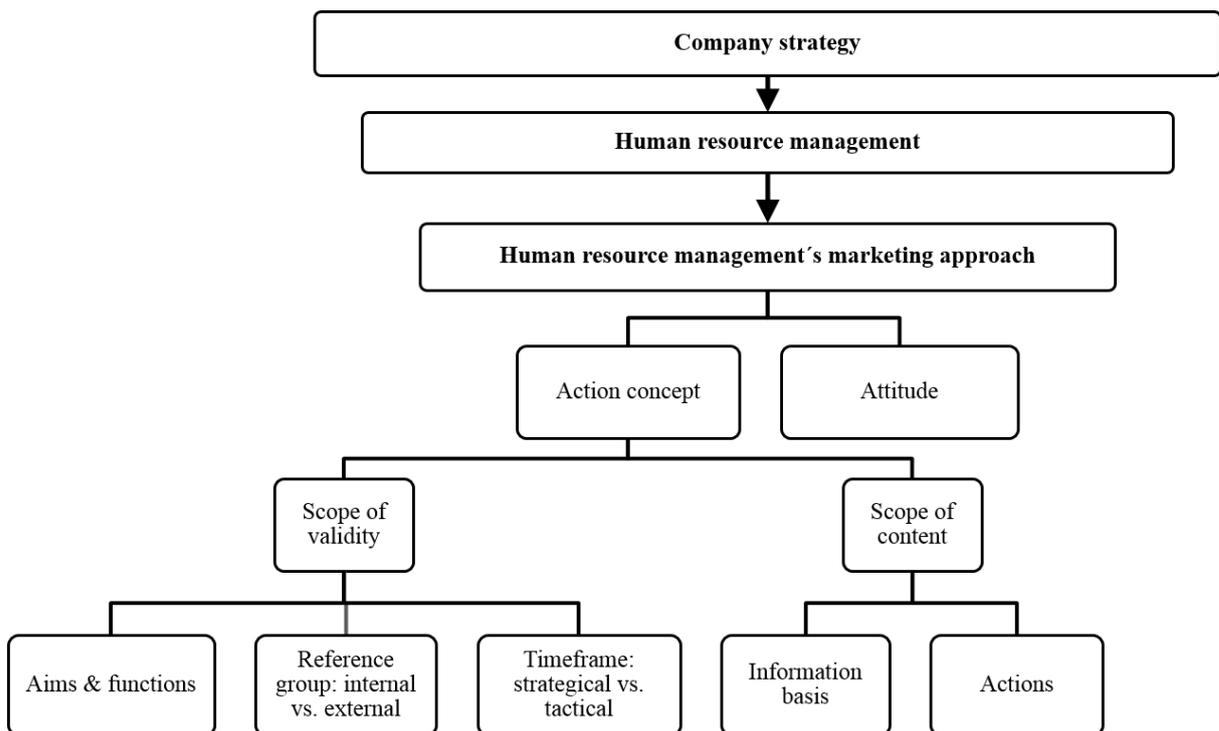
<sup>40</sup> Cappelli, 1999, p. 61f.; Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001, p. 5f.

<sup>41</sup> Hunziker, 1973, p. 7

<sup>42</sup> Bartscher & Fritsch, 1992, p. 1749f.

<sup>43</sup> Dietmann, 1993, p. 33f.

These manifold criteria can be arranged in a classification of HRMM approach which also depicts an overview of its different configuration´s aspects.<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 1.2. Classification and configuration of HRMM approach**

Source: Author´s creation using works of Seiwert and Thom<sup>45</sup>

This integrative classification - as shown in figure 1.2. - promotes human resource management as the superstructure for HRMM approach. It requires companies to take all possible activities into account to achieve an optimized design of all transactions within the company – as stated in the company´s strategy. Thus, HRMM approach is an expression of a human resource management concept: The (open) positions are the goods to be sold and HRMM approach should enable the company to do this in a successful way.<sup>46</sup>

It is obvious that HRMM approach focuses on acquiring and retaining employees as two managerial tasks but all other fields of human resource management are touched as well. HRMM approach is integrated as vision and cross-divisional process in nearly all areas of human resource management. It is a mindset which demands to take into account the way all company activities affect the existing and potential employees.

Hereby no single-doctrine of how the attitude of HRMM approach should be exists. The different positions reach from a very widespread orientation of HRMM approach (personnel marketing as mindset) to a very narrow definition of its original attitude (hard selling of

<sup>44</sup> Analogous to Bartscher & Fritsch, 1992, p. 1749f; Seiwert, 1985, p. 351; Thom, 1994, p. 72f.

<sup>45</sup> Seiwert, 1985, p. 351; Thom, 1994, p. 72f.

<sup>46</sup> Schmalen & Pechtl, 2006, p. 248f.

positions to employees).<sup>47</sup> However, the basis that needs to be established and thus defines the attitude of HRMM approach is always the same: To understand who the target-group is, what their most important values and aims are and how the situation within the company is perceived.<sup>48</sup>

The action concept of HRMM approach is spread into two parts: the scope of validity and the scope of content. The scope of validity defines the aims, reference group and timeframe of the concept. The scope of content defines the precise content of the concept of HRMM approach beginning with the information on the exchange conditions and following the practical actions which will be taken into account.<sup>49</sup>

Hentze<sup>50</sup> defines the aim of HRMM approach as on the one hand to acquire qualified potential employees for the company. On the other hand the objective is to achieve the commitment of existing employees and retain them within the company or – if inevitable – to achieve an agreeable form of separation. This means that the goal of HRMM approach is to provide a basis for the long-term establishment of a both quantitatively and qualitatively adequate potential pool of motivated staff.<sup>51</sup> Thus HRMM approach serves to create favorable conditions for improving the employer's perception on the labor market. Just as the existing employees are motivated, satisfied and developed by certain human resource management instruments, the interests of (potential) employees for a future cooperation should be raised. According to Thom this results in more opportunities to acquire and retain (higher) qualified and motivated staff.<sup>52</sup>

It is important that objectives of the HRMM approach are derived from the company's strategy and mission. As a result, its objectives are firmly incorporated in the corporate and human resource strategy and therefore allow a consistent and coherent concept.<sup>53</sup> For this reason expectations of the employees – as one stakeholder group - have to be taken into account. Their decisions about work and jobs have very profound consequences in terms of personal, social and economic development and are directly connected to the whole life of a person and situation as a whole.

Concerning the reference group HRMM approach sets the employees as reference point for all transactional processes within and outside the company. Employees and positions should be aligned to the employees' requests and therefore secure the existence of the company itself

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<sup>47</sup> Schmalen & Pechtl, 2006, p. 249

<sup>48</sup> Haubrock & Öhlschlegel-Haubrock, 2009, p. 70

<sup>49</sup> Necessarily this is simplifying, as neither the elements of the marketing mix of HRMM approach and / or the instruments of the range of action are shown.

<sup>50</sup> Hentze, 2001, p. 217f.

<sup>51</sup> Giesen, 1998, p. 86

<sup>52</sup> Thom, 2001, p. 126

<sup>53</sup> Giesen, 1998, p. 86

and its positions. In this context Ahmed and Rafiq state that HRMM approach can be seen as a “planned effort using a marketing-like approach directed at motivating, retaining and acquiring employees, for implementing and integrating organizational strategies towards customer orientation”.<sup>54</sup>

According to Schlabinger and Hansen<sup>55</sup> it is the aim of a HRMM approach to ensure that the companies stay an attractive partner for employees during (actual employees as internal reference group) and after their placement (former / potential employees as external reference group). Thereby the companies can come back to different possibilities starting by the determination of personnel requirements, recruiting and going on to integration, retention and a positive handling of redundancies.

Another definition according to Simon<sup>56</sup> includes external as well as internal employees. However, looking at the company strategy as starting point for HRMM approach considerations there is no distinction between internal and external employees possible. Here it must be considered that between internal and external HRMM approach a correlation exists as “only what exists and applies internally can be communicated efficiently and plausibly externally.”<sup>57</sup>

Therefore a differentiation between external and internal HRMM approach needs not to be acknowledged. However, for the sake of completeness, an explanation of the two views of internal and external HRMM approach needs to be depicted.

The aim of internal HRMM approach consists of increasing the identification of the present coworkers with the company<sup>58</sup> and in forming an internal potential pool of employees by using personnel development measures.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the fluctuation rate should be reduced and the employee satisfaction rate should be increased. To achieve these goals different development measures can be used, e.g. trainings, individual developing career paths etc. as well as the improvement of staff management, compensation and benefit schemes etc.<sup>60</sup>

The goal of external HRMM approach is to ensure long-term acquisition of potential employees from the labor market and to select the most suitable candidate for a vacant position from all applicants available. Instruments of HRMM approach ensure the proper selection and search of employees on the labor market, the target-group-orientated approach of the company on the labor market and the motivation of the prospective employees to apply for a job. This external HRMM approach focuses on the intensification of the personnel recruiting activities

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<sup>54</sup> Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002, p. 10p

<sup>55</sup> Schlabinger & Hansen, 2004, p. 63

<sup>56</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 13

<sup>57</sup> Strutz, 1993, p. 14

<sup>58</sup> Grönroos, 1981, p. 238

<sup>59</sup> Reich K.-H. , 1993, p. 165

<sup>60</sup> George, 1977, p. 89f.

to counter steer the shortage of potential employees. According to Krieg and Ehrlich<sup>61</sup> the attractiveness of positions for existing and potential employees can be increased by promotional work and an adequate employer brand.

An external HRMM approach is focused on the attractiveness of a company on the labor market and is understood as optimization and communication of employer´ attractiveness.<sup>62</sup> This definition is dominant in the common managerial usage<sup>63</sup> but neglects the interests of the actual employees.

Schlabinger and Hansen<sup>64</sup> state that the aim of external HRMM approach is to positively position and profile the company on the labor market in order to get potential employees to be interested in the company. For that matter different instruments and measures (e.g. employer brand, promotion etc.) can be taken into account.

These instruments and measures are depicted in the timeframe´s orientation of HRMM approach. Here it is distinguished between a long-term, strategic orientation and a tactical, short-term orientation. The aim of each company is to react rapidly and adequately if a shortage of personnel on the labor market or within the company arises. To ensure this, the strategic orientation of HRMM approach needs to affect the target group in advance of the labor market shortage in order to supply the company with candidates if job vacancies arise.<sup>65</sup> This strategic orientation needs to be aligned with the overall company strategy to ensure a sustainable orientation of the human resource management to the overall organization´s performance.

Basis of the strategic orientation of HRMM approach is the quantitative and qualitative manpower planning of the company which also defines the relevant target group on the labor market according to pre-defined criteria (e.g. working experience, occupational history, age etc.).

Following this identification and definition of the target group an analysis about requirements, demands and behavior pattern of the target group takes place. This is crucial for the success of HRMM approach as potential new employees differ concerning requirements on and perception of their new employer<sup>66</sup>.

As strategic planning basis for all functions of HRMM approach - as well as the evaluation of the own image on the labor market and its comparison with the competitors – the establishment of an employer brand is useful. An employer brand is seen as a “set of distinctive

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<sup>61</sup> Krieg & Ehrlich, 1998, p. 79f.

<sup>62</sup> Schanz, 1993, p. 284

<sup>63</sup> Hentze & Kammel, 2001, p. 217

<sup>64</sup> Schlabinger & Hansen, 2004, p. 62f

<sup>65</sup> Ibid p. 150

<sup>66</sup> Schlabinger & Hansen, 2004, p. 16

associations made by employees (actual or potential) with the corporate name”.<sup>67</sup> This definition integrates the external and internal approach of HRMM approach and its focus on the perception of employees. The aim of an employer brand is to position the own company according to the demands of the target group in the aspired labor market segment. Therefore a consequent and persistent usage of instruments of HRMM approach is necessary.

The task of the tactical HRMM approach is to plan and implement these instruments of the HRMM approach. The instruments and their usage have to be agreed in the human resource management strategy and need to reflect the content of the company strategy.

Analog to the generic sales marketing concept the following instruments are deployed, which are also called the four P’s (or C’s) of the HRMM-mix:

- Product (or commodity) politics,
- price (or cost) politics,
- promotion (or communication) politics,
- place / distribution (or convenience) politics.

Bröckermann and Pepels<sup>68</sup> give an overview of possible content’s variants of the instruments’ mix within the HRMM approach (see table 1.2.). The content can be combined in any possible way and therefore form an individual mix for every company concerning the application of their HRMM approach.

**Table 1.2. Overview of possible content’s variants of the marketing mix of the HRMM approach**

	<b>Product / Commodity politics</b>	<b>Price / Cost politics</b>
<b>Content’s variants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision planning (with regard to leading employees)</li> <li>• Operational work content</li> <li>• Hard factors like work equipment, working time, work place etc.</li> <li>• Soft factors like company climate, working atmosphere etc.</li> <li>• Content oriented work factors (kind of work, work load, timeframe etc.)</li> <li>• Procedural work factors (decision making, delegation, self-empowerment, internal and peer review etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Material remuneration (salary, benefits, bonuses etc.)</li> <li>• Immaterial remuneration like status features (size of office, special IT-access etc.)</li> <li>• Fixed remuneration parts (statutory benefits, contractual agreed benefits etc.)</li> <li>• Voluntary remuneration parts (awards, special payments etc.)</li> <li>• Individual remuneration parts, which are defined individual for each employee</li> <li>• Collective remuneration parts which are based on departments, facilities etc.</li> </ul>

Source: Author’s creation using work of Bröckermann & Pepels<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Davies, 2008, p. 667

<sup>68</sup> Bröckermann & Pepels, 2002, p. 10f.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid p. 10f.

**Table 1.2. Overview of possible content's variants of the marketing mix of the HRMM approach (continuation)**

	<b>Promotion / Communication politics</b>	<b>Place / Convenience politics</b>
<b>Content's variants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal way of communication (circular letter, employees meeting etc.)</li> <li>• Informal way of communication (casual exchange of ideas between colleagues e.g. in the canteen etc.)</li> <li>• Top-down-communication (yearly appraisal interview etc.)</li> <li>• Bottom-up-communication (management audit etc.)</li> <li>• Internal communication (newsletter, bulletin etc.)</li> <li>• External communication (job advertisements, employer brand campaign etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct supply channels (staff search via the company's human resource department)</li> <li>• Indirect supply channels (Headhunter, employment office etc.)</li> <li>• Internal supply channels (announcement via the ad board etc.)</li> <li>• External supply channels (staff search via internet etc.)</li> <li>• Acquisition of permanent employees</li> <li>• Acquisition of contract workers</li> </ul>

Source: Author's creation using work of Bröckermann & Pepels<sup>70</sup>

As is shown in the table above, the product (commodity) politics - within the area of HRMM approach - combines the creation of the physical environment of the place of work, all factors concerning the processes of the workplace surroundings and all comprehensive factors concerning the workplace itself.<sup>71</sup> Elements are work content and work time regulation, career planning, training possibilities, integration concepts as well as work climate, job security, company culture etc. The aim of the commodity politics is to establish a workplace that ensures the target group's required demands like e.g. flexible work times, good work climate, adequate training possibilities etc. are fulfilled.

In general the price politics define the compensation of the buyer for the sustaining of the provider's services or goods in form of conditions. This is quite similar within the realm of the HRMM approach. Simon et al.<sup>72</sup> state that the employer needs to make a return for the ceding of the physical and mental capacities of its employees. The price politics comprises all benefits from the employer which are given to the employee for their physical motivation and commitment and their intellectual skills and performances.<sup>73</sup>

The aim of the communication politics is to depict the company and its workplaces in a way that they come as close as possible to the demands of the target group (current, former and potential employees). The goal is a positive positioning of the organization on the labor market

<sup>70</sup> Bröckermann & Pepels, 2002, p. 10f.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid p. 9

<sup>72</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 19

<sup>73</sup> Bröckermann & Pepels, 2002, p. 9

and a picture of an attractive employer of choice who has a healthy margin on the labor market compared to the competitors. Instruments of the communication politics can be divided into communication methods (personal or impersonal methods) and in the type of contact (direct or indirect).<sup>74</sup>

In the area of distribution (resp. acquisition) politics the choice of adequate ways of addressing employees is decided. This also includes decisions concerning the way of communicating with the target group and therefore interferes with communication politics.<sup>75</sup> One can distinguish between direct (recruitment by the company itself) or indirect (employee search by external persons and / or institutions such as employment agencies, recruitment consultants etc.) as well as between own (e.g. placement in the company) or external search paths (e.g. Internet search). In addition there is a differentiation necessary between the procurement of permanent employees and contract workers (e.g. staff leasing).

In this context it is interesting to also look at three mayor functions Schmidt<sup>76</sup> lists for human resource management and which are closely linked to HRMM approach:

- Acquisition,
- profiling,
- motivation.

HRMM approach uses acquisition, profiling and motivation as independent functions – as is also human resource management itself doing. Looking at these overlap of the above mentioned three functions in the realm of human resource management and its marketing approach it is becoming once again obvious that it is difficult to decide sufficiently whether HRMM approach can be called an independent process or is a sub-function of human resource management. There is no final decision existing in research, whether a self-contained application of acquisition, profiling and motivation can lead to a definition of HRMM approach as an independent managerial process. This aspect provides another indication that further research needs to be conducted to come to a sound decision support for or against the positioning of HRMM approach in the realm of human resource management or not.

In the context of the HRMM approach acquisition copes with the choice of appropriate measures through which the interest of employees should be won and kept and suitable staff should be recruited and retained. During that phase organizations set the basis for the second function human resource management copes with: the profiling phase. Hereby the company must position itself on the labor market in a way that enables actual and potential employees to

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<sup>74</sup> Süß, 1996, p. 200f.

<sup>75</sup> Kolter, 1991, p. 38

<sup>76</sup> Schmidt, 2007, p. 20

recognize the specifics of the organization. By means of integration and promotion the expectations raised during the acquisition and profiling phase should be met in the daily business within the third phase. Here staff needs to identify with the company culture. By identifying with the company staff's motivation and satisfaction to work within that specific company environment is increased.

Acquisition, profiling and motivation functions contribute significantly to achieving the overall aim of HRMM approach. All three functions need to be applied in a way that an advantage compared to the competitor is derived, employee satisfaction and the aspired appearance on the labor market is reached and competitive advantages are created.<sup>77</sup> These advantages are closely linked and are ensured by the combination and coordination with appropriate variants of the HRMM mix.

### **1.3 Employee satisfaction in the context of human resource management**

As shown above employees are the linchpin of functions and instruments of human resource management and its marketing approach. One of the key success indicators in this context is the satisfaction of employees.<sup>78</sup> Spector<sup>79</sup> states as definition of employee satisfaction with their employer that employee satisfaction is "the extent to which people like their job".

In the realm of human resource management employee satisfaction is related to two objectives. On the one hand employee satisfaction develops towards the work performance and the work content (work satisfaction). On the other hand satisfaction develops towards the employer organization itself. Definitions in literature focus mainly either on one or the other perspective.<sup>80</sup> Due to the focus of the thesis on the HRMM approach of an organization and the organization's positioning on the labor market especially satisfaction with the employer organization is regarded.

This satisfaction with the employer organization is - according to Griffin<sup>81</sup> - the emotion of an employee towards its employer as a whole, not only towards the employee's job position within the company. In this context three major factors need to be considered to speak of employee satisfaction with the whole organization.<sup>82</sup> Firstly, the employee needs to accept and support the company's overall objectives. Secondly, the employee is willing to excel in his or her daily business performance. And thirdly, the employee feels obliged to stay a member of

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<sup>77</sup> Bröckermann & Pepels, 2002, p. 21f.; Strutz, 2004, p. 1592f.

<sup>78</sup> Homburg & Bucerius, 2008, p. 53f.; Knox & Freeman, 2006, p. 697

<sup>79</sup> Spector, 2003, S. 57f.

<sup>80</sup> For an overview of definitions see Bauer, Neumann, & Lange, 2004, p. 23f.

<sup>81</sup> Griffin, 2010, p. 239f.

<sup>82</sup> Mowday, 1982, p. 83f.

the organization. These three factors can vary in their occurrence and specificity. However, what all factors have in common is that they bind the employee to an organization and serve to attain the overall company goals. This displays the task management – and especially human resource management - has to fulfill: To establish a mind-set within a company that determines employee satisfaction and the behavior leading to it.

In this connection it must be clear that satisfaction differs from one individual to another. Diener and Lucas<sup>83</sup> point out that all employees cannot be satisfied by one and the same thing. Applying one thing to satisfy one person can lead to dissatisfaction of another individual. Here it gets clear that satisfaction is a very complex issue and psychological phenomenon as it depends on different experiences (e.g. the experience by joining an organization), individual perceptions and expectations towards the employer organization and personal values. However, what occurs commonly with dissatisfied employees is that they tend to search for satisfaction elsewhere. This can be within a new employer organization by giving notice to their actual employer or by escaping the dissatisfying structures within their actual employer by e.g. not performing optimally, doing private business during working hours etc.<sup>84</sup>

Furthermore, satisfaction is seen as the target-performance comparison in regard of the existing working environment (performance) and the expected working environment (target) of the target group (employees). Hereby the target group is satisfied when the perception of the existing work environment meets the expectations. An assessment of work conception and experience regarding all elements of work and workplace results in employee satisfaction<sup>85</sup>. Satisfaction itself is defined as a pleasant or positive emotional state.

The main contributor to employee satisfaction is the management of an organization in its understanding of human resource management. Here different managerial tasks like recruiting, staff management, retention and remuneration play a major role and lead to different performance levels<sup>86</sup> within the companies. By monitoring the employee satisfaction within a company management can contribute significantly to an improvement of its human resource management processes.<sup>87</sup> Satisfied employees perform better in their daily business and therefore increase the overall company's performance.

Hereby a common understanding exists in literature that the achievement of employee satisfaction can be set equal in some aspects to the managerial task of achieving customer

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<sup>83</sup> Diener, 2003, p. 403

<sup>84</sup> Lee T., 1988, p. 263f.

<sup>85</sup> Naveed, 2014, p. 85f.

<sup>86</sup> Performance levels in this context mean different levels of efficiency and effectiveness. It is defined as the attained result of skilled workers in some specific situations (Prasetya & Kato, 2011, p. 147f.).

<sup>87</sup> Naveed, 2014, p. 86f.

satisfaction.<sup>88</sup> As is satisfaction of customers reached by a positive customer's perception of the overall company so is employee satisfaction reached by a positive employee's perception of the organization. Besides, studies<sup>89</sup> came to the conclusion that a connection exists between increased organization's performance – which leads to more satisfied customers – and customer-oriented employees. Here the interconnection between the managerial task of increasing employee and customer satisfaction is visible as both aspects lead to an increased company's performance. However, further research needs to be applied how customer and employee satisfaction are interlinked with each other in detail and which role management exactly plays. One approach to deal with this issue in further research can be the application of HRMM approach within an organization and its influence on customer satisfaction. In this special approach in the realm of human resource management employees are set equal to customers of an organization. This therefore gives an entrance point to the further discussion and investigation of possible interconnections between customer and employee satisfaction.

As mentioned, different authors point out that employee satisfaction leads to a stronger commitment of the employees to their employer.<sup>90</sup> For example, research has been applied to the correlation between employee satisfaction and fluctuation rate and absenteeism.<sup>91</sup> It's behind discussion that satisfied employees work more efficiently, reach overall company objectives and therefore contribute significantly to the company's performance.<sup>92</sup>

However, research is still missing about the influence of HRMM approach and its influence on employees' satisfaction. Management understands that employee satisfaction is important for their company's success and that different human resource management functions are needed to increase or at least hold steady employee satisfaction within an organization. Nevertheless, the contribution of the marketing approach as one approach within the realm of human resource management has not been discussed in academic research yet.

As mentioned before employee satisfaction depends on the perception of the employer by the employees. This must reflect in an authentic placement of human resource management performance and therefore also in an authentic approach in the context of HRMM approach. The target-oriented positioning and promotion of the employer's organization on the labor market is therefore crucial for the authentic perception of the organization by the employees.

In addition, the perception of employees and employer on the job must be congruent. Otherwise the authentic approach of human resource marketing is not valid anymore and

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<sup>88</sup> Chen & Yang, 2006, p. 484f.

<sup>89</sup> Stock-Homburg, 2008, p. 157f.

<sup>90</sup> Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 61f.; Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2003, p. 43f.

<sup>91</sup> Howard, 2004, p. 380f.; Lambert, 2005, p. 165f.

<sup>92</sup> Naveed, 2014, p. 85ff.

employees become dissatisfied.<sup>93</sup> Employees judge their working environment on the one hand according to their choice for or against an employer and on the other hand according to the comparison of their employer with other employers. This leads to a continuous decision behavior of the employees and a continual judgment of employee satisfaction.

#### **1.4 Critical acclaim and limitations of the marketing concept in the realm of human resource management**

As discussed above an interconnection between employee satisfaction – as one key aim of human resource management - and customer satisfaction can be thinkable. Customer satisfaction is hereby defined as an overall evaluation based on the customer's purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time.<sup>94</sup> It is part of the marketing strategy derived from the company strategy and drives the long-term profitability and market-value of an organization.<sup>95</sup> Marketing can be settled as equal managerial process next to human resource management within a company.

By linking human resource management and customer satisfaction the process function of HRMM can be derived. Although further research is missing, a conjunction between human resource management and customer satisfaction (respectively generic sales marketing) seems therefore possible. However, there seem to be inconsistencies in the foci of HRMM approach as possible connection. Recently scholars argue that positions should be traded like goods and employees like consumers. However, this shortening entails unexpected risks.

There are clear limitations to HRMM approach as a way of portraying the employment relationship. To claim that employees buy and consume jobs and that, if they find them not adequate any more, they can buy other jobs elsewhere is a misrepresentation of the employment relationship.<sup>96</sup> Firstly, it is employers who are the buyers and consumers in the relationship, offering monetary and non-monetary rewards in return for the right to use employees' labor for a contracted period of time. Consumption of the employee's labor during that time is at the discretion of the employer only, not the employee. Secondly, the view that employees are customers of the employer means that the fundamental structural problem of management is pushed away as a mere technical problem. Furthermore, if employees were indeed consumers of jobs and customers of employers, they would presumably have the same rights as other more conventionally defined consumers. Thus their job - once bought - would become their

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<sup>93</sup> Bauer, Neumann, & Lange, 2004, p. 24

<sup>94</sup> Anderson, Fornell, & Mazzyancheryl, 2004, p. 172f.

<sup>95</sup> Gruca & Rego, 2005, p. 115f.

<sup>96</sup> Maertz & Campion, 2004, p. 566f.

inalienable private property which they would be able to retain or dispose of at will. According to Foster<sup>97</sup> employees seen as customers could not be deprived of their right to continue consuming their job (e.g. be laid off), could not be reprimanded for consuming it in an inappropriate way (e.g. be disciplined)<sup>98</sup> and could not be instructed on how to consume it (e.g. be managed). The employee like the customer would always be right.

It is clear that employees do not possess this kind of market power. Therefore, when the interests of employees and employers diverge, it is not always in the interests of employees to prevail<sup>99</sup>. Hence Berry's view of HRMM approach as offering "products that satisfy the needs and wants of [...] customers while addressing the objectives of the organization"<sup>100</sup> fails to address the problem of what happens when employees' needs and organizational objectives diverge. Here the approach of HRMM reveals the weakness of its essentially all-embracing assumptions.

Besides - according to HRMM approach - if employees as customers do not like the employment product on offer from their current employer, they can go elsewhere and find a better offer<sup>101</sup>. Thus, labor is conceived as being not only formally free but substantively.

All the forces which serve to constrain different individuals or social groups to particular labor markets, jobs and / or career paths would simply disappear and therefore HRMM approach itself would be made obsolete.

As seen above the concept of HRMM approach has been exposed to criticism for different reasons in the past. Regarding the term *HRMM approach* different explanations can be found in literature. As shown, the understanding of HRMM approach is by no means uniform but systematized within different approaches. Nevertheless, it was established as independent and important field in research and practice.

It is possible to explain HRMM approach analogous to the generic sales marketing concept. There are quite a lot of different hurdles that hinder a one-to-one transfer of the generic sales marketing concept to the realm of human resource management. Due to the specialties of generic sales marketing shown above and the problems arising out of these specialties, there are questions which are not sufficiently answered yet. However, until today no other elementary definition and explanation can be found in literature. Scholars stick to the basic framework of generic sales marketing to explain the market functions of labor supply and labor demand.<sup>102</sup> As mentioned, questions of how problems of this transfer can be coped with are not answered

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<sup>97</sup> Foster, Punjaisri, & Cheng, 2010, p. 401f.

<sup>98</sup> Cappelli & Neumark, 2004, p. 148f.

<sup>99</sup> Hausknecht, Trevor, & Howard, 2010, p. 352f.

<sup>100</sup> Berry, 1984, p. 41f.

<sup>101</sup> Siebert & Zubanov, 2009, p. 294f.; Wood, Holmann, & Stride, 2006, p. 99f.

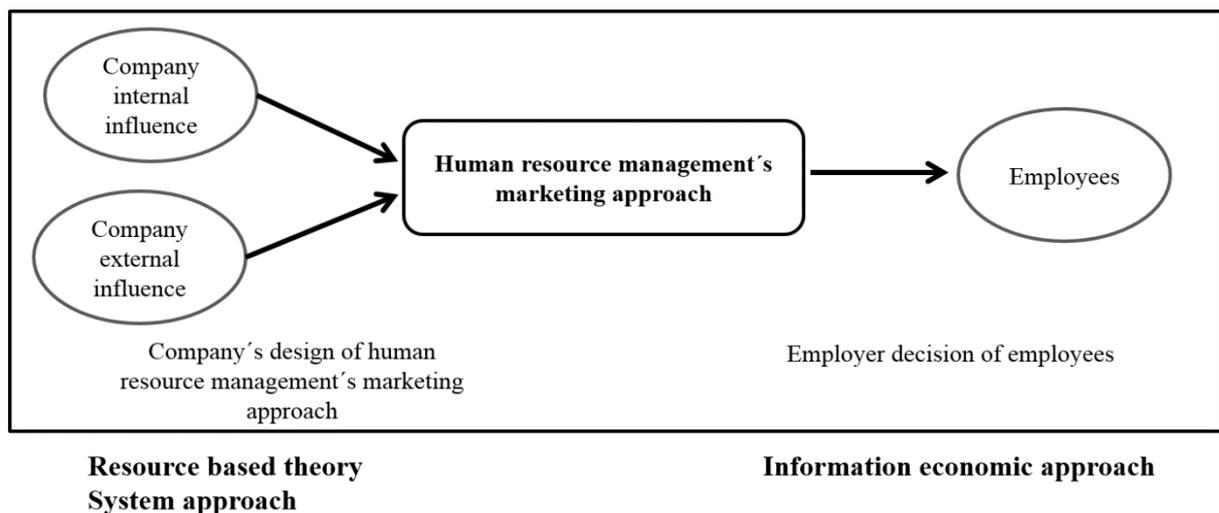
<sup>102</sup> Hiwaki, 2012, p. 181f.

at all or only on the fringes of existing literature. This leaves way to further studies and the development of more accurately fitting linkages and explanations.

### 1.5 Theories to explain content and context of HRMM approach

HRMM approach is regarded as a labor market-oriented approach in the realm of human resource management to promote the organization to potential employees, position the organization on the labor market and increase employee satisfaction of existing employees by using an appropriate HRMM mix. It considers the cross-divisional process of HRMM approach.

This integrative view on HRMM approach and its process needs to be illustrated by existing perspectives (see figure 1.3.). On the one hand the organizational anchoring and the influences on HRMM approach are to be considered, on the other hand the effects on (potential) employees need to be taken into account. Hence, the roots of HRMM approach can be depicted by the resource based theory, the system perspective and the new institutional economic theory.



**Figure 1.3. Perspectives used to explain HRMM approach**

Source: Author's creation using works of Barney, Eberhardt and Oechsler<sup>103</sup>

HRMM approach is a managerial process embedded in the company and influenced – same as all other managerial processes – by elements inside and outside the organization. Hereby HRMM approach is about defining components in the immediate availability of the company which fulfill labor market's and company success' objectives. The aims of the success of a company can be multilayered. On the one hand the company's success in a performance oriented perspective can be reached (e.g. in the increase of key performance indicators such as profit, earnings before interest and tax etc.) and on the other hand it can be reached via a people-oriented perspective (e.g. in the increase of employee satisfaction). Therefore theories of

<sup>103</sup> Barney, 1991, p. 99f.; Eberhardt, 1998, p. 64f.; Oechsler, 2006, p. 28

strategic company management are used to explain HRMM approach. Hereby theoretical inspection concerning the labor market-oriented approach of human resource management and the demand for an increase in employee satisfaction as a sustained competitive advantage for the organization on the labor market is worked out.

In the frame of the effects on (potential) employees a theory is used which defines the decision making process of (potential) employees. Employees decide for or against an employer - among other things - based on their perception about the expected satisfaction they will receive within the chosen organization. One of the aims of human resource management is to drive organizations towards employee satisfaction to increase company performance. The decision for or against an employer is often based on the fulfillment of this specific human resource aim. Therefore, as foundation of decisions, basic ideas of the new institutional economic theory are used.

In the combination of diverse existing theories an interaction of theoretical perspectives on HRMM approach emerges. The different aspects of HRMM approach (company internal / external influences and effects on (potential) employees and their decision for or against an employer) can only be determined by a multi-theoretical approach.<sup>104</sup> Only by such an approach all elements and their relation can be illustrated.

### **1.5.1 Utilization of company management theories for explaining human resource management as labor-market oriented system**

In the following two theoretical views are considered which will establish different, sometimes interdependent aspects of human resource management. This applies accordingly to the demand for theoretical plurality in the research area.<sup>105</sup> Its openness to different theoretical approaches with different emphases is needed to explain the complex organizational and strategic linkage in the realm of human resource management.<sup>106</sup> The usage of different theoretical perspectives gives a multi-layered view on human resource management as labor market-oriented sub-system of company management.

Hereby the resource based theory focuses on design and content of HRMM approach and shows the importance of labor market-orientation in the realm of human resource management.<sup>107</sup> The system approach on the other hand provides good pointers towards labor

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<sup>104</sup> For further information on multi-theoretical approaches in the realm of marketing see e.g. Müller and Homburg (Müller-Hagedorn, 1983, p. 205f.; Homburg, 2000, p. 340f.)

<sup>105</sup> Seth & Thomas, 1994, p. 165f.

<sup>106</sup> Martin, 2003, p. 17

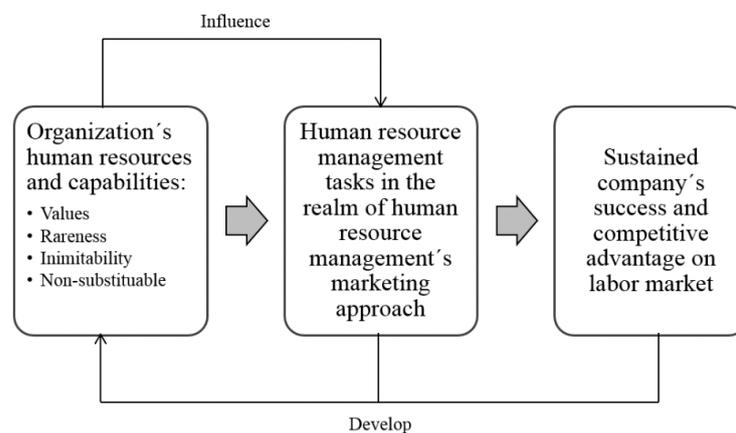
<sup>107</sup> Fulop & Linstead, 1999, p. 385

market-oriented human resource management of company internal and external transfer objects and partners.

The resource based theory is used as theoretical foundation for the concept of the labor market-oriented design of HRMM approach. This theory explains why companies can gain a higher efficiency (company success) by adjusting their human resource management according to principles of marketing management.<sup>108</sup>

The success contribution of human resource management crystalizes in behavior-related and in economic results. Indicators for behavior-related results are e.g. employee satisfaction, retention and performance indicators of other managerial tasks like recruiting (e.g. quickness of staffing, employer image etc.).<sup>109</sup> To be among the indicators of economic results are e.g. personal costs, company profit etc.<sup>110</sup> The thesis' line of argumentation establishes a resource oriented relationship between human resource management and its labor market-oriented alignment leading to higher efficiency.

