MASTER THESIS

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International Marketing

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Development of an Employer Branding Communication Concept to attract the Generation Z with Focus on Social Media

on the example of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

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Declaration of Authenticity

I hereby certify that I have written the present thesis independently and without help from any third parties. I have not used any sources other than those which are clearly indicated and have duly provided details of the sources of both direct and indirect quotation.

The present piece of work and parts thereof have to date not been presented to this or any other examination board in the same or similar form, nor have they been published. The present version is the same as the electronic version submitted.

Principle of Equality

For readability purposes, gender-specific formulations have not been used in the present piece of work. It is, however, hereby expressly stated that when the masculine form is used to denote people, both sexes are being referred to.

Graz, 07/11/2022 ……………………………

Sabrina Pospichal

Acknowledgements

Summary

Appropriately addressing qualified graduates and young professionals of Generation Z and retaining them is a vital competitive advantage of personnel intensive organizations. Due to demographic change and the declining attractiveness of the financial sector, it is becoming increasingly difficult for financial institutions to attract these urgently needed young professionals. This thesis therefore addresses the composition of an employer branding concept for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. The concept focuses in particular on social media communication for Generation Z.

The theory part discusses the generations, with a special focus on external employer branding communication for Generation Z. This is followed by a presentation of social media employer branding communication for Generation Z, and a discussion of the general fundamentals of an employer branding concept. Various arguments for a digitally based social media employer branding concept for Generation Z are outlined. In addition, Generation Z is specifically addressed as workforce in the banking sector.

In the practical part, social media communication measures of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG are analyzed. Moreover, a primary scientific study delivered valuable insights into the employer preferences, the perception, as well as the communication behavior of Generation Z. The findings from literature and the individual analyses have formed the basis for a unified communication concept. Besides concrete measures, the concept also contains recommendations for implementation and monitoring. Ultimately, the concept is intended to support Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG in presenting itself as an attractive employer for Generation Z on social media.

Abstract

Die richtige Ansprache und Bindung von qualifizierten Absolventen und Berufseinsteigern der Generation Z ist ein entscheidender Wettbewerbsvorteil personalintensiver Unternehmen. Aufgrund des demografischen Wandels und der sinkenden Attraktivität des Finanzsektors wird es für Finanzinstitute immer schwieriger, diese dringend benötigten jungen Fachkräfte zu gewinnen. Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigt sich aus diesem Grund mit der Erstellung eines Employer Branding Konzeptes für die Steiermärksiche Bank und Sparkassen AG. Das Konzept konzentriert sich insbesondere auf die Social Media Kommunikation für die Generation Z.

Der Theorieteil befasst sich mit den Generationen, wobei ein besonderer Schwerpunkt auf der externen Employer Branding Kommunikation für die Generation Z liegt. Es folgt die Behandlung von Social Media Employer Branding Kommunikation für die Generation Z, bevor die allgemeinen Ausführungen eines Employer Branding Konzept diskutiert werden. Es werden verschiedene Argumente für ein digital basiertes Social Media Employer Branding Konzept für die Generation Z aufgezeigt. Darüber hinaus wird die Generation Z speziell als Arbeitskraft im Bankensektor angesprochen.

Im Praxisteil werden die Social Media Kommunikationsmaßnahmen der Steiermärkischen Bank und Sparkassen AG analysiert. Darüber hinaus lieferte eine wissenschaftliche Primärstudie wertvolle Erkenntnisse über die Arbeitgeberpräferenzen, die Wahrnehmung sowie das Kommunikationsverhalten der Generation. Die Erkenntnisse aus der Literatur und den Einzelanalysen bildeten die Grundlage für ein einheitliches Kommunikationskonzept. Neben konkreten Maßnahmen enthält das Konzept auch Empfehlungen zur Umsetzung und Kontrolle. Letztendlich soll das Konzept die Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG dabei unterstützen, sich als attraktiver Arbeitgeber für die Generation Z in den sozialen Medien zu präsentieren.

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List of abbreviations

BGC	Brand generated content	XI
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	
CPM	Cost per mille	
EVP	Employer Value Proposition	
eWoM	Electronic word of mouth	
HR	Human resources	
KPI	Key performance indicator	
UGC	User generated content	
USP	Unique selling proposition	
WKO	Wirtschaftskammer Österreich	

1 Introduction

1.1 Initial Situation

The Covid-19 crisis in Austria has a significant impact on almost all areas of life, especially on businesses. It has slowed down economic activity and thus the labor market. By doing so it had clearly a negative impact on employment (cf. Eurostat 2022). Despite this development, the findings of an annual nationwide survey of more than 4,200 businesses in Austria on behalf of the WKO indicate that broad sections of the Austrian economy are heavily impacted by a lack of qualified workforce. In Austria, the shortage of skilled workers is at its highest since the 1950s, at around 221,000 people (cf. Dornmayr/Riepl 2021, p. 16). This is also referred to as *"war for talent".* The term was first coined in 1998 in a study by the prestigious consultancy McKinsey & Company. The authors illustrated the increasing difficulty companies face in finding qualified personnel (cf. Chambers et al. 1998, p. 44 f.). However, Werding (2019) argues that this is partly an expression of demographic change and a direct continuation of longstanding trends (cf. Werding 2019, pp. 5-7).

Demographic change

The following diagram shows the population development in Austria in 2020 and estimated developments for the years 2040 until 2060 (cf. Statistik Austria 2021):
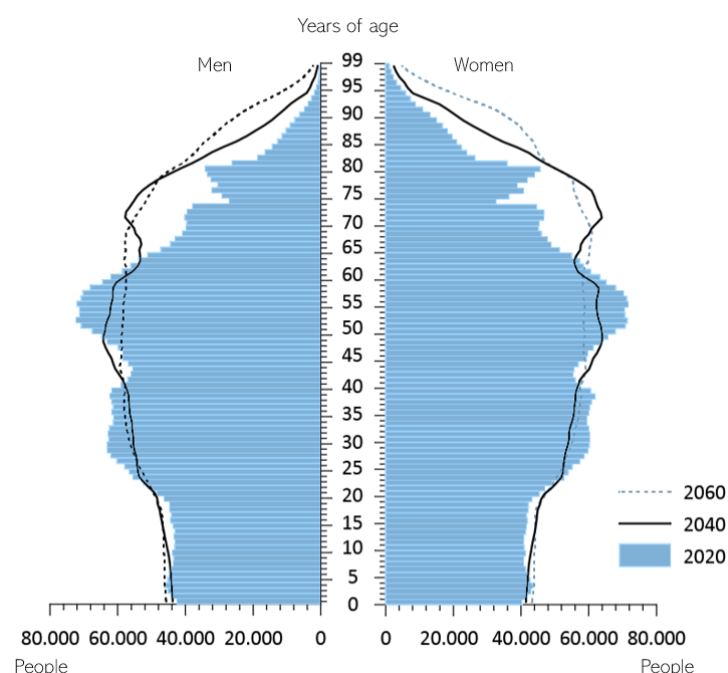
Figure 1: Expected population developments in Austria (based on Statistik Austria 2021)

The fertility rate in Austria, which averages at around 1.40 children per woman is significantly below replacement level. From the mid to late 1960s, birth rates in Austria fell rapidly and stabilized at a low level of just below 1.5 children per woman. This downwards trend is even more apparent in the crude birth rate (number of births per 1.000 people):
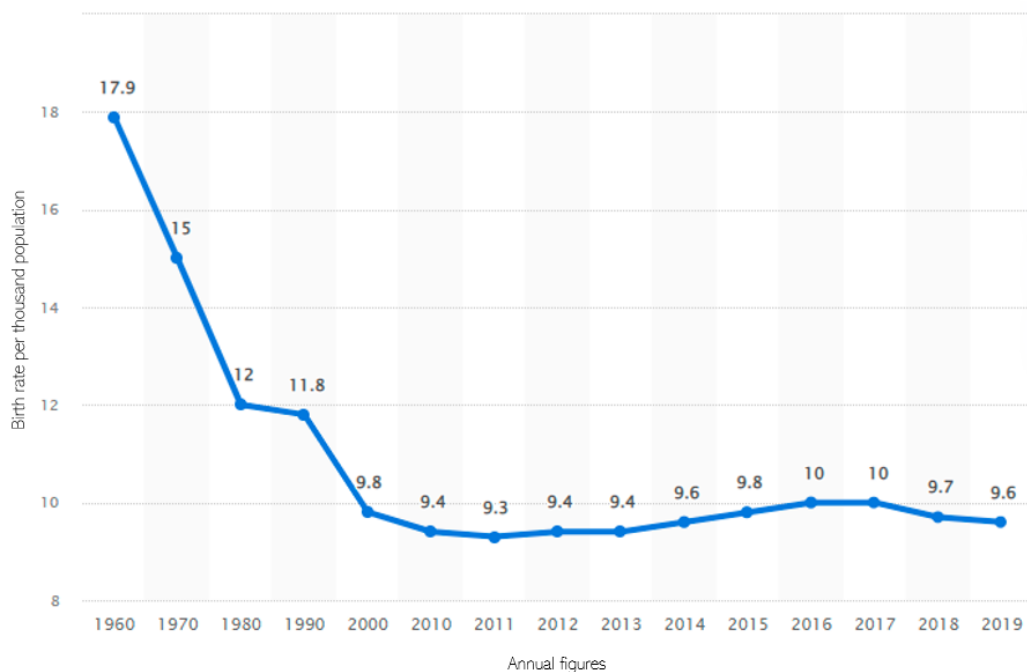
Figure 2: Crude birth rate in Austria from 1960 to 2019 (Statista 2019a)

The most important reason for this is that, during this period, relatively large birth cohorts will retire from the labor force and much smaller cohorts will enter the workforce (cf. Werding 2019, p. 9).

Changed expectations and values of Generation Z

In addition, these fewer graduates' values differ from previous generations. Employers need to be aware of this, as Generation Z portrays itself as disloyal and leaves a company much faster compared to other generations (cf. Kring/Hurrelmann 2019, p. 17), making it difficult for employers to retain and attract qualified personnel in an employee market (cf. Hesse et al. 2019, p. 57). To fill vacant positions appropriately, the battle between companies for best talent will become more intense (cf. Chambers et al. 1998, p. 47).

1.2 Challenges

The goal of every company therefore is to retain highly committed, qualified and motivated employees, especially in difficult economic times. Attracting and retaining employees with sufficient qualifications is an increasing and ongoing challenge for companies, especially when facing demographic changes and uncertainty in the labor market (cf. Dornmayr/Riepl 2021, p. 27).

Particularly in the financial sector the attractiveness of banks has suffered greatly in recent years. Many private banks have massively reduced their branch network, leading to a lower number of employees and thus causing image-damaging restructuring headlines (cf. Der Standard 2022). The following graph illustrates the shrinking number of banks in Austria until 2021 (cf. Statista 2022):
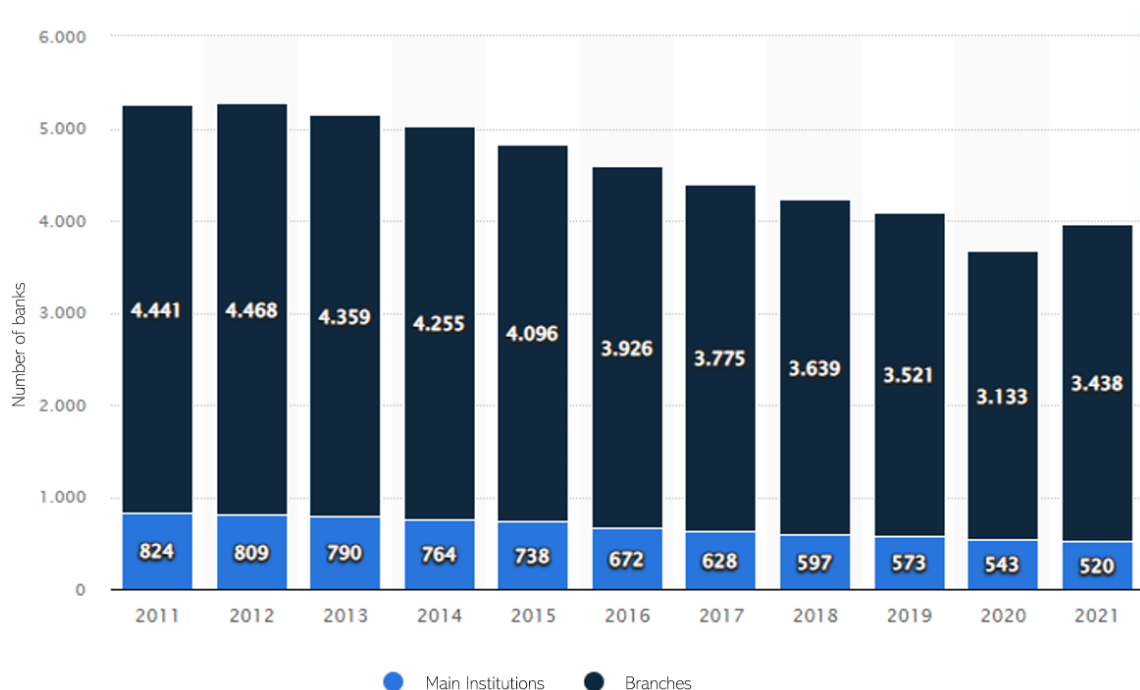
Figure 3: Number of banks in Austria from 2011 to 2021 (based on Statista 2022)

Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is the largest credit institution in the country with a total of 3,009 employees working at 231 locations in Austria and the Western Balkan region (cf. Sparkasse 2022a).

Nevertheless, the supply for skilled personnel is becoming a major obstacle:

- The demographic development in Austria, which is essentially expressed in a declining share of the younger generation and an increasing share of the older generation, has a major impact on the number of applicants.
- As well as a change in values of Generation Z is leading to a decreased number of applications (cf. Baier 2021).

In summary, Generation Z's new expectations are a challenge and the demographic shift in the society leading to fewer and low qualified applicants is not preferable for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. However, the image of a company as an attractive employer is an important competitive advantage in recruiting efforts. As an employer, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG needs to act on the expectations of this new generation. An employer branding concept would support the creation of a strong employer brand that is specifically tailored towards the values and expectations of Generation Z. This is done to assist Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG to be perceived as an attractive employer and thus attract better qualified employees.

1.3 Objectives

1.1.1 Company aims

Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG has decided to maintain a strong regional branch network for its private and corporate customers, specializing in the house bank function. This strategic approach requires a substantial amount of personnel. For this reason, the recruitment team aims to ensure that Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is seen as an attractive employer by Generation Z, resulting in:

- a 25% increase in unsolicited applications by graduates and young professionals - from six to eight applications per offer/month - completed by November 2023.
- a 5% increase in the employee retention rate for employees belonging to Generation Z, from 5% to 10% by November 2023 (cf. Baier 2021).

1.1.2 Thesis aim

As an attractive employer, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG seeks to reach well-qualified graduates. These "*young potentials*" are essential for a healthy and productive workforce (cf. Baier 2021). Therefore, the main objective of this thesis is to develop an employer branding concept for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. The concept seeks to attract mainly graduates and young professionals of Generation Z. The predominant sub-goals are presented below:

- Identifying how Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is perceived as a prospective employer by Generation Z in Austria by conducting quantitative research.
- Adapting the existing employer value proposition to align better with the preferences of Generation Z by incorporating the research results.

1.1.3 Non-objectives

Internal employer branding for the existing employees of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is not aim of the concept, as well as creating an employer brand concept for branches outside of Austria (cf. Baier 2021).