The resource based theory was established as strategic company management theory in order to focus on company internal determinants for company's success.<sup>111</sup> This view differs from the environmentally-focused strategic management paradigm<sup>112</sup> in that its emphasis is on the linkage between the internal resources of the company, its strategy and its performance. This means that the success results out of company-focused determinants while models of strategic analysis such as Porter's<sup>113</sup> have an industry environment focus.



**Figure 1.4. Resource based theory of HRMM approach**

Source: Author's creation using work of Barney<sup>114</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Dyer & Reeves, 1995, p. 656f.

<sup>109</sup> Penrose, 1959, p. 61f.; Wernerfelt, 1984, p. 171f.; Wernerfelt, 1995, p. 171f.

<sup>110</sup> Stock-Homburg, 2008, p. 24f.

<sup>111</sup> Fulop & Linstead, 1999, p. 385

<sup>112</sup> Porter, 1980, p. 27f.; Porter, 1991, p. 95f.

<sup>113</sup> Porter, 1980, p. 30f.; Porter, 1991, p. 97

<sup>114</sup> Barney, 1991, p. 99f.

To identify a company's means of resources - as they are displayed in figure 1.4. - different categorizations and definitions are available. Wernerfelt defines resources as "anything which could be thought of as a strength or weakness of a firm [...], those tangible assets which are tied semi permanently to the firm."<sup>115</sup> Barney enhances this view and adds "all assets, capabilities, organizational process, firm attributes, information, knowledge etc. controlled by a firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness."<sup>116</sup>

Following this definition the following resources can be differentiated:

- Physical resources (e.g. equipment, raw material, site),
- intangible resources (e.g. know how, patents, copyrights, reputation),
- organizational resources (e.g. planning and control systems, organizational structure, informal relations in-between the firm and between company and environment).

For the company's success in the realm of HRMM approach especially intangible and organizational resources need to be taken into account which focus on the perception of the company on the labor market and its organizational variables, e.g. the whole human resource management system and its managerial tasks.<sup>117</sup> An important factor concerning intangible resources are e.g. skills that enable "the organization to [...] put customers first."<sup>118</sup>

This is expressed on the one hand by organizational structures which focus on the labor market-orientation of HRMM approach. On the other hand HRMM approach itself can have a resource-character as it defines the intangible knowledge of (potential) employees of the company. Therefore, HRMM approach itself could be credited to the category of organizational resources.

However, as HRMM approach is a process the question arises whether a process itself can be a resource. Some authors indicate that systems and processes can be seen as resources as they enable a company to produce offers.<sup>119</sup> However, common consensus is missing concerning this issue. Thus, only the outputs of a process (e.g. company's brand on the labor market) are defined as resources as academic discussion is about controversy that they can be regarded as resources.

As such resources those company specific capabilities are considered that grant high priority to employee satisfaction and labor market orientation. They refer to the perception of

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<sup>115</sup> Wernerfelt, 1984, p. 172

<sup>116</sup> Barney, 1991, p. 101

<sup>117</sup> Wright, McMahan, & McWilliams, 1994, p. 301f.

<sup>118</sup> Hall, 1992, p. 139

<sup>119</sup> Bamberger & Wrona, 1996, p. 132; Staehle, 1999, p. 792

the employer on the labor market and to organizational variables within human resource management leading to employee satisfaction (e.g. staff management).

To generate the effect of company success and - derived from this - competitive advantage resources need to fulfill some requirements to be defined as strategically important.<sup>120</sup> To be of strategic importance four characteristics are relevant. Firstly, the resource needs to be distributed by the agents heterogeneously in the market. A competitive advantage can only be generated, if the resource is in short supply and seldom (rareness). Secondly, the resource needs to be unique and not easily to be copied (inimitability). Hereby the impairment of the resource can generate a competitive advantage. Thirdly, the resource needs to be non-substitutable by other goods and services. Otherwise – even by inimitability and rareness – the competitive advantage of the company would be endangered. The fourth characteristic is the value of the resource. The resource contributes to the value-enhancement of the company and is therefore regarded as valuable for the organization.

The resource based theory can be transferred to the area of human resource management as this is seen as an area with a lot of intangible and organizational resources. Therefore, human resource management seen in the context of the resource based theory implies a sustained competitive advantage for the company.<sup>121</sup> The labor market-oriented design of HRMM approach is of strategic importance as the perception (by employer brand and promotion) of an employer is neither easy to substitute nor to imitate on the labor market. Besides, every employer displays special characteristics on the labor market which mirror the given facts and performance of the company itself. Consequently, HRMM approach is heterogeneously distributed on the labor market and non-imitable. (Potential) employees perceive employers differently on the labor market. HRMM approach is formed differently in different companies based on their demand for (qualified) staff, financial resources, size etc. The imitation of a successful HRMM approach on the labor market is nearly impossible. Cultural aspects, leadership, learn and development possibilities which are reflected in the human resource management of an organization are extremely difficult to imitate even for companies with comparably strategic alignment.<sup>122</sup> The value of a resource is defined by the demands of the labor market. Competitive advantages are generated by a company positioning itself differently as its competitors and by choosing an adequate strategy that accommodates the labor market structure.<sup>123</sup> HRMM approach defines the position of a company on the labor market. The aim

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<sup>120</sup> Barney, 1991, p. 99f.; Grant, (a) 1991, p. 37f.; Grant, (b) 1991, p. 114f.; Peteraf, 1993, p. 179f.; Colis & Montgomery, 1995, p. 119f.; Bamberger & Wrona, 1996, p.130f.

<sup>121</sup> Dyer & Reeves, 1995, p. 656f.

<sup>122</sup> Reed & De Fillippi, 1990, pp. 91 - 94

<sup>123</sup> Porter, 1980, p. 24f.

is to establish a strong employer brand and promotion and hereby generate the highest possible attraction as employer within defined labor market segments.

The resource based theory focuses on the importance of company internal human resource management systems and company-exclusive values. Especially for intangible and organizational resources a correlation between above-average success and exploitation of competitive advantages exist. The outputs of the process of HRMM approach show - according to the above discussed criteria - a strong strategically relevant character and can therefore be seen as resources. HRMM approach establishes a strong, unique image for the relevant target group that enables an employer to generate competitive advantages on the labor market.

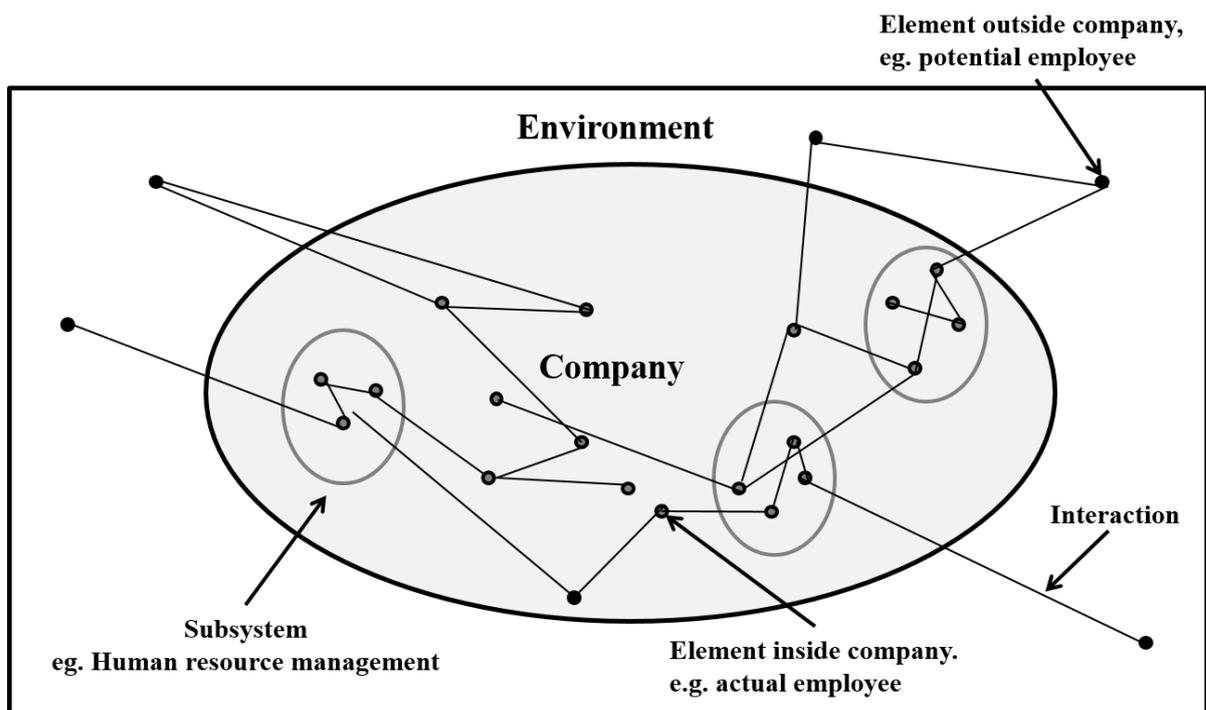
Another theoretical approach to HRMM approach of a company is the system perspective of the organizational behavior and human resource research. In the system approach companies are seen as complex socio-technical systems which can be divided into numerous sub-systems.<sup>124</sup> Hereby companies interact with elements within and outside the organization. The system approach therefore enables to show the interaction of human resource processes within the company itself (e.g. human resource information and control systems) and with its environment. By means of this, human resource processes can be defined as sub-system of the system of all company processes.<sup>125</sup>

In terms of the system perspective HRMM approach is also understood as a process of the system *Human resource management*. HRMM approach contains interactions of a company with its environment and with its employees. Herewith, human resource management supports active relationships with elements within and outside the organization system. Relations within the company are e.g. with actual employees, delegates of trade unions. Relations outside the company exist e.g. with potential employees, representatives of politics, representatives of universities etc. In both areas input for the human resource management system in form of demands of other sub-systems (e.g. search request for new employees) as well as benefits (e.g. motivation of employees for company targets) is given.

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<sup>124</sup> Weber, 1993, p. 626f; Weber, 2004, p. 272f.; Staehle, 1999, p. 26f.

<sup>125</sup> Weber, 1993, p. 629f.



**Figure 1.5. Open systems in the context of human resource management**

Source: Author's creation using work of Eberhardt<sup>126</sup>

According to the system perspective described in figure 1.5. a company is seen as an open system which is in contact with other systems and interacts with its sub-systems and systems outside the company.<sup>127</sup> Based on these relationships an organization can only be economically successful if it can adapt to changing demands of the groups and individuals it has relations with.<sup>128</sup> Regarding HRMM approach these can be e.g. the changing demands of potential employees on the labor market due to the demographic development in different countries or the economic demands of a company concerning the required employees in quantitative and qualitative aspects. The system perspective therefore implies a labor market-oriented focus of human resource management activities. Thus this perspective not only sets up interactions of human resource management with internal and external elements of the company which need to be taken into account by applying an appropriate HRMM approach. It also forms a theoretical basis to justify the necessity of a consequent alignment of all activities of the HRMM approach to the demands of the labor market.<sup>129</sup>

Nevertheless, explaining HRMM approach by open systems may lead to a misinterpretation: A lot of interactions are relevant also for other systems outside the original organization.<sup>130</sup> Of course, these simultaneous interactions also have an impact on HRMM

<sup>126</sup> Eberhardt, 1998, p. 64f.

<sup>127</sup> Eberhardt, 1998, p. 64f.

<sup>128</sup> Mockler, 1968, p. 54; Link, 2004, p. 11f.

<sup>129</sup> Weber, 2004, p. 30

<sup>130</sup> Scott & Davis, 2007, p. 95f.

approach. An entry into one organization – seen from one point of view – is an exit from another organization – seen from another point of view – and influences HRMM approach in these two organizations differently. The close connection between the system itself - including its specifications - and its environment leads to stable processes in the realm of human resource management. For example, companies can only exist in areas where people live and are willing to work. On the other hand, people can only exist in areas where they can earn their living.

Therefore open systems as theoretical bases for HRMM approach demonstrate the connection between a company and its potential and actual employees. The instruments of HRMM approach need to be adopted to the interdependence of organizations and their environments.

### **1.5.2 Utilization of decision making processes for explaining human resource management as employee oriented system**

In the previous the importance of HRMM approach for the success and competitive advantage of an organization was derived from the fact that HRMM approach takes over functions within the framework of resource orientation and interacts with elements inside the system and in the system's environment. To understand in detail how HRMM approach fulfills its function on the individual employee level another theory needs to be illuminated. In this context a theory must be used which explains the decision making of individuals. (Potential) employees decide for or against an organization as an employer and constantly judge their decision against their perception of the company as well as the congruence between themselves and the employer company. Hereby, employees constantly reflect the decisions they made when they joined their employer. This constant reflection process results directly in the level of employee satisfaction.

To consider the design and impact of HRMM approach decisions of employees need to be taken into account which take place in the respective fields of human resource management. Human resource management takes place in areas where expectations concerning behavior and relationship of (potential) employees arise. The instruments of human resource management in which this can take place are recruiting, staff management, compensation and benefit as well as personnel development.<sup>131</sup> By analyzing important aims for employees and employer as well as the relationship - and behavior - decisions of employees the impact of HRMM approach can be derived. As the thesis deals with the process of HRMM approach the choice for or against

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<sup>131</sup> Tichy, Fombrun, & Devanna, 1982, p. 52f.; Link, 2004, p. 29; Oechsler, 2006, p. 28; Albert, 2008, p. 281

an employer and the continuous process of adjusting this decision is considered. This consideration is enrooted in the new institutional economic theory.

In the realm of HRMM approach the initiation and securing of working contracts plays a major role. The task is to supply the company with employees in a cost-effective way and tailored to suit the company's needs.<sup>132</sup> The aim of recruiting and staffing is – based on the company's quantitative and qualitative manpower computation as well as the precise observation of the labor market – to identify suitable potential employees and encourage them to apply at the company.<sup>133</sup> The most important sub-objectives are hereby the generation of attention for the organization itself on the labor market as well as its attractiveness as employer, the transportation of a positive employer's image and the opportunity for suitable candidates to get in contact with the company. Companies are interested in generating a certain amount of applications in order to select out of a pool of candidates. Organizations expect that a bigger amount of applications results in a bigger amount of suitable candidates. In contrast, a high quantity of applications generates a certain amount of workload which is not desirable due to cost-effectiveness.<sup>134</sup>

To be seen alongside the recruiting efforts of the company is the decision for or against an employer on the employees' side. This means for the employee to decide for an employer out of a pool of potential employers and to close a contract with this chosen employer. The potential employees aspire a working relationship that is in accordance with their individual demands and needs and therefore leads to an individual satisfaction of the employees. Hereby, they evaluate the characterizations of an employer and the concrete job positions, e.g. career opportunities.<sup>135</sup> They put this information in correlation with their individual needs and judge the adequacy of an employer in comparison to its competitors.<sup>136</sup> Based on these considerations decisions concerning the concrete relationship to a company are made. The result of this decision making process – starting from the knowledge about, the attractiveness and preference for an employer – are the application itself and the contract acceptance or denial.<sup>137</sup>

In the context of recruiting and staffing employees mostly need to perform information seeking activities and have to make several decisions. They choose which companies to take into account for their job seeking activities (aptitude testing). Out of these they prioritize which organization to send an application to (prioritization). And, towards the end of the process, they

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<sup>132</sup> Tichy, Fombrun, & Devanna, 1982, p. 51; Oechsler, 2006, p. 218; Stock-Homburg, 2008, p. 104; Berthel & Becker, 2007, p. 247

<sup>133</sup> Oechsler, 2006, p. 162; Berthel & Becker, 2007, p. 241f.

<sup>134</sup> Brown & Hesketh, 2004, p. 63

<sup>135</sup> Süß, 1996, p. 109; Simon, 1995, p. 105

<sup>136</sup> Oechsler, 2006, p. 219

<sup>137</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 55f.

decide from which company they accept a work contract (decision).<sup>138</sup> HRMM approach plays different roles in the initiation of employment contracts. The company is made known to potential employees and the target group is made familiar with advantages of the company and the position.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, employees constantly judge their once made decisions and decide whether they are still satisfied with this decision and its consequences.

As seen HRMM approach interferes with a lot of decision making processes of employees. As a systematic approach to influence employees with instruments out of the HRMM mix, HRMM approach aims - in this context - to bring about decisions which are advantageous for the company. As these employee's decisions deal mainly with the evaluation of employers' performances, a deeper insight into the economic significance of information in the decision making processes is needed. In the following a theory based on information economy will therefore be introduced. The goal is to explain to which extend HRMM approach can support decision making processes.

Decisions of potential employees and their resulting actions to apply and retain at a company are based on their evaluations of the whole process of a company's HRMM approach. Employees therefore are dependent on information concerning these circumstances which they need for their decisions and actions. Companies decide on their actions in the realm of HRMM approach on the same information basis as is available for employees.

In a world based on the division of labor there are several relationships of dependence. The division of labor leads to supply and demand of output. If the company as demander of output (principal) gets in interaction with the employee as supplier (agent), a relationship originates respectively a contractual relationship of dependence concerning output and reward arises. Under the premise of utility for both stakeholders the principal-agent-theory aims on analyzing the contractual scheme of dependence of principal and agent and developing formats in which – under the assumption of imperfection – both parties can act pareto-optimal.<sup>140</sup> “Whenever one individual depends on the action of another, an agency relationship arises. The individual taking the action is called the agent. The affected party is the principal.”<sup>141</sup> The principal-agent-theory copes with the relation between the principal and the agent under the premise of different aims, information and risk attitude.<sup>142</sup>

Labor relationships are an example for such relationships. The employer acts as principal who delegates tasks to his employee, the agent. Thereby the actions of the employee

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<sup>138</sup> Kieser, Nagel, Krüger, & Hippler, 1990, p. 9f.; Wanous, 1992, p. 24f.; Teufer, 1999, p. 31f.

<sup>139</sup> Stock-Homburg, 2008, p. 105

<sup>140</sup> Wegner & Terberger, 1988, p. 506f.

<sup>141</sup> Pratt & Zeckhauser, 1985, p. 22

<sup>142</sup> Rühli, 1996, p. 112

affect both, his own and the employer's level of utility. Both parties are dependent on the decisions of the agent. The main issue is that the principal cannot be sure that the agent acts in his spirit.

Imperfectness which embodies in an asymmetric information distribution between principal and agent, is also a factor in the realm of HRMM approach. If these information asymmetries exist before a contractual agreement – in this case the labor contract - the danger of *Adverse selection* may arise. This is the case if one party (e.g. the employee) has private information about certain characteristics of the employment relationship but the other party (e.g. employer) cannot obtain this information. While the principal may try to verify the behavior of the agent, he cannot act in an optimal way because he lacks information.<sup>143</sup>

This imperfectness and asymmetric information distribution is one major constraint of the employment relationship characteristics. In the case of HRMM approach potential employees do not have all relevant information that might be available within the company itself. This information difference leads to the fact that employees are not in an optimal position for decision making. The results are disadvantageous actions for the company like e.g. absence of applications, refusal of job offers. Potential employees can only judge the positions of a company – and therefore their desire to apply for this position – by externally visible characteristics. These are e.g. job profile, contractually agreed characteristics (e.g. compensation, benefits, holiday etc.) which are described by the company. However, as not all these aspects can be assessed in advance a lot of them are based on afterwards experience. This problem concerning the hindrance of interaction processes due to a lack of information symmetry can be explained by the information-economic approach.

Potential employees always face a risk. During the whole process of HRMM approach they have to make assumptions about how competencies and tasks of the available position as well as the company climate present themselves in reality.

If information asymmetries result after the labor contract agreement, the danger of *Moral hazard* arises. By delegating a task to an employee according to an agreed contract the employee may be able to take actions that affect the employer's outcome of the labor relationship. These outcomes can either not be observed by the principal or enforced by him perfectly. In many economic transactions a principal's decision to delegate a task to an agent implies that he is at least partly not able to control the agent's performance.<sup>144</sup> The discretionary

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<sup>143</sup> Mas-Colell, 1995, p. 436

<sup>144</sup> Kreps, 1990, p. 577

power of the agent to behave in accordance with his individual utility rather than solely in the interest of the principal constitutes in the moral hazard problem.<sup>145</sup>

Costs arise due to that imperfectness (*Agency costs*) - independently whether the information asymmetry exists before or after the labor contract agreement.<sup>146</sup> They arise when the principal wants to diminish the discrepancy between the (actual) activity of the agent and his own ideas of the agent's action. In the realm of human resource management the employer can try to install incentive mechanism in form of bonus, piece rate etc. and / or control instruments like probation periods and thus create so called *Control costs* by screening the agent. The considerations to agency costs are based on Jensen and Meckling<sup>147,148</sup> but are criticized by some authors because of the concept itself as well as the closeness to financial accounting.<sup>149</sup>

In the context of human resource management companies try to diminish the risk of high agency costs by establishing different kinds of control costs. Nevertheless, it is quite difficult to measure these costs against each other in practice. Departing from a situation where both contractual parties have the same level of information (first best optimum) the prevalence of information asymmetries between the participants is therefore likely to induce modifications to contracts that would have been written under symmetric information. In this case only the second best optimum can be reached. The difference between the possible first best optimum and the second best optimum is called agency-costs.<sup>150</sup> They are the criteria for efficiency of the principal-agent theory.<sup>151</sup> That risk might be minimized in the context of HRMM approach by some signaling activities such as the handing in of qualification papers, diplomas, references, certificates etc. by the employee. In addition, the employer can take into account screening possibilities: He can implement assessment centers or job interviews aiming at gathering more in-depth information about the potential employee. As particularly economic proves the technique of *Self-Selection*, e.g. by implementing job advertisements which are designed in a way that the potential employee can recognize a priori whether he or she suits for the job.

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<sup>145</sup> Macho-Stadler & Perez-Castrillo, 1997, p. 51f.

<sup>146</sup> Concerning adverse selection the reasons for the asymmetric distribution of information is unimportant, as the danger lies in the inefficient risk fragmentation. In contrary to the moral hazard problem: there the asymmetric information distribution may lead to *Hidden Action* or *Hidden Information* (Mas-Colell, 1995, p. 47f.).

<sup>147</sup> Jensen & Meckling, 1976, p. 305f.

<sup>148</sup> According to Jensen and Meckling the agency-costs consist of signaling, screening as well as welfare loss. (Jensen & Meckling, 1976, p. 308)

<sup>149</sup> Meinhövel, 1999, pp. 50 - 55

<sup>150</sup> Picot, 2005, p. 73

<sup>151</sup> In this context an institution is considered as efficient if the agency-costs are minimized in the existing relation.

**Table 1.3. Signaling and screening activities in the context of HRMM approach**

Party involved	Signaling activities	Screening activities
Informed party's efforts  Uninformed party's efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to reduce the information asymmetry, e.g. submitting of qualification certificates.</li> <li>• to inform the other party correctly, e.g. probation period and piece rate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to decrease the prevalent information asymmetry.</li> <li>• to decrease the prevalent information asymmetry.</li> </ul>

Source: Author's creation using work of Jensen & Meckling<sup>152</sup>

As shown in table 1.3. signaling activities are all activities of the informed party to reduce the information asymmetry.<sup>153</sup> Concerning the signaling efforts of an employee these are all measures which show the employee's characteristics to an employer, even if they are not visible directly. For example employees signal their qualification by submitting qualification documents or references.<sup>154</sup>

If the focus lays on the evaluation of employers by potential employees, of special interest are the signaling measures of the employers.<sup>155</sup> This means for HRMM approach that the measures taken into account need to be honest and plain and may not propagandize wrong or dishonest perceptions of the employer. As false statements displayed via the instruments of the mix of HRMM approach are easily to be looked through by the employee they are inefficient for the employer. Besides, these wrong given statements lead to a decrease in the satisfaction of the employee with the decision he has taken for or against an employer. If false statements are given, rumors on the labor market may also lead to a decrease in the number of applications for the respective employer. This shows that holding back some characteristics, displaying false characteristics or the denial of them is not a valid procedure for the employer.

Screening activities entail all activities of information gathering which are conducted by the uninformed party, mainly the employer as principal. In the context of HRMM approach this means the employer aims on gathering information concerning preferences and attitude of employees by labor market research or information gained in personal contacts with the employees. Screening measures of the employees consist of gathering, verifying and filtering of information about the respective employer.<sup>156</sup> The individual environment of an employee (friends, family, colleagues etc.) is a relevant source for labor-market-related information e.g. the perception of an employer on the labor market. This environment influences the decision

<sup>152</sup> Jensen & Meckling, 1976, p. 308

<sup>153</sup> Stiglitz, 1974, p. 27f.; Spence, 1976, p. 592; Kaas, 1990, p. 541

<sup>154</sup> Spence, 1976, p. 592; Vahrenkamp, 1991, p. 54

<sup>155</sup> Schmidtke & Backes-Gellner, 2002, p. 105

<sup>156</sup> Tolle, 1994, p. 926

making process of an employee concerning his education and qualification as well as his choice of an employer.<sup>157</sup>

A combination between HRMM approach and screening activities is a mixture of instruments of the mix of HRMM approach which supplies the information demand of the employees on the labor market.

## 1.6 Summary

The integral concept of human resource management and marketing management shows in total that a close connection of the two disciplines is possible. In addition, starting points for a labor market-oriented alignment of human resource management result through this integration. The presented concepts show that human resource management's objectives can be achieved by taking market-adequate transfer services on the labor market into account. Parallels exist in parts of the labor market situation in which the workplace serves as the exchange good and for which supplier (company) and consumers (employees) are identified.

From the analysis of the above mentioned concepts three central aspects can be derived which are of importance for an integrated consideration of human resource management and marketing management. First of all, this includes the attractiveness of a company as an employer and its perception by employees on the labor market which exists as knowledge about the employer by the employee in the labor market. Secondly, there is similarity of the concepts that they consider human resources management bottleneck-oriented. This perspective is taking into account the needs of current and potential organization members. Therefore, HRMM approach emphasizes the consideration of employees' needs as the target group which demands need to be taken into account. In the light of shortage of qualified employees and their resulting labor market power this approach is of great importance. Thirdly, the design of instruments of the mix of HRMM approach and systems which represent the range of services of the employer is crucial. It is the basis from which employees decide for or against an employer.

The concept of HRMM approach emphasize the exploitation of the labor market for the optimization of the company's labor market performance. In addition, it shows the importance of a strong labor market orientation of human resource management for an improved company's success. HRMM approach provides a general, bottleneck-oriented mental model of human resources management which is reflected in the resource oriented approach.

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<sup>157</sup> Schüssler & Funke, 2002, p. 406

HRMM approach understands labor market orientation in such a way that employees are conceived as customers and jobs as products.<sup>158</sup> Its aim is to position a company as an attractive employer on the labor market by offering clearly identifiable services on the labor market which evokes a unique employer preference. Hereby the company is exposed to internal as well as external influences which are displayed in the system approach. The organization is only capable to comply with its aim to supply the company with adequate personnel if it cooperates with systems outside its own boundaries.

Decisions of employees are made by observing all available relevant data of a company. All aspects of the information-economic approach of employee decisions in the realm of HRMM approach therefore need to be taken into consideration. Employee satisfaction in the realm of the process of HRMM approach arises when the perception of a company on the labor market is judged as correctly by the employee. A false positioning of an organization on the labor market may hereby lead to a decrease in employee satisfaction. The employee's decision for or against an employer needs to be congruent to his personal values, interests and characteristics<sup>159</sup> in order to result in employee satisfaction. Hereby employees can reach a more positive overall judgment of their personal working situation.<sup>160</sup> Employees tend to choose the kind of work that is in accordance with their personal values, interests and characteristics and respectively continue such once chosen, individually satisfying employment relationships.

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<sup>158</sup> Berry, 1981, p. 33f.; Wucknitz, 2000, p. 11

<sup>159</sup> Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985, p. 109f.; Ganzach, 1998, p. 528

<sup>160</sup> Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994, p. 256

## **2 MODELING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT'S MARKETING APPROACH AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION**

As outlined in the first chapter, employees are the salient company's resource when trying to achieve a competitive advantage. Their availability for companies plays a major role and is the driving factor for organizations' establishment of HRMM approach. To understand this situation not only in theory but also in reality, the following chapter analyzes the competitive market environment on the German labor market – as this is the market where the exchange of labor takes place. Besides, the chapter highlights labor market's influence on the considerations of companies to establish HRMM. The labor market conditions vary from country to country. Therefore the main factors relevant for the German labor market and their connection to HRMM considerations are explained. Additionally, content's aspects of HRMM approach – as they exist in reality - are depicted. In a second step, based on literature review and theoretical foundations of HRMM approach, the chapter proposes two causal models and their underlying hypothesis and propositions. These are later picked up in the empirical research to study their practical relevance.

### **2.1 The German labor market as driving factor in the context of HRMM**

German companies agitate in a competitive labor market environment. All organizations have a certain need for staff and try to gain these human resources on the labor market. The better the economic climate within a country, the more of these rare resources are needed.<sup>161</sup> Labor supply is increasing and – as a result out of this increase – labor demand is shrinking. To cope with this competitive environment companies are supported by the process of HRMM approach. Therefore, the economic climate and the development on the labor market are the driving factors for companies to invest in this process.

Reinberg and Hummel<sup>162</sup> state that a major shift occurred on the German labor market starting in the year 2005. From this year on the German labor market developed rigorously and continuously to a buyer's market – meaning a surplus of labor supply of companies and a lack of labor demand by employees. In addition, a new awareness for HRMM approach started in 2005 – due to the development on the German labor market. From that time on, HRMM

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<sup>161</sup> Franz, 2006, p. 19f.

<sup>162</sup> Reinberg & Hummel, 2007, p. 2f.

approach was receiving augmented attention for its value contribution towards organizations.<sup>163</sup> Therefore – in the following – the German labor market and its relation and influence to HRMM approach is investigated from the year 2005 until 2013<sup>164</sup>.

In Germany the economic climate is positive since 2005<sup>165</sup> and an increase of production capacity is continuously developing.<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, the amount of suitable employees is not inevitably increasing to meet the companies' demand for employees. Therefore a shortage of personnel is expected.<sup>167</sup> These circumstances are the reason for an increase of organizations' awareness for HRMM approach.

To demonstrate a country's economic climate commonly the gross domestic product is used. A positively growing gross domestic product implies a positive economic climate. The influence of the gross domestic product on companies is generally of material kind. Production and financial resources of an organization are rising. This leads to an increase in the demand for company's personnel.

Looking at the development of the gross domestic product in Germany (figure 2.1.) it can be seen that in 2012 the German economy blundered into a recession. The growth trend of the economy was lower than the two years before. Nevertheless, the development of the gross domestic product was still positive, which gives hints for the stability and ongoing high performance of the German economy. However, in 2012 the growth rate was 3,5 % below the growth rate of the year 2011 - an apparent indicator for a decline in the economic development within Germany. Though, overall the German economy is still on a slight growth path.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Personalführung, 2006, pp. 22 - 24

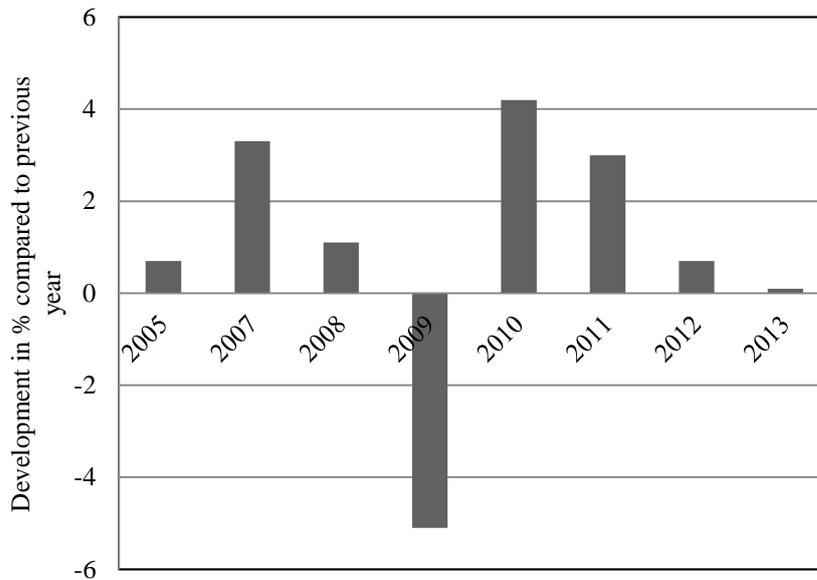
<sup>164</sup> Valid figures of the German labor market situation are mostly provided by the German Employment Agency. At the end of each year, the Agency edits a report including all relevant figures. The thesis examines figures until the year 2013, as all relevant data were retrieved out of Agency's reports at the beginning of the year 2014.

<sup>165</sup> German Federal Statistical Office, (b) 2014

<sup>166</sup> German Federal Statistical Office, (a) 2014

<sup>167</sup> Franz, 2006, p. 19f.

<sup>168</sup> German Federal Employment Agency, 2013, p. 11f.



**Figure 2.1. Development of the gross domestic product in Germany (2005 – 2013)**

Source: Author's creation using work of German Federal Employment Agency <sup>169</sup>

Looking in detail at the development of the gross domestic product of Germany (figure 2.1.) it can be seen that it was slightly growing by 0,1 percentage points in 2013, after 0,7 and 3,0 percentage points in 2012 and 2011 as well as 4,2 percentage points in 2010<sup>170</sup>. As already mentioned, in 2009 there was a heavy decline in the growth rate due to the weak performance of the German economy (-5,1 % in 2009 compared to the preceding year). Besides, since 2006 a decrease in the growth rate of the gross domestic product was visible (3,9 % in 2006, 3,3 % in 2007 and 1,1 % in 2008). However, only in 2009 the growth rate was negative and the development of the gross domestic product is continuously positive.

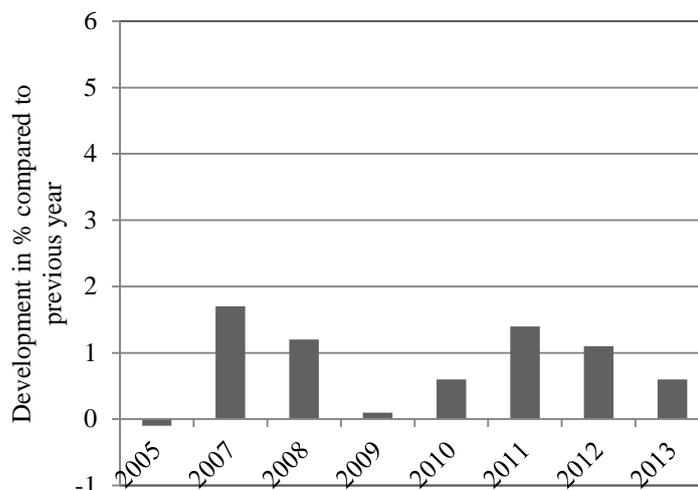
The development of the gross domestic product reflects the necessity for companies to invest in their HRMM approach. Even if the figure above shows a decrease in the development of the gross domestic product it is still on a positive growth path. Organizations can expect an increase in production or service. Therefore, more human resources need to be approached on the labor market to cope with this positive development. Concerning the overall German labor market, the demand for human resources is hereby determined by company external conditions, like the development of the gross domestic product. However, concerning the specific organizations' labor markets the demand for human resources can be specified according to organizations' quantitative and qualitative needs and can therefore be made more tangibly. In this case the company's performance, its innovation, its national or international division of labor etc. define the need of its human resources. This means the

<sup>169</sup> German Federal Employment Agency, 2013, p. 11f.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid p. 11f.

specific need for labor forces can be defined by the organizations themselves and can be independent from the overall development of the gross domestic product. However, for the whole German national economy these needs sum up to an overall demand for human resources due to the positive development of the German gross domestic product. As a company's HRMM approach copes with acquiring and retaining employees, the gross domestic product and its development can be considered as one influencing factor on the conceptualization of this process.