1.4 Frame of Reference

INTRODUCTION

Initial Situation	Challenge
War for Talent	Missing EB Communication Concept

Objectives

Company aims	Thesis aims

THEORETICAL PART

The Concept of Generation with Focus on Gen Z

Generations in the Labor Market
Core Values of Gen Z
Gen Z as a Workforce in the Banking Sector

External EB Communication

Extern Employer Branding
Employer Branding Communication
Reasons for generation-based EB

Social Media EB Communication for Gen Z

The role of Social Media in Employer Branding Communication
Social Media EB Communication for Gen Z in the Workforce

Development of EB Concept

- Definition of EB Objectives • Identification of the Target Group • Situation Analysis
- Strategy Development • Social Media Communication Strategy • Implementation • Monitoring

PRACTICAL PART

Steiermärkische Sparkasse

Facts and Figures
Vision, Mission and Values

Research Design

Secondary Research   Primary Research

Development of EB Concept

Recommendations

Measures
Implementation
Monitoring & Controlling

Conclusion

Figure 4: Frame of reference (prepared by the author)

2 The Concept of Generation with Focus on Generation Z

In this second chapter, a terminological differentiation of the generations in the labor market is made in order to specify the Generation Z as a target group. In the course of the theoretical examination of the generations, special attention is paid to the historical background by which the respective generation was shaped. A terminological overview of Generation Z, the economic environment, characteristics and communication behavior is investigated. Beyond that, the core values and expectations of Generation Z towards the workplace are discussed.

2.1 Generations in the Labor Market

According to sociologist Karl Mannheim (1928), a generation is understood as a social cohort that experiences a common birth period and formative collective events (e.g., World War II) during childhood or adolescence (cf. Mannheim 1928, pp. 309-311). From the perspective of this social historical angle, generations can be characterized by a common set of values (cf. Klaffke 2021a, p. 17). It is emphasized that a person's fundamental values are shaped primarily during childhood, adolescence, and the early adult years. This socialization hypothesis has been studied and numerous results emphasize that people of the same age have similar memories (cf. Schewe/Meredith 2004, p. 62). Accordingly, a certain basic attitude can be attributed to a generation. This basic attitude is reflected, among other things, in patterns of values and behavior. In this sense a generation is to be understood as a dynamic construct. The generational approach implies a conscious categorization of people. It reduces complexity and supports the understanding of important trends, tendencies and developments in society (cf. Klaffke 2021a, pp. 17-19).

In literature, the time classification of generations varies, as does the terminology. Therefore, there are several terms for one generation. However, four birth cohorts can be distinguished since about 1950 (cf. Klaffke 2021a, p. 19). The following graphic intends to provide a rough understanding with a chronological classification of the generations in literature (cf. Francis/Hoefel 2018):

Figure 5: Overview of birth cohorts (based on Francis/Hoefel 2018)

All previously mentioned generations are active on the Austrian labor market. The following overview illustrates the current position for each generation in their professional life. It particularly points out that Generation Z is about to enter the workforce (cf. Klaffke 2021a, p. 20):
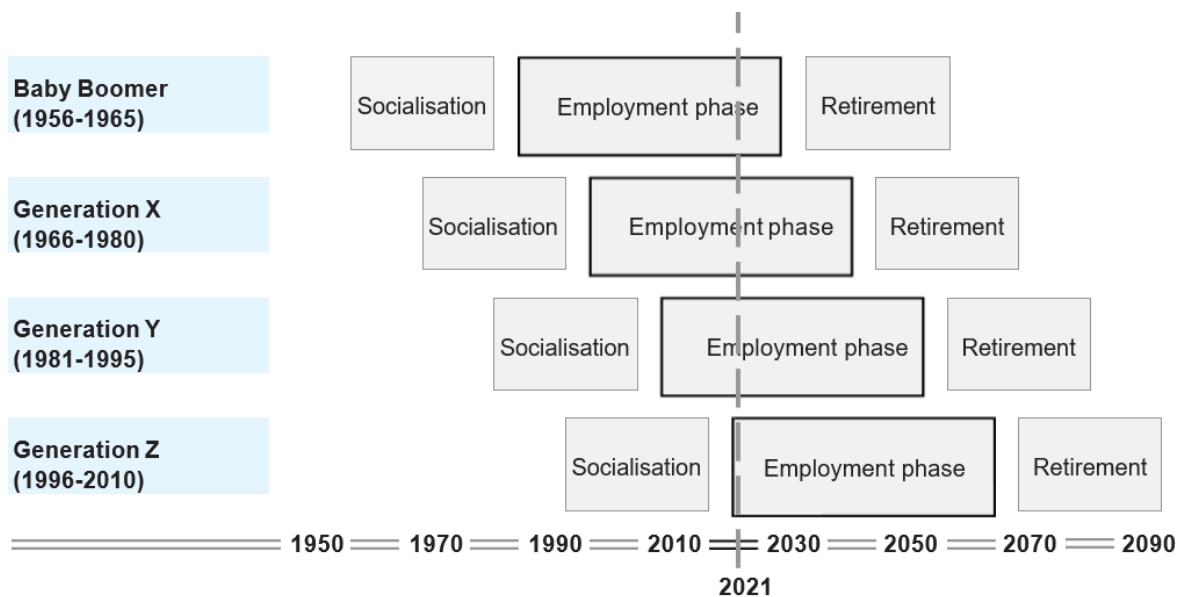
Figure 6: Generations in the Austrian labor market (based on Klaffke 2021a, p. 20)

Based on the graph above the following sections describe the generations represented briefly, the environment in which they grew up, the values they believe in and the attributes they represent in the work environment.

2.1.1 Baby Boomer

The so-called "*Baby Boomer*" generation was born between 1956 and 1965 (cf. Francis/Hoefel 2018). The year with the highest birth rate in Austria to date was 1963 with a maximum of almost 135,000 births. This was the peak of the baby boom in Austria (cf. Eurostat 2016). The Baby Boomers did not have a seamless transition into the workforce due to the oil crisis in the 1970s and 1980s of the 20th centuries. This period was the first real economic crisis of the post-war period. Stagnating economic growth led to the introduction of mass unemployment (cf. Oertel 2021, p. 50 f.). Therefore, the Baby Boomers value a decent quality of life more than all other generations (cf. Brake 2003, p. 161). The typical Baby Boomer can be characterized as follows (cf. Oertel 2021, p. 56): assertive, team spirited and friendly. Other age groups often attribute helpfulness, social competence, and idealism to them, plus they are said to have a high level of self-assessment. They are seen as reliable partners with whom one can work effectively with. Such qualities, predestine them for positions with customer contact (cf. Oertel 2021, p. 56).

2.1.2 Generation X

The next generation, Generation X, was born between 1966 and 1980 (cf. Francis/Hoefel 2018). The originator of the name of this generation is Douglas Coupland (1991), who made this generation famous in his socio-critical novel "*Generation X*". The author described the generation accurately, as in retrospect his description coincided with scientifically based research (cf. Coupland 1991, p. 1). In terms of occupational situation, Generation X's entry years were largely characterized by a more competitive situation than those of the baby boomers (cf. Oertel 2021, p. 69). Generation X values the importance of family, friendships and joie de vivre to a greater extent (cf. Oertel 2021, p. 61). Overall, the Generation X can be characterized as follows (cf. Oertel 2021, p. 70): creative, tolerant, achievement-oriented, resilient, self-confident, friendly, rational, helpful and a team player. Among these qualities, self-confidence, and friendliness are particularly valued across other generations. Additionally, the "*Xers*" are regarded as competent contact persons and reliable colleagues with whom one can work well with (cf. Oertel 2021, p. 70).