This positive development of the German gross domestic product reflects itself in the solid development on the labor market (see figure 2.2.) which also had a stabilizing effect on the gross domestic product vice-versa. The German labor market is growing. Nevertheless, the increase dropped slightly since 2012. In 2012 the growth rate of employed persons was 1,1 % compared to 1,4 % in 2011. However, the positive direction for 2013 (0,6 % growth rate) and the following years is obvious. The German labor market is still progressive. The development from one year to another is in most cases a positive one.<sup>171</sup> Only exception is the year 2005 with a minimal negative development rate of -0,1 % compared to the preceding year.



**Figure 2.2. Development of employed persons in Germany (2005 – 2013)**

Source: Author's creation using work of German Federal Employment Agency <sup>172</sup>

Another downward trend was visible in the years 2008 (with a decline in the development of employed persons to only a growth rate of 1,2 % compared to the year 2007 with a growth rate of 1,7 %) and 2009 (with only 0,1 % positive development of employed persons compared to 2008). However, the development of employed persons was again pointing

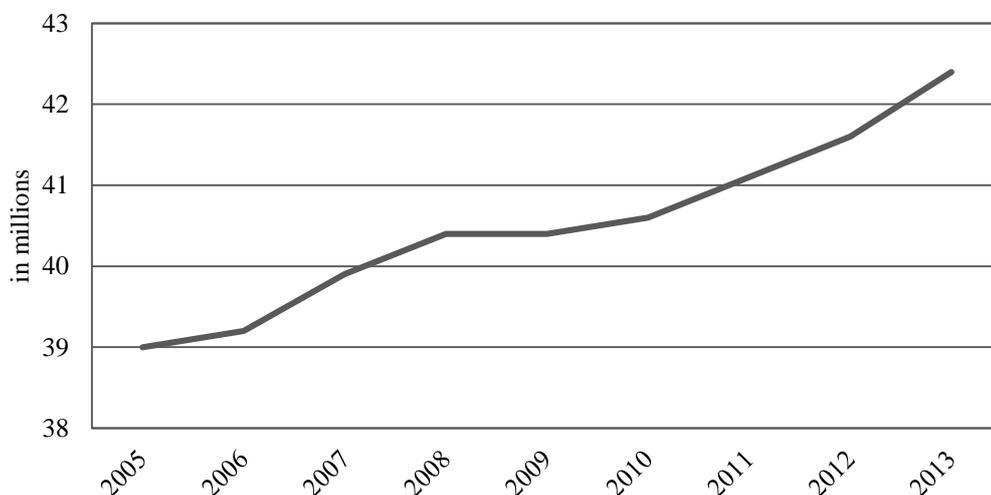
<sup>171</sup> German Federal Employment Agency, 2013, p. 11f.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 2013, p. 11f.

upward in 2010. In this year the growth rate of employment increased by 0,6 % compared to 2009. Starting from 2011, the growth rate of employed persons is decreasing (growth rate of 1,4 % in 2011, 1,1% in 2012).<sup>173</sup> Nevertheless, the figures show that – even if the growth rate itself is slightly decreasing every year compared to the previous year – the development is still positive: In 2013 0,6 % more persons became employed compared to 2012.

Organizations have understood that a positive development of the gross domestic product needs to be reflected in more companies’ human resources. They tend to still acquire employees on the labor market every year, which is reflected in the development of employed persons. However, in the case of such a positive development - as it exists in Germany today – the amount of persons available on the labor market is not necessarily growing as well. A shortage of personnel can be expected. Employers need to invest more on gaining attractiveness on the labor market. On the other hand they need to mobilize energy to attract and retain employees. The aim is to position the own organization more attractively than the competition. Thus, an increase in the quality and performance of companies’ HRMM processes can be expected for not dropping back behind competitors. This increase demands on the other hand more human resources at companies which leads to an increase in employed persons.

Going hand in hand with the overall development of employed persons on the German labor market was the actual number of employed people in Germany (see figure 2.3.).



**Figure 2.3. Development of number of employed persons in Germany (2005 to 2013)**

Source: Author’s creation using work of German Federal Employment Agency<sup>174</sup>

<sup>173</sup> German Federal Employment Agency, 2013, p. 11f.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, p. 12

In the year 2013 the number of employed people increased by 800.000 thousand to 42,4 million employed people in total (in 2012: 41,6 million employed people). This is the highest number of employed persons in Germany after the German Reunification<sup>175</sup> in 1990. At this time the number of employed persons was roughly 38 million. Since 2005 the number of employed persons has steadily increased (39,0 million in 2005, 39,2 million in 2006, 39,9 million in 2007, 40,4 million in 2008 and 2009, 40,6 million in 2010 and 41,1 million in 2011).<sup>176</sup> This positive trend is predicted to continue also for the next coming years.<sup>177</sup>

For organizations the increasing number of employed persons means – once again - a continuous pressure and competition with other companies to acquire and retain employees. Differentiation towards competitors is necessary. In this case, the attractiveness of an employer on the labor market – compared to its competitors - needs to be enhanced. In addition, employee satisfaction – and its result of retaining employees at the organization - is gaining momentum as one strategic possibility to achieve a competitive advantage on the labor market. Therefore, a company's HRMM approach tends to receive increasing managerial attention and strategic importance. It is the necessary process to acquire persons on the labor market and retain them at the company. With this increasing importance the financial environment for organizational departments concerned with this human resource management's process tends to be improving. Furthermore, the staffing situation of these departments enhances and staffing improving measures are conducted (like e.g. employer branding measures). Thus, these measures can only be successful if enough persons are available on the labor market.

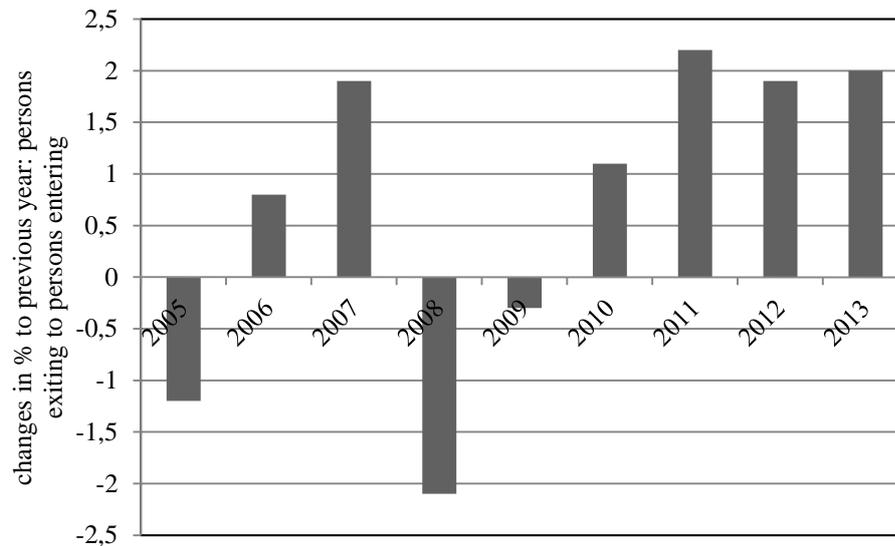
However, the following figures show that companies are facing yet another difficulty in acquiring employees on the labor market. The development of persons who are exiting the German labor market compared to persons entering the German labor market (see figure 2.4.) shows that there is an overhang of exiting persons. This means that an overall shortage of employees is expected as less employees are available on the labor market.

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<sup>175</sup> In 1990 the former German Democratic Republic (GDR / East Germany) joined the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG / West Germany) to form the reunited nation of one single German sovereign state. This process is called *Reunification*. For further information see Rödder, A. 2009, p. 118f.

<sup>176</sup> German Federal Employment Agency, 2013, p. 68

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid* p. 12f.



**Figure 2.4. Changes of persons exiting compared to persons entering the German labor market (2005 to 2013)**

Source: Author's creation using work of German Federal Employment Agency<sup>178</sup>

As displayed in figure 2.4. less and less people have entered the labor market since 2010, but more and more people have exited it since then. In 2010 1,1 % more persons exited the labor market than entered it. In 2011 and 2102 these numbers were even higher. In 2011 2,2 % and in 2012 1,9% more persons exited the labor market than entered it.<sup>179</sup>. This development started some years after the turn of the century. In 2005 there were still 1,2 % more persons entering the labor market than exiting it. However, in 2006 this development changed already. In this year 0,8 % more persons exited the labor market and in 2007 even 1,9% more persons exited than entered the labor market. This development continues until today (in 2013 2,0 % more people exited the labor market than entered it). The only figures out-of-band in this development existed in the years 2008 and 2009. In 2008 2,1 % more persons entered than exited the labor market (in 2009 0,3 % more entrances than exits).

This development of more persons exiting the labor market than entering it leads to a continuous scarcity of human resources available on the labor market. The necessity and importance of HRMM approach for the overall performance and success of organizations is once again made visible. The reasons why such a development of more persons exiting than entering the labor market exists can be manifold. One reason could be the overall demographic development on the German labor market.

The birth rate in Germany declined and the population is becoming older over the last decades. This low birth rate causes a reduction of the German population. Result is a lesser

<sup>178</sup> German Federal Employment Agency, 2013, p. 77f.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid p. 112f.

amount of persons available on the labor market. Next to the natural demographic development also migration and emigration are reasons for an increase or decrease of population. In Germany emigration exceeds immigration since some years. Therefore, overall, less persons enter the German labor market than exit it and less persons are available as potential labor force for organizations.

Summarized, the positive economic climate – as displayed in figure 2.1. - leads to an increase in the overall demand for labor forces. Due to an increase in production volume of goods and services more and more employees are needed by the organizations to produce these products / services.<sup>180</sup> However, employees´ demand for labor does not meet companies´ supply of labor on the labor market.<sup>181</sup> The figures above show that the number of employed persons is increasing (figure 2.3.) and therefore less unemployed persons – seeking a job position - are available on the labor market. Besides, more persons exit the labor market and are not available as (potential) employees anymore (figure 2.4.). Summarizing, on the one hand employees are becoming rare on the labor market. However, on the other hand companies need more of these human resources.

Economic climate and labor market development mainly influence to what extend organizations take efforts to convince employees to join a company and to retain them.<sup>182</sup> As HRMM approach copes with acquiring and retaining employees, the economic climate and the labor market´s development are driving factors for the development and application of HRMM approach.

As stated above, an increase of production capacity and volume – as is expected in an environment with positive economic climate – does not naturally lead to an increase of available employees on the labor market. Therefore it comes to a scarcity of human resources.<sup>183</sup> A surplus of labor supply - as exists in Germany - forces companies to increase their efforts to position themselves on the labor market. In addition, they compete with other organizations to attract employees and convince them to decide for them as employer.<sup>184</sup>

The development on the German labor market - as displayed above - with its surplus of labor supply due to the ongoing positive development of the gross domestic product, the increasing number of employed persons and a trend of more persons exiting the labor market than entering it, establishes on the one hand the necessity of HRMM approach. In this situation companies need to invest more efforts to acquire and retain employees.<sup>185</sup> The increasing

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<sup>180</sup> Franz, 2006, p. 121f.

<sup>181</sup> Klinger, Bonin, Horn, & Raffelhüschen, 2013, p. 148f.

<sup>182</sup> Oechsler, 2006, p. 101f.

<sup>183</sup> Franz, 2006, p. 19f.

<sup>184</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 48

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, p. 48

companies' awareness for HRMM approach leads on the other hand to an intensified implementation of HRMM approach.<sup>186</sup> Therefore, the overall economic climate and labor market situation in Germany forces companies to gain momentum by establishing HRMM approach.<sup>187</sup>

## **2.2 Highlighting actual content's aspects of HRMM approach**

However, as not only implementation of HRMM approach and companies' awareness for this process are crucial for achieving a competitive advantage<sup>188</sup>, it can be concluded that the content of HRMM approach is salient. Herewith, this content needs to become dominating if organizations have to cope with similar situations on the labor market.<sup>189</sup> The main factors of this content's outline - as it exists in reality in Germany today - will be briefly described in the following chapter.

### **2.2.1 Manpower recruitment computation and internal labor market research as starting points for HRMM considerations**

The staffing requirements of a company are determined by various internal and external factors. The company internal ones are e.g. fluctuation rate, work hours as well as absence of employees. In addition, changes of quantity of sales or production volume or methods within the organization play a decisive role. Also the technological development needs to be taken into account as it influences the design of production conditions.<sup>190</sup> Therefore, manpower recruitment computation is essential to every company and influences not only human resource management and its processes but lots of other company processes as well (e.g. production processes).<sup>191</sup> There are several reasons for this: the existence of the just mentioned multiple factors, the scarcity in many segments of the labor market, the high cost of personnel shortages and bad investments as well as the relatively lengthy adjustment of the production factor labor.<sup>192</sup> Manpower recruitment computation forms the basis for processes of HRMM approach adjusted to company needs.

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<sup>186</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 48

<sup>187</sup> Krohmer, Homburg, & Workman, 2002, p. 451f.

<sup>188</sup> Weis, 2007, p. 13

<sup>189</sup> Oechsler, 2006, p. 24f.

<sup>190</sup> Harris & Ogbonna, 2001, p. 267

<sup>191</sup> This is justified by the fact that the type and extent of provision of personnel are defined by the production program and the level of operational activity in the single functional divisions. Vice versa the scope of operation in the various divisions is qualitatively and quantitatively influenced by the staff provided (Kossbiel, 1975, p. 1626f.).

<sup>192</sup> Oechsler, 2006, p. 24f.

The usefulness and scope of manpower recruitment computation has increased over the decades, given the increasing size and demands of organizations. Increased competition and a general need to minimize cost have spurred growth in the areas of research linked to manpower planning. Advances in various areas of mathematics have contributed to the ability to deal with the manpower recruitment computation problem more effectively.<sup>193</sup> Large companies consider manpower planning one of their central concerns and have invested large amounts of capital in dealing with the problem.<sup>194</sup>

The aim of manpower recruitment computation is to determine the human capital needed for the realization of the planned production and performance program of the company. HRMM approach is seen as an organizational process which outputs and results are defined as intangible resources (e.g. required employee's skills) for the organization. Hereby the core question is: how many employees (quantitative) with which qualification (qualitative) does the company need in which places (regionally) and at what time (temporarily).<sup>195</sup>

Manpower planning problems can be understood as optimization problems.<sup>196</sup> A paper by Edwards<sup>197</sup> surveyed the manpower recruitment computation models at the time which deal with employment policy, assignment of workers to specific tasks, predicting the future demand for and supply of manpower. In some cases labor supply and demand forecasting problems are treated as inputs to a more central problem: the employment policy and assignment of workers.<sup>198</sup> Today data collection is widespread and there are many methods available for accurately forecasting future staff demands quantitatively<sup>199</sup> and qualitatively<sup>200</sup>.

The anticipation of necessary personnel requirements prevents cost intensive corrections of workforce and provides important information for the personnel cost planning. For this reason manpower recruitment computation is seen as an integral part of the overall company policy which reflects itself in the human resource management strategy.<sup>201</sup> Derived from this it provides a solid basis for activities of HRMM approach.

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<sup>193</sup> Wittlage, 1995, p. 46f.

<sup>194</sup> Hentze & Kammel, 2001, p. 225f.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid p. 190f.

<sup>196</sup> Edwards, 1983, p. 1031

<sup>197</sup> Ibid pp. 1031-1340

<sup>198</sup> Lee & Cai, 2001, pp. 155-175

<sup>199</sup> Regarding the quantitative manpower recruitment computation different statistical methods can be used. Possible are e.g. methods based on time series (inter- and extrapolation, trend extrapolation, regression and correlation calculation etc.) or on holistic methods (method of analogy reasoning, aggregate method and establishment planning method etc.) or methods based on quantity and time (methods according to Rosenkranz/Duschek etc.) (Wittlage, 1995, p. 46).

<sup>200</sup> The qualitative manpower recruitment computation uses job descriptions, job specifications and role profiles as planning basis. (Hentze & Kammel, 2001, pp. 225-234 and Drumm, 1995, pp. 185-203).

<sup>201</sup> Kossbiel, 1975, p. 1626

The possibility to meet the required staff need - planned by manpower recruitment computation - depends primarily on the situation on the labor market. In addition to this perspective also data on previously decided relevant labor market segments are collected in the context of establishing a basis of HRMM approach. The consolidated findings need to be integrated in the tasks of HRMM approach.<sup>202</sup>

Of particular interest are therefore details concerning the information and job search behavior of potential candidates and their way of making decisions. A crucial role for HRMM approach plays the value system of the target group on the labor market. A change of the value system leads to a change of requirements which put great demands on the employer<sup>203</sup> and affects processes of a company's human resource management. An example for this is the higher awareness of work-life-balance nowadays: previous employees did not put so much attention towards this topic. That means that in all processes of human resource management this topic needs to be addressed (e.g. by establishing flexible working time models, support home office workplaces).<sup>204</sup> Once again, an overlapping of topics within the different processes of human resource management appears.

Effective HRMM approach requires a solid knowledge of the own company image as well as the image of the competition on the labor market.<sup>205</sup> Usually appropriate information cannot be gathered by secondary research but must be determined by own data collection in form of company funded / initiated studies. In addition, competitive analysis provides data on competitors' behavior as employers and their image on the labor market. Concerning this matter for example work conditions, remuneration and work time models are of interest.<sup>206</sup>

The aim of labor market research is to recognize changes - for example with regard to offer and expectations of the relevant target groups on the labor market and their decisions for or against an employer - on time and prior to the competition. The result is that the company can respond to these changes quicker than the competition, e.g. by modifying or adding certain instruments to the mix of HRMM approach.<sup>207</sup> Therefore, results of the labor market research serve as information basis for current decisions of a company's HRMM approach and for the development of long-term strategies in the realm of human resource management.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 63f.

<sup>203</sup> Characteristic for the change in the value system is a shift in emphasis: e.g. from material to non-material and bourgeois to non-bourgeois values. This results in a growing leisure orientation as well as a rising individualism which lead to an aversion to large organizations and a decreasing reliance on technology and research result (Simon, 1995, p. 63).

<sup>204</sup> Drumm H.-J. , 2008, p. 55

<sup>205</sup> Rastetter, 1996, p. 134

<sup>206</sup> Drumm, 1995, p. 55

<sup>207</sup> Birker, 2002, p. 21

<sup>208</sup> Ibid , p. 21

## **2.2.2 Acquiring and retaining employees as main tasks of HRMM approach**

The primary task of human resource management and all processes derived from it is to secure the company's performance by providing staff. Objective is hereby - based on quantitative and qualitative manpower recruitment computation - to identify potential candidates, persuade them to apply and retain actual employees within the company.<sup>209</sup> Main secondary aims are the generation of general attention for the company as a whole and as employer, the transportation of an advantageous employer brand and the possibility of approaching suitable and interested candidates on the labor market.<sup>210</sup> Organizations have realized these managerial tasks as important for their further successful existence on the labor market and therefore the overall company's performance.

### **Employer brand and employee search as acquisition elements**

As stated in chapter 1.2., one focus of HRMM approach lies on the perception of the company's image on the labor market and the congruence of employer and employee. Crucial for that requirement is to demonstrate employees a relevant, strong and individual image of company's principle of reaching employee satisfaction and the offered employer's performance via an individual employer brand.<sup>211</sup> Hereby it is essential to know the employees' demands, the ones who provide labor on the labor market.

The employer brand is defined as the perception of a company related to the development of those properties and characteristics in which its attractiveness as a potential employer is reflected by specific target groups.<sup>212</sup> Meaning briefly that employer brand is the perception of a company by its employees. The company's image is affected by different aspects. Among other things this is the industry the organization agitates in, its products and services, but also size, location, staff, management and leadership style.<sup>213</sup> The attractiveness of an organization in form of a positive employer brand is crucial for the success of retaining and recruiting. It affects the willingness of actual employees to stay with an organization and of potential candidates to take the company into consideration as a potential employer as well as determines their choice of an application or offer. Therefore an employer brand can be seen

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<sup>209</sup> Gaugler, 2002, S. 331f.

<sup>210</sup> Bröckermann & Pepels, 2002, p. 8

<sup>211</sup> Schlabinger & Hansen, 2004, p. 62f.

<sup>212</sup> Vollmer, 1993, p. 180

<sup>213</sup> Schwan & Seipel, 1994, p. 108

as “package of functional, economical and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified by the employing company”.<sup>214</sup>

The individual organization has the opportunity to exert influence on its employer brand through the usage of various promotional activities. The aim is not to trigger concrete applications, but to create the willingness of a potential candidate to get in contact with the company or at least not to block a contact with the company.<sup>215</sup> Hereby, the company needs to represent itself in a way that meets the requirements of the target group as precisely as possible. The resulting positive influence on the employer brand improves the framework conditions for acquisition and also diminishes monetary disadvantages for the company (e.g. a negative employer brand needs to be balanced by higher wages for employees).<sup>216</sup>

An effective employer brand starts with knowing what the relevant target groups think about the company. Not the absolute employer brand of the company is crucial but its relative competitive position compared to the main competitors in the labor market. Indicators for the level of attractiveness of the company can be retrieved by image studies and labor market research as well as by the number and quality of received applications and the number of employees staying in the company after completion of their probation period<sup>217</sup>. For establishing an employer brand it is essential to know how the target group perceives the company as an employer and to gather information of how their ideal employer looks like.

The comparison of the target group-specific requirements - in form of an ideal employer brand - with the existing employer brand of the company shows strengths and weaknesses and gives the organization the ability to cope specifically with the identified vulnerabilities.<sup>218</sup> In addition, knowledge of the information behavior of the target group must exist for an effective employer brand. This behavior varies for every individual - depending if the employee is already member of the organization or on a stage of job search.<sup>219</sup>

To adjust an existing employer brand to an ideal image<sup>220</sup> a long-term and consistent usage of personal and impersonal instruments of employer branding is required. Schwan and Seipel emphasize that a conscious and consistent way of information transfer to the general

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<sup>214</sup> Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p. 187

<sup>215</sup> Süß, 1996, p. 206

<sup>216</sup> Ibid p. 206

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, p. 207

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, p. 78

<sup>219</sup> Even before a specific job search begins, individuals absorb information about companies (e.g. by media reports or friends). In the phase of active job search a precise image of the company is formed - based on the active information gathering of the individual and the influence of the already existing image of the company as an employer. In addition to the individual's own experiences and information from other groups and opinion leaders as well as public reports also actions controlled by the company concerning the establishment of an employer brand serve as sources of information for the target group.

<sup>220</sup> *Ideal* in the context of the thesis and its labor market-oriented approach means the best fit possible between offer of employer and demand of target group on the labor market.

public increases the attractiveness of a company as employer as well as its reputation on the labor market.<sup>221</sup> This is due to the fact that the change of an implemented brand is very expensive. Individuals tend to perceive information and experience which reinforce their perception of an existing image of a company more easily than totally new information. Furthermore, information and experience which disagree with the existing image of an employer on the labor market is likely to be subconsciously suppressed by the target group.<sup>222</sup> This makes obvious that an existing employer brand is not necessarily based on objective conditions but on subjective perceptions and evaluations of the target group.

The content's focus of HRMM approach is, firstly, to position the company on the labor market by an adequate, unique employer brand. In a second step it is necessary to acquire adequate employees from a pool of applicants by using appropriate employee search procedures.<sup>223</sup>

If a vacant position can or should not be filled internally staff search is expanded to the labor market.<sup>224</sup> With the help of various instruments - to obtain information about the company and the vacant position – potentially interested parties are motivated to apply with the company. For this purpose staff search instruments of HRMM mix are selected and designed in such a way that they raise attention and interest of the intended recipients (see table 2.1).<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Schwan & Seipel, 1994, p. 133

<sup>222</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 166

<sup>223</sup> Giesen, 1998, p. 92

<sup>224</sup> For further information of advantages and disadvantages of internal and external staff search see e.g. Mag, 1998, p. 86; Hentze & Kammel, 2001, p. 273f.; Schwan & Seipel, 1994, pp. 104 – 107.

<sup>225</sup> Hentze & Kammel, 2001, p. 273f.

**Table 2.1. Overview of main employee search´s instruments and their characterization**

Employee search instrument	Characterization	Possible design parameters
Social media. <sup>226</sup> (Most important media platforms: facebook, twitter, LinkedIn and Xing <sup>227</sup> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaining more and more importance in addressing employees on the labor market<sup>228</sup></li> <li>• Target group to be addressed plays major roles in the usage of social media</li> <li>• Recent studies state: especially (potential) employees born after 1980 can be addressed via social media<sup>229</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies from company to company: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some companies are pioneers in the usage of social media for retaining, recruiting and attracting staff.</li> <li>○ Other companies are just at the beginning of using this channel.<sup>230</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Content of advertisements in social media mainly to position employer on the labor market</li> <li>• Establish a well-known employer brand.</li> <li>• Concrete proposals of vacant job positions mainly not advertised.</li> </ul>
German Federal Employment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports companies in recruitment.</li> <li>• Advantage: low costs.</li> <li>• Criticism: huge bureaucracy and complexity as well as the lack of suitable jobseekers.<sup>231</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various consulting services and placement of candidates</li> </ul>
Private employment services <sup>232</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often used for finding higher skilled workers or executives</li> <li>• Additional offer: consulting services for the companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulting services: establishing job profiles, using different staffing and selection instruments, doing a preliminary selection of candidates and contractual matters.<sup>233</sup></li> </ul>

Source: Author´s creation using works of Levi, Knoblauch, Schwan & Seipel, Pesch and Rotzinger<sup>234</sup>

<sup>226</sup> Pesch, 2013, p. 34

<sup>227</sup> Ibid p. 35

<sup>228</sup> Ibid p. 52

<sup>229</sup> Levi, 2013, p. 52

<sup>230</sup> Ibid p. 54

<sup>231</sup> Rotzinger, 2004, p. 46

<sup>232</sup> Private employment services were established after 1994 as the placement monopoly of the Federal Employment Agency was abolished in Germany. For further information see Bruttel, O., 2005, p. 3f.

<sup>233</sup> Schwan & Seipel, 1994, p. 152

<sup>234</sup> Levi, 2013, p. 52f.; Knoblauch, 2002, p. 66; Schwan & Seipel, 1994, p. 152; Pesch, 2013, p. 34f.; Rotzinger, 2004, p. 46

**Table 2.1. Overview of main employee search´s instruments and their characterization**  
(*continuation*)

<b>Employee search instrument</b>	<b>Characterization</b>	<b>Possible design parameters</b>
Publication of job vacancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of most common recruiting instruments</li> <li>• Aspects of information content, visual design, choice of media and time of advertising to be determined according to target group, vacant position and corporate image.</li> <li>• Contains typically: description of the company, the position to be filled, information about the expected requirements (education, special experience and skills etc.), application procedures (information on the type of application and the required documentation)<sup>235</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usage of various sizes, colors, logos, fonts etc.</li> <li>• Media – depending on the target segment which should be addressed on the labor market: regional or national newspapers and magazines as well as university publications or the internet</li> </ul>
Recruitment done by own employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to concerns about own reputation: recommended applicants are generally only people who are really suitable for the offered, vacant position</li> <li>• Produces valid pre-selection process</li> <li>• Existing employees have relatively realistic and detailed picture of their company (company climate, leadership style etc.)</li> <li>• Provides accurate picture of vacant position to potential new employees<sup>236</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company internal programs which encourage actual employees to acquire new employees by themselves</li> </ul>
Recruiting of employees at universities and universities of applied sciences. <sup>237</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct contact with potential employees right</li> <li>• Mostly the beginning of employee´s professional career</li> <li>• Possibility to be ahead of competitors in addressing and approaching new employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures and presentations held by organizations</li> <li>• Company visits for students</li> <li>• Companies´ participations in career fairs</li> <li>• Co-operations with university chairs</li> </ul>

Source: Author´s creation using works of Levi, Knoblauch, Schwan & Seipel, Pesch and Rotzinger<sup>238</sup>

For the success of employee search it is a central factor whether the target group experiences the company as an attractive and relevant employer. According to the different requirements on an employer, human resource management and its marketing approach

<sup>235</sup> Knoblauch, 2002, p. 63

<sup>236</sup> Rastetter, 1996, p. 127

<sup>237</sup> Knoblauch, 2002, p. 66

<sup>238</sup> Levi, 2013, p. 52f.; Knoblauch, 2002, p. 66; Schwan & Seipel, 1994, p. 152; Pesch, 2013, p. 34f.; Rotzinger, 2004, p. 46

provides different offers for different target groups.<sup>239</sup> This aims on the congruence of the offered position with the demands of the employee target group. In this connection, actual content's aspects of retaining employees support the employee search for a requested target group and are displayed in the following.

### **Staff management, remuneration and personnel development as retaining elements**

In the HRMM approach special attention is paid to the tasks concerning retaining of employees. Hereby the managerial efforts of the organization play a crucial role.<sup>240</sup> Thus, staff management, remuneration and personnel development are the main content's components of HRMM approach which lay in the company's direct scope of responsibility.<sup>241</sup> They constitute the framework conditions within an organization as well as the employment itself which retains an employee with his or her employer.<sup>242</sup>

In the framework of performance processes within the company, management of staff is responsible for influencing employees' behavior to ensure the organizations' productive aims.<sup>243</sup> Hereby, the concept of HRMM approach contributes by three factors: motivation of employees to perform adequately and remain a member of the company, the integration of employees within the company itself and other company's processes as well as the improvement of concordant target and contract fulfillment via organizational commitment.<sup>244</sup> In principle, staff management arises the question to what extend employees are willing and able to support company's aims and reach the contractual agreements of the working contract. HRMM approach communicates expectations towards the employees' behavior, which include also expectations concerning employees' cooperation and solidarity with the company.

Furthermore, special attention is paid to the task of remuneration as equalization for companies expectations towards employees.<sup>245</sup> Other human resource management tasks cannot totally compensate the level of remuneration's attraction to employees.<sup>246</sup> Sometimes employees have minimum wage requirements. Offers below that minimum wage are not

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<sup>239</sup> Collins & Stevens, 2002, p. 1122

<sup>240</sup> These managerial efforts can be part of other human resource management functions and processes as well. Once again, the difficulty in separating HRMM approach as individual management field next to its superstructure of human resource management is visible.

<sup>241</sup> Link, 2004, p. 29

<sup>242</sup> Oechsler, 2006, p. 28

<sup>243</sup> Ibid p. 353

<sup>244</sup> For further information and a detailed description of the three factors see works of Oechsler (Oechsler, 2006, p. 340f.), Berthel and Becker (Berthel & Becker, 2007, p. 21ff.) and Legge (Legge, 2005, p. 13f.)

<sup>245</sup> Oechsler, 2006, p. 383f.

<sup>246</sup> Simon, 1995, p. 141

accepted by employees.<sup>247</sup> An inadequate remuneration can therefore lead to an increased propensity to switch employer.

Human resource management itself defines hereby the structure in which HRMM approach can contribute to an adequate remuneration. It introduces the different company's remuneration parts like salary, wage, bonus etc. Besides, human resource management defines employees' benefits related to remuneration like for example adequate supply in case of illness or disability. Furthermore, extended benefits like company car, assistance for children care etc. are established by a company's human resource management function. Once again, it is made obvious that HRMM approach is hence a sub-function of human resource management as its aim is to define a fair remuneration based on the human resource management's definitions. Employees can rely on a labor market conform compensation of their qualifications. The confidence towards the employer's organization is increased.<sup>248</sup> Finally, defining remuneration within the HRMM approach can display the company's performance orientation (e.g. a high share of variable remuneration depending on the employee's and / or company's performance). This leads to a self-selection of employees as only those employees apply for a position with such a remuneration package that are especially willing to perform.<sup>249</sup>

It is interesting that - in addition to human resource management and its marketing approach - also other company functions contribute to remuneration and an employee's perception about it. Sales marketing and public relations for example establish processes which promote the company's remuneration strategy and components. Information technology and finance functions ensure a precise, on-time payment of the defined remuneration. However, even if these company functions need to interact with each other, only human resource management and its marketing approach have the task and responsibility to define the remuneration package of a company.

In the context of personnel development the employer aims preferentially at increasing the employees' quality by trainings and education possibilities as well as the facilitation of

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<sup>247</sup> Wiltinger, 1997, p. 67

<sup>248</sup> Tuschke, 2002, p. 46f.

<sup>249</sup> Remuneration's importance for employees can originate from different reasons (Teufer, 1999, p. 149): On the one hand it can be an indicator for employees displaying the job position's importance for the employer. On the other hand the height of the offered remuneration signals prestige and status. Hofmeyer-Zlotnik (Hofmeyer-Zlotnik, 2003, p. 125f.) defines job position and its remuneration as prestige. It is the most important indicator for the definition of a person's social status. Prestige and status can be influenced not only by remuneration but with the HRMM approach itself. The symbolic character of an organization – which is influenced and formed by the company's HRMM approach – conveys content of importance to the social environment. Employees use this as one possible expression to position themselves within different social groups and levels. (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994, p. 248f.)

career and succession planning.<sup>250</sup> To arise from the promotion of the employee's career the company's need regarding qualified employees is secured.

On employee's side personnel development is linked on the one hand with the increase of professional or personal qualification. On the other hand it is linked with the possibility of a hierarchical rise within or without the employer's organization.<sup>251</sup> Here the importance of personnel development as one task of HRMM approach is depicted. Without personnel development possibilities employees tend to leave their employer.<sup>252</sup> This generates increasing efforts within the realm of other tasks of human resource management and its marketing approach.

The preceding tasks of HRMM approach (employer brand, employee search, staff management, remuneration and personnel development) aim on a positive impact on employees' decisions for or against an employer and a positive positioning of the employer on the labor market. What all instruments have in common is that they can be used in multiple combinations of the individual measures. Among the various instruments the most appropriate ones have to be identified, combined, coordinated and adapted to the respective target group on the labor market. Hereby synergies are created and the chance of a long-term effect is increased.<sup>253</sup>

### **2.3 Modeling the relationship between HRMM approach and employee satisfaction**

Looking at reality in Germany – as displayed in chapters 2.1. and 2.2. - it becomes clear that organizations tend to spend time, money and efforts to implement HRMM approach. They have understood that acquiring and retaining employees is of crucial importance for their further existence.<sup>254</sup> As a consequence, companies' HRMM approach as managerial process is gaining momentum.

However, what existing approaches are missing is considering why companies reach different performance levels - even if all of them apply HRMM approach within the same labor

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<sup>250</sup> Stock-Homburg, 2008, p. 153f.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid p. 155f.

<sup>252</sup> In the context of personnel development, one function of HRMM approach is to communicate, how the employer can accommodate its development measures with personal and professional development aims of employees. Value propositions within the realm of HRMM approach reflect the positive employer's attitude towards employees' development needs. Thus, a public commitment of the employer towards personnel development is displayed. This commitment is perceived by employees and leads to an increased performance of the employer's HRMM approach. (Stock-Homburg, 2008, p. 153f.; Oechsler, 2006, p. 478f.)

<sup>253</sup> Scholz, 2000, p. 420

<sup>254</sup> Prasetya & Kato, 2011, p. 147f.

market conditions and the same content's factors. These considerations outline the need for a new discussion of HRMM approach.

In this discussion, some aspects of Thom's definition are taken into account.<sup>255</sup> Thom defines HRMM approach as an approach needed for promoting and positioning the company on the labor market. Retention of employees is reached by using an adequate combination of HRMM mix. This view is supported as it combines the two-tier (internal and external) managerial perspective of HRMM approach and therefore puts the focus on its managerial orientation. This is in contrast to another commonly applied definition given by Schlabinger and Hansen. They state recruitment of employees - by simply promoting the employer on the labor market - as primary and single objective of HRMM approach.<sup>256</sup> However, solemnly promoting an employer on the labor market seems not sufficiently contributing to fulfill the different aims of HRMM approach. Here, Gaugler<sup>257</sup> adds a second aspect to the above mentioned definition. He puts the reach of a competitive advantage for the employer in the focus of HRMM approach. However, what Gaugler's definition is missing is a hint how to reach this competitive advantage. This absence of linking HRMM approach and a competitive advantage justifies the thesis' contribution to research. How this can be done is depicted in a definition stated by Scholz. He defines company strategy as direction sign for HRMM approach.<sup>258</sup> This definition points out that HRMM approach should not be carried out for its own sake but should be linked with a higher ranking system. Here Scholz's definition is aligned with other researchers such as Lado and Wilson, Pfeffer, Becker and Gerhart. They point out that a strict alignment of HRMM approach to a strategic superstructure adds positive contributions to the overall success of the company.<sup>259</sup> This idea is taken into further consideration, however its focus is put on employee satisfaction, not on company strategy. As argued in chapter 1.3. employee satisfaction contributes significantly to company's performance. Against this background, generating employee satisfaction by the application of HRMM approach is highly relevant for managerial contest.

Derived from these considerations a linkage of the managerial approach of HRMM with employee satisfaction is argued for and adds value to the research community.

Considering other researchers' definitions as outlined above, a new definition of HRMM approach is given:

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<sup>255</sup> Thom, 2001, p. 117f.

<sup>256</sup> Schlabinger & Hansen, 2004, p. 62f.

<sup>257</sup> Gaugler, 2002, p. 327f.

<sup>258</sup> Scholz, 2000, p. 417

<sup>259</sup> Lado & Wilson, 1994, p. 699f.; Pfeffer, 1994, p. 36f.; Becker & Gerhart, 1996, p. 1779f.; Delaney & Huselid, 1996, p. 949f.; Youndt & al., 1996, p. 838f.; Harris & Ogbonna, 2001, p.157f.

*The human resource management's marketing approach – one sub-function of human resource management - is an approach aspiring entrance and retention of employees at the employer's organization by aiming on an increase of company's performance through satisfying employees' needs and demands.*

Hereby HRMM approach contributes entirely intentionally to all structures, tools and measures of human resource management which have an influence on the retaining of employees and the employer's position on the labor market.

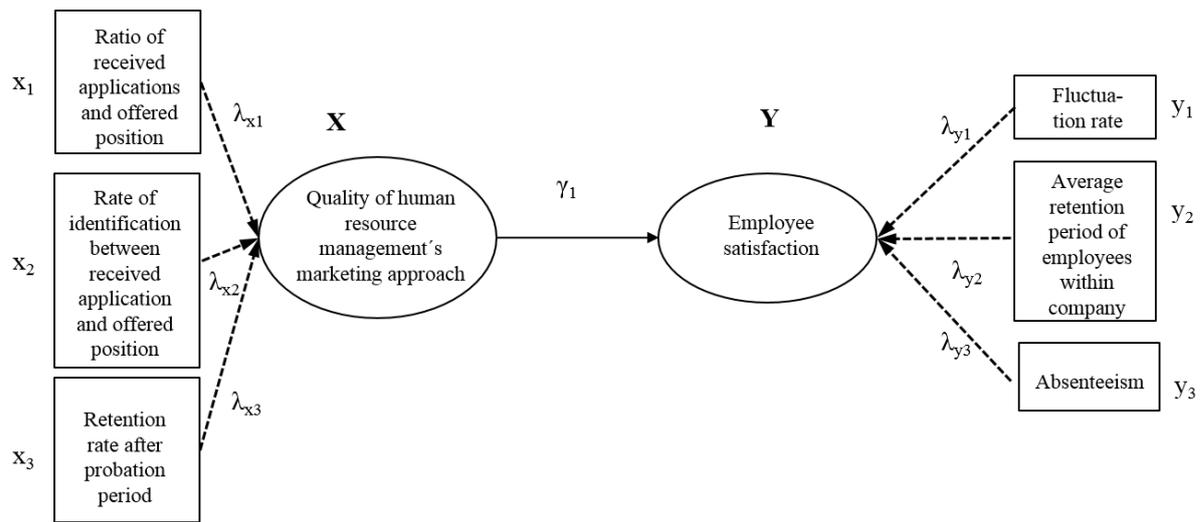
The purpose of the theoretical framework of the thesis is to provide a basis for probation in research and therefore for transformation into reality. The developed idea of the relationship between HRMM approach and employee satisfaction as stated in the definition above is such a basis which needs to be tested empirically. To circumstantiate this idea, the causal modeling is used.

Causal models are representatives of causal-effect-relations of the real world. Normally they are presented as graphics that define relevant actions leading to a given fact.<sup>260</sup> The causal analysis researches the influence of latent exogenous variables onto latent endogenous variables (causal model) as well as the relationship between these two variables and their indicators. Concluding from the literature review, existing theories and reality two causal models are developed. The two models have been chosen to enable a bilateral evaluation of the impact of HRMM approach on employee satisfaction.

The first model (see figure 2.5.) depicts the companies' view on the influence of HRMM approach on employee satisfaction. The second model (see figure 2.6.) substantiates this perspective with the employees' perception.

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<sup>260</sup> Homburg & Pflesser, 2000, p. 633f.

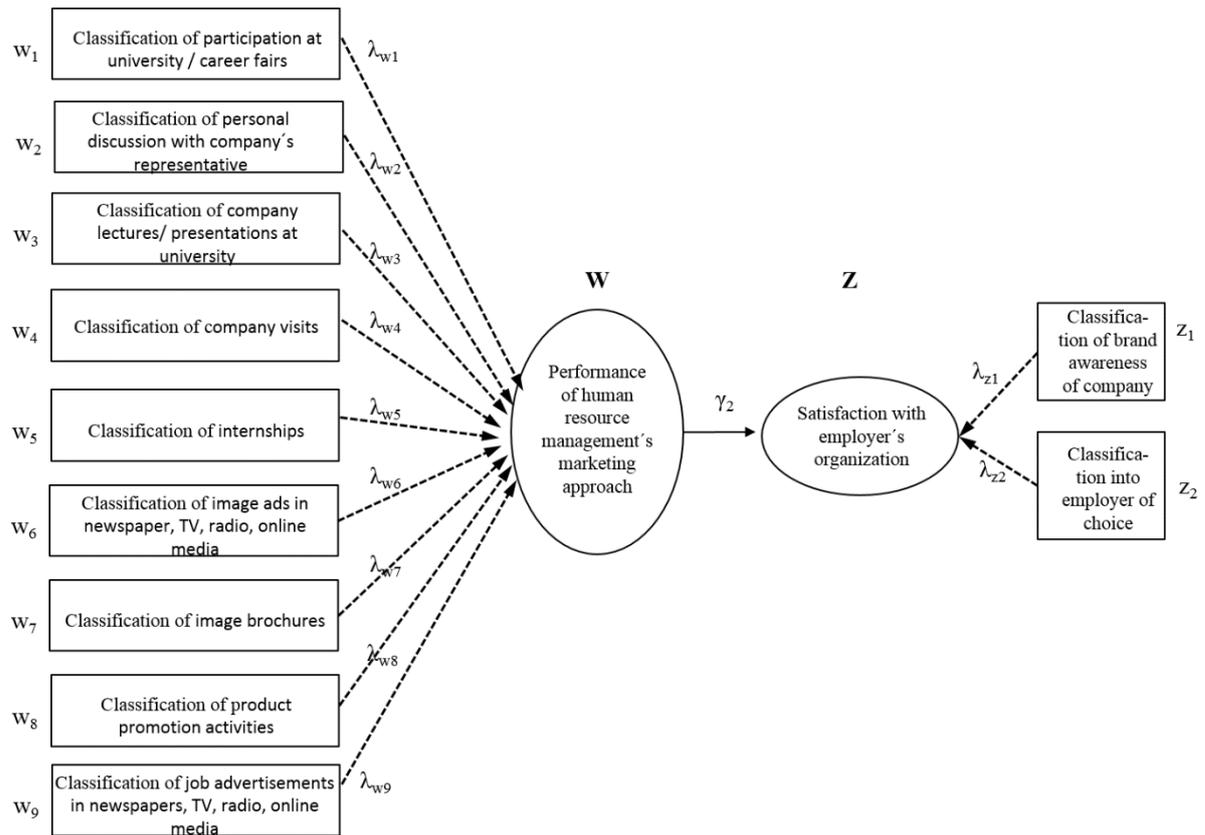


**Figure 2.5. Causal model between the quality of HRMM approach and employee-satisfaction (Model no. 1)**

Source: Author's creation

The first model (see figure 2.5) depicts a relationship between the independent structural variable *Quality of HRMM approach* ( $X$ ) and the dependent structural variable *Employee satisfaction* ( $Y$ ) - displayed via the arrow  $\gamma_1$ . The independent structural variable *Quality of HRMM approach* ( $X$ ) is described by the indicators *Ratio of received applications and offered positions* ( $x_1$ ), *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* ( $x_2$ ) and *Retention rate after probation period* ( $x_3$ ). The arrows  $\lambda_{x1}$ ,  $\lambda_{x2}$ ,  $\lambda_{x3}$  display hereby the descriptions of the single indicators ( $x_1$ ,  $x_2$ ,  $x_3$ ) for the structural variable *Quality of HRMM approach* ( $X$ ). The dependent structural variable *Employee satisfaction* ( $Y$ ) is described by the indicators *Fluctuation rate* ( $y_1$ ), *Average retention period of employees within company* ( $y_2$ ) and *Absenteeism* ( $y_3$ ) - displayed via the arrows  $\lambda_{y1}$ ,  $\lambda_{y2}$ ,  $\lambda_{y3}$ .

In the second model (see figure 2.6.), the relationship between the independent structural variable *Performance of HRMM approach* ( $W$ ) and the dependent structural variable *Satisfaction with employer organization* ( $Z$ ) - displayed via the arrow  $\gamma_2$  - is depicted.



**Figure 2.6. Causal model between the performance of HRMM approach and satisfaction with employer organization (Model no. 2)**

Source: Author's creation

As displayed in figure 2.6. the independent structural variable *Performance of HRMM approach* (W) is described by the nine indicators *Classification of participation at university / career fairs* ( $w_1$ ), *Classification of personal discussion with company's representatives* ( $w_2$ ), *Classification of company lectures / presentations at university* ( $w_3$ ), *Classification of company visits* ( $w_4$ ), *Classification of internships* ( $w_5$ ), *Classification of image advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio, online media* ( $w_6$ ), *Classification of image brochures* ( $w_7$ ), *Classification of product promotion activities* ( $w_8$ ) and *Classification of job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio, online media* ( $w_9$ ). The arrows  $\lambda_{w1}$ ,  $\lambda_{w2}$ ,  $\lambda_{w3}$ ,  $\lambda_{w4}$ ,  $\lambda_{w5}$ ,  $\lambda_{w6}$ ,  $\lambda_{w7}$ ,  $\lambda_{w8}$  and  $\lambda_{w9}$  display hereby the descriptions of the single indicators ( $w_1$ ,  $w_2$ ,  $w_3$ ,  $w_4$ ,  $w_5$ ,  $w_6$ ,  $w_7$ ,  $w_8$ ,  $w_9$ ) for the structural variable *Performance of HRMM approach* (W). The dependent structural variable *Satisfaction with employer organization* (Z) is described by the indicators *Classification of brand awareness of company* ( $z_1$ ) and *Classification into employer of choice* ( $z_2$ ) - displayed via the arrows  $\lambda_{z1}$  and  $\lambda_{z2}$ .

Hereby, both causal models propose an impact of HRMM approach towards employee satisfaction.

Besides the structural variables and their indicators also a grouping variable exists which is not displayed in the two models. This grouping variable is called *Different employee groups* and might disclose differentiations in the empirical investigation. It represents different stakeholders within an organization. It is possible that there are differences concerning the indicators depending on different employee groups. For example, the fluctuation rate of employees who have just entered an organization and their professional career - like juniors - might be lower than the rate of employees who stay already in one company for a longer period during their professional life. To minimize respectively discover this effect the grouping variable has been introduced which separates the indicators' results into the four employee groups of trainees, assistants, juniors and all other employees<sup>261</sup>. These employee groups can be found in every company and are therefore chosen. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the possibility of measurement errors in the models – though these are not focused on any further.<sup>262263</sup>

In the following, the characterization and operationalisation of the variables as used in the causal models and their respective indicators are explained in detail.

## **2.4 Characterization of variables and indicators for describing HRMM approach and employee satisfaction**

The results of an empirical research are dependent on the choice of variables and indicators. Hereby the chosen variables and indicators need to fulfil three quality criteria applying to all empirical researches conducted: objectivity, reliability and validity.<sup>264</sup> The objectivity is given because the whole research procedure is described in detail further below and the used methods as well as the participating probands are exactly defined. A replication of the whole research is therefore possible and intersubjective confirmability is given. Replicability of the results under the same research conditions is expected to exist. The answers of the probands as well as the empirical research procedure are journalized. It is expected that the research results can be reproduced by other independent researchers. The formal accuracy of the empirical research is therefore given. Concerning the quality criteria of validity only questions have been asked which lead to an explicit result as required for answering the postulated cause-effect-relations.

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<sup>261</sup> Other employees in this context means that the employees do not belong to the group of trainees, assistants and / or juniors, however work at a company at any level, position, department and / or functional area.

<sup>262</sup> Brühl & Buch, 2005, p. 34f.

<sup>263</sup> For a more detailed information about disturbing factors, measurement errors and their influences see Borg & Staufenbiel, 1989, p. 45.

<sup>264</sup> Neuert, 2009, p. 135

### **2.4.1 Determination of latent exogenous variable *Quality of HRMM approach* (X) and latent endogenous variable *Employee satisfaction* (Y)**

To understand the background and reasoning why particular variables and special indicators have been chosen it is important to look at other researches already conducted: starting with researches concerning human resource management's marketing and continuing with researches concerning employee satisfaction.<sup>265</sup> Even if these studies do not cover the same context and conceptualization they give hints which variables and indicators are the most suitable to use in the thesis' context.

As values to describe a company's HRMM approach its quality and performance are used. These two variables (variables X and W) are chosen to a mainly common understanding in literature. For example Dietmann, Bleis and Staffelbach point out that quality and performance are values to classify the overall constitution of a company's HRMM approach.<sup>266</sup> This possibility to portray HRMM approach is also used in other researches like Seiwert's and Thom's.<sup>267</sup> As literature proposes quite consentaneously these values to depict HRMM approach *Quality* (X) and *Performance of HRMM approach* (W) are used as independent structural variables.

The quality of HRMM approach has been object to a lot of previous research studies. Some studies concerning this object display a high number of applications as quality indicator for HRMM approach.<sup>268</sup> Scholz<sup>269</sup> adds that not only this single indicator can be used but the number of received applications for one position must be considered as well. After all only the connection between the number of received applications and offered positions can indicate whether a company's HRMM approach is of high-quality. Ulrich<sup>270</sup> proposes a number of quality indicators like acceptance per offer ratio, number of applicants contacted compared with those reporting for job interviews, average tenure of employees, performance of hired applicants (e.g. performance of candidates from different schools, types of experience etc.) to name just a few out of his more than 70 proposed quality indicators. Other researchers add in their studies even more indicators to this already long list. For example Cutcher-Gershenfeld<sup>271</sup> depicts quality of received applications and their fitting to the offered position as one possible

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<sup>265</sup> Examples for other researches can be found at e.g. Davies, 2008, p. 667; Simon, 1995, pp. 16, 150; Knox & Freeman, 2006, p. 695f.; Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser jr, & Schlessinger, 1994, p. 164f.; Thom, 2001, p. 126f.; Schmalen & Pechtl, 2006, p. 248f

<sup>266</sup> Dietmann, 1993, p. 108f.; Bleis, 1992, p. 10f.; Staffelbach, 1995, p. 144f

<sup>267</sup> Seiwert, 1985, p. 351f.; Thom, 2001, p. 72f.

<sup>268</sup> Moser, 1993, p. 2f.

<sup>269</sup> Scholz, 1999, p. 97f.

<sup>270</sup> Ulrich, 1997, p. 303f.

<sup>271</sup> Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 1991, p. 241f.

indicator. Studies conducted by Terpstra and Rozell<sup>272</sup> as well as Bormann<sup>273</sup> suggest to emphasize the staffing situation – expressed e.g. by number of received applications, their quality, the time to fill a position etc. - and the retention of employees after the entrance into the company at Ulrich´s indicators´ list. They classify these indicators as investments of various human resource management processes and important quality criteria for the marketing approach within these human resource management processes. In the context of the theoretical framework and to establish a dealable amount of quality indicators three indicators have been chosen for the empirical study out of the indicators proposed and used by other researchers:

- *Ratio of received application and offered positions* ( $x_1$ )
- *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* ( $x_2$ ) and
- *Retention rate after probation period* ( $x_3$ ).

These indicators combine on the one hand quantitative quality criteria (*Ratio of received application and offered positions* ( $x_1$ ) and *Retention rate after probation period* ( $x_3$ )) with a qualitative quality criteria (*Rate of identification between received application and offered position* ( $x_2$ )). Therefore, they depict an integrative, empirical measurable view on the concept of HRMM approach.

Concerning the operationalization of employee satisfaction, a research provided by Robbins<sup>274</sup> states that employee dissatisfaction expresses itself by a high fluctuation rate, attempts to actively voice negative opinions (e.g. in dialogs with managers, trade unions), low job performance, high absenteeism rates and lateness. Lambert and Camp<sup>275</sup> propose high absenteeism, low performance, low retention as well as low motivation as indicators for employee dissatisfaction. Another study conducted by Whitehead<sup>276</sup> add burn-out to this itemisation of employee dissatisfaction. What all researches have in common is that employee dissatisfaction leads to negative consequences for the employer´s organization.

Based on these previous studies the following three indicators have been chosen:

- *Fluctuation rate* ( $y_1$ ),
- *Average retention period of employees within a company* ( $y_2$ ) and
- *Absenteeism* ( $y_3$ ).

The thesis integrates indicators already used in research and therefore proven as relevant to investigate on the issue of employee satisfaction. Hereby it is important to understand that

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<sup>272</sup> Terpstra & Rozell, 1993, p. 27f.

<sup>273</sup> Bormann, 1991, p. 271f.

<sup>274</sup> Robbins, 1991, p. 20f.

<sup>275</sup> Lambert, 2005, p. 165f.

<sup>276</sup> Whitehead, 1989, p. 34f.

employee satisfaction is the opposite of employee dissatisfaction. Thus, the algebraic sign of the (expected) correlation of the variables need to be switched compared to the previous studies.

The constraint to three indicators for each variable reduces on the one hand complexity and enables on the other hand a well-founded picture of the quality of HRMM approach and employee satisfaction. An overview of how the used research leading questions are allocated to the indicators and integrated in the research method is given in the following (see table 2.2.).

**Table 2.2. Operationalisation of the latent exogenous and endogenous variable via questions used in the self-assessment for companies' representatives including used scale**

Indicator	Description <sup>277</sup>	Research leading questions in the self-assessment for companies	Scale applied
x <sub>1</sub>	Ratio of received applications and offered positions: $\frac{\text{received applications}}{\text{offered position}}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of received applications</li> <li>• Number of offered positions</li> </ul>	Metric
x <sub>2</sub>	Rate of identification between received application and offered position:  Rate of identification (in %)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of received applications compared to offered job profile in %</li> </ul>	Metric
x <sub>3</sub>	Retention rate after probation period: $\frac{\text{number of employees staying after probation period}}{\text{number of offered positions occupied}} \times 100\%$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of offered positions occupied</li> <li>• Number of employees staying in company after the end of probation period</li> </ul>	Metric

Source: Author's creation using works of Drumm, Davies, Simon, Knox & Freeman, Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser jr, & Schlessinger<sup>278</sup>

<sup>277</sup> The formula used for the calculation of the indicators x<sub>1</sub>, x<sub>2</sub> and x<sub>3</sub> are withdrawn from Drumm (Drumm H., 2008, p. 220f.) and adopted analogously.

<sup>278</sup> Drumm, 2008, p. 220f.; Davies, 2008, p. 667; Simon, 1995, pp. 16, 150; Knox & Freeman, 2006, p. 695f.; Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser jr, & Schlessinger, 1994, p. 164f.;

**Table 2.2. Operationalisation of the latent exogenous and endogenous variable via questions used in the self-assessment for companies' representatives including used scale (continuation)**

Indicator	Description <sup>279</sup>	Research leading questions in the self-assessment for companies	Scale applied
y <sub>1</sub>	Fluctuation rate (company external fluctuation rate):  $\frac{\text{Fluctuation}}{\text{number of employees}} \times 100 \%$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of employees</li> <li>• Number of employees leaving the company</li> </ul>	Metric
y <sub>2</sub>	Retention period of employees within company:  Average retention period (in years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention period in years of employees</li> </ul>	Metric
y <sub>3</sub>	Absenteeism days:  Average absenteeism days (per year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absenteeism days</li> </ul>	Metric

Source: Author's creation using works of Drumm, Davies, Simon, Knox & Freeman, Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser jr, & Schlessinger<sup>280</sup>

The indicators for the independent structural variable *Quality of HRMM approach (X)* and the dependent variable *Employee satisfaction (Y)* are measured using four respectively five different research leading questions in the companies' self-assessment as stated in table 2.3. The chosen scalings for the questions are all metric.

#### **2.4.2 Determination of latent exogenous variable *Performance of HRMM approach (W)* and *Satisfaction with employer's organization (Z)***

Also the indicators for describing the performance of HRMM approach and the employees' satisfaction with the employers' organizations are chosen according to the theoretical framework as well as already conducted research.

On second thoughts the assumption may arise that every employee has an individual set of indicators relevant for the evaluation of his or her satisfaction with an employer. Such individual criteria might lead to the negative consequence that empirical results are hard to compare. However, other research has shown that prognoses concerning the perception of satisfaction towards an employer based on individual criteria do not deliver better results than

<sup>279</sup> The formula and measurement methods used for the calculation of the indicators y<sub>1</sub>, y<sub>2</sub> and y<sub>3</sub> are withdrawn from Drumm (Drumm H., 2008, p. 220f. and 328f.) and are adopted analogously.

<sup>280</sup> Drumm, 2008, p. 220f.; Davies, 2008, p. 667; Simon, 1995, pp. 16, 150; Knox & Freeman, 2006, p. 695f.; Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser jr, & Schlessinger, 1994, p. 164f.;

prognoses based on standardized indicators.<sup>281</sup> Dichtl and Müller<sup>282</sup> state that standardization is necessary concerning the evaluation of satisfaction with an employer. Otherwise all characteristics of an employer are judged as relevant by employees. Trommsdorff even indicates that using a lesser amount of indicators is more effective in generating a measurable assessment.<sup>283</sup> However, what needs to be heard in mind is that standardized indicators can be relevant and dominant for one group due to special reasons but not for broad public.<sup>284</sup>

A research conducted by Shet<sup>285</sup> provides a high degree of a company's brand awareness on the labor market, the classification of an employer as employer of choice and a high classification of the company's image on the labor market as indicators for the satisfaction with an employer. Also Barrow and Mosley define those indicators, which express the employer's individual characterization on the labor market as the most relevant ones for employees to perceive satisfaction.<sup>286</sup> Another study conducted by Gilly and Wolfingbarger adds the individually perceived value of an employer for an employee to the listed indicators.<sup>287</sup> Furthermore, Essig, Soulas de Russel and Semanakova indicate brand awareness and classification into employer of choice as two of the most important items for employees to decide for or against an employer on the labor market.<sup>288</sup>

Based on these previous studies – and therefore proven as relevant to evaluate employees' satisfaction towards an employing organization - the two indicators *Classification of brand awareness* ( $z_1$ ) and *Classification into employer of choice* ( $z_2$ ) are chosen. They reflect on the one hand Trommsdorff's request for a lesser amount of indicators and on the other hand integrate the most relevant indicators applied by other researchers.

Different authors state that the performance of HRMM approach is displayed by the application of different instruments of the mix of HRMM approach.<sup>289</sup> Homburg and Krohmer<sup>290</sup> indicate in a study that the application of a set of different instruments of the HRMM approach - especially within the communication and product politics - are relevant to classify an organization's HRMM approach. Another study conducted by Gilly and Wolfingbarger<sup>291</sup> provides all activities of a company taken into account to communicate and get in contact with employees as indicating the performance of HRMM approach.

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<sup>281</sup> Hackmann & Anderson, 1968, p. 55f.

<sup>282</sup> Dichtl & Müller, 1986, p. 233

<sup>283</sup> Trommsdorff, 1975, p. 100f.

<sup>284</sup> Müller-Hagedorn, 1986, p. 137

<sup>285</sup> Shet, 1973, p. 37f.

<sup>286</sup> Barrow & Mosley, 2006, p. 147f.

<sup>287</sup> Gilly & Wolfingbarger, 1998, p. 76f.

<sup>288</sup> Trommsdorff, 2002, p. 149; Essig, Soulas de Russel, & Semanakova, 2003, p. 29

<sup>289</sup> Bröckermann & Pepels, 2002, p. 101f.; Simon, 1995, p. 16f.

<sup>290</sup> Homburg & Krohmer, 2006, p. 1254

<sup>291</sup> Gilly & Wolfingbarger, 1998, p. 74

To reduce complexity, nine different instruments have been selected out of the pool of possible indicators suggested by other researchers, which are commonly known and applied in German companies<sup>292</sup>.

- *Classification of participation at university / career fairs* ( $w_1$ ),
- *Classification of personal discussion with company's representatives* ( $w_2$ ),
- *Classification of company lectures / presentations at university* ( $w_3$ ),
- *Classification of company visits* ( $w_4$ ),
- *Classification of internships* ( $w_5$ ),
- *Classification of image advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio, online media* ( $w_6$ ),
- *Classification of image brochures* ( $w_7$ ),
- *Classification of product promotion activities* ( $w_8$ )
- and *Classification of job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio, online media* ( $w_9$ ).

Hereby the amount of nine indicators was chosen on the one hand to get a precise performance's picture. On the other hand this amount of indicators still remains measurable. Based on these considerations, an overview of the applied indicators is listed in table 2.3.

**Table 2.3. Operationalisation of the latent exogenous and endogenous variable via questions used in the assessment by others (employees) including used scale**

Indicator	Description	Research leading questions in the assessment for others (employees):	Scale applied
$w_1$	Classification of companies' participation at university / career fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation at university and / or career fairs</li> </ul>	Ordinal
$w_2$	Classification of personal discussion possibilities with a company's representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal discussion possibilities with a company's representative</li> </ul>	Ordinal
$w_3$	Classification of company lectures / presentations at university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company lectures and / or presentations at university</li> </ul>	Ordinal
$w_4$	Classification of possibilities of company visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibilities of company visits</li> </ul>	Ordinal
$w_5$	Classification of internship possibilities within a company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internship possibilities within a company</li> </ul>	Ordinal

Source: Author's creation using work of Trommsdorff, Essig, Soulas de Russel, & Semanakova and Zimmermann<sup>293</sup>

<sup>292</sup> Zimmermann, 2014, p. 62

<sup>293</sup> Trommsdorff, 2002, p. 149; Essig, Soulas de Russel, & Semanakova, 2003, p. 29, Zimmermann, 2014, p. 62

**Table 2.3. Operationalisation of the latent exogenous and endogenous variable via questions used in the assessment by others (employees) including used scale (continuation)**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Research leading questions in the assessment for others (employees):</b>	<b>Scale applied</b>
<b>w<sub>6</sub></b>	Classification of a company's image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio, online media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company's image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media</li> </ul>	Ordinal
<b>w<sub>7</sub></b>	Classification of a company's image brochure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company's image brochure</li> </ul>	Ordinal
<b>w<sub>8</sub></b>	Classification of a company's product promotion activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company's product promotion activities</li> </ul>	Ordinal
<b>w<sub>9</sub></b>	Classification of a company's job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio, online media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company's job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or online media</li> </ul>	Ordinal
<b>z<sub>1</sub></b>	Classification of brand awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer known on labor market</li> </ul>	Ordinal
<b>z<sub>2</sub></b>	Classification into employer of choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer's classification into employer of choice</li> </ul>	Ordinal

Source: Author's creation using work of Trommsdorff, Essig, Soulas de Russel, & Semanakova and Zimmermann<sup>294</sup>

Ordinal scales are used for all questions displaying the latent exogenous variable *Performance of human resource marketing (W)* and the latent endogenous variable *Satisfaction with employer's organization (Z)*. All the questions apply a 6-ary Likert scale<sup>295</sup> with the grading from "very good" to "very poor". The 6-ary scale is chosen due to the fact that no centre point exists.<sup>296</sup> Hereby it is implied that the distances between each single steps (e.g. between "very good" and "good" as well as "poor" and "very poor") are the same. Normally statistical procedures can only be applied if the scaling is metric. Nevertheless the data retrieved using ordinal scales are treated like data achieved by metric scales<sup>297</sup> - as the distance between the single steps onto the scale are considered almost the same in the conception of the proband.<sup>298</sup>

<sup>294</sup> Trommsdorff, 2002, p. 149; Essig, Soulas de Russel, & Semanakova, 2003, p. 29, Zimmermann, 2014, p. 62

<sup>295</sup> Berekoven, Eckert, & Ellenrieder, 1993, p. 77f.

<sup>296</sup> Trommsdorff, 1975, p. 93

<sup>297</sup> Kallmann, 1979, p. 39

<sup>298</sup> Kroeber-Riel, 1992, p. 5f.

## **2.5 Elaboration of hypothesis, theses to defend and propositions concerning the impact of HRMM approach**

Cause-effect relations are the basis of theories and need to meet certain criteria: information degree, intersubjective verifiability and general validation.<sup>299</sup> Hence, it is common understanding that hypotheses in the context of management science cannot be proved / dismissed in general as it is possible in e.g. natural sciences.<sup>300</sup> As HRMM approach is part of management science of human resources the hypothesis, theses to defend and propositions stated in this thesis are therefore only valid until proven right or wrong by another following research.

Hypotheses state a specific assumption. Hereby the assumed direction of the causal relation is of crucial importance. The contingency must be defined from cause to effect. That means only a change in cause leads to a change in effect and not vice-versa. The goal of this thesis is to examine what effects HRMM approach has on specific aspects. In this context the assumption is that HRMM approach is the effect leading to some causes. This is reflected in the flow charts of the causal models as already described.

The first step in generating hypotheses is to define which variables need to be taken into consideration and to assume which relations between the different variables exist. Afterwards the hypotheses themselves can be derived.

After the deduction and description of the latent variables and their respective indicators based on existing theory, the hypothesis, theses to defend and propositions are depicted. The postulated hypothesis and theses to defend of this dissertation are statements about the relationships between the latent exogenous (independent) and latent endogenous (dependent) variables in the causal models.

The hypothesis and theses to defend are concerned with the relationship between organizations' HRMM approach and employees' satisfaction. Special attention is paid to the relation between quality and performance of a company's HRMM approach and its impact on employees' perception about their employer's organization.

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<sup>299</sup> Neuert, 2009, p. 175f.

<sup>300</sup> Examples for such general valid theories are Einstein's general theory of relativity, Kepler's laws of planetary motion, Newton's general theory of gravity etc.

The hypothesis to defend is stated as follows:

*The higher the quality and performance of a company's HRMM approach is, the higher is the employees' perception about their employer's organization as well as the overall employees' satisfaction in terms of a high retention period, a low fluctuation rate and a low absenteeism at a company.*

In addition to the research hypothesis, five theses to defend are deduced from the discussed theoretical framework and developed causal models:

Thesis 1: The higher the quality of HRMM approach in terms of a high ratio of received applications to offered positions, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

Thesis 2: The higher the quality of HRMM approach in terms of a high rate of identification between received application and offered position, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

Thesis 3: The higher the quality of HRMM approach in terms of a high retention rate after probation period, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

Thesis 4: The higher the performance of HRMM approach in terms of a high classification of an instrument of the HRMM approach, the higher is the classification of company brand awareness on the labor market.

Thesis 5: The higher the performance of HRMM approach in terms of a high classification of an instrument of the HRMM approach, the higher is the classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market.

To support the basis hypothesis and the five theses to defend, several propositions are elaborated.

For the first causal model the propositions are considering the quality of the company's HRMM approach and its influence on employee satisfaction. Thus, the propositions suggest relationships between indicators describing the quality of an organization's HRMM approach with indicators describing the employees' satisfaction with their employer's organization. The elaborated propositions are shown in the following table (table 2.4.).

**Table 2.4. Propositions concerning the quality of the company’s HRMM approach and its influence on employee satisfaction**

	...the fluctuation rate within the company.	...the average retention period of employees within the company.	...the absenteeism within the company.
The <b>higher</b> the ratio of received applications to offered positions...	the lower is...	the higher is...	the lower is...
The <b>higher</b> the rate of identification between all received applications and the offered position...	the lower is...	the higher is...	the lower is...
The <b>higher</b> the employees’ retention rate after probation period...	the lower is...	the higher is...	the lower is...

Source: Author’s creation

Concerning the second causal model the propositions are considering the company’s performance of HRMM approach and its influence on the employees’ satisfaction with the employers’ organizations. Relationships between the single indicators depicting the performance of a company’s HRMM approach with indicators describing the employees’ perception about their employer’s organization are shown.

The propositions taken are hereby displayed in the following table (table 2.5.).

**Table 2.5. Propositions concerning the performance of the company’s HRMM approach and its impact on employees’ satisfaction with their employers’ organizations**

	...the classification of the company’s brand awareness on the labor market.	...the classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market.
The <b>higher</b> the classification of a company’s participation at university and / or career fairs...	the higher is...	the higher is...
The <b>higher</b> the classification of a personal discussion with a company’s representative...	the higher is...	the higher is...
The <b>higher</b> the classification of company lectures and / or presentations at university...	the higher is...	the higher is...

Source: Author’s creation

**Table 2.5. Propositions concerning the performance of the company’s HRMM approach and its impact on employees’ satisfaction with their employers’ organizations**  
(*continuation*)

	...the classification of the company’s brand awareness on the labor market.	...the classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market.
The <b>higher</b> the classification of possible company visits...	the higher is...	the higher is...
The <b>higher</b> the classification of internship offers within a company...	the higher is...	the higher is...
The <b>higher</b> the classification of company’s image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media...	the higher is...	the higher is...
The <b>higher</b> the classification of company’s image brochures...	the higher is...	the higher is...
The <b>higher</b> the classification of company’s product promotion activities...	the higher is...	the higher is...
The <b>higher</b> the classification of company’s job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or online media...	the higher is...	the higher is...

Source: Author’s creation

The chapter has proposed two causal models that link HRMM approach and employee satisfaction in a two-tier perspective. The variables have been defined and the assumed relationships among the variables have been advanced. All variables have been operationalized by indicators to allow for testing the predictions against experience. The postulated causal models, hypothesis, theses to defend and propositions build the framework for the empirical study and can be considered as an organizing framework for the determination of the empirical research design and data collection procedures.

### **3 EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT'S MARKETING APPROACH ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND THE INTERPRETATION OF ITS RESULTS**

The task of an empirical investigation is to examine whether the hypothesis and cause-effect-relations postulated in the causal models are valid. Aim of the research is to demonstrate whether the application of HRMM approach has an impact on employee satisfaction. The confrontation of the causal models with real life data aims to get indications of the empirical acceptability of the impacts of HRMM approach. Hereby the two-tier view by a self-assessment and an assessment by others gives hints whether the companies judge their HRMM approach and its impact on employee satisfaction adequately compared to employees' view or whether discrepancies within the two-tier inspection arise.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the empirical design and research methods applied for the testing of the causal models, hypothesis and propositions suggested in the previous chapter. Furthermore, the chapter reports on the results of the data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research objective and methodology of the empirical investigation**

As science-theoretical basis for the empirical investigation the ideas of Carl Popper<sup>301</sup>, the *Critical Rationalism*, are used. Hereby the causal models act as a rational reconstruction of the actual practice by applying the given theoretical framework.<sup>302</sup> If an adequate correlation between the variables exists, the models argue for the plausibility of postulated hypotheses. If it is inadequate, the tenability of such hypotheses is rejected.

Besides the causal modelling also triangulation is used as research strategy. Hereby data sets of different sources are used within the empirical investigation to balance possible bias.<sup>303</sup> On the one hand company data - as one possible data source - are depicted, on the other hand data received from employees are used. In addition, research results are exposed to critical discussion with human resource management's professionals in a final step. Furthermore,

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<sup>301</sup> Mayer, 2002, p. 15

<sup>302</sup> Ibid p. 15

<sup>303</sup> Brown J. , 2001, p. 228

different indicators are applied for describing the same construct.<sup>304</sup> Also here triangulation – within one research method - is applied.

An empirical investigation about HRMM approach and its influences on employee satisfaction needs to meet the requirements of a certain perspective. This perspective needs to express companies' representatives' views (self-assessment) as well as employees' view (assessment by others). In addition, it needs to reflect the theoretical framework about HRMM approach in practice.