2.1.3 Generation Y

The classification continues with Generation Y, who were born between 1981 and 1995 (cf. Francis/Hoefel 2018). "*Generation Y*" is a term coined in *Ad Age* magazine in 1993, when the editor described the teenagers of the day, who were defined as different from Generation X (cf. Ad Age 1993, p. 16). They are also referred to as "*Millennials*" (Strauss/Howe 1991, p. 97). Generation Y also follows on alphabetically from the previous Generation X. Nevertheless, Y also stands for "*WHY*" in the English language and thus refers to a generation that asks critical questions and questions the meaningfulness of potential actions (cf. Albert/Hurrelmann/Quenzel 2015, p. 35). The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001 is frequently cited as a formative event for Generation Y. In addition, the emergence of the internet has shaped their youth (cf. Klaffke/Parment 2011, pp. 6-8.). Overall, Generation Y can be characterized as follows (cf. Klaffke 2021b, pp. 91-97): reliable, achievement-oriented, joie de vivre-seeking, searching for meaning, believes in the concept of lifelong learning and authenticity. Managers should pay close attention to the emotional level in order to encourage Millennials' top performance and emotional commitment (cf. Klaffke 2021b, p. 97). Additionally, they are regarded as competent and professional as they have often a decade of experience in their profession (cf. Klaffke 2021b, p. 89).

2.1.4 Generation Z

The youngest generation on the labor market is Generation Z. Generation Z was born between 1996 and 2010 (cf. Francis/Hoefel 2018) and thus includes around 1,2 million people in Austria (cf. Statistik Austria 2021). The terms "*Generation Z*", „*iGeneration*" or "*Homelanders"* were often used interchangeably to describe this generation (cf. Dimock 2019). In fact, the generation was even coined "*Generation Greta*", which refers to the climate activist Greta Thunberg (cf. Hurrelmann/Albrecht 2020, p. 1). However, there is no exact method for determining whether a name is set, Michael Dimock, president of the Pew Research Center, states that Gen Z is clearly in the lead. In the next few years this cohort will enter adulthood (cf. Dimock 2019). They will enter the workforce and represent the employees of tomorrow (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawa 2021, p. 32). For this reason, this generation will be analyzed in more detail below:

Economic Environment

From an overarching perspective, the hallmarks of this epoch since 2010 continue to be worldwide uncertainty, political upheaval and increasing terrorism. In addition, the rise of authoritarian nationalism, including right-wing populism, is putting liberal-democratic ideas under pressure in many countries. After the "*summer of migration*" in 2015, the high number of asylum seekers posed considerable challenges on politics and society in Europe. Further challenges arose with the emergence of so-called "*alternative facts*". First described and discussed in the media during Trump's presidency, the term refers to facts in which the line between truth and falsification or wishful thinking is blurred (cf. Klaffke 2021b, p. 102). All these events and economic circumstances have resulted in the fact, that Generation Z places a high value on stable social relationships, health, fulfilling work combined with job security, financial independence, and freedom (cf. Hurrelmann/Köcher/Sommer 2019, p. 15). They are inclined to save money and consider economic stability an important element in their career decision-making process (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawa 2021, p. 38). In addition, due to the economic upswing since the beginning of the 2010s, Generation Z is growing up under largely secure living conditions This held true until 2020, when the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) was discovered, which significantly impaired the economic situation (cf. Klaffke 2021b, p. 105 f.).

Characteristics

Electronic media, new communication possibilities and virtual worlds have a significant influence on Generation Z's upbringing. Google, Wikipedia, Facebook and even YouTube had already been introduced by the time internet use became relevant for Generation Z (cf. Klaffke 2021b, p. 104). Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawa (2021) consider them the "*very first digital natives*". For Generation Z, analog and digital worlds merge into a borderless, universal way of life (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawa 2021, p. 38). Kleinjohann and Reinecke (2020) even state that for Generation Z the credo is "*mobile only*" as the smartphone has become the constant, almost physically connected medium for communication, research or interaction (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 17). This generation spends more time on the mobile phone than any other generation before (cf. Criteo 2018, p. 11). According to OC&C's 2019 study "*Eine Generation ohne Grenzen*" Generation Z is constantly accessible, they don't go online, they live online 24/7 (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 5). Due to the constant nature of digital interaction Generation Z is more influenced

by endless external inspiration sources including family members and friends, as well as by media "*influencers"* than previous generations (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 28). Within this conformist generational behavior, this age cohort is seeking personal and recognizable individuality. They desire to be unique and communicate as such. In decision-making, this leads to personalized or limited editions being popular and preferred among Generation Z (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 16).

Communication behavior

In addition to knowledge about economic factors and psychographic characteristics, insights into the communication and media usage behavior of Generation Z support effective employer branding communication. As described above, Generation Z generally uses the smartphone as their primary means of communication. It is a door to a wide range of consumer offerings that enable personalization and commercialization of daily activities (cf. Tully 2018, p. 84 f.). Almost 100% of Generation Z owns a smartphone (cf. IZI 2022, p. 5), which is used continuously, even when they are in social situations to communicate, inform, or interact (cf. Elbdudler 2018, p. 5). Digitalization has had profound consequences on their media consumption, as 89% go online every day, and spend about four hours online (cf. MPFS 2020, p. 33). WhatsApp is the most widely used messenger service. Second in terms of frequency of use are social networks, especially YouTube and Instagram (cf. IZI 2022, p. 40). As a result, successful users of these platforms become so-called "*influencers*". Influencers have a wide reach and can exert a strong influence on followers (cf. Fries 2019, p. 5 f.). Through this trend Generation Z is influenced by their peer network, they tend to mimic and influence each other (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 28). However, they are not only "*always on*", but also a "*YouTube generation*" (Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 21). This means that they communicate strongly audiovisual via photos and videos (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 18). Furthermore, the "*secondscreen phenomenon*" (Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 21) is particularly pronounced and widespread among Generation Z when it comes to using moving images. This phenomenon describes the simultaneous use of a smartphone with corresponding apps or social media channels while using linear television (cf. Livadic 2018, p. 49.). Traditional media channels such as print, radio and television are consumed sparely by Generation Z. More than a third no longer watches linear TV (cf. MPFS 2020, p. 15).

2.2 Core Values of Generation Z

Reliable knowledge of this generation's communication behavior is crucial; however, more is required to be considered as attractive employer in this war for talents. The war for talent expanded employer branding by the dimension of corporate culture. Employer branding is no longer simply the fight for the best. The fight for the best becomes a search for the (culturally) suitable (cf. Meyer/Dietz 2019, p. 65). "*Hire for attitude, train for skills*" (Meyer/Dietz 2019, p. 65) has become the credo. It has been proven, that besides the professional qualifications, a high level of cultural suitability has a significant influence on the success of the employer-employee relationship (cf. Meyer/Dietz 2019, p. 65). In order to define whether cultural suitability occurs, the concept of cultural suitability itself must be defined in addition to the concept of corporate culture. The concept of cultural suitability is often referred to as "*cultural fit*". A cultural fit is supposed to indicate whether employee values match the company's culture (cf. Mueller 2016, p. 192). The company's culture is based on the totality of all shared values, common norms and attitudes which shape the attitudes, decisions and actions of all company members (cf. Meyer/Dietz 2019, p. 65). In summary, the values of the employee should be in alignment with the values of the company to ensure lasting success (cf. Mueller 2016, p. 192).

Applicant Decision

Company value proposition

Personal value system

Shared values
- Applicant assesses the alignment of a company's perceived value proposition with their own value system

Projection
- The applicant tries to understand the value proposition of a company in its implementation in employer branding

- The higher the match, the more likely a decision is for an employer

Perception
- The applicant tests the employer brand and develops an image of the company

Figure 7: Value-based candidate decision (based on Meyer/Dietz 2019, p. 72)

To achieve this effectively and sustainably, employer branding must begin with a reflection of the company's own corporate identity and the target group's values, in this case Generation Z. Based on a literature analysis, Generation Z's values

(presumably due to their tender age and limited representation on the labor market) are less frequently depicted in professional literature than other generations. Nevertheless, the body of research on the topic of Generation Z's values is steadily growing. However, Buschmann, Fournier and Mattmüller (2019) claim that core values of Generation Z are transparency and openness, equality and diversity, flexibility and individuality and finally sustainability (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 210 f.). In the following section, the individual values are discussed below:

2.2.1 Transparency and Openness

For Generation Z the most important values are transparency and openness. The digitization of their everyday lives puts more information at their fingertips virtually everywhere and instantly. At the same time, leading to more fake news, framing and misinformation, while information is more disclosed than ever before. This development has led Generation Z to place a high value on autonomy, flexibility and the desire for transparency and openness (cf. Klaffke 2021b, p. 104 f.). This young cohort also expects transparency and openness from companies. As employees, they want to be informed about what is going on in the company and they also want the opportunity to influence developments. It is equally important for them to receive honest feedback on their work so that they can continue to develop their strengths. However transparent communication should also be established with the outside world. This involves admitting weaknesses instead of concealing them (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 210).