With regard to the research objective a quantitative empirical research is conducted. Hereby the survey was chosen as one possible research method<sup>305</sup> as it allows to reach the broadest comparability as well as a most possible structuring of the data sets can be reached.<sup>306</sup> The survey was documented via two different structured questionnaires. On the one hand companies' representatives' have been questioned (self-assessment), on the other hand employees out of these organizations have been interviewed (assessment by others).

The development of both questionnaires has been closely linked to the conceptual part of the thesis. Due to that integrative procedure a systematic linkage of the theoretical, conceptual basic principles with the empirical research is reached. The questionnaire for companies' representatives (self-assessment)<sup>307</sup> consists of a brief introduction including the reason for the survey, target group, confirmation of anonymity, estimated handling time, contact details of participant and contact details of the author. The second part of the questionnaire consists of questions concerning the evaluation of the quality of a company's HRMM approach and questions concerning the evaluation of employee satisfaction. The whole questionnaire is standardized, no comments can be given.

The self-assessment questionnaire is filled in by companies' representatives – represented by human resource management professionals. Human resource management professionals have the insight and information concerning data of a company that illuminate the quality of its HRMM approach as well as employee satisfaction.

Human resource management professionals in the context of the thesis are defined as professionals working in human resource departments of organizations. Hereby no differentiation is made concerning their educational background or their individual tasks within the human resource department. The availability of these professionals is essential for an

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<sup>304</sup> Todd, 1979, p. 603

<sup>305</sup> Schnell, Hill, & Esser, 1999, p. 319

<sup>306</sup> Mayring, 2003, p. 89

<sup>307</sup> The questionnaire for companies can be found in the appendix.

effective data collection. Therefore only those companies have been involved in the empirical research and analysed in-depth that were able to provide enough valid data.<sup>308</sup>

The second questionnaire (assessment by employees)<sup>309</sup> substantiates the scientific aim with another set of quantitative data and is based on the same criteria concerning the linkage with the theoretical framework as mentioned above. It starts with a brief introduction including the same items as the companies' representatives' questionnaire, followed by questions concerning the performance of HRMM approach and the employees' satisfaction with the employers' organizations.

As explained earlier, human resource management related hypotheses can only be temporarily valid and examined. For this reason – and to ensure a precise measurement of the hypothesis – both questionnaires considered details of a two-year period (2012 and 2013). All actions that have been taken into consideration outside that time period are not evaluated.

The aim of both questionnaires' construction is a limitation in volume wherever possible. Besides, the time used to fill out the questionnaire shall be limited as much as possible to not waste the restricted time of the participants. Evans and Mathur note that it is not the number of questions that affect the response rate, but the amount of time needed to complete a survey.<sup>310</sup> The questionnaire for the companies' representatives' can be answered in approximately 20 to 25 minutes, the questionnaire for the employees can be answered in approximately five minutes.

## **3.2 Research design of the empirical study**

Following the definition of the research methodology and its science-theoretical basis is the definition of the whole research design. Hereby it is important to define which companies and employees participate in the empirical investigation and why they have been chosen. In addition, the conducting of the whole research process needs to be described to provide transparency of the executed process.

### **3.2.1 Selection and structure of participating companies and employees**

Before the description of the research process can be conducted it is - in a first step - crucial to describe the participants to establish a solid basis for the empirical investigation.

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<sup>308</sup> Valid data in this context mean enough contact persons to address as well as the utilization of their answers.

<sup>309</sup> The questionnaire for employees can be found in the appendix.

<sup>310</sup> Evans & Mathur, 2005, p. 195

The procedure to define and select participants for a certain questioning consists of the classification of the population and the following definition of the selection criteria as it is essential for every empirical research to clarify in advance to which units the research should refer to. Therefore it is necessary to distinguish the basic population. The object of the thesis are German companies. A European or even worldwide expanded investigation of the research object is economically not justifiable. As human resource management is – for the time being – nationally oriented a limitation to the area of Germany is conducted.

The necessity and priority of HRMM approach is increasing in times with restricted available labor force offer as outlined in chapter 2.1. In this situation, companies make growing endeavours to acquire and retain employees. However, some organizations are more advanced in realizing these issues and put more focus on their HRMM approach than others.<sup>311</sup> These organizations have understood that HRMM is an appropriate approach to face the problems of coping with limited labor force offer on the market and increasing labor force demand on behalf of the companies. One possibility to overcome this problem is the participation in career fairs.<sup>312</sup> Therefore all companies participating in career fairs in Germany form the population for the empirical investigation. This population consists of 2328 companies.<sup>313</sup>

A census is – due to economic reasons like time and costs – not applicable. Therefore a limitation of the investigation to some population's units takes place. Baum and Kabst<sup>314</sup> propose that companies can be certified a particular profound understanding of the necessity and priority of a HRMM approach if they attend different career fairs at least four times a year. Therefore, out of a relevant database<sup>315</sup>, which includes 56 different career fairs in Germany in 2014, four fairs<sup>316</sup> have been randomly filtered. According to the criteria of a sufficient number of career fairs' attendances, only companies attending all filtered fairs form the sample size of the investigation. Hence, the sample size is 482. At every fair companies were randomly selected to participate in the survey, so that in total 233 companies were asked to participate (master sample). However, 137 companies were not willing to respond at all and 68 companies stopped answering in the middle of the survey's process. Only 28 companies were finally willing to answer the whole questionnaire which leads to a response rate of 12,02 %. The low

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<sup>311</sup> Steinle & Thies, 2008, p. 52

<sup>312</sup> Nieschlag, R., & Hörschgen, 2002, p. 229

<sup>313</sup> The number of 2328 companies attending career fairs is derived from a non-public database of the commercial institution v. Rundstedt. This database provides all career fairs including the participating companies in Germany in 2014.

<sup>314</sup> Baum & Kabst, 2011, p. 328f

<sup>315</sup> Databases giving an overview about German career fairs can be bought at different commercial organizations. The author uses a database provided by the commercial organization v. Rundstedt.

<sup>316</sup> Career Days 2014, JobMesse Deutschland 2014, Career Venture 2014 and World MBA Tour 2014.

response rate is acknowledged<sup>317</sup> and it is emphasized that the overall conclusions cannot be generalized due to the specifics of the researched target group. However, it is pointed out that the response rate for surveys that are conducted in Germany, normally ranges between 10 – 20 %.<sup>318</sup> Even if the achieved response rate is at the lower edge of this range it represents reality concerning response rates in Germany.

As the surveyed data is in most cases company confidential the data sets of the companies have been made anonymous. However, to display the structure of the sample some company's demographic information is given in the following table 3.1.

**Table 3.1. Overview of the participating companies' financial turnover**

<b>Turnover</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>&lt; 1 million</b>	7	25,0 %
<b>&lt; 50 millions</b>	11	39,3 %
<b>&gt; 50 millions</b>	10	35,7 %

Source: Author's creation using research results

The majority of the questioned companies (39,3 % or 11 organizations) has a financial turnover of less than 50 million Euro but higher than 1 million Euro. The second group form the large companies with a financial turnover of more than 50 million Euro (35,7 % or 10 organizations) and the smallest group are the small enterprises (25,0 % or 7 companies) with a financial turnover of less than one million Euro. However, as the size of the organizations and its possible impact on the application of human resource management and its marketing approach is not part of the thesis' research aim, a deeper insight into this aspect is not given.

Another company demographic data is the companies' affiliation to an industry sector<sup>319</sup> (industrial, service and information sector)<sup>320</sup> which is depicted in the following table 3.2.

**Table 3.2. Survey of companies differentiated analogously to industry sectors: service sector, industrial sector and information sector**

<b>Industry sector</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	11	39,3
<b>Service</b>	9	32,1
<b>Information</b>	8	28,6

Source: Author's creation using research results

<sup>317</sup> For problems arising from a low response rate see de Leeuw & de Heer (de Leeuw & de Heer, 2002, p. 41f.)

<sup>318</sup> Theurl & Saxe, 2009, p. 7

<sup>319</sup> Sectors are defined analogously to Fisher (Fisher, 1935)

<sup>320</sup> The initial production (first sector) is not integrated as these companies are usually not attending career fairs. Besides, due to the general structure of organizations of the first sector, a comparison with enterprises of the second, third and fourth sector seems not applicable.

Out of the 28 interviewed organizations eleven companies are located in the industrial sector (39,3 %) followed by nine companies (32,1 %) out of the service sector. The third group is - with eight questioned companies (28,6 %) - the information sector.

Besides - as already hinted - the indicators' results in the survey can vary due to the grouping variable *Different employee groups*. Therefore the companies' representatives have been asked to split the answers in their surveys for four different employee groups (trainees, assistants, juniors and other employees). This leads to the fact that in total 112 different cases (generated from 28 surveyed companies and their representatives' answers for four different employee groups) can be analysed. Possible differences due to the grouping variable in the indicators' results can therefore be depicted and investigated in-depth.

As already mentioned an assessment by others (employee survey) is conducted to provide a second data set on the research subject. Also here the random sampling is used: randomly selected 336 employees of the 28 questioned companies have been asked to participate in the empirical investigation. The number of employees completing the whole questionnaire is 259, accounting for a response rate of 77,08%. Concerning this questionnaire also here the data sets are anonym, as for the conducted research it is not essential which employees in detail with name, surname, job title etc. have been interviewed.

To get an impression of the participating employees some demographic information is given in the following. However, as these differentiations are not part of the research or subject of the thesis no further investigation is applied.

The average age of the participating employees is 28,2 years with a median of 27 years. Their age is between 23 and 42 years.<sup>321</sup> Hereby a range of 19 years in total is covered. Concerning the sex of the 259 participating employees 125 employees are male (48,3 %), 134 are female (51,7 %).

In addition, the sample can be clustered due to the affiliation of employees to the particular industry sector their company operates in. An overview in which industry sector the interviewed employees work in is given in the following table 3.3.

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<sup>321</sup> As can be seen no employees younger than 23 and / or older than 43 years have been interviewed. However, there was no restriction in age for answering the questionnaire. The reasons for this age distribution were not examined in the research.

**Table 3.3. Statistical data of the number of interviewed employees: split into the three industry sectors the employees' employer is located in**

Industry sector	Frequency	Percent
<b>Industrial</b>	101	39,0
<b>Service</b>	81	31,3
<b>Information</b>	77	29,7

Source: Author's creation using research results

These numbers reflect the questioned companies' distribution to the three industry sectors. Analogous to the interviewed companies' representatives also here the biggest group of employees works in the industrial sector (39,0 % or 101 interviewed employees), followed by employees within the service sector (31,3 % or 81 interviewed employees) and the information sector (29,7 % or 77 interviewed employees).

Another - for the research important - fact is the interviewed employees' distribution due to the grouping variable *Different employee groups*.<sup>322</sup>

**Table 3.4. Statistical data of participating employees differentiated analogous to different employee groups: trainee, junior, assistant, other employees**

Employee group	Frequency	Percent
<b>Trainee</b>	54	20,8
<b>Junior</b>	83	32,0
<b>Assistant</b>	78	30,1
<b>Other employee</b>	44	17,0

Source: Author's creation using research results

As displayed in table 3.4. the biggest number of interviewed persons are the juniors. In this employee group 83 persons (32,0 %) have been questioned. Following the number of employees who work as juniors in a company are the assistants with 78 conducted interviews (30,1 %) and the trainees where 54 persons (20,8 %) have been questioned. The group of the other employees form the smallest sample group within the survey. In total 44 other employees (17,0 %) have been interviewed.

Hereby six to twelve employees have been randomly questioned per company. Within the companies zero to five employees per each single employee group have been interviewed.

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<sup>322</sup> As can be seen roughly 50 % of the surveyed employees belong to the two employee groups *Trainee* and *Junior*. This does not represent reality in German companies, where only 15 - 20 % of the whole staff belong to these two employee groups (Zimmermann, 2014, p. 34f.). However, there was no restriction in employee group distribution for answering the questionnaire. The reasons for this distribution were not examined in the research.

### 3.2.2 Applied procedure for conducting the empirical research

Different authors<sup>323</sup> point out the necessity that a chosen research method needs to be subjected to a pre-test, even if the author is personally present to clear ambiguities and to interact with the interview partners.<sup>324</sup> Against the background of the pre-test's importance both questionnaires have undergone a pre-test phase. In the course of this pre-test the questionnaire for companies' representatives has been given to managers in human resource departments of organizations which did finally not participate in the interviews. This pre-test has been conducted to ensure understandability, completeness and unambiguousness of the questionnaire. The result has been a shift of the questions' order, adaptations in the questions' formulations and a large-scale shortening of the questions in total.

The second pre-test has been conducted for the employees' questionnaire. Hereby employees from different companies have been asked to participate in the pre-test-phase. Also here all the employees worked for organizations which have finally not participated in the research. Analogously to the questionnaire for companies' representatives also here understandability, completeness and unambiguousness of the questionnaire have been tested. Concerning the employees' questionnaire the result has been a shift in the questions' order, some layout modifications and shortening of the questionnaire.

Following the pre-test phase is the empirical research itself. For the data gathering career fairs have been personally attended between January and March 2014. The questionnaires for companies' human resource management professionals were distributed to the master sample of 233 companies' representatives. The representatives of organizations (human resource management professionals) were personally invited to participate in the survey. In a second step, 336 employees out of these organizations were invited to participate in the survey. Also here the employees' questionnaire was personally distributed to the participants at the career fairs from January to March 2014.

Limitation of this procedure is that only employees are interviewed who have been personally present at the career fairs. How these employees have been chosen by their organizations to participate in the fairs is not evaluated. Therefore, this pre-selection can lead to bias of the results. However, this possible pre-selection of probands is not of crucial importance for the aspired research aim which is to consider typical situations within organizations. The probands still fulfill the required relevance and applicability for the empirical investigation as their answers reflect typical situations within organizations.

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<sup>323</sup> Friedrichs, 1990, p. 245; Mayer, 2002, p. 97

<sup>324</sup> Zikmund, 2003, p. 201

The results of the surveys are evaluated by a statistical computer program (SPSS).

### **3.3 Results' interpretation of the empirical research**

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the results of the empirical research. As a first step, the descriptive results of the surveys are provided giving an overview of the distribution of indicators (minimum, maximum, mean). Secondly, the results are assessed by a Shapiro-Wilk-test to receive information about the samples' distribution. In a third step, the causal-models' constructs are assessed through correlation analysis (Spearman's Rho) to determine the strength and direction of relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Hereby - as is suggested by Bauer<sup>325</sup> - all correlations  $r > 0,5$  are considered to be strongly related / strongly significant. Correlations between  $r = 0,3$  and  $r = 0,5$  are considered to be related / significant. All correlations  $r < 0,3$  are considered to be not related / not significant.

Finally, an analysis of differences due to the grouping variable *Different employee groups* (Kruskal-Wallis Test) is conducted. In line with empirical convention an alpha level of 0,05 and confidence interval of 95,0 % (unless otherwise noted) are set to determine the significance of the statistical tests.

#### **3.3.1 Descriptive results of the companies' representatives' self-assessment and assessment by others**

At the beginning of the evaluation descriptive results are provided to get a first impression of the conducted research. Firstly, the indicators investigated via the companies' representative' survey are displayed, followed in a second step by the results of the assessment by others. The following overview displays minimum, maximum and mean (see table 3.5.) of the three indicators *Ratio of received applications to offered position* ( $x_1$ ), *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* ( $x_2$ ) and *Retention rate after probation period* ( $x_3$ ) received via the companies' representatives' self-assessment.

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<sup>325</sup> (Bauer F., 1984, p. 167)

**Table 3.5. Descriptive results for the latent exogenous variable's indicators in the years 2012 and 2013**

Indicator	2012			2013		
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
<i>Ratio of received applications to offered position (x<sub>1</sub>)</i>	12	41	27,04	10	43	25,60
<i>Rate of identification between received application and offered position (x<sub>2</sub>)</i>	55%	100%	79,58%	55%	100%	79,51%
<i>Retention rate after probation period (x<sub>3</sub>)</i>	75%	100%	93,60%	72 %	100 %	92,54%

Source: Author's creation using research results

For the indicator *Ratio of received applications to offered position (x<sub>1</sub>)* the minimum and maximum display that there is an obvious discrepancy between companies. Some organizations are performing well with a ratio's maximum of 41 in the year 2012 and of 43 in the year 2013. Other companies have still room for improvement with a minimum ratio of 12 received applications per offered position for the year 2012 and ten received applications per offered position for the year 2013. The mean in 2012 is a ratio of 27 applications per offered positions compared to a ratio of 26 received applications per offered positions in 2013. Concerning the indicator *Rate of identification between received application and offered position (x<sub>2</sub>)* this diversified picture manifests. Also here organizations are performing on different levels. Some companies receive applications very well fitting to their offered positions (maximum rate of 100 % in the years 2012 and 2013.). Some companies' representatives state that only half of the received applications fit to their offered positions (minimum rate of 55 %). Hereby, room for improvement exists by comparing this value to the mean of 80 % in both years. The mean itself indicates a good overall companies' performance level. The last indicator *Retention rate after probation period (x<sub>3</sub>)* shows that in some companies only 75% of the new employees stay with their employer after the end of the probation period (minimum of 75 % in the year 2012 and 72 % in the year 2013). However, in other companies 100% of the new employees stay with their employer (maximum of 100 % for both years) after the ending of their probation period. Also here the different organizations' performance levels are obvious.

Secondly, descriptive results are provided for the three indicators depicting the variable *Employee satisfaction (Y)* in the companies' assessment (see table 3.6).

**Table 3.6. Descriptive statistics for the latent endogenous variable's indicators in the years 2012 and 2013**

Indicator	2012			2013		
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
<i>Fluctuation rate (y<sub>1</sub>)</i>	2	18	6,99	2	19	7,55
<i>Average retention period within the company (y<sub>2</sub>)</i>	3	20	9,70	3	21	9,78
<i>Absenteeism (y<sub>3</sub>)</i>	3	21	10,65	2	21	11,28

Source: Author's creation using research results

Looking at the three indicators, it becomes clear that also here companies have reached different performance levels. The first indicator *Fluctuation rate (y<sub>1</sub>)* depicts a minimum of 2 % in both years 2012 and 2013, reflecting a very low fluctuation rate of employees. However, a maximum of 18 % in 2012 to 19 % in 2013 reflects a fluctuation rate more than 10 % above the average (mean: 6,99 % in the year 2012 and 7,55 % in the year 2013). In some companies, employees stay only three years with their employer (*Average retention period within the company (y<sub>2</sub>)*: minimum of three years in 2012 and 2013). Compared to this, a maximum retention period of 20 years in 2012 and 21 years in 2013 is very high. The minimum of the third indicator *Absenteeism (y<sub>3</sub>)* is three days in the year 2012 and two days in 2013, indicating a very low absenteeism within an organization. However, some companies are facing problems concerning their employees' absenteeism with a maximum of 21 days in both years compared to the overall companies' mean of eleven days in 2012 and 2013.

Following, descriptive investigation is also conducted for the indicators of the variable *Performance of HRMM approach (W)*, extracted from the assessment by others (see table 3.7.).

**Table 3.7. Descriptive results for the latent exogenous variable's indicators**

Indicator	2012			2013		
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
<i>Participation at university / career fairs (w<sub>1</sub>)</i>	1,0	3,0	1,40	1,0	4,0	1,54
<i>Personal discussion with company's representatives (w<sub>2</sub>)</i>	1,0	5,0	2,18	1,0	5,0	2,32
<i>Company lectures at universities (w<sub>3</sub>)</i>	1,0	5,0	2,26	1,0	5,0	2,40
<i>Company visits (w<sub>4</sub>)</i>	2,0	5,0	3,38	2,0	6,0	3,52
<i>Internships (w<sub>5</sub>)</i>	1,0	4,0	1,66	1,0	4,0	1,79
<i>Image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radios and / or online media (w<sub>6</sub>)</i>	3,0	6,0	4,90	3,0	6,0	4,96
<i>Image brochures (w<sub>7</sub>)</i>	4,0	6,0	5,19	4,0	6,0	5,27
<i>Product promotion activities (w<sub>8</sub>)</i>	4,0	6,0	5,39	4,0	6,0	5,44
<i>Job advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media (w<sub>9</sub>)</i>	1,0	4,0	1,99	1,0	5,0	2,13

Source: Author's creation using research results

Apparently is that employees differently perceive the importance of instruments of their employer's HRMM approach. This is displayed in the diversified answers. Some employees judge the instruments as very good or good (indicated by the minimum of 1,0 or 2,0), while other employees judge the same instruments as poor or even very poor (indicated by the maximum of 5,0 or 6,0). Data analysis shows that the indicators *Participation at university / career fairs (w<sub>1</sub>)* (mean 2012: 1,40 and mean 2013: 1,54), the indicator *Internships (w<sub>5</sub>)* (mean 2012: 1,66 and mean 2013: 1,79) and the indicator *Job advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media (w<sub>9</sub>)* (mean 2012: 1,99 and mean 2013: 2,13) are the instruments being rated as "very good" or "good" within companies' HHRM performance. The indicators *Image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radios and / or online media (w<sub>6</sub>)* (mean 2012: 4,90 and mean 2013: 4,96), *Image brochures (w<sub>7</sub>)* (mean 2012: 5,19 and mean 2013: 5,27) and *Product*

*promotion activities* ( $w_8$ ) (mean 2012: 5,39 and mean 2013: 5,44) are the instruments rated as being “very poor” or “poor” concerning companies’ HHRM performance.

After examining the descriptive results for the performance of HRMM approach in a second step the indicators describing employees’ satisfaction with their employer organization are evaluated. Hereby the results show a more homogenous picture (see table 3.8.).

**Table 3.8. Descriptive statistics for the latent endogenous variable’s indicators**

Indicator	2012			2013		
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
<i>Classification of brand awareness</i> ( $z_1$ )	1,0	5,0	1,64	1,0	4,0	1,78
<i>Classification into employer of choice</i> ( $z_2$ )	1,0	3,0	1,60	1,0	4,0	1,74

Source: Author’s creation using research results

The surveyed employees judge both indicators *Classification of brand awareness* ( $z_1$ ) and *Classification into employer of choice* ( $z_2$ ) in average as good (mean  $z_1$  in 2012: 1,64 and mean in 2013: 1,78; mean  $z_2$  in 2012: 1,60 and mean in 2013: 1,74). However, the single answers vary from very good (minimum  $z_1$  and  $z_2$ : 1,0) to poor (maximum  $z_1$  in 2012: 5,0).

### 3.3.2 Test of postulated cause-effect relationships

However, only evaluating descriptive results does not mandatorily lead to a deeper insight into the survey’s results. Therefore, further investigations are necessary. In a first step, all indicators have been tested via the Shapiro-Wilk-Test. Hereby it is documented whether the indicators are normally distributed or not in order to decide for the usage of further statistical tests. The Shapiro-Wilk-Test test was run for all indicators.<sup>326</sup> An example for this test’s result concerning the distribution for the *Ratio of received applications and offered positions* in the year 2012 is given in the table 3.9

**Table 3.9. Shapiro-Wilk-Test calculation: result for kind of distribution concerning the *Ratio of received applications and offered positions* ( $x_1$ ) in 2012**

Calculated Shapiro-Wilk significance: $p_{calc}$	0,000
Accepted level of significance: $p_{set}$	0,050

Note: Confidence interval: 95,0 %;  $p < 0,05$ : statistically significant

Source: Author’s creation using research results

The result of the Shapiro-Wilk-Test shows that no normal distribution exists concerning the indicator *Ratio of received applications and offered positions* ( $x_1$ ) for the year 2012. The

<sup>326</sup> All other test results of the Shapiro-Wilk-Test can be found in the appendix.

calculated value of  $p$  ( $p_{\text{calc}} = 0,000$ ) is less than the accepted and set significance level ( $p_{\text{set}} = 0,05$ ). For all other indicators' Shapiro-Wilk-Tests the results are the same: the calculated significance's value is always less than the accepted significance level's value of  $p_{\text{set}} = 0,05$  and no normal distribution exists. Therefore, all following statistical tests are run for non-normal distribution.

Of utmost interest is an investigation of correlations between the different variables' indicators to examine to what extent the postulated hypothesis, the theses to defend and the propositions can be accepted. Correlation coefficients were calculated using the non-parametric test Spearman's Rho.

The results of the statistical test - derived from the companies' representatives' assessment - provide support for the hypothesis:

The higher the quality and performance of a company's HRMM approach is, the higher is the employees' perception about their employer's organization as well as the overall employees' satisfaction in terms of a high retention period, a low fluctuation rate and a low absenteeism at a company.

An overview of the results of companies' representatives' assessment of Spearman's correlations' calculation is given in the following table 3.10. Hereby – as already stated - the significance of the correlations is considered according to Bauer<sup>327</sup>. The algebraic sign of the correlation coefficient indicates the direction of association while the absolute value reveals its strength.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Bauer F., 1984, p. 167: All correlations  $r > 0,5$  are considered to be strongly related / strongly significant. Correlations between  $r = 0,3$  and  $r = 0,5$  are considered to be related / significant. All correlations  $r < 0,3$  are considered to be not related / not significant.

<sup>328</sup> Brosius, 2008, p. 527

**Table 3.10. Relationship between the quality of HRMM approach and employee satisfaction (Spearman's Rho) – derived from companies' representatives' assessment for the years 2012 and 2013**

Indicators in 2012 / 2013	<i>Fluctuation rate (y<sub>1</sub>)</i>		<i>Retention period (y<sub>2</sub>)</i>		<i>Absenteeism (y<sub>3</sub>)</i>	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
<i>Ratio of received applications to offered positions (x<sub>1</sub>)</i>	r = -0,97	r = -0,96	r = +0,96	r = +0,89	r = -0,47	r = -0,58
<i>Rate of identification between received application and offered position (x<sub>2</sub>)</i>	r = -0,45	r = -0,50	r = +0,48	r = +0,50	r = -0,95	r = -0,84
<i>Retention rate after probation period (x<sub>3</sub>)</i>	r = -0,78	r = -0,83	r = +0,76	r = + 0,70	r = -0,32	r = -0,46

Note: All correlations are significant at the 0,01 level.

Source: Author's creation using research results

As is shown in the table above, not only the postulated hypothesis can be accepted. The Spearman's Rho also provides support for all nine propositions postulated by the first causal model. The highest relation ( $r = -0,97$  in 2012 and  $r = -0,96$  in 2013) exists between the *Ratio of received applications to offered positions (x<sub>1</sub>)* and the *Fluctuation rate (y<sub>1</sub>)* within a company. In addition, the *Retention period (y<sub>2</sub>)* of employees within an enterprise is also strongly related to the ratio of received applications to offered positions ( $r = +0,96$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,89$  in 2013). The more applications a company receives per offered position, the lower is the fluctuation rate and the higher is the retention period of employees within this organization. In addition a negative correlation – even if it is not as strong as the ones mentioned before - also exists between the ratio and absenteeism ( $r = -0,47$  in 2012 and  $r = -0,58$  in 2013). This means that the higher the ratio between received applications and offered position is, the lower is the number of absenteeism days within an organization. The lowest relation is between *Retention rate after probation period (x<sub>3</sub>)* and *Absenteeism days (y<sub>3</sub>)* within a company ( $r = -0,32$  in 2012 and  $r = -0,46$  in 2013). Even if this correlation is the lowest of the measured indicators also here the proposition is supported that the higher the retention rate, the lower is the absenteeism within a company. The indicator *Rate of identification between received application and offered position (x<sub>2</sub>)* has the subsequent lowest impact on the indicators describing the satisfaction of employees. For the relation between the rate of identification and the fluctuation rate the

correlation coefficient is  $r = -0,45$  in 2012 and  $r = -0,50$  in 2013. For the relation with the retention period of existing employees within a company the coefficient is  $r = +0,48$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,50$  in 2013. The relation of the identification rate with the absenteeism is strongly negative ( $r = -0,95$  in 2012 and  $r = -0,84$  in 2013), indicating that a high rate of identification between application and offered position leads to lower absenteeism of employees. Concerning the retention rate of employees after their probation period and the fluctuation rate strong correlations exist ( $r = -0,78$  in 2012 and  $r = -0,83$  in 2013). The average retention period within a company increases with an increasing retention rate after the employees' probation period (correlation of  $r = +0,76$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,70$  in 2013).

Besides, the results of the statistical tests provide support for the following thesis to defend.

Thesis 1: The higher the quality of HRMM approach in terms of a high ratio of received applications to offered positions, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

The results of correlation analyses indicated strong statistically significant relationships between the following indicators:

- *Ratio of received applications to offered positions* and *Fluctuation rate* ( $r = -0,97$  for the year 2012 and  $r = -0,96$  for the year 2013)
- *Ratio of received applications to offered positions* and average *Retention period* ( $r = 0,96$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,89$  for the year 2013)
- *Ratio of received applications to offered positions* and *Absenteeism* ( $r = -0,47$  for the year 2012 and  $r = -0,58$  for the year 2013)

Looking at the test's results and the correlations between the single indicators it needs to be clear that a low fluctuation rate and low days of absenteeism indicate a high employee satisfaction. Thus, the correlation coefficients of these indicators' relations are negative. However, this is not meaning that a negative algebraic sign indicates a negative aligned correlation. On the other hand, a high average retention period contributes to a high employee satisfaction. Therefore, the correlation coefficients argue for the support of the first thesis to defend.

By looking at the second thesis to defend, also here the statistical test's results provide support.

Thesis 2: The higher the quality of HRMM approach in terms of a high rate of identification between received application and offered position, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

Concerning the second thesis to defend the correlation between the single indicators is not as strong as for the first thesis to defend. However, also here a significant relationship exists - as is shown in the following.

- *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* and *Fluctuation rate* ( $r = -0,45$  for the year 2012 and  $r = -0,50$  for the year 2013)
- *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* and average *Retention period* ( $r = 0,48$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,50$  for the year 2013)
- *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* and *Absenteeism* ( $r = -0,95$  for the year 2012 and  $r = -0,84$  for the year 2013)

Special attention needs to be paid to the algebraic sign of the correlation coefficients and its correspondence in the results' interpretation. A high *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* leads to a low *Fluctuation rate*. The higher the *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* the higher is the average *Retention period*. A high *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* leads to low *Absenteeism*. All these relationships substantiate the second theses to defend.

Also the acceptance of the third thesis to defend is supported by the statistical test's results.

Thesis 3: The higher the quality of HRMM approach in terms of a high retention rate after probation period, the higher is the employee satisfaction.

The relationship between the single indicators shows strong significance between the indicators. The higher the *Retention rate after probation period* the lower is the *Fluctuation rate*. Furthermore, the higher the *Retention rate after probation period* the higher is the average *Retention period*. The relation between the indicators *Retention rate after probation period* and *Absenteeism* is also significant, meaning the higher the employees *Retention rate after probation period* the lower is the *Absenteeism*. However, this relation is not strongly significant. The single results' correlations are as follows:

- *Retention rate* and *Fluctuation rate* ( $r = -0,78$  for the year 2012 and  $r = -0,83$  for the year 2013)
- *Retention rate* and average *Retention period* ( $r = 0,76$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,70$  for the year 2013)
- *Retention rate* and *Absenteeism* ( $r = -0,32$  for the year 2012 and  $r = -0,46$  for the year 2013)

Overall, the statistical test's results show that companies' representatives certify their organizations profound understanding of the influence of the quality of their HRMM approach

on employee satisfaction. However, a second investigation is conducted to verify whether the companies' representatives adequately judge the performance of their HRMM approach. Therefore, in the following, the hypothesis, the two remaining theses to defend and the postulated propositions are also investigated by an assessment by others.

By looking at the results of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient the hypothesis can also be approved via this second empirical research as employee satisfaction and HRMM approach was found to be related.

However, the correlation coefficients (see table 3.11.) display that an in-depth investigation of the results for single indicators must be conducted. Not all 18 postulated propositions - derived from the second causal model - can be accepted. Besides, it is obvious that employees judge the issue of HRMM approach more critically compared to their employers.

**Table 3.11. Relationship between the performance of HRMM approach and employee satisfaction (Spearman's Rho) – derived from employees' assessment for the years 2012 and 2013**

Indicators in 2012 / 2013	<i>Classification of the company's brand awareness on the labor market (z<sub>1</sub>)</i>		<i>Classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market (z<sub>2</sub>)</i>	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
<i>Classification of a company's participation at university and / or career fairs (w<sub>1</sub>)</i>	r = +0,70	r = +0,77	r = +0,57	r = +0,68
<i>Classification of a personal discussion with a company's representative (w<sub>2</sub>)</i>	r = +0,46	r = +0,56	r = +0,39	r = +0,51
<i>Classification of company lectures and / or presentations at university (w<sub>3</sub>)</i>	r = +0,46	r = +0,57	r = +0,49	r = +0,60
<i>Classification of possible company visits (w<sub>4</sub>)</i>	r = +0,35	r = +0,48	r = +0,36	r = +0,49
<i>Classification of internship offers within a company (w<sub>5</sub>)</i>	r = +0,42	r = +0,54	r = +0,43	r = +0,54

Note: All correlations are significant at the 0,01 level.

Source: Author's creation using research results

**Table 3.11. Relationship between the performance of HHRM approach and employee satisfaction (Spearman's Rho) – derived from employees' assessment for the years 2012 and 2013 (continuation)**

Indicators in 2012 / 2013	Classification of the company's brand awareness on the labor market (z <sub>1</sub> )		Classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market (z <sub>2</sub> )	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
<i>Classification of company's image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media (w<sub>6</sub>)</i>	r = +0,35**	r = +0,45**	r = +0,29**	r = +0,39**
<i>Classification of company's image brochures (w<sub>7</sub>)</i>	r = +0,07	r = +0,21**	r = +0,22**	r = +0,35**
<i>Classification of company's product promotion activities (w<sub>8</sub>)</i>	r = -0,08	r = +0,03	r = +0,08	r = +0,16*
<i>Classification of company's job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or online media (w<sub>9</sub>)</i>	r = +0,43**	r = +0,56**	r = +0,43**	r = +0,55**

Note: \*\* Correlations are significant at the 0,01 level.

\* Correlations are significant at the 0,05 level.

Source: Author's creation using research results

The results of the correlations show that hardly any relation exists between the indicators *Classification of the brand awareness of the company (z<sub>1</sub>)* and *Classification into employer of choice (z<sub>2</sub>)* and the indicators *Image advertisements in newspaper, radio, TV and / or online media (w<sub>6</sub>)* and *Image brochures (w<sub>7</sub>)*. The indicator *Product promotion activities (w<sub>8</sub>)* is not at all significantly related to the indicator *Classification of the brand awareness of the company (z<sub>1</sub>)* (correlation coefficient of r = -0,08 in 2012 and r = +0,03 in 2013) and therefore does not support the postulated proposition that the higher the classification of a company's *Product promotion activities* is, the higher is the *Classification of this company's brand awareness*. In the year 2012 the algebraic sign for this relation was even negative. In the year 2013 the sign turned into positive. However, as the proposition needs to be dismissed, this change in the algebraic sign does only play a minor role. Besides, also the proposition that the higher the classification of a company's *Product promotion activities* is, the higher is the *Classification of the company into an employer of choice (z<sub>2</sub>)* needs to be neglected. The correlation coefficient of r = +0,08 in the year 2012 and r = +0,16 in the year 2013 does not provide support for this

proposition. The indicator *Image brochures* ( $w_7$ ) is not related to *Classification of brand awareness of company* ( $z_1$ ) (correlation coefficient  $r = +0,07$  in 2012 and  $r = 0,21$  in 2013) and only slightly related to the indicator *Classification into employer of choice* ( $z_2$ ) (correlation coefficient  $r = +0,22$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,35$  in 2013). Likewise, the indicator *Image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radios and / or online media* ( $w_6$ ) is only slightly related to *Classification of brand awareness of company* ( $z_1$ ) (correlation coefficient  $r = +0,35$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,45$  in 2013) and *Classification into employer of choice* ( $z_2$ ) (correlation coefficient  $r = +0,29$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,39$  in 2013). All other indicators show a significant relation between 0,35 (correlation coefficient for *Company visits* ( $w_4$ ) with *Classification of brand awareness of company* ( $z_1$ ) in the year 2012) and 0,70 (correlation coefficient for *Participation at university / career fairs* ( $w_1$ ) with *Classification of brand awareness of company* ( $z_1$ ) in the year 2012).

Therefore, looking in detail at the taken propositions, the empirical investigation - as displayed in table 3.11. - shows proof for 15 of them. However, no proof exists for three propositions. Firstly, it must be dismissed that a higher classification of a company's image brochure leads to higher classification of the company's brand awareness (correlation coefficient  $r = +0,07$  in the year 2012 and  $r = +0,21$  in the year 2013). Secondly - as already mentioned - the proposition cannot be proven that the higher the classification of company's product promotion activities, the higher is the classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market (correlation coefficient  $r = +0,08$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,16$  in 2013). Thirdly, it must be dismissed that a higher classification of company's product promotion activities leads to higher classification of the company's brand awareness on the labor market (correlation coefficient  $r = -0,08$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,03$  in 2013). Besides, the two propositions that the higher the classification of a company's image advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or online media as well as the classification of a company's image brochures, the higher is the classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market show only a minor correlation (correlation coefficients of  $r = +0,29$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,39$  and  $r = +0,22$  in 2012 and  $r = +0,35$  in 2013).

Concerning the fourth thesis to defend, the statistical test's results argue for its partial support.

Thesis 4: The higher the performance of HRMM approach in terms of a high classification of an instrument of the HRMM approach, the higher is the classification of a company's brand awareness on the labor market.

The results of correlation analyses indicates statistically significant relationships between seven indicators. However, two indicators show no significant relation.

- *Classification of a company's participation at university / career fairs and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = 0,70$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,77$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of personal discussion with a company's representative and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = 0,46$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,56$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company lectures and / or presentations at university and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = 0,46$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,57$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company visits and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = 0,35$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,48$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of internship offers and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = 0,42$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,54$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company's image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = 0,35$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,45$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company's image brochures and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = 0,07$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,21$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company's product promotion activities and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = - 0,08$  for the year 2012 and  $r = +0,03$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company's job advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media and Classification of a company's brand awareness* ( $r = 0,43$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,56$  for the year 2013)

As shown above, the relationship between the *Classification of a company's brand awareness* with a high classifying of company's brochures as well as a high *Classification of company's product promotion activities* shows no significant relation and therefore does not support the forth thesis to defend.

Also by looking at the fifth thesis to defend the statistical test provides only partial support.

Thesis 5: The higher the performance of HRMM approach in terms of a high classification of an instrument of the HRMM approach, the higher is the classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market.

One indicators' relationship (relationship between *Classification of company's product promotion activities* ( $w_8$ ) and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $z_2$ )) shows no significant correlation and therefore does not support the fifth theses. Two relationships (relationship between *Classification of company's image brochures* ( $w_7$ ) and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $z_2$ ) and relationship between *Classification of company's image advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or online media* ( $w_6$ ) and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $z_2$ )) show only minor correlation between the indicators and therefore do not fully contribute to the support of the thesis to defend. The overall relations are as follows:

- *Classification of a company's participation at university / career fairs* and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,57$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,68$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of personal discussion with a company's representative* and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,39$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,51$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company lectures and / or presentations at university* and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,49$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,60$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company visits* and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,36$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,49$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of internship offers* and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,43$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,54$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company's image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media* and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,29$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,39$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company's image brochures* and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,22$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,35$  for the year 2013)

- *Classification of company's product promotion activities and Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,08$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,16$  for the year 2013)
- *Classification of company's job advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media and Classification of a company into an employer of choice* ( $r = 0,43$  for the year 2012 and  $r = 0,55$  for the year 2013)

Overall, the test's results display the differing degree of employees' perception concerning what kind of instruments of HRMM approach mostly contribute to HRMM approach's performance within an organization and – derived from that - the perceived employees' satisfaction. Some instruments, like the participation at career and / or university fairs, the placements of job advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media, the offering of internship possibilities within an enterprise as well as company lectures / presentations at universities are generally necessary for organizations to be an attractive employer on the labor market. Other instruments, like company visits and personal discussions with company representatives are helpful possibilities to position an employer attractively on the labor market. However, they do not play a crucial role for the attractiveness of an employer on the labor market. And some instruments of HRMM approach, like image advertisements and brochures, do not support an employee satisfying approach of an organization on the labor market.

Furthermore, HRMM approach needs to meet the requirements of the respective target group to be successful. Indicators can vary in their results due to the differentiation of this target-group. In the conducted research the target-groups were represented by four different employee groups. Looking at an optionally target-group specific approach of HRMM approach the research shows that the indicator results make a differentiation necessary in some cases. The Kruskal-Wallis Test was applied to contrast these perceived differences due to the grouping variable *Different employee groups*. In a first step, the research results of the companies' representatives' assessment are tested via the Kruskal-Wallis Test. Identified differences due to different investigated employee groups are depicted. Secondly, the test is run for the employee's assessment to illustrate whether differences due to different employee groups arise in this investigation as well.

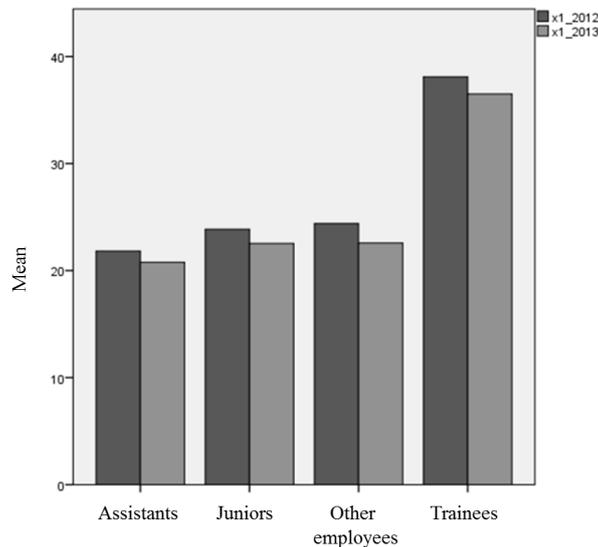
In the conducted Kruskal-Wallis Test<sup>329</sup> of the companies' representatives' assessment the significance levels of all indicators are  $p = 0,000$ . As they are smaller than the predefined accepted significance level of  $p = 0,050$ , the Kruskal-Wallis Test argues for differences due to

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<sup>329</sup> The confidence interval in the conducted Kruskal-Wallis Test is set at 95,0 %;  $p < 0,05$ : statistically significant difference between the mean ratio of employee groups.

different employee groups. By additionally investigating the means of the indicators, these differences can be depicted.

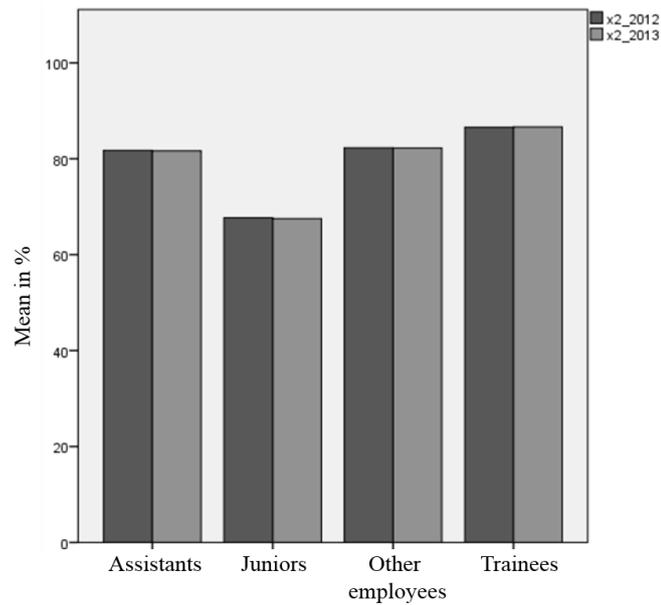
The first indicator showing such a significant difference in the investigation's results is the employee group of trainees which has a higher ratio of received applications to offered positions than the three other groups (see figure 3.1.).



**Figure 3.1. Mean of indicator *Ratio of received applications to offered positions* ( $x_1$ ) differentiated by employee groups for the years 2012 and 2013**

Source: Author's creation using research results

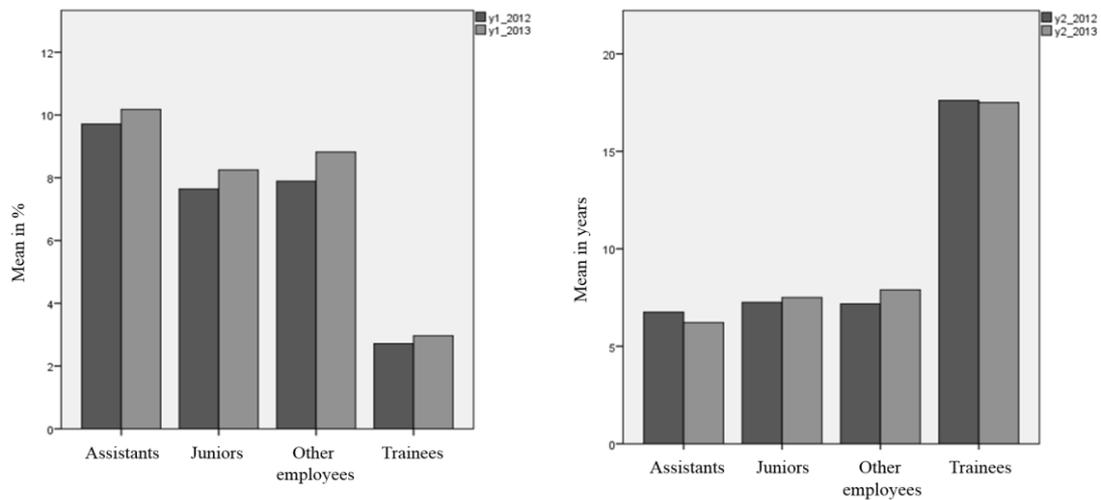
As shown in figure 3.1. the mean of *Ratio of received applications to offered positions* ( $x_1$ ) for the trainees is 38 for the years 2012 and 37 in the year 2013. All other employee groups' means display a ratio between 21 and 24 for these two years. Therefore companies need to pay special attention to the development of the ratio of received applications to offered positions for the employee groups of assistant, juniors and other employees. The ratio for the employee group *Trainees* shows that a higher performance in this indicator is possible also for other employee groups. A HRMM approach which is designed to meet the requirements of a specific target group can attract more applications and can therefore result in a higher ratio of received applications to offered positions. Of crucial importance is hereby that the rate of identification between received applications and offered positions remains in an adequate range. The mean for the employee group *Juniors* (68 % for the years 2012 and 2013) displays room for improvements concerning this indicator  $x_2$  (see figure 3.2.).



**Figure 3.2. Mean of indicator *Rate of identification between received applications and offered position* ( $x_2$ ) differentiated by employee groups in % for the years 2012 and 2013**

Source: Author's creation using research results

All other employee groups show a homogenous picture with a mean between 82 % and 87 %, equally for both years 2012 and 2013. For the employee group *Juniors* this means that the offered positions must be described more precisely on the labor market so that the received applications meet the positions' requirements. A rate of 68 % is not sufficient enough for a qualitatively high approach of HRMM. All other employee groups show that an improved approach concerning this indicator is possible. By looking at the indicator *Retention rate after probation period* ( $w_3$ ) the employee group with the highest value are the Trainees. 99% (2012 and still 98 % in 2013) stay with their employer after the ending of their probation period. Concerning the remaining three employee groups only 91 % to 94 % stay after their probation period has ended. Such a high rate for *Trainees* is remarkable as it is nearly 100 % of all investigated probands. In addition, the employee group *Trainees* shows a different picture than the other three employee groups concerning the indicator *Fluctuation rate* ( $y_1$ ) as well as the indicator *Retention period* ( $y_2$ ). The other three employee groups are mainly uniform in these two indicators (see figure 3.3.).



**Figure 3.3. Means of indicators *Fluctuation rate* (y1) in % and *Average Retention period of employees within a company* (y2) in years differentiated by employee groups for the years 2012 and 2013**

Source: Author's creation using research results

The mean of the employee group *Trainees* for the indicator *Fluctuation rate* (y1) is three percent compared to eight percent to ten percent for the other employee groups. Trainees therefore tend to change their employer less than other employees' groups. This phenomenon is also reflected in the indicator *Average retention period of employees* (y2). Here trainees stay in average 18 years, all other employee groups stay between six and eight years in one organization. This can be explained by the fact that normally a trainee position is the first full-time position for a professional. After finishing their trainee program this employee group stays in the company to take over another position. Enterprises encourage their trainees to stay within the organization as they created costs during the trainee program.<sup>330</sup> Trainee programs aim to give an overview about different departments within an organization and enable the participants to learn instead of productively gain money for the company. Besides, trainees often feel affiliated with the company they spent their trainee program with. It is not unusual that this employee group stays a long period of time with one organization before changing to another one.

Another deviation from the average is the employee group *Juniors* concerning the indicator *Absenteeism* (y3). The average days of absenteeism are eight to ten days for the years 2012 and 2013. However, juniors are 15 to 16 days absent from business. This fact might have two different reasons. On the one hand juniors belong to a generation in which work-life-balance has a high importance. When they feel not well they cure their illness at home instead

<sup>330</sup> Normally employees in trainee programs are not cost-covering employees.

of attending business. Another aspect is that their job can be very demanding and they put themselves under a lot of pressure to achieve the best possible results for their organization. Due to that constant pressure days of absenteeism can rise. However, the single reasons for the higher days of juniors' absenteeism have not been evaluated and leave way for further research.

To supply the research with another set of data, the Kruskal-Wallis Test is also conducted on the results for the employees investigation. Possible differences due to the grouping variable *Different employee groups* (see table 3.12.) can be depicted and further investigated.

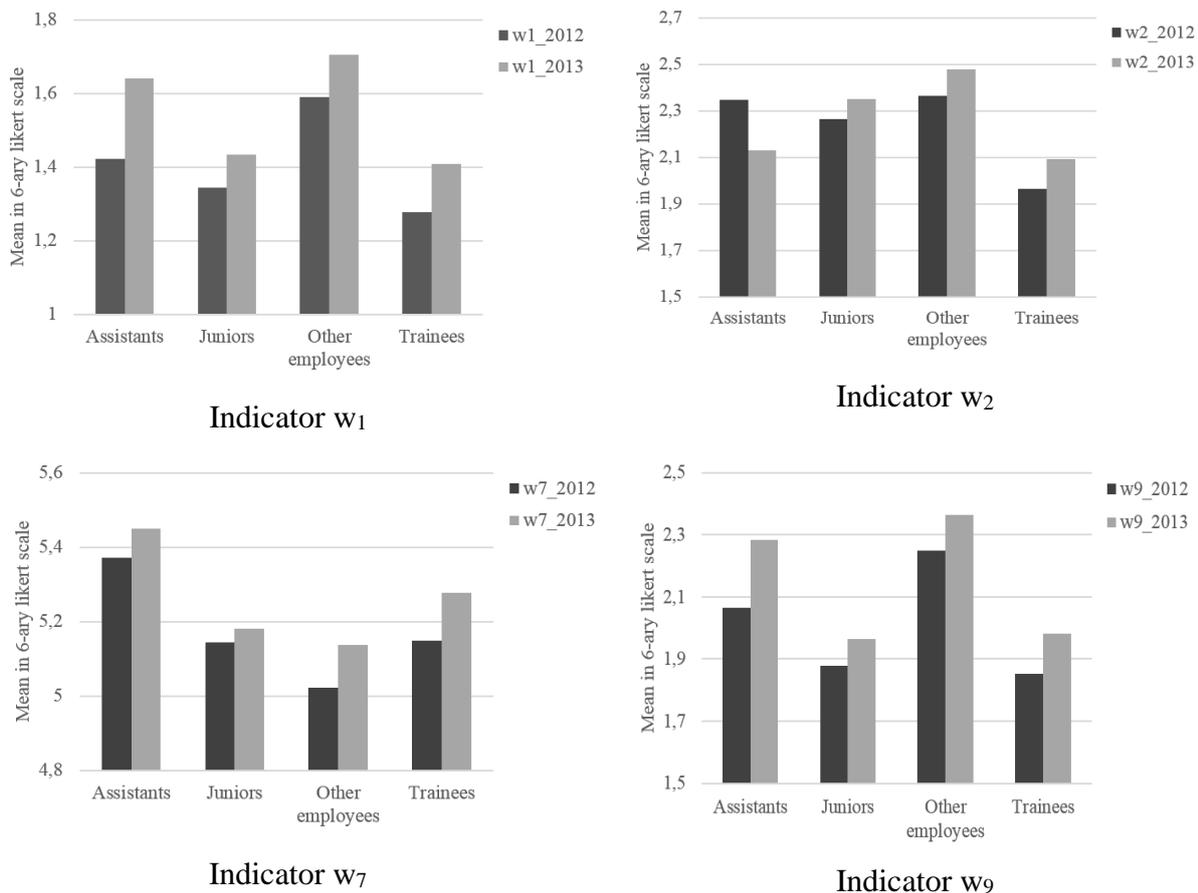
**Table 3.12. Kruskal-Wallis Test calculation: results of employees' assessment to depict differences due to grouping variable *Different employee groups***

Indicator	Significance level
<i>Participation at university / career fairs (w<sub>1</sub>)</i>	0,021
<i>Personal discussion with company's representatives (w<sub>2</sub>)</i>	0,021
<i>Company lectures at universities (w<sub>3</sub>)</i>	0,103
<i>Company visits (w<sub>4</sub>)</i>	0,596
<i>Internships (w<sub>5</sub>)</i>	0,147
<i>Image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radios and / or online media (w<sub>6</sub>)</i>	0,295
<i>Image brochures (w<sub>7</sub>)</i>	0,000
<i>Product promotion activities (w<sub>8</sub>)</i>	0,087
<i>Job advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media (w<sub>9</sub>)</i>	0,001
<i>Classification of brand awareness (z<sub>1</sub>)</i>	0,049
<i>Classification into employer of choice (z<sub>2</sub>)</i>	0,000

Note: confidence interval: 95,0 %;  $p < 0,05$ : statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of employee groups.

Source: Author's creation using research results

The empirical research depicts differences due to the grouping variable *Different employee groups* in the results of some indicators in the assessment by others. The significance level of the indicators *Classification of a company's participation at university and / or career fairs (w<sub>1</sub>)* ( $p = 0,021$ ), *Classification of a personnel discussion with a company's representative (w<sub>2</sub>)* ( $p = 0,021$ ), *Classification of a company's image brochure (w<sub>7</sub>)* ( $p = 0,000$ ) and *Classification of job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or online media (w<sub>9</sub>)* ( $p = 0,001$ ) as well as of *Classification of brand awareness of a company (z<sub>1</sub>)* ( $p = 0,049$ ) and *Classification of a company into an employer of choice (z<sub>2</sub>)* ( $p = 0,000$ ) are smaller than the predefined accepted significance level of  $p = 0,050$  and therefore reflect significant differences due to the investigated employee groups.



**Figure 3.4. Means of indicators *Participation at university / career fairs* (w<sub>1</sub>), *Personal discussion with company's representatives* (w<sub>2</sub>), *Image brochures* (w<sub>7</sub>) and *Job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or inline media* (w<sub>9</sub>) in a 6-ary Likert-scale (1 = very important to 6 = very unimportant)**

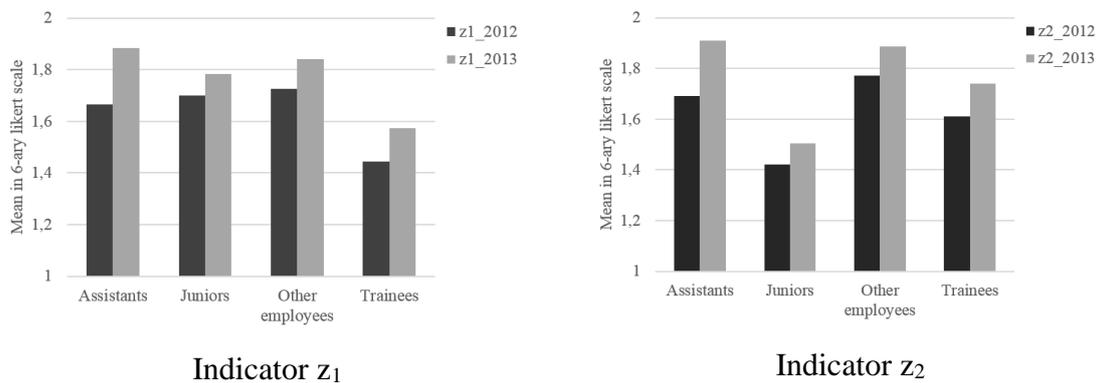
Source: Author's creation using research results

Concerning a company's participation at university and / or career fairs, the employee group *Trainees* awards more importance to this instrument (mean of 1,3 in 2012 and 1,4 in 2013) compared with the other three employee groups (means between 1,4 and 1,7). The reason might be that fairs are the preferred method for this employee group to inform themselves about a company. The same picture arises concerning the instrument of HRMM approach of *Personal discussion with a company's representative* (w<sub>2</sub>). Also here the group of *Trainees* judge the importance of this instrument higher (mean of 2,0 in 2012 and 2,1 in 2013) than the three remaining employee groups (means between 2,1 and 2,5). Concerning both indicator's results it is obvious that the employee group *Trainees* has just left university and therefore pays major attention to instruments related with this - for them - still well-known institution. Interesting is the fact that personal discussions have a lower priority for all other target groups. Here other values might have been expected as employees often tend to make their decision for or against an employer depending on their impression about companies' representatives. However,

empirical research shows that this instrument is less important for the investigated three other employee groups in order to classify an organization as attractive employer. Here, further research can be applied to substantiate the investigated results with more data.

Furthermore, the measure of job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or online media shows an interesting result in the empirical investigation. The mean for the employee group *Trainees* (mean 1,8 in 2012 and 2,0 in 2013) is lower than the ones for the three remaining employee groups (means between 1,9 and 2,4). It is interesting that not all investigated employees value this instrument of HRMM approach in the same way, although it is postulated the one with one of the highest correlation to an employee satisfying, labor market-oriented approach of an organization. *Other employees* perceive the instrument *Image brochures* ( $w_7$ ) as of higher importance (mean 5,0 in 2012 and 5,1 in 2013) than the other groups (means between 5,2 and 5,5). To investigate the reasons for the differences in the different target groups' perceptions concerning the indicators leaves way to further research.

In a next step, employee groups' differences in the satisfaction with the employer's organization are depicted.



**Figure 3.5. Means of indicator *Classification of brand awareness* ( $z_1$ ) and *Classification into employer of choice* ( $z_2$ ) and in a 6-ary Likert-scale (1 = yes totally to 6 = not at all)**

Source: Author's creation

As shown in figure 3.5., *Trainees* classify their employer's brand awareness on the labor market better than the remaining three employee groups (mean 1,4 in 2012 and 1,6 in 2013 compared to means between 1,6 and 1,9 for the other three employee groups). Investigating the employee group *Juniors* it is obvious that the indicator *Classification into employer of choice* ( $z_2$ ) for this employee group is 1,4 in 2012 and 1,5 in 2013 - compared to means between 1,6 and 1,9 for the other three groups. This result shows that juniors tend to classify their employer into a more attractive employer on the labor market than the rest of the surveyed employee groups.

### 3.4 Critical discussion of results with HRMM professionals

In order to evaluate the results from the research even further and determine whether they are considered to have an impact in reality, HRMM professionals were interviewed. They have been selected from different industries such as food industry, automotive supplier industry and pharmaceutical industry to guarantee an industry unbiased evaluation. By means of semi-structured interviews the theoretical and empirical results were critically discussed and confronted with practical experiences and professionals' opinions.<sup>331</sup>

Concerning the theoretical considerations, the professionals completely agree that the idea of HRMM approach needs to focus on how to recruit and retain employees. It needs to be derived from the human resource management's and company's strategy. They emphasize that the strategic company's alignment - displayed in the human resource strategy - is the defining factor of HRMM approach. Hereby HRMM approach must reflect its direction towards employee satisfaction. The professionals perceive HRMM approach as a cross-divisional process in the realm of human resource management which is dependent on company's strategic decisions. As a matter of principle the organization's alignment towards the labor market accounts for the company's human resources' necessity.

In the opinion of the HRMM professionals, human resource and company strategic decisions are closely linked. Therefore decisions about strategy, structure and human resource management need to be made simultaneously. Deriving from this integrative coordination specifications for the conceptualization of a HRMM approach arise. Accordingly, companies with different strategic alignments use different concepts of HRMM to attractively position themselves on the labor market.

From the professionals' point of view, HRMM approach effects all processes of an organization's human resource management. For example an innovation-focused company strategy implies a HRMM approach that addresses especially those employees that are keen on knowledge building and transfer and want to try out new ideas. The professionals emphasize that hereby human resource management processes need to be established that support cooperation, knowledge sharing and commitment.

Considering an employee satisfying HRMM approach, all professionals agree that employee's motivation plays a crucial role. In their opinion, HRMM approach can create positive effects on employees' motivation in the context of promoting working situations (e.g., by promoting adequate remuneration, career paths etc.). Hereby the professionals argue that

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<sup>331</sup> Job titles and employer companies of the interviewed HRMM professionals can be found in the appendix.

HRMM approach contributes to a context-oriented framework for employees' motivation. It promotes a clearly defined picture of the employer's expectations concerning employees' behavior and the employee's beneficiaries to be expectable from this behavior. In the professionals' opinion, HRMM approach therefore combines the decision making behavior of employees concerning the company's human resource management's performance with the individual employee's working performance. Through a consistent HRMM approach employee's knowledge about the employer's organization is available. Furthermore, professionals agree that HRMM approach defines and communicates employer's characteristics concerning management structures and processes. Herewith, it enables employees to judge whether they want to work and / or remain with this company. Furthermore, the professionals acknowledge that not only HRMM approach is responsible for employee satisfaction but other processes within the realm of human resource management influence employees' satisfaction as well.

However, the professionals emphasize that a clear definition and communication of HRMM approach does not contribute per definitionem towards a higher employees' motivation and satisfaction. They point out that employees judge processes individually and link them to their personal situation. An effective communication of the employer's value towards employees is important. From the professionals' point of view, contributions of HRMM approach in this context can be either communication or design efforts.

Regarding the conceptual depth, professionals propose a further investigation's conceptualization and systematization of HRMM approach. In their opinion, a promising aspect is the research on the accordance of communicated aspects of HRMM approach within the human resource management practice of companies. Transparency and reliability of instruments related to human resource management - meaning the congruence of promised and actual human resource management structures and processes - could be subject of this further research.

Concerning the causal model, the professionals agree that the chosen indicators reflect the functions of acquiring and retaining employees. In their opinion, the indicators describing the variables *Quality of human resource management's marketing approach (X)* and *Performance of human resource management's marketing approach (Z)* focus mainly on the function of acquiring employees, whereas the indicators used for *Employee satisfaction (Y)* and *Satisfaction with employer's organization (Z)* focus mainly on retaining employees.

Concerning the empirical research, all interviewed human resource management's professionals support the results gained in the research. They confirm the postulated hypothesis and its underlying, confirmed propositions. In addition, they declare their special interest in the

tests' results of the five theses to defend. All professionals agree that the quality of a company's HRMM approach in terms of its different indicators might have different influence on employee satisfaction. Thus, they all approve the statistical tests' results and state that the gained results are in accordance with their expectations.

Furthermore, they testify that HRMM approach must be specifically designed to meet the different target groups' requirements. Hereby, of special interest are the single employee groups' results. All professionals postulate that they expected differences due to different investigated employee groups.

In addition, the professionals confirm that they did not expect any differences due to the investigated years 2012 and 2013. Herewith, they totally agree with the research results that also show no significant differences of the two investigated years. However, one professional points out that these test's results may vary depending on the exact investigated years – even if he totally agrees with the tests' results for the examined years 2012 and 2013. In his opinion the results can be different ones if the surveys are conducted in the following four to five years. He proposes further ongoing and continuing research also for the next five years to come to receive a valid picture of possible differences due to different investigated years.

However, the empirical result of dismissing some propositions is controversially discussed. Two professionals state that - in their opinion - company's image brochures lead to a higher classification of the company's brand awareness on the labor market. They point out that employees tend to inform themselves about their (potential) employer via the medium of image brochures.

In addition - in these two professionals' experiences - a well-placed company's product promotion activity leads to a higher classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market. They argue that employees – in their professional experience - tend to define the satisfaction with their employer especially via the products and / or services produced by the employer. Thirdly, they argue that companies' image advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio and / or online media contribute significantly to a high classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market. These two professionals would expect a strong relationship between these two indicators which cannot be proven in the empirical research.

Summarizing, all interviewed human resource professionals understand that they need to take up the idea of an employee satisfying HRMM approach to establish their organizations successfully on the labor market. They recognize that HRMM approach itself adds value to the company. Completing this issue with the aspect of employee satisfaction is comprehended by all professionals. An employee satisfying HRMM approach is – in all the professionals' opinion

- of crucial importance for organizations in times with restricted available labor force as exists in Germany today.

### **3.5 Closing remarks**

Starting point for the empirical investigation has been the question whether the application of a company's HRMM approach has an impact on employee satisfaction. To answer this question two steps are necessary. Firstly, a literature review and theoretical inspection of the issue of human resource management and its marketing approach is carried out. Secondly, an empirical research on the impact of HRMM approach on employee satisfaction is conducted.

Literature review and theoretical inspection shows that HRMM approach can be classified as subsystem of human resource management. However, there is still no final academic decision on this issue. Some authors classify HRMM approach as an independent process and managerial field, others portray HRMM approach as sub-function of human resource management. It is important to acknowledge the obligations deriving from positioning the approach as subsystem of human resource management. Firstly, companies need to orientate their strategic direction of human resource management on the employees' demands and needs. The employment relationship between employees and their employer's organization is of crucial importance for the classification of the employer into a company that is attractive on the labor market. Hereby, employees are the driving factor for the company's efforts to attractively position itself on the labor market.

In addition, different aspects and the nature of HRMM approach are depicted. HRMM approach is classified according to the reference group, the strategical and tactical orientation, its instruments and actions as well as the information basis used for designing the action concept of HRMM approach. Hereby, special attention is paid to the two aspects of acquiring and retaining employees.

A multi-layered theoretical perspective is used for approaching the issue of HRMM approach. The resource based theory displays the importance of a company's labor market orientation in the realm of HRMM approach. Besides, this theory focuses on the design and content of HRMM approach. The focus of HRMM approach's transfer objects on the labor market, like positions and employees, are depicted by the system approach. Furthermore, a theory reflecting the decision making process of employees is considered. Employees constantly decide for or against an employer based – among other things – on their expectation about the satisfaction they receive at their employer.

To receive empirical results about the relationship between HRMM approach and employee satisfaction human resource professionals of different companies have been interviewed about the quality of their companies' HRMM approach as well as the employee satisfaction at their organization. In addition, employees have been surveyed about their perception about their employer organization and its HRMM approach's performance.

Following out of this empirical investigation the research hypothesis is accepted for the time being. The better a company's HRMM approach in terms of its quality and performance is, the higher is the employees' perception about their employer's organization as well as the overall employees' satisfaction in terms of a high retention period, a low fluctuation rate and a low absenteeism at a company. By considering the research result in detail, the research question can be answered: The application of HRMM approach has an impact on employee satisfaction.

In addition to the research hypothesis, also the five theses to defend can be accepted for the time being. However, three postulated propositions need to be dismissed. All other propositions can be accepted.

Overall, employees judge the relation between HRMM approach and employee satisfaction more critically than organizations do. This puts the focus on companies' efforts concerning their HRMM approach. Their efforts need not only to meet the expectations of the employees but even outperform them to install an employee satisfying perception of the employees' employer organizations.

The results of the thesis' tests have shown that organizations derive fruitful benefits from their HRMM approach's activities, such as low absenteeism, long retention periods, a high number of applications per offered positions. The impact of HRMM approach on employee satisfaction can be derived. However, special attention needs to be paid to a target group conform approach to tap the full potential of an employee satisfying HRMM approach.

Finally, the empirical results are opposed to the practical opinion of human resource management's professionals. This completes the research and provides evidence for a practical usage of an employee satisfying HRMM approach.

HRMM approach, its quality and overall performance can stimulate company internal and external forces. Essential competitive advantages concerning employee satisfaction and differentiation on the labor market can be achieved. By actively promoting their attractiveness on the labor market by an adequate HRMM approach companies can anticipate influences on their human resources and their human resource management. Labor market changes as well as its development can be forestalled and organizations can position themselves adequately on the labor market.

Overall, it can be stated that the problem of how to ensure that appropriate employees can be acquired and retained is a question of economic motivation. It is related to a specific external audience (namely workforce available on the German labor market) with a strategic perspective for organizations. The research in the framework of the thesis is helping to come to a sound decision support for a targeted use of an employee satisfying HRMM approach. Hereby, the design of the approach needs to be based on results for different target groups.

In the following conclusions – based on the theoretical framework and the empirical findings – are given with regard to the application of an employee satisfying HRMM approach. They summarize the main results of the thesis with regard to the literature review and theoretical inspection as well as the empirical research.

## CONCLUSIONS

The availability of labor force is one of the basic premises for economic success of companies. In order to cope with this requirement in the future, the acquisition and retaining of employees is of crucial importance. In the context of the thesis, human resource management and its marketing approach are displayed concerning the theoretical foundations and the conceptual correlation with employee satisfaction. The following conclusions are the outcome of the dissertational work and starting points for further research.

### **From theoretical considerations:**

Companies need to invest effort into their HRMM approach when they want to acquire and retain employees. A thorough conceptualization and effective implication of a target-group oriented HRMM approach is becoming an imperative. Companies applying this approach are primed under the circumstances of growing employee shortage on the labor market.

Besides, the reflection of the employee decision making process and of the cooperation with systems and influences outside the organization is essential as well. These processes lead to positioning the enterprise attractively on the labor market and result in a better performance of the company in retaining and acquiring employees.

In addition, as a company's attraction as employer of choice as well as its brand awareness on the labor market depends on the perception of individuals further research should be applied concerning a deeper probation of decision making processes and individual behaviour of the respective target groups.

Furthermore, labor market-orientation - classically focused on the penetration of selling markets - experiences a focused concretion towards a buying market. Attractive enterprises on the labor market have recognised employee satisfaction as important factor to retain and acquire employees.

HRMM approach considers human resource management bottleneck-oriented. This resource oriented perspective is taking into account the needs of current and potential organization members. Therefore, HRMM approach emphasizes the consideration of employees' needs as the target group which demands need to be taken into account. In the light of shortage of employees and their resulting labor market power this approach is of great importance.

### **From data analysis:**

Overall, the postulated hypothesis is proven for the time being. HRMM approach contributes significantly to employee satisfaction. Organizations' representatives give their companies a positive testimonial concerning the quality of their HRMM approach. Employees judge this more critically. However, overall they state their employers a HRMM approach' performance which satisfies their needs as well as demands and therefore contributes to their satisfaction.

The study findings provide support for all five theses to defend. The quality of a company's HRMM approach is significantly contributing to the overall employee satisfaction. Furthermore, employees' perception of their employer's organization is significantly influenced by the performance of the HRMM approach of the employer's company.

Concerning the postulated propositions the study does not reveal support for three of them as the Spearman's Rho does not show significant correlations. However, all remaining propositions show significant correlations and can therefore be accepted for the time being.

Besides, differentiations concerning the HRMM approach of the organizations arise due to addressing different employee groups. Empirical evidence – derived from the Kruskal-Wallis Tests - shows that measures of HRMM approach need to be adapted to the differing demands of the target-groups on the labor market.

In addition, by looking at the statistical tests' results, differences in investigating different years (2012 and 2013) are of minor importance. However, in the critical discussion of the test's results with human resource management professionals the question arises whether this result will be the same when investigating the issue of HRMM approach and its influence on employee satisfaction in the next coming five to ten years. This leaves way for further research in the future.

Spearman's Rho displayed that different instruments of a company concerning its HRMM approach have a different impact on employee satisfaction. However, there is still room for further investigation. The reasons why three instruments are not regarded as essential for a labor market-oriented and employee satisfying approach should be deeper investigated. This could help to develop a prioritization in the ranking of the different instruments to enhance the performance of companies concerning their HRMM approach.