2.2.2 Equality and Diversity

Besides, another important set of values is equality and diversity. Diversity, merely a buzzword for their predecessors (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 20), is of fundamental importance for Generation Z (cf. Lanier 2017, p. 289). From having access to information worth a lifetime, social media has enabled Generation Z to interact with people from other backgrounds, cultures, or circumstances (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 11). Thus, Generation Z seems to be willing to take action to achieve transparency and openness, inclusion, economic equality, and social justice (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 20). Mary Meehan even argued in a Forbes article that Generation Z is driven by social justice. They have been raised to be empathetic, to be just and to recognize that

"*Black Lives Matter*". She argues that this ethnically and gender aware cohort challenges policymakers to understand more, to expose more and to fight for more (cf. Meehan 2016). Moreover, equality is overwhelmingly expected at work (cf. Lanier 2017, p. 289), as racism is is the most important socio-political issue for Generation Z. Due to increasing globalization and the associated international cultural and economic exchange, Generation Z is predominantely concerned with socio-political issues (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 31).

2.2.3   Flexibility and Individuality

Nevertheless, flexibility and individuality are just as important values for Generation Z as equality and diversity. As the analog and digital worlds merge into one holistic entity, this new generation is more flexible and individual in its daily activities (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawa 2021, p. 38 f.). It is assumed that this flexibility and individuality will also be reflected in their employment biographies, as standard careers are becoming increasingly rare due to the structural openness of education and employment systems (cf. Klaffke 2021b, p. 114 f.). In addition, the predominantly consumptive experience of internet use may create a demand for entertainment in life itself. This could potentially extend to an entertaining pursuit in employment as well (cf. Klaffke 2021b, p. 105). In contrast to Generation X, the willingness, to work hard in order to be able to afford a decent material life is not given. Recognition and self-actualization have replaced the luxury limousine as a status symbol (cf. Hesse et al. 2019, p. 84). Instead, Generation Z wants to be heard and, above all, to have their individuality valued. Not only do they desire to be appreciated in their individuality, but they also seek to live under economic conditions that respect future generations (cf. Hesse et al. 2019, p. 87 f.).

2.2.4   Sustainability

Generation Z is deeply concerned about global sustainability. This fear of environmental change is well-rooted in the fact that there is a low readiness to respond from policymakers to environmental issues, intensifying the impact on this generation. Scarcity of resources and increasing environmental problems such as climate change led to a higher awareness in dealing with nature. Generation Z sees environmental protection as an emotional and important issue for them and their future children. There is an awareness that preventing the climate catastrophe is the

responsibility of humanity (cf. Calmbach et al. 2020, p. 405 f.). Exceptional climate events and a heated socio-political atmosphere have even intensified their commitment to the cause. The climate activist Greta Thunberg observed that the global response on Covid-19 was evidence that "*we can act fast and change our habits and treat a crisis like a crisis.*" meaning that young people will demand swift, decisive action in regard to climate issues since they witnessed this was possible during Covid-19 (cf. Reuters 2020).

Swift action is also required in the war for talent. Strong employer brands are characterized by a strong positioning among the relevant set of potential future employees and a high degree of cultural fit. Therefore, employer brands should offer a high degree of shared values that are firmly and clearly anchored in the minds of their individual employees as well as future employees and are confirmed in their day-to-day work lives (cf. Meyer/Dietz 2019, p. 61 f.).

2.3 Generation Z as a Workforce in the Banking Sector

For their everyday lives, Generation Z chooses a work culture that is characterized by **teamwork**. This gives them the opportunity to work on important issues right from the start and puts them in direct contact with employees at different levels of experience. In addition, the importance of a **family environment** should not be underestimated. As the workplace and leisure time increasingly merge in the future, it is important that employees feel comfortable in their working environment. The workplace should not only be a place of "*performance*"; instead, it should serve to establish social contacts. This means an employer should implement **flat hierarchies** to support and meet their desire for early co-determination, transfer of responsibility and information transparency in order to be attractive to Generation Z. After all, this young generation values sustainability in their professional environment as well (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 211 f.). They believe their decisions put pressure on companies to improve their **sustainability practices**. They are passionate about volunteering and expect their employers to provide the platform to do so (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawa 2021, p. 39). Financial institutions should therefore not only focus on short-term profit, but also pursue long-term and sustainable targets. To ensure that the employees of the coming generation are also satisfied with their jobs and to create loyalty, value should be

placed on **fast processes**. Due to constant networking with the Internet, fast feedback is becoming the standard; long processes bore and frustrate. Interest in a matter is then quickly lost, and the quality of work suffers as a result (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 211 f.). While expectations of the general public regarding gender, racial or cultural diversity have risen, Generation Z is the first generation to demand diversity in the workplace (cf. Lanier 2017, p. 289). In addition, employees and members of Generation Z want to be treated fairly based on their performance, not any other factors (cf. Schroth 2019, p. 9.). This primarily relates to tangible and intangible incentives. Young employees compare themselves to their peers, and when their efforts are less appreciated, it leads to dissatisfaction in the longterm. Imposing an obligation on employees to keep quiet about such aspects is a violation of their value of transparency (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 211). Furthermore, the representatives of Generation Z are considered **optimistic, well-educated, and technologically up to date**. They bring these skills into the work environment and in return demand flexibility and autonomy (cf. Scholz/Grotefend 2019a, p. 1). Generation Z is often seen by others as a generation that places a great value on leisure time, where qualifications tend to be not as important. This makes them seem rather unmotivated. Their wishes and needs are often in contrast to the requirements of the working world, which seeks career-oriented and fully operational employees, who can survive in an increasingly competitive environment (cf. Scholz/Grotefend 2019b, pp. 187-190). Additionally, Generation Z also tends to present itself as disloyal and leaves employers much faster compared to other generations (cf. Randstad 2021, p. 15). At the same time, employers that engage with this unprecedented generation and understand its fundamental needs and wishes will have better chances in recruiting and retaining them. As employees, they expect to be kept up to date on developments in their company. They expect transparency and openness from their employers. Equally important to them is **honest and regular feedback** on their performance so that they can continue to develop. At the same time, there should be transparent communication with the outside world as well. This includes admitting weaknesses instead of covering them up (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 210 f.). Due to Generation Z's pragmatism, they favor brands that are committed to solving social and environmental issues (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 31). In essence, the same is true for the attractiveness of an industry. However, the attractiveness overall depends