Furthermore, in the realm of human resource management research, the thesis is a contribution to the investigation of an employee-oriented company management. Instruments and processes have been surveyed which support the implementation of an employee-satisfaction focused human resource management system. Further research should expand to other countries as well. Herewith the issue of HRMM approach and its influence on employee satisfaction can be investigated in-depth.

The dissertational work only conducted quantitative investigations. Further research should be applied considering qualitative measures focusing on conceptual considerations of HRMM approach. Qualitative analysis can try to substantiate the already gained deeper insight as the thesis provides first explanations for employee satisfying structures of human resource management and its results concerning personnel.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT**

The pursuit of the thesis should not be considered uncoupled of its practical usage in management science. Based on the analysis of data, the information as well as the conclusions made in the research - and in order to improve companies' HRMM approach - the study recognises the following practical implications for management.

Managers can use the outcome of the thesis for the establishment or improvement of their organizations' HRMM approach. The ongoing and increasing demand for staff on the labor market forces companies to cope with the matter of HRMM approach. Managers might reconsider their organizations' approach concerning HRMM. Hereby, the thesis enables managers to discuss this issue with empirically received and documented data.

Managers know the different possibilities of the mix of the HRMM approach for approaching different target groups on the labor market. They understand, that different instruments are available in creating their organizations' HRMM approach. Thus, they can judge which instruments to apply and know that differences exist due to different target-group's requirements. Besides, they can consider the different tasks of HRMM approach and can decide if and to what extend single tasks need to be fulfilled.

The relation between HRMM approach and employee satisfaction is accepted for the time being. Managers can use this information for convincing other parties (e.g. governing body, proprietor, partners etc.) to establish HRMM approach as process at the company. They have valid data to initiate the process adequately and with enough influence to position the company attractively on the labor market and therefore increase the employee satisfaction at their company.

In the context of influences on the quality of a company's HRMM approach managers understand that the management of these influences is in direct access of their company and therefore also in their area of responsibility. The management of these influences is hereby on the one hand exposed to situations arising company internally (e.g. retention period after probation period) and on the other hand to situations which are company externally (e.g. number of received applications). Managers know that both perspectives need to be considered carefully by them to establish an uncontradicted approach for a qualitatively demanding, employee satisfying HRMM approach.

Managers can use the outcome of the thesis to increase employee satisfaction at their companies. The relation between HRMM approach and employee satisfaction is considered in

the study and empirically investigated. Managers can use this data to establish HRMM approach as one possible process to influence employee satisfaction.

The thesis investigates different aspects of HRMM approach by using different indicators describing the quality as well as the performance of HRMM approach and its influence on employee satisfaction. Managers can use this information as a basis for further considerations that might include different indicators to substantiate the research and supply managers with more data.

In addition, managers can decide if and to what extent other indicators should be investigated to describe HRMM approach and its relation to employee satisfaction in following research. Hereby, managers can use the thesis as a solid bases for adjusting the following research to their company's specific requirements.

The investigated concept of HRMM approach includes tasks for acquiring and retaining employees. This information can be used by managers to establish and / or promote other human resource management processes of other sub-systems of human resource management which support the tasks of acquiring and retaining staff. Therefore, managers can establish the fullest human resource management system possible to increase and foster employee satisfaction.

Managers can use the thesis outcome to reconsider their mental approach towards human resource management as well as its marketing approach and the influence these aspects have on their company's overall performance and success. They can broaden their horizon by considering their managerial influence on employee satisfaction and their company's HRMM approach. Hereby, the thesis provides a framework which managers can critically investigate. They can mentally position their companies within the developed and investigated context or they can use the thesis outcome to start to think about other possibilities concerning a cause effect relation between human resource management and employee satisfaction contributing to the company's success.

## SUGGESTIONS

The thesis offers suggestions for three different main stakeholders involved in the HRMM process of companies. The first stakeholders are hereby the companies themselves, represented by the general management of the companies. Secondly, the ones responsible for human resource management within a company, namely human resource professionals, are addressed. The third group interested in the HRMM approach of a company are the employees themselves. In the following section suggestions for all three stakeholders are depicted.

### **To general management:**

It is recommended to managers to define an employee satisfying HRMM approach for their company as well as establish its concept at their enterprise. The company's specifics like the target group to approach on the labor market, the company's need for human resources (quantitatively and qualitatively), the alignment of the company strategy with employee satisfaction etc. are suggested to be integrated in the process and therefore define their HRMM approach in an individual and inimitable way.

Besides, it is suggested that managers enable collaboration with institutions outside the boundaries of their companies in order to establish a successful employee satisfying HRMM approach. It is recommended that managers also drive this cooperation. In addition, processes and structures need to be installed which support this collaboration.

Managers are suggested to develop their own interpretation and sense of duty towards their employees. It is recommended that they understand that employees are one of the most valuable and rare resources of the organization which need to be fostered and cared for. HRMM approach is suggested to be recognized by them as one of the driving forces to establish employee satisfaction in a company. Managers are recommended to approach this process not only with respect and understanding but moreover with engagement.

In addition, human resource management and especially its marketing approach is suggested to be understood as crucial for a successful continuity of a company. It is recommended that managers understand that this employee satisfying approach of HRMM can only contribute to the company's success if favorable organizational structures are installed to support it.

### **To human resource professionals:**

The empirical research shows the dependence of employee satisfaction on HRMM approach. This enables human resource professionals to make decision-makers aware of the expected outcomes for the company's overall performance and especially its human resource management. A definition of key performance indicators for employee satisfaction is therefore possible and recommended. Acquisition and retaining of employees can be controlled and monitored to ensure an effective allocation of resources. In addition, changes in a company's HRMM orientation can be identified in time and required changes within the field of human resource management can be initiated.

In order to ensure sustainable competitiveness on the labor market, it is suggested to design a company's HRMM approach in a way that organizations are able to quickly react to changing labor market dynamics. As the research has revealed, employee satisfaction is highly impacted by HRMM approach. Therefore, favorable HRMM structures need to be created, which enable the fostering of employee satisfaction to successfully acquire and retain employees.

### **To employees:**

It is suggested that employees carefully investigate the human resource management of an organization. Labor market pressure forces companies to position themselves truthfully on the labor market. HRMM approaches that do not display reality within a company are easily disclosed. HRMM approach therefore provides employees an insight into the employing company. It is one possible platform for employees to inform themselves about their employer and its need satisfaction towards employees. Nevertheless, a broad investigation of all used instruments of HRMM approach is recommended as they might focus on different aspects of the employer.

HRMM approach is bearing a comprehensive responsibility for position and identity of a company as an attractive employer. Different stakeholders within an organization are responsible for applying HRMM approach. Only with a carefully selected and well-coordinated employee satisfying human resource management and its marketing approach employees can be acquired and retained as described and evaluated in the thesis. These human resources are finally the ones mainly responsible for a company's success and its overall performance.

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## Appendix 1: Example of standardized interview questionnaire for human resource management's professionals

*The interview is conducted in the framework of the dissertational thesis of Susanna Minder. Contact details: [info\\_minder@gmx.de](mailto:info_minder@gmx.de), or Buchenstr. 26, 85635 Siegertsbrunn/ Germany.*

The aim of the interview is to receive information concerning the quality of external human resource marketing within a company.

Target group are human resource professionals, working in human resource departments.

All information is handled confidentially. Citations are only used with no reference to single companies.

The interview takes about 15 minutes of your time.

---

### Statistical information:

Name of interview partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Industry sector of your company:  Industrial  Service  
 Information  Other industry sector

**1. Please mark with a cross your company's financial Turnover (stated in Euro) in 2012 and 2013:**

	Financial turnover in 2012	Financial turnover in 2013
< 1 million €		
< 50 million €		
> 50 million €		

*All following information concerning numbers of employees are calculated in full-time-equivalent.*

**2. Please indicate the average number of full-time-equivalent employees in 2012 and 2013:**

	in 2012	in 2013
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
# of Trainees		
# of Assistants / administrative department		
# of Juniors		

**3. Please indicate the numbers of offered positions in 2012 and 2013:**

	# of vacant positions in 2012	# of vacant positions in 2013
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
Trainees		
Assistants / administrative department		
Junior positions		

**4. Please indicate the numbers of offered positions occupied in 2012 and 2013:**

	# of occupied positions in 2012	# of occupied positions in 2013
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
Trainees		
Assistants / administrative department		
Junior positions		

**5. Please indicate the numbers of applications within your company received in 2012 and 2013:**

	# of applications in 2012	# of applications in 2013
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
Trainees		
Assistants / administrative department		
Junior positions		

*In the following please consider only employees who were on trial in the years 2012 to 2013. For employees whose probation period lasts over the years 2012 and 2013 please indicate their number in the year 2013.*

**6. Please state the number of employees staying in your company after the end of their probation period.**

	# of employees 2012 in your company after their probation period	# of employees 2013 in your company after their probation period
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
Trainees		
Assistants / administrative department		
Junior positions		

**7. Applications differ from quality. Please regard the quality of all received applications in 2012 and 2013 by comparing them to the corresponding job profiles on offer.**

**In average, how many percentage of all received applications met your requirements?**

	The applications met your requirements in 2012 (in percentage)	The applications met your requirements in 2013 (in percentage)
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
Trainees		
Assistants / administrative department		
Junior positions		

**8. Please indicate the number of employees leaving the company in 2012 and 2013:**

	# of employees leaving in 2012	# of employees leaving in 2013
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
Trainees		
Assistants / administrative department		
Juniors		

**9. Please indicate the number of absenteeism days (excluding holidays) per employee in 2012 and 2013:**

	# of absenteeism days in 2012	# of absenteeism days in 2013
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
Trainees		
Assistants / administrative department		
Junior positions		

**10. Please indicate the average retention period per employee within your company in years:**

	Average retention period in 2012	Average retention period in 2013
Employee (not Trainee, Assistant, Junior)		
Trainees		
Assistants/ administrative department		
Junior positions		

---

**Thanks for your contribution!**

## Appendix 2: Example of standardized interview questionnaire for employees

*The questionnaire is conducted in the framework of the dissertational thesis of Susanna Minder.*

*Contact details: [info\\_minder@gmx.de](mailto:info_minder@gmx.de), or Susanna Minder, Buchenstr. 26, 85635 Siegersbrunn/ Germany*

The aim of the questionnaire is to receive information concerning the importance of external human resource marketing of different companies and its fit to specific target group requirements.

As an employee you get an impression about the company you are employed at. This information is needed to check the importance of human resource marketing within your employer and your perception about it.

Of course, all information is handled confidentially. Citations are only used with no reference to single persons.

Please take approx. 3 minutes of your time to fill out the questionnaire. Afterwards please mail or hand it back to me.

---

### **Please answer some statistical information about your person:**

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

Your sex:

male

female

Name of company you work in right now: \_\_\_\_\_

Industry of your company:

Industrial

Service

Information

Other Industry

You are employed as:

Trainee

Junior

Assistant

Any other employee

**1. Please indicate with a cross the importance of the following human resource marketing instruments at your employer right now to position the company on the labor market:**

**a) FOR THE YEAR 2012**

Participation at University/ career fairs

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Personal discussion with company's representative

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Company lectures/ presentations at University

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Company visits

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Internships

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio, online media

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Image brochures

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Product promotion activities

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio, online media

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

**b) FOR THE YEAR 2013**

Participation at University/ career fairs

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Personal discussion with company's representative

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Company lectures/ presentations at University

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Company visits

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Internships

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio, online media

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Image brochures

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Product promotion activities

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

Job advertisements in newspapers, TV, radio, online media

Very good  1  2  3  4  5  6 very poor

**2. Please consider the employer you work with right know.**

**How would you classify your employer concerning an employer of choice:**

**Considering the year 2012:**

Very good     1    2    3    4    5    6    very poor

**Considering the year 2013**

Very good     1    2    3    4    5    6    very poor

**How would you classify your employer concerning its brand awareness on the labor market:**

**Considering the year 2012**

Very good     1    2    3    4    5    6    very poor

**Considering the year 2013**

Very good     1    2    3    4    5    6    very poor

---

**Thanks for your contribution!**

**Appendix 3: Shapiro Wilk Test's results for indicators x1, x2, x3 and y1, y2, y3, separated  
by years 2012 and 2013**

Indicator	Year	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
x1	2012,0	,936	112	,000
	2013,0	,955	112	,001
x2	2012,0	,932	112	,000
	2013,0	,933	112	,000
x3	2012,0	,889	112	,000
	2013,0	,913	112	,000
y1	2012,0	,937	112	,000
	2013,0	,949	112	,000
y2	2012,0	,846	112	,000
	2013,0	,873	112	,000
y3	2012,0	,928	112	,000
	2013,0	,957	112	,001

Source: Author's creation

**Appendix 4: Shapiro Wilk Test's results for indicators w1, w2, w3, w4, w5, w6, w7, w8, w9 and z1, z2, separated by years 2012 and 2013**

Indicator	Year	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
w1	2012	,615	259	,000
	2013	,680	259	,000
w2	2012	,844	259	,000
	2013	,862	259	,000
w3	2012	,835	259	,000
	2013	,854	259	,000
w4	2012	,841	259	,000
	2013	,866	259	,000
w5	2012	,762	259	,000
	2013	,799	259	,000
w6	2012	,858	259	,000
	2013	,850	259	,000
w7	2012	,785	259	,000
	2013	,778	259	,000
w8	2012	,733	259	,000
	2013	,720	259	,000
w9	2012	,810	259	,000
	2013	,836	259	,000
z1	2012	,758	259	,000
	2013	,789	259	,000
z2	2012	,731	259	,000
	2013	,771	259	,000

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 5: Kruskal Wallis Test's results for indicators x1, x2, x3 and y1, y2, y3 for the year 2012**

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

	<b>Null Hypothesis</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>1</b>	The distribution of x1_2012 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>2</b>	The distribution of x2_2012 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>3</b>	The distribution of x3_2012 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>4</b>	The distribution of y1_2012 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>5</b>	The distribution of y2_2012 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>6</b>	The distribution of y3_2012 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is ,05.

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 6: Kruskal Wallis Test's results for indicators x1, x2, x3 and y1, y2, y3 for the year 2013**

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

	<b>Null Hypothesis</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>1</b>	The distribution of x1_2013 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>2</b>	The distribution of x2_2013 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>3</b>	The distribution of x3_2013 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>4</b>	The distribution of y1_2013 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>5</b>	The distribution of y2_2013 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>6</b>	The distribution of y3_2013 is the same across categories of LevelPosition.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is ,05.

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 7: Kruskal Wallis Test's results for indicators w1, w2, w3, w4, w5, w6, w7, w8, w9  
and z1, z2**

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

	<b>Null Hypothesis</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>1</b>	The distribution of w1 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,021	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>2</b>	The distribution of w2 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,021	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>3</b>	The distribution of w3 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,103	Retain the null hypothesis.
<b>4</b>	The distribution of w4 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,596	Retain the null hypothesis.
<b>5</b>	The distribution of w5 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,147	Retain the null hypothesis.
<b>6</b>	The distribution of w6 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,295	Retain the null hypothesis.
<b>7</b>	The distribution of w7 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>8</b>	The distribution of w8 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,087	Retain the null hypothesis.
<b>9</b>	The distribution of w9 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,001	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>10</b>	The distribution of z1 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,049	Reject the null hypothesis.
<b>11</b>	The distribution of z2 is the same across categories of EmployedasTraineeJuniorAssiOther .	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is ,05.

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 8: Spearman's Rho's results for indicators x1, x2, x3 and y1, y2, y3 for the year  
2012**

			y1_2012	y2_2012	y3_2012
Spearman's rho	x1_2012	Correlation Coefficient	-,967**	,964**	-,465**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000
		N	112	112	112
	x2_2012	Correlation Coefficient	-,450**	,483**	-,945**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000
		N	112	112	112
	x3_2012	Correlation Coefficient	-,780**	,763**	-,317**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,001
		N	112	112	112

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's creation

**Appendix 9: Spearman's Rho's results for indicators x1, x2, x3 and y1, y2, y3 for the year  
2013**

			y1_2013	y2_2013	y3_2013
Spearman's rho	x1_2013	Correlation Coefficient	-,961**	,886**	-,584**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000
		N	112	112	112
	x2_2013	Correlation Coefficient	-,501**	,500**	-,839**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000
		N	112	112	112
	x3_2013	Correlation Coefficient	-,832**	,697**	-,463**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000
		N	112	112	112

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 10: Spearman's Rho's results for indicators w1, w2, w3, w4, w5, w6, w7, w8, w9  
and z1, z2 for the year 2012**

			z1	z2
Spearman's rho	w1	Correlation Coefficient	,695**	,572**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w2	Correlation Coefficient	,457**	,385**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w3	Correlation Coefficient	,464**	,492**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w4	Correlation Coefficient	,354**	,361**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w5	Correlation Coefficient	,420**	,426**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w6	Correlation Coefficient	,346**	,286**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w7	Correlation Coefficient	,067	,222**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,280	,000
		N	259	259
	w8	Correlation Coefficient	-,077	,078
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,219	,211
		N	259	259
	w9	Correlation Coefficient	,426**	,434**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 11: Spearman's Rho's results for indicators w1, w2, w3, w4, w5, w6, w7, w8, w9  
and z1, z2 for the year 2013**

			z1	z2
Spearman's rho	w1	Correlation Coefficient	,772**	,676**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w2	Correlation Coefficient	,559**	,507**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w3	Correlation Coefficient	,567**	,596**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w4	Correlation Coefficient	,477**	,489**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w5	Correlation Coefficient	,537**	,542**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w6	Correlation Coefficient	,454**	,392**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259
	w7	Correlation Coefficient	,209**	,346**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,000
		N	259	259
	w8	Correlation Coefficient	,029	,156*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,640	,012
		N	259	259
	w9	Correlation Coefficient	,561**	,554**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	259	259

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 12: Descriptive Test's results for indicators x1, x2, x3 and y1, y2, y3 for the year  
2012**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
x1_2012	112	12	41	27,04	7,446
x2_2012	112	55	100	79,58	11,075
x3_2012	112	75	100	93,60	5,861
y1_2012	112	2	18	6,99	3,697
y2_2012	112	3	20	9,70	5,006
y3_2012	112	3	21	10,65	4,208
Valid N (listwise)	112				

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 13: Descriptive Test's results for indicators x1, x2, x3 and y1, y2, y3 for the year  
2013**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
x1_2013	112	10	43	25,60	7,633
x2_2013	112	55	100	79,51	11,075
x3_2013	112	72	100	92,54	6,189
y1_2013	112	2	19	7,55	3,961
y2_2013	112	3	21	9,78	5,022
y3_2013	112	2	21	11,28	4,281
Valid N (listwise)	112				

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 14: Descriptive Test's results for indicators w1, w2, w3, w4, w5, w6, w7, w8, w9  
and z1, z2 for the year 2012**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
w1	259	1	4	1,54	,813
w2	259	1	5	2,32	,919
w3	259	1	5	2,40	,936
w4	259	2	6	3,52	,916
w5	259	1	4	1,80	,863
w6	259	3	6	4,97	,846
w7	259	4	6	5,27	,658
w8	259	4	6	5,44	,715
w9	259	1	5	2,13	,848
z1	259	1	4	1,78	,886
z2	259	1	4	1,74	,871
Valid N (listwise)	259				

Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

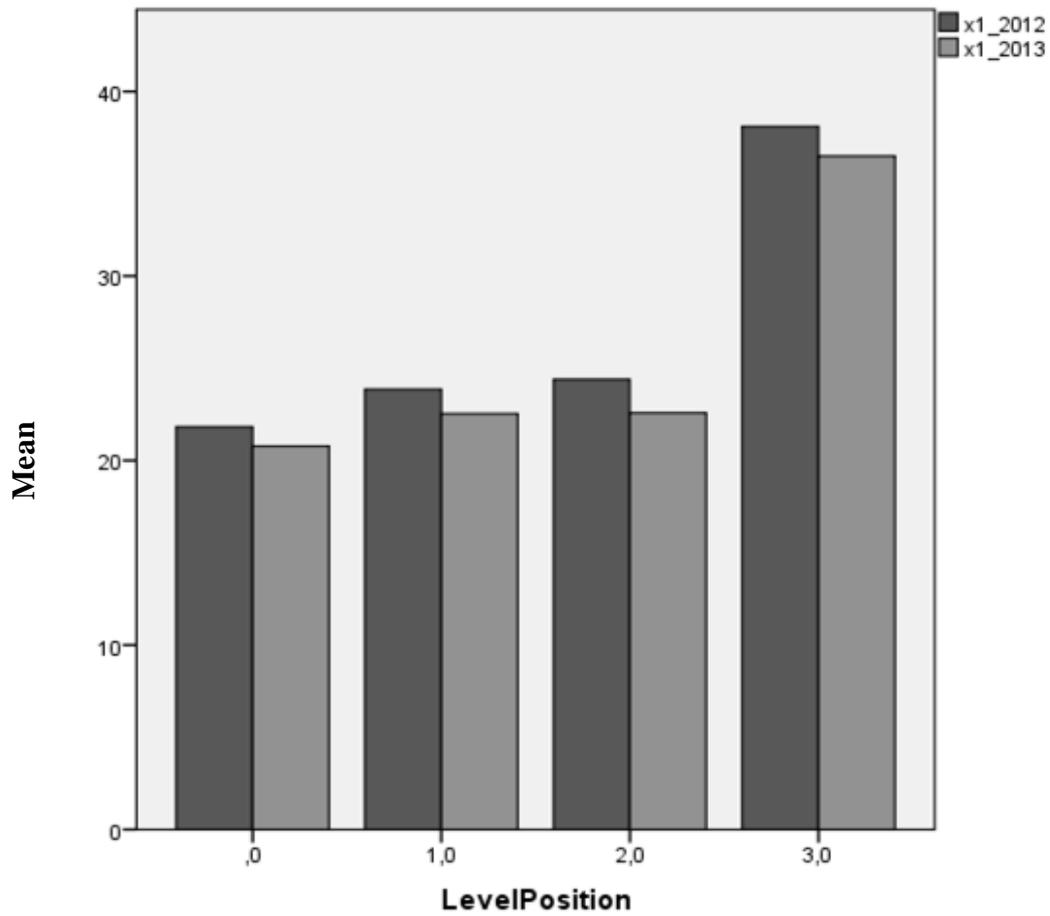
**Appendix 15: Descriptive Test's results for indicators w1, w2, w3, w4, w5, w6, w7, w8, w9  
and z1, z2 for the year 2013**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
w1	259	1	4	1,54	,813
w2	259	1	5	2,32	,919
w3	259	1	5	2,40	,936
w4	259	2	6	3,52	,916
w5	259	1	4	1,80	,863
w6	259	3	6	4,97	,846
w7	259	4	6	5,27	,658
w8	259	4	6	5,44	,715
w9	259	1	5	2,13	,848
z1	259	1	4	1,78	,886
z2	259	1	4	1,74	,871
Valid N (listwise)	259				

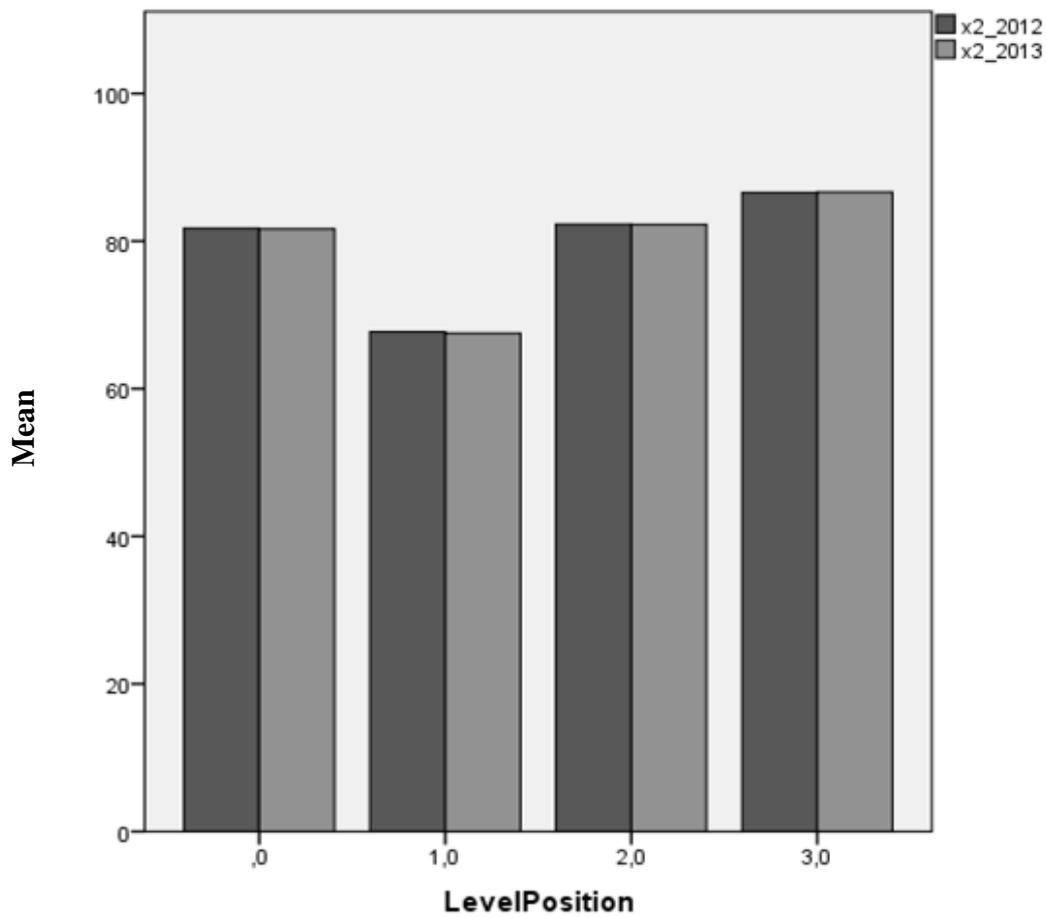
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 16: Histogram for indicator *Ratio of received application to offered position* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



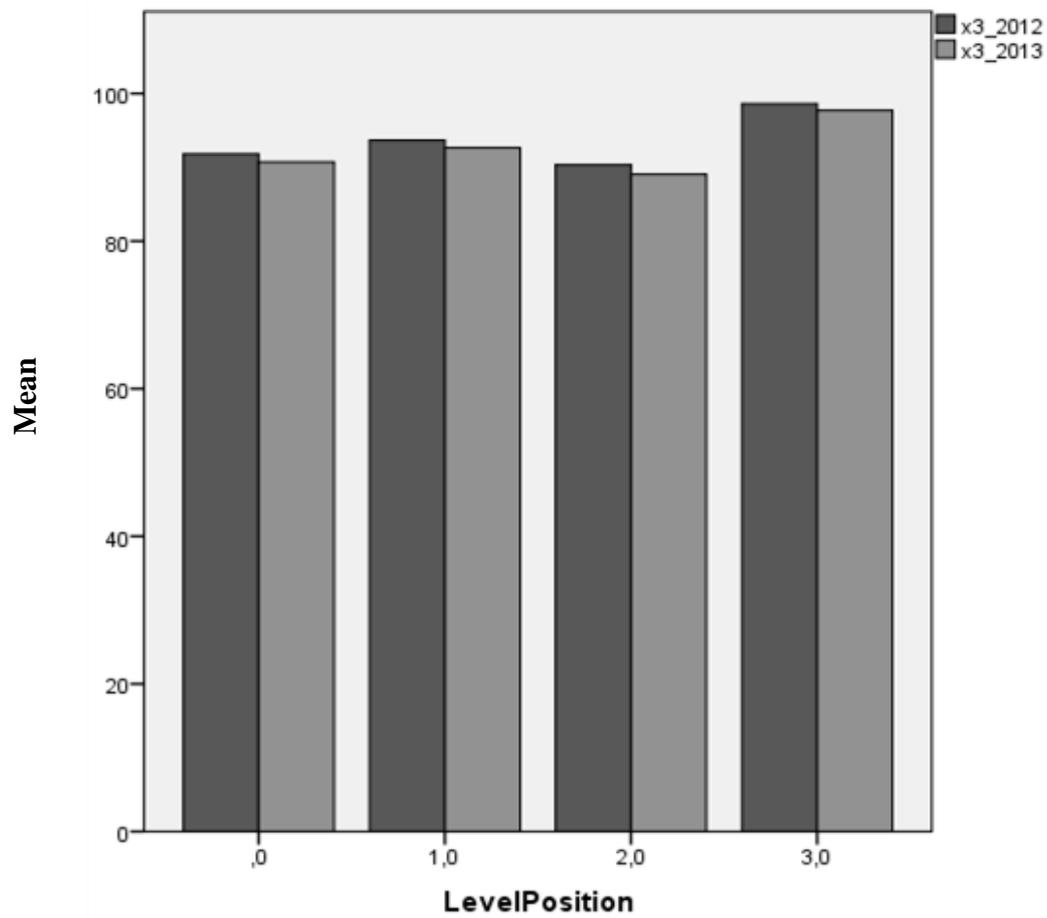
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 17: Histogram for indicator *Rate of identification between received application and offered position* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



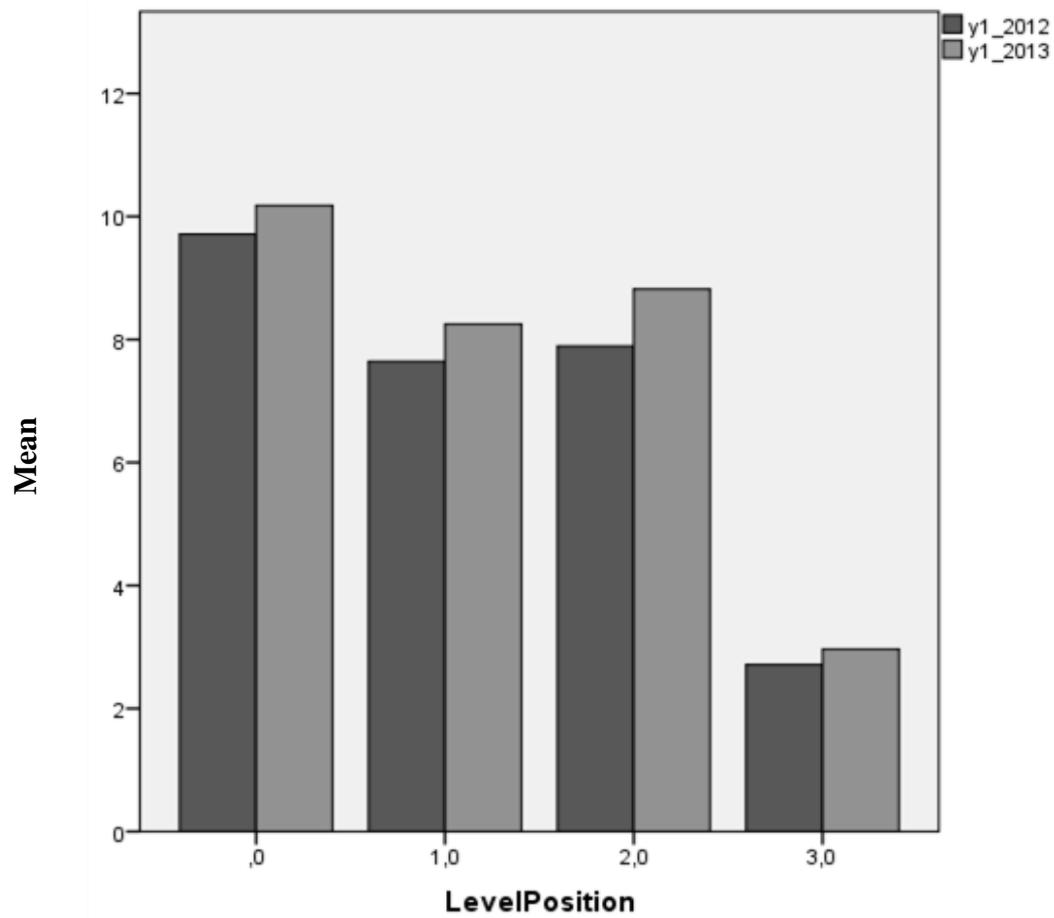
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 18: Histogram for indicator *Retention rate after probation period* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



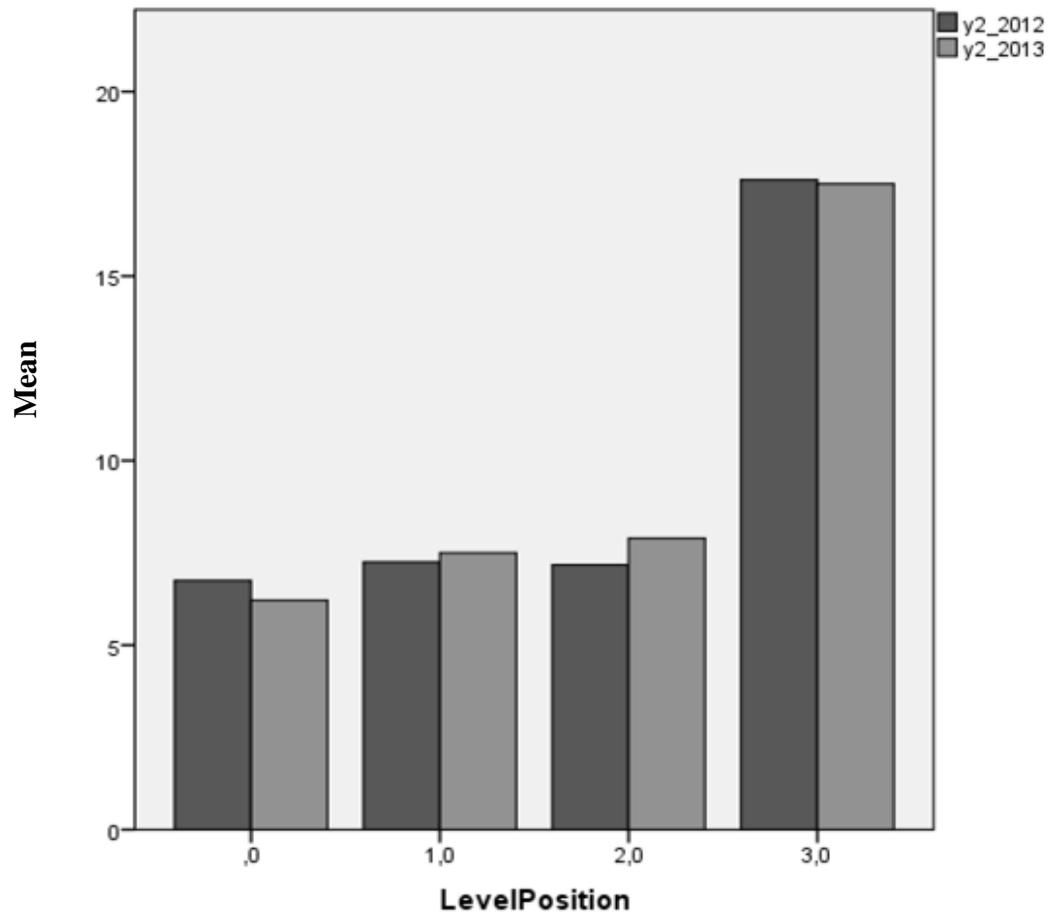
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 19: Histogram for indicator *Fluctuation rate* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



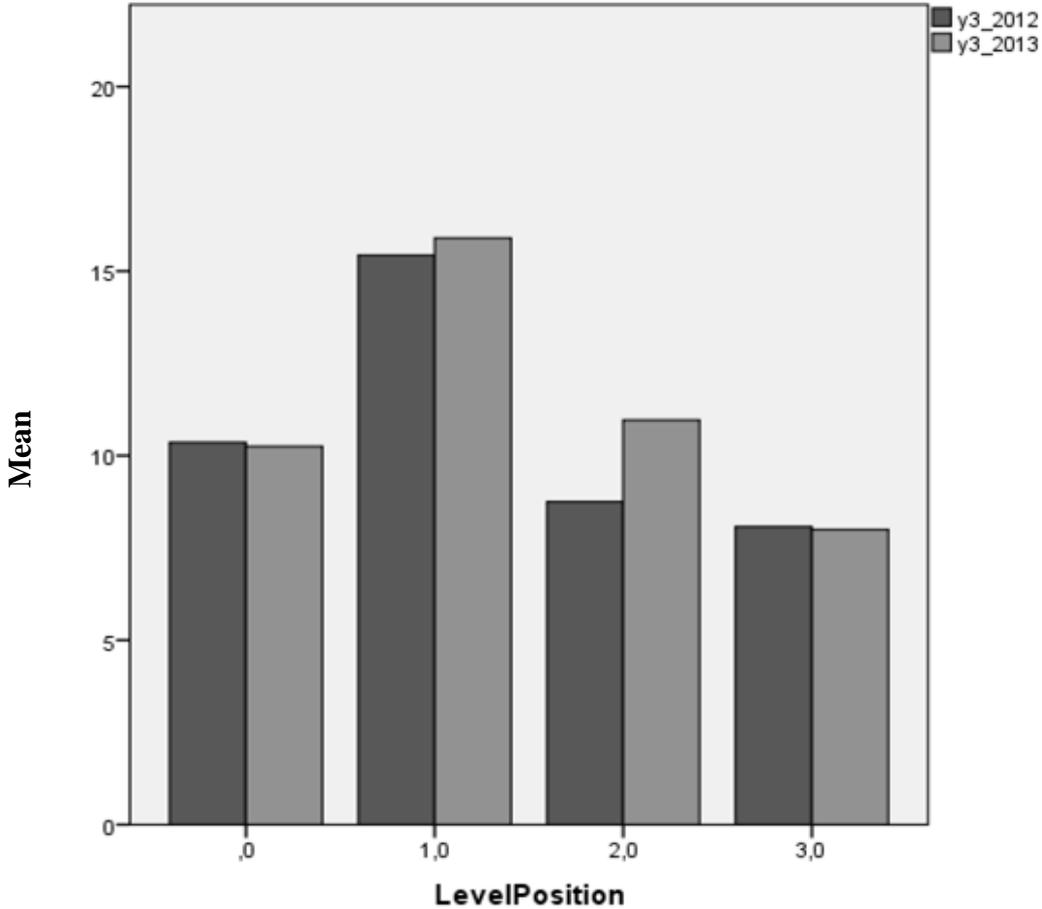
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 20: Histogram for indicator *Average Retention period* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



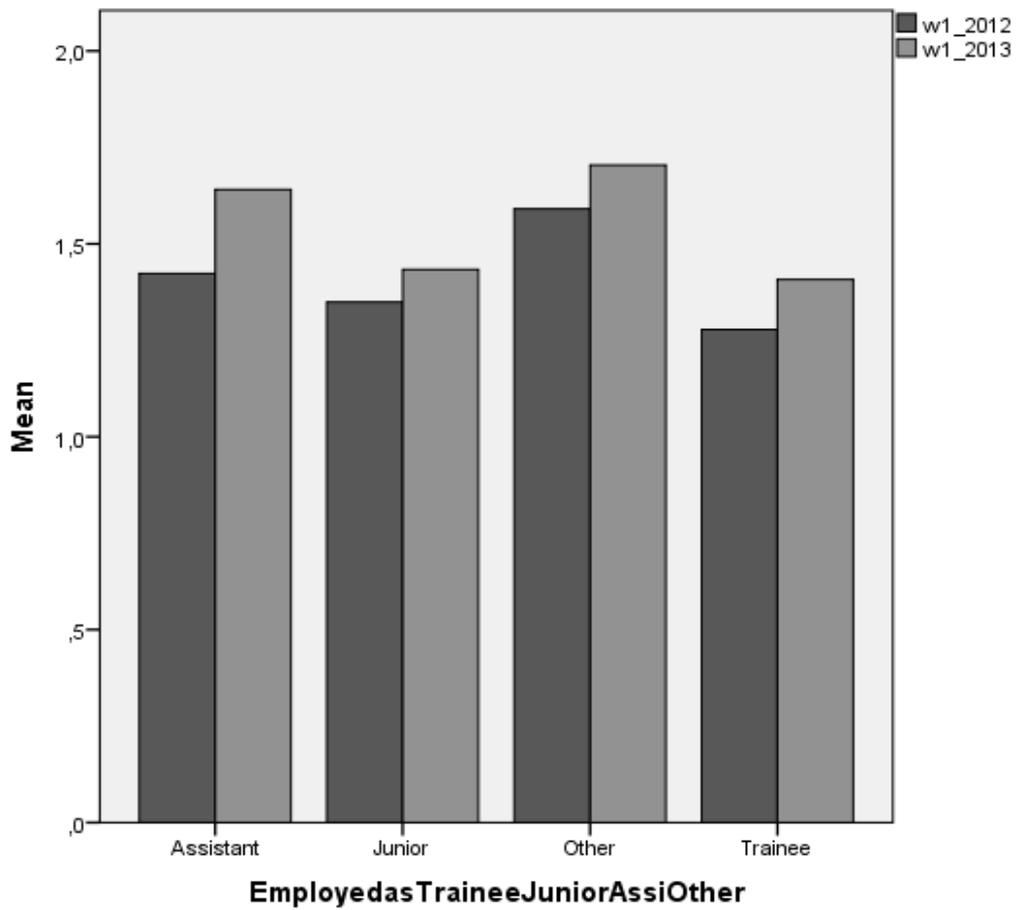
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 21: Histogram for indicator *Absenteeism* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



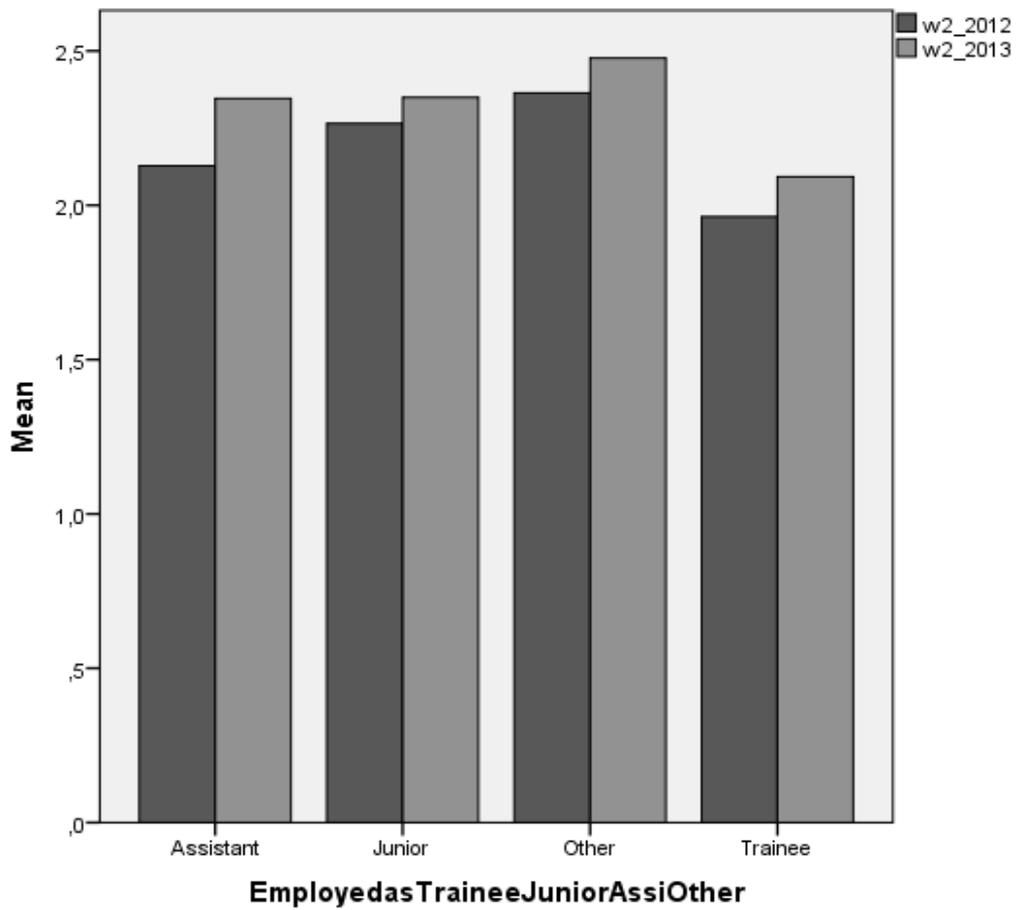
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 22: Histogram for indicator *Classification of a company's participation at university / career fair* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



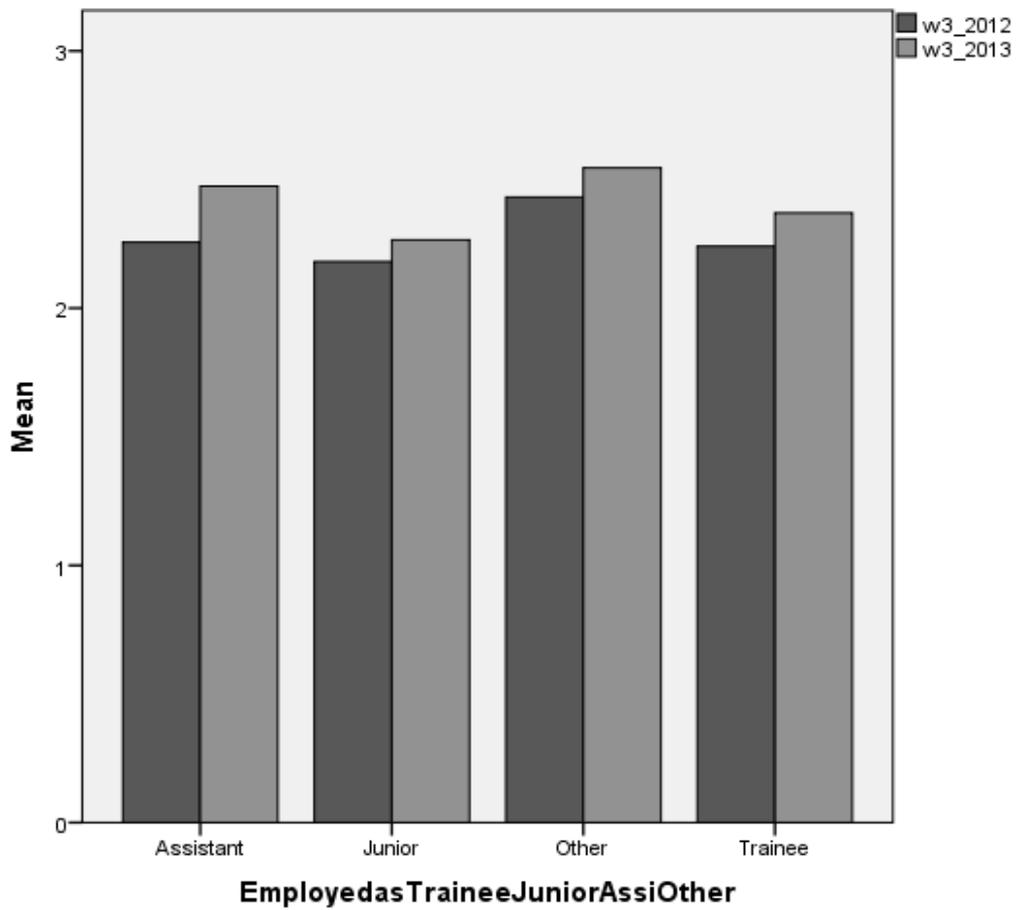
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 23: Histogram for indicator *Classification of a personal discussion with a company's representative* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



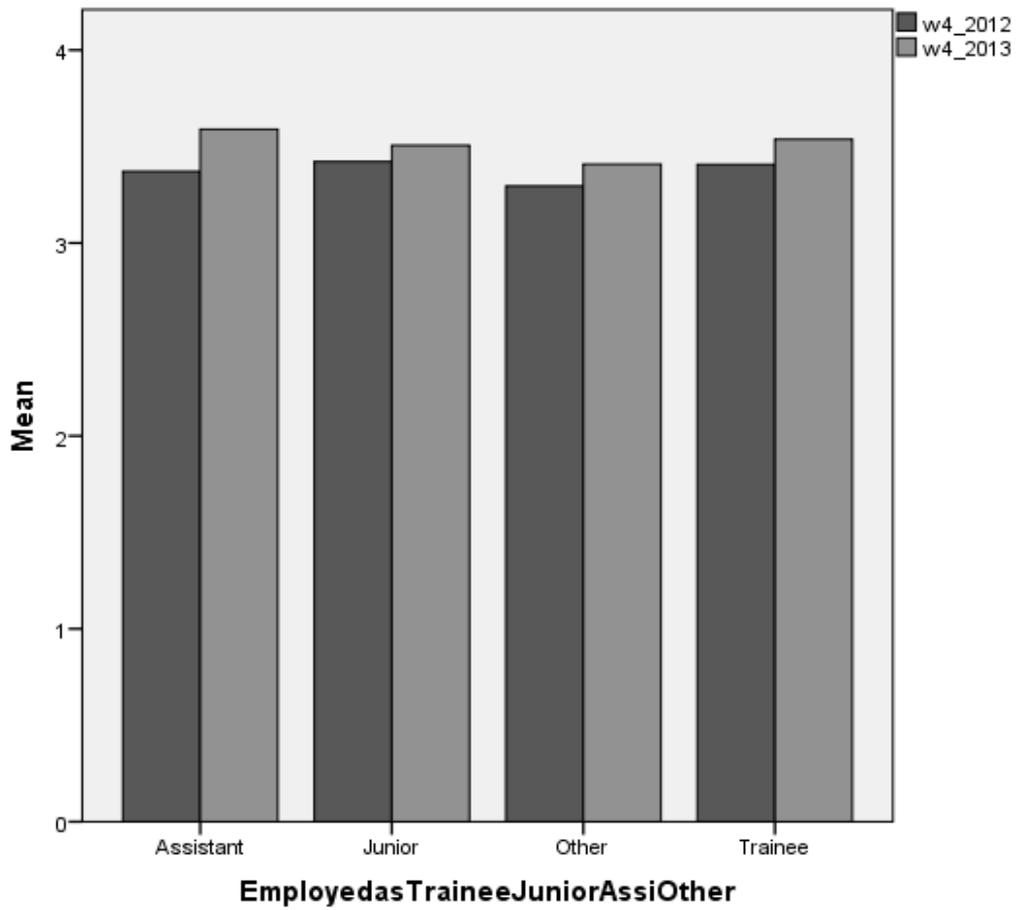
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 24: Histogram for indicator *Classification of company's lectures and / or presentations at university* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



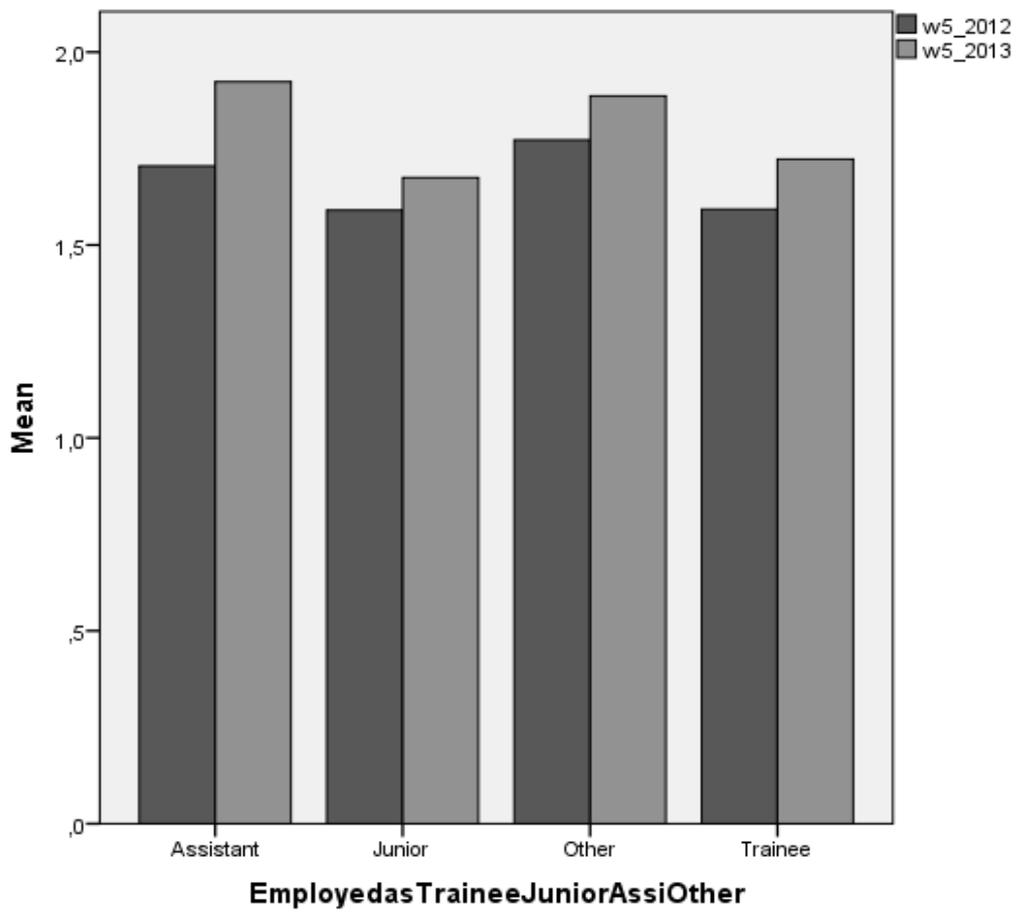
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 25: Histogram for indicator *Classification of possible company visits* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



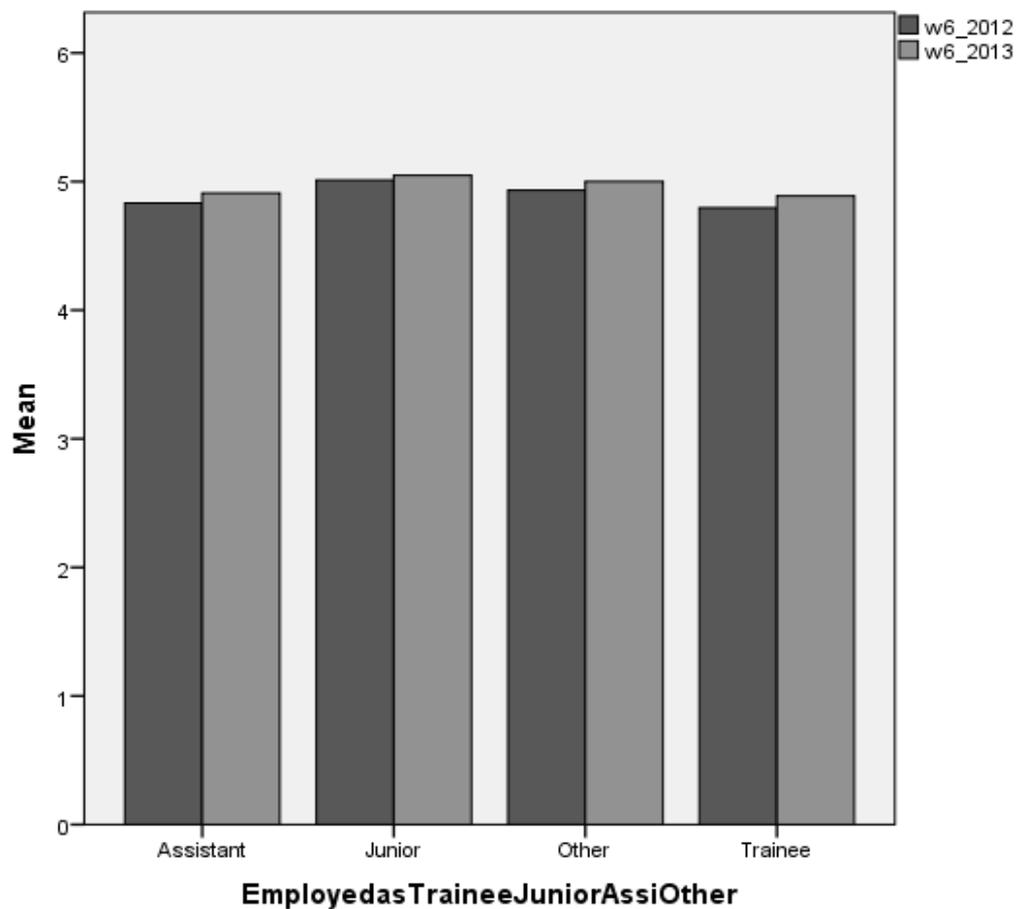
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 26: Histogram for indicator *Classification of internship offers within a company* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



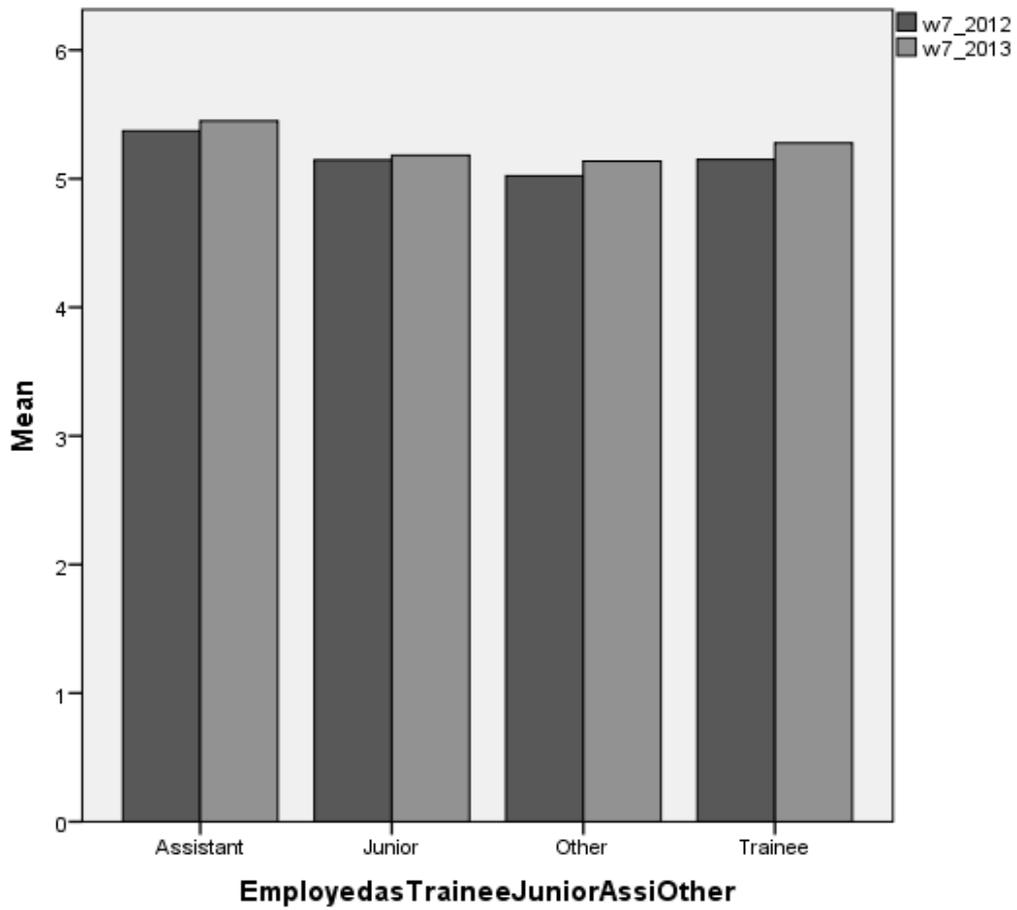
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 27: Histogram for indicator *Classification of company's image advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



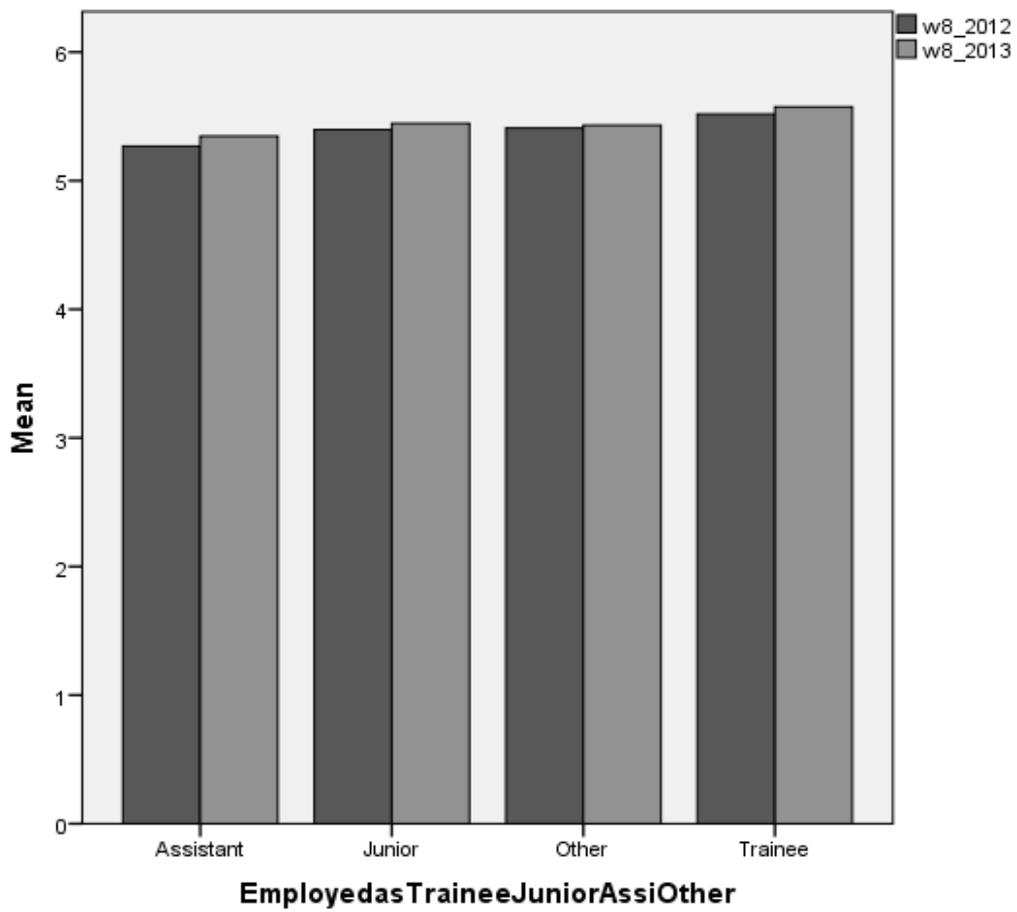
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 28: Histogram for indicator *Classification of company's image brochures* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



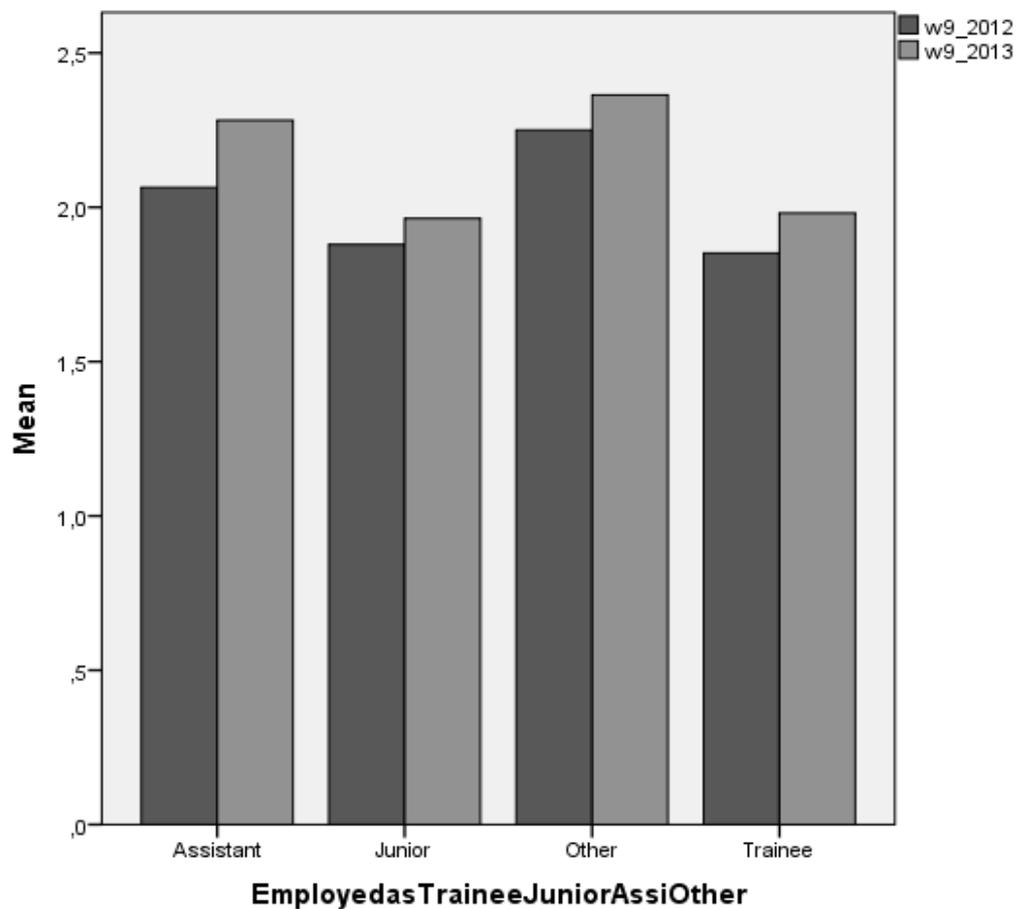
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 29: Histogram for indicator *Classification of company's product promotion activities* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



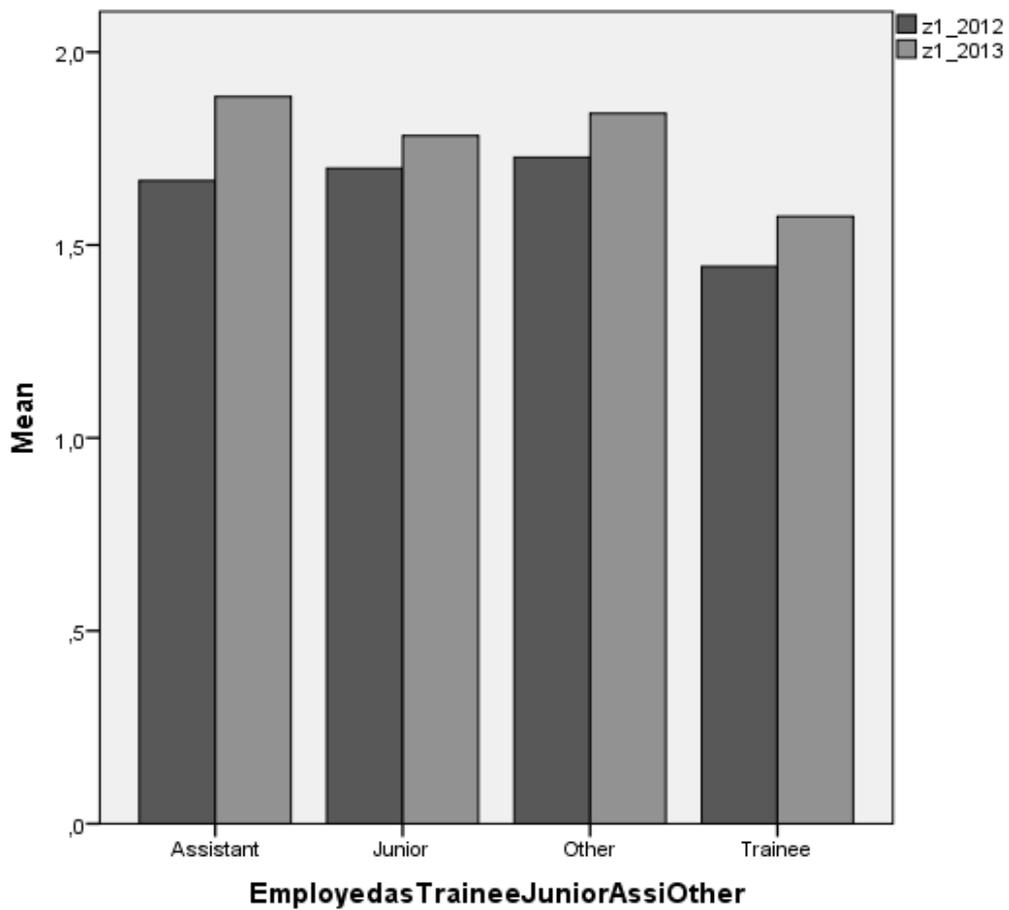
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 30: Histogram for indicator *Classification of company's job advertisements in newspaper, TV, radio and / or online media* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



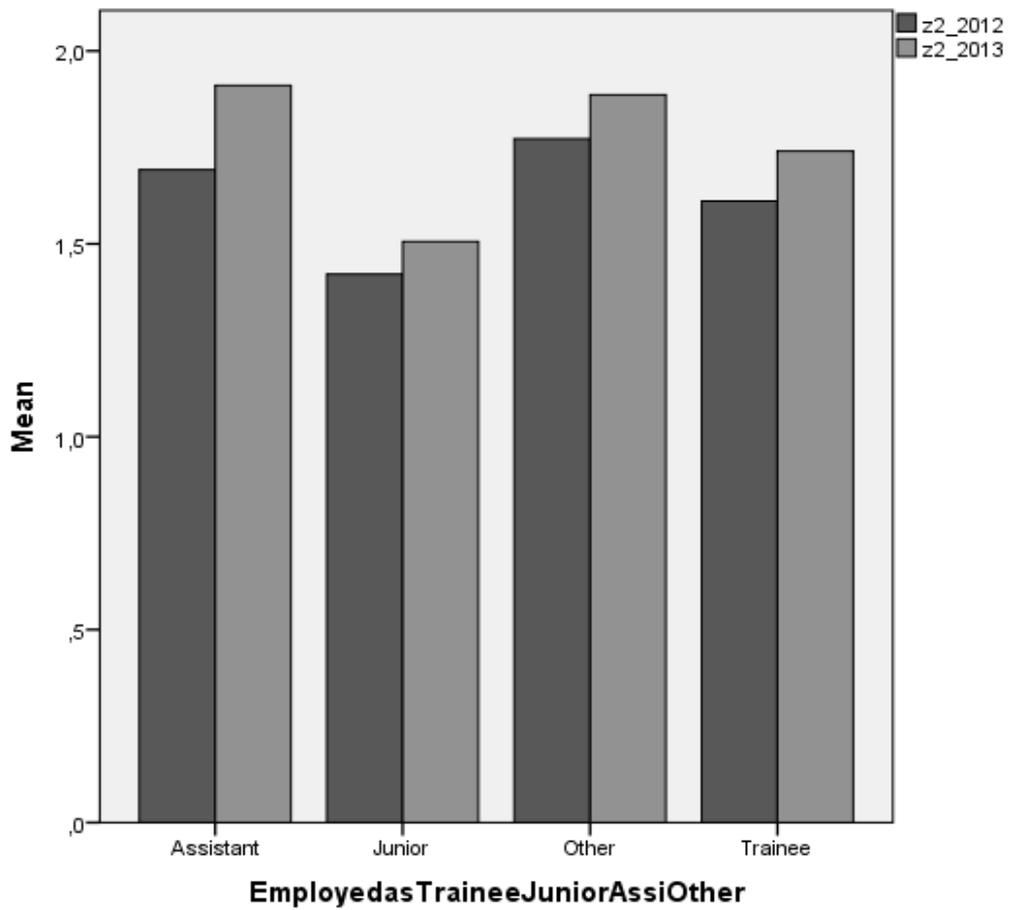
Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 31: Histogram for indicator *Classification of the company's brand awareness on the labor market* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 32: Histogram for indicator *Classification of the company into an employer of choice on the labor market* according to employee groups separated for the year 2012 and 2013**



Source: Author's creation out of SPSS

**Appendix 33: Job titles and employer's organizations of interviewed human resource management's marketing professionals**

Sylvia Beemüller, Human Resource Professional

Allplan GmbH, Munich / Germany

Karena Hansel, Director Human Resources

Homann Gruppe, Dissen / Germany

Markus Dörrmann, Human Resource Manager

Daichii Sankyo Germany, Munich / Germany