on the economic environment and the economic development of this industry, but also on media coverage. Accordingly, the large number of bank cutbacks in the banking sector in recent years has had a negative impact on the assessment of the **attractiveness of this sector** (cf. Statista 2022). For example, the proportion of under-25s who consider banks and insurance companies to be a particularly interesting sector fell from 44% to 32% between 2015 and 2019:
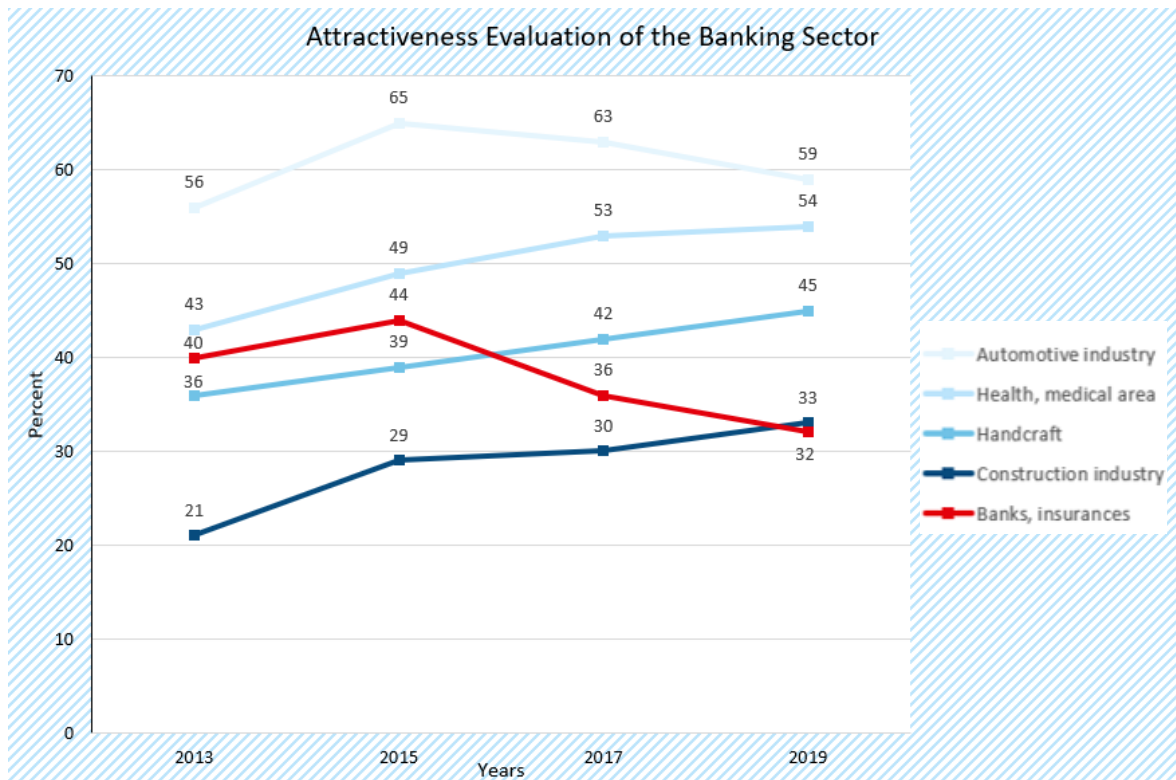
Figure 8: Attractiveness evaluation of the banking sector (based on Hurrelmann/Köcher/Sommer 2019, p. 65)

In regard to their profession this generation is particularly searching for tasks and activities that fit to their own personality. Meaning that they strive for a professional identity that seamlessly blends in with their individuality. Since this generation values flexibility, they reject rigid structures and prefer flexibility on the part of the financial institution so that they can adapt all aspects of their daily work to their individual needs. Additionally, they do not simply aspire to be a number, but to be addressed and taken seriously as an individual (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 211).

3 External Employer Branding Communication

To create a basic understanding of employer branding and its communication a number of specific definitions, many of which emphasize different features and characteristics are presented in the following chapter. External and internal employer branding communication is examined and reasons for generation-based employer branding communication are given.

3.1 External Employer Branding

First, a terminological basis for the term "*employer branding*" is presented and external employer branding is discussed. The term employer branding was first defined by Ambler and Barrow as *"the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with employing company"* (Ambler/Barrow 1996, p.187). A few years later, Lloyd (2002) also proposed, that employer branding and the employer brand should be distinguished from the employer image, stating that the employer brand follows a strategic orientation in contrast to the "**Employer image**", which has grown historically (cf. Lloyd 2002, pp. 64-66). In this context, the employer brand aims to shape the existing employer image in a particular way (cf. Trost 2013, p. 16 f.). In 2003, Ingrid Smithey Fulmer, Barry Gerhart, and Kimberly Scott proved the significant link between employer image and economic success (cf. Fulmer/Gerhart/Scott 2003, p. 987). However, shortly afterwards in 2004 researchers, including Backhaus and Tikoo or Sullivan, defined employer branding on their own terms (cf. Backhaus/Tikoo 2004, p. 502, Sullivan 2004). Meanwhile, Graeme Martin and Susan Hetrick (2009) claimed that "**Corporate Identity**" and "**Organizational Identity**" are core elements of employer branding. This means corporate identity can be seen as the public image of the organization, whereas the organizational identity symbolizes the self-image of the organization and its employees (cf. Graeme/Hetrick 2009, pp. 294–296). Overall corporate identity is more comprehensive (cf. Trost 2013, p. 16). Nevertheless, the latest definition of the term was given in Rosethorn's book in 2009: *The Employer Brand: Keeping Faith with the Deal* (cf. Rosethorn 2009, p. 19 f.).

The following table offers an overview on the various definitions discussed:

Author(s) Year	Definition of employer branding
Ambler and Barrow 1996	"[…] *package of functional, economic and psychological benefits* […]."
Lloyd 2002	"[…] *aggregate of a company's effort* […]."
Backhaus and Tikoo 2004	"[…] *process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity* […]" and "[…] *a concept of the firm that differentiates it* […]."
Sullivan 2004	"[…] *A targeted long-term strategy* […]."
Rosethorn 2009	"[…] *employer brand is in essence the two-way deal between an organisation and its people* […] *thus* "[…] *The art of employer branding is to articulate this deal in a way this is distinctive, compelling and relevant to the individual* […]."

Table 1: Definitions of employer branding (based on Stritzke 2010, p. 45)

In summary, it can be stated that employees are the focus of attention in all definitions and HR marketing measures can only be a part in an employer branding strategy, as employer branding consists of more than a number of targeted actions.

In academic and practice-oriented literature, a distinction between **employer brand** and employer branding has emerged. An employer brand is understood as the target object of market-oriented personnel management, in other words, the brand itself. "*A brand is a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers.*" states the American Marketing Association (American Marketing Association 2022). On the

other hand, **employer branding** is the structured procedure of managing this employer brand (cf. Stritzke 2010, p. 42 f.). In summary it can be stated that employer branding is a field where fundamentals of marketing, especially the "*science of branding*", are implemented on human resource activities to attract, recruit, and retain top talent (cf. Edwards 2010, p. 6). To manage the employer brand optimally and to address the target group effectively a long-term, integrated communication strategy is required (cf. von Walter et al. 2016, p. 170). Hereby, a distinction is made between points of contact with internal and external target groups (cf. Fournier et al. 2019, p. 22).

Internal employer branding involves all measures, which are directed at existing employees of a company (cf. Ambler/Barrow 1996, p.189) and aims to ensure that their behavior lives up to the brand's promise to customers (cf. Punjaisri/Wilson/Evanschitzky 2008, p. 408). However, this can only be achieved if the employees identify with the company's values and practice them (cf. Gilani/Cunningham 2017, p. 245). Internal employer branding is intended to increase employee trust, identification and commitment (cf. Foster/Punjaisri/Cheng 2010, p. 403).

In contrast, the aim of **external employer branding** is to position the company as a first-class employer among well-qualified applicants and thus attract the best employees (cf. Backhaus/Tikoo 2004, p. 503). However, external employer branding entails more than just the measures, with which a company advertises its advantages as an employer. External employer branding is determined by all types of interaction between the company and the public (cf. Johnson/Roberts 2006, p. 40). It is difficult for many employers to communicate their corporate culture to potential applicants, as information should be both accurate and predominantly postitve. The biggest challenge for a company in employer branding communication is to promote the company as "*best-place-to-work*", while still remaining honest, and authentic (cf. Fournier et al. 2019, p. 42 f.).

3.2 Employer Branding Communication

Communication is a core element of employer branding that is often underestimated. Customized employer branding measures must be communicated to the target group. The core of every employer brand is therefore communication. No matter how innovative and creative the employer brand may be: If a company does not succeed in concretely defining a target group as potential employees, clearly identifying them, reaching them with precision, and communicating with them efficiently, employer branding measures will remain unsuccessful. The aim of employer branding communication is to promote the company as an attractive employer and to inform the target group about special values and characteristics of the brand. For this to be possible, the development of an integrated, strategic, long-term communication concept is indispensable (cf. Fournier et al. 2019, p. 40 f.). An employer branding communication concept creates synergy effects between the different measures, which should be consistent and aligned with the desired brand image (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 102). The integrated utilization of communication instruments should support the interaction between the employer brand, the product and corporate brand. By doing so, employer branding has the advantage and power to positively influence other brands by transferring a positive, trustworthy, and distinctive image to them (cf. Moroko/Uncles 2008, p. 167). The difficulty hereby is for many employers, conveying their own corporate culture to potential future employees. On the one hand, the information that the company conveys about its culture should be correct, so that applicants have the right expectations and future employees, and employers can match as well as possible. On the other hand, especially in the current war for talent, an employer is more likely to present a more positive and desirable image to a prospective employee than to provide him or her with accurate and realistic information. An open discussion about unfavorable characteristics of the company culture can result in the deterrence of applicants. The biggest challenge for a company in employer branding communications, therefore, is to find ways to convey content accurately, honestly, and authentically, including blemishes, while still painting a favorable picture of the employer and its culture (cf. Fournier et al. 2019, p. 42 f.). Unfortunately, too many employers use corny, flowery phrases such as leadership personality, unique opportunities and development possibilities or passion and team spirit. Most applicants find such hollow phrases alienating and therefore ignore them (cf.

Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 107). Campaigns and job ads should rather convey the essentials, the core of the employer brand. After interest has been piqued, the potential candidate should find further information on the company's website. Creative, different, unique and well-placed ads and messages stand out especially in this regard (cf. Johnson/Roberts 2006, p. 40). There are many channels that can be used for external employer branding communication, whereby a distinction is made between impersonal and personal communication (cf. Esch 2018, p. 206).

Impersonal communication or in other words, mass communication, is a form of communication that is often used to reach the masses quickly and to increase public awareness. Instruments include image advertisements in suitable publications, on websites or at universities, job advertisements in print media, on the Internet or online job exchanges, brochures, sponsorship and the company's online career site including videos, blogs and much more (cf. Petkovic 2008, pp. 204-206).

On the other hand, **personal communication** instruments are characterized by direct contact with the target group. These include, for example, participation in career fairs, lectures at universities, sponsored competitions for students and the identification of opinion leaders such as professors or high potentials who are active at their university as brand ambassadors for the company. Brand ambassadors act as multipliers for the employer and its brand. Therefore, they have a positive influence on the opinions of potential future employees as they initiate positive word-of-mouth propaganda. Advantages of personal communication instruments are higher credibility, flexibility and greater control over the reception of the message (cf. Böttger 2012, pp. 101–104). Additionally, personal communication instruments make it easier to break through content clutter (cf. Wiese 2012, p. 65). Consequently, effective targeting tools in employer branding are personal communication instruments, as it is easier for applicants to form an opinion about the employer if they have had personal experience with the company. Since personal means of communication are to be preferred, the next step is to segment accordingly (cf. Mattmüller et al. 2019, p. 167).

3.3 Reasons for generation-based Employer Branding

In this thesis, segmentation by generations is given. The segmentation and the underlying reasons are explained in more detail in this chapter. The segmentation concept of "*generation*" utilizes the identification and description of shared characteristics that a person has in common with others. The primary factor here is the context in which the person emerged, meaning that megatrends and economical events shape people or generations. This stereotyping not only includes megatrends and economical events according to generations but also includes the economic, political, technical and ecological conditions under which the members of this generation were born and raised. In the concentration, combination and accumulation of this data lies the opportunity for communications in general to **localize trends and changing perspectives** that apply to this target group, that go beyond simple reference to socio-demographic criteria such as age, gender or national affiliation (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 3 f.). Looking at formative events through this generational lens provides an understanding of how trends are shaped and influenced. In an employee market, generation-specific differences in employee behavior must be considered when addressing potential employees, as companies can no longer easily choose the right candidates, but must compete for them (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 45). At the moment, four generations are working together in the Austrian labor market for the first time in history. Each generation - Baby Boomers, X, Y and Z - has different values, needs, desires and expectations of the labor market. Even a rough analysis of the different generations in chapter 2.1 shows that the ethical values and typical characteristics of the generations differ as a result of their different generational experiences. This has an impact on their consumption, communication and media behavior. Thus, the **different imprinting results in generation-specific differences** in employee behavior, which can have an impact on, among other things brand loyalty or acceptance of advertising changes for each successive generation. Employers need to know about these differences to stay competitive in an employee market. Therefore, each generation must be examined separately, and specific employer branding measures must be derived from the findings (cf. Hesse et al. 2019, pp. 55-57). Another advantage of using this generational target group approach, is that birth cohorts can be **easily differentiated and distinguished** from one another. It is typical for every generation that new, younger generations consciously or

unconsciously distance themselves from the previous, older generations ("*generational conflict*") (cf. Klaffke 2021a, p. 26). Therefore, the differences between the various generations are clearly identifiable ("*intergenerational difference*"). The youngest generation on the labor market is currently Generation Z, which differs significantly from the previous generation in its communication behavior. This is reflected in the importance of social media for their daily communication (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 18).

4 Social Media Employer Branding Communication for Generation Z

In this chapter, the role of social media in external employer branding communication is examined. The relevance in particular for the target group - Generation Z - is discussed and hereby the focus is placed on Generation Z in the labor market.

4.1 The Role of Social Media in Employer Branding Communication

There are various channels that can be used for external employer branding communication, for example television, radio, fairs, print, the company's own homepage as well as social media. Social media is the primary focus in this chapter, as it is particularly effective in reaching the target group of Generation Z.

4.1.1 Definition of Social Media

The term "*social media*" has long since taken a firm place in our everyday language, so much so that it is used daily and synonymously with many other terms (cf. Decker 2019, p. 111). However, the central difference between social media communication and simple online communication is that communication activities are no longer limited to an interaction between the company and stakeholders, but also allow for interaction between stakeholders. The previous one-way communication from brand to customer has disappeared. The "*users*" generate content independently and enter directly into a dialog with their environment (cf. Bender 2011, p. 145 f.). This

new utilization of the World Wide Web to create independent content by users is referred to as **Web 2.0** (cf. Hettler 2010, p. 2). The central focal point hereby is the integration of the user (cf. Wirtz/Schilke/Ullrich 2010, p. 277 f.). This means that the focus is no longer on content provided by companies (**Brand Generated Content** [BGC]), but rather on the creation of content by the users themselves (**User Generated Content** [UGC]) (cf. Daugherty/Eastin/Bright 2008, p. 16). In literature brand-generated content is also frequently cited as "*marketer-generated content*" (e.g., Goh/Heng/ Lin 2013) or "*firm-generated content*" (e.g., Kumar et al. 2016). However, with the introduction of social media platforms, there has been little agreement on the meaning of the term "*UGC*". In this thesis, however, agreement on the basic concept of UGC is required. Marcelo Luis Barbosa dos Santos did a literature review on the exact term "*user-generated content*" (cf. Santos 2021, pp. 95-97). He proposed that "*User-generated Content is any kind of text, data or action performed by online digital systems users, published and disseminated by the same user through independent channels, that incur an expressive or communicative effect either on an individual manner or combined with other contributions from the same or other sources.*" (Santos 2021, p. 113). This definition now allows a uniform understanding of the term UGC (cf. Santos 2021, p. 113). In addition, UGC has more credibility than content that comes directly from a company, as 88% trust recommendations from friends and family (UGC) more than any other form of content (cf. Nielsen 2021, p. 1). However, platforms form the basis for the exchange of BGC and UGC (cf. Santos 2021, p. 113). Social media consists of platforms (websites or applications) where content (BGC/UGC) is shared by humans in a social network for communication. And a social network for communication is a system whose elements consist of individuals or groups connected by social relationships (cf. Pein 2020, p. 26 f.).

However, in literature, it is noticeable that many authors use their own definition of social media. A widely accepted definition is unknown. Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2017) summarize the situation as follows "*In a nutshell, strategic social media marketing remains an untested user interaction paradigm […] with little published academic research*" (Felix/Rauschnabel/Hinsch 2017, p. 118). Although this is still the case in 2022, the various definitions can be divided into two groups. On the one hand, there are definitions that see social media more in the context of technical platforms and media as defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), Bruhn

and Hadwich (2015) and Gabriel and Röhrs (2017) (cf. Kaplan/Haenlein 2010, pp. 60-62, Bruhn/Hadwich 2015, pp. 3-8, Gabriel/Röhrs 2017, pp. 12-18). On the other hand, the definitions by Hettler (2010), Weinberg and Pahrmann (2022) and Pein (2020) define social media as an overarching term or phenomenon that reflects virtual relationships (cf. Hettler 2010, pp. 14-16, Weinberg/Pahrmann 2022, p. 23, Pein 2020, p. 26 f.). However, the diversity of definitions also leads to the problem that, depending on the author, different platforms may or may not be counted as social media. In recent years in particular, messenger services such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger have gained in importance, whereby it is unclear whether they are social media or not (cf. Decker 2019, p. 110). Nevertheless, there is a common understanding about the different types of media. It is agreed upon that they are distinguishable in "*Owned Media*", "*Paid Media*" and "*Earned Media*" (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 18):
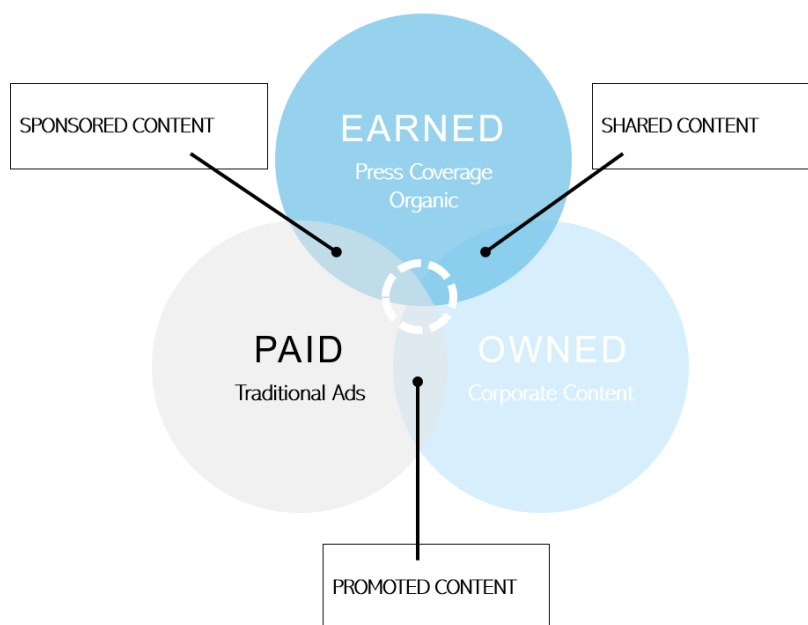
Figure 9: Different types of media (based on Oxford College of Marketing Blog 2021)

As seen above, the online activities for which the companies are responsible are referred to as **Owned Media.** These include among others the corporate website, the online shop, the corporate blog or the corporate profile managed by the company on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube. The entirety of these media is to be managed in order to achieve the defined goal of achieving a strong employer brand communication. Whereas **Paid Media** is purchased from third-party partners to achieve the defined goal. The term paid media is therefore to be distinguished from owned media. Examples of this are banners, keyword ads or paid posts, which can

be recognized by the indication "*sponsored".* However, this does not mean sponsored content. It means that this is a paid story that appears for people based on the targeting criteria the company set up. While sponsored content is created by a sponsored party. Paid media is merely a question of the available finances. The third category, known as **Earned Media**, refers to content created by users. This user-generated content comes in various forms. They include, for example, user-generated photos, hashtags, tweets, or simply posts. An important prerequisite for achieving a highly positive share of earned media is to gain attention and engagement on social networks (cf. Kreutzer 2021, pp. 16-19). However, the overall goal is to leverage owned, earned, and paid media for a comprehensive social media strategy (cf. Lipschultz 2020, p. 58).

The intersections consist of promoted content, sponsored content and shared content. **Promoted content** refers to any kind of web content whose reach is increased by payment to an advertising platform. **Sponsored content** is content for which a company pays a publisher or social media influencer (sponsored party) to create and distribute content in a quality and format for which they are known. For example, an influencer who is known for his financial advice discusses the products of a particular bank on his channel and gives advice to his followers. This type of content is most appealing when the influencer addresses the company's core target group and already covers topics that align with the brand. The last overlap is **shared content**. For example, when users are invited to create their own content on platforms operated by companies, this content belongs to shared content (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 19). "*Starbucks Ideas"* provides an example of this. Customers were invited to share their ideas with Starbucks. The success of the concept has been enormous: In the first year, more than 70,000 ideas were generated, of which dozens were implemented (cf. Gallaugher/Ransbotham 2010, p. 204 f.).

In general, social media is characterized by real-time communication, non-linear dialogue, and the fact that the user is both a producer and consumer of content. While the use of traditional mass media is reserved for professional users, engagement in social media is open to every online user and inspiration for the creation of new content is found everywhere. Real-time communication enables a disproportionately higher speed in the exchange of information and the non-linearity of the communication is characterized by the acronym *CIIS*. Kreutzer (2021) states

that this non-linear dialogue can be characterized as follows (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 7 f.):

- **C**ollaborative: Users are working together for the benefit or to the disadvantage of a company, a brand, or an offer
- **I**nteractive: Exchange between users or the company, "*Many-to-Many*" (Kreutzer 2021, p. 3).
- **I**terative: Complaints, suggestions, etc. are presented online until there is a response from the user's point of view
- **S**imultaneous: Simultaneousness of different communication strands and content (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 8).

It is becoming increasingly obvious that people no longer use social media just for informational purposes. Instead, they engage in frequent networking (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 8). However, a distinction is made between two main types of networks:

- Social networks
- Business networks (cf. Bruhn 2014, 1050)

Social networks are primarily used to maintain private contacts, while business networks are mainly used to establish and maintain relationships that can be useful for business. Social media is one of the fastest growing communication tools today (cf. Bruhn 2014, 1051). It is becoming apparent that people are moving beyond using social media just to collect information. Rather, they utilize it to communicate intensely, to give and receive reviews, and to display their own creations (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 8).

4.1.2 Social Media as useful Tool to target Potential Employees

As already illustrated in the previous chapter, social media has become an integral part of everyday life. But regardless of whether a company wants to address a broad mass of potentially interested future employees or focuses on individually addressing selected talents, it is crucial to respond to the information behavior of the target group - Generation Z (cf. Esch/Winter 2016, p. 337). Considering the **limitations of traditional print media** and the fact that Generation Z's communication takes place mainly online, social media has huge advantages. Organizations are now able to be present at (almost) any place in the world at any time to anyone on the internet (global reach) (cf. Schuhmacher/Geschwill 2014, p. 101). Additionally, it allows an organization to present themselves, their mission and values in a way they could not have been done before. However, the fundamentally reasonable requirement of brand management to present the brand digitally in a way that is also consistent with the identity and at the same time appropriate for the media in highly different media channels, also leads to a high level of management effort (cf. Gabriel/Röhrs 2017, p. 83). Nevertheless, social media is an extremely effective tool for providing future employees with an additional information channel. This is a crucial factor in attracting qualified personnel. As **91% of job seekers check an employer's reputation** to learn more about a potential employer (cf. Randstad 2019, p. 31). Plus, Candidates trust company personnel or employees who have worked in a particular occupation the most when it comes to providing credible information about working conditions (cf. Hurrelmann/Köcher/Sommer 2019, p. 86). This way satisfied employees can provide feedback and further information about what it is like to work in a certain company, and also serve as a physical manifestation of the company culture. These brand advocates foster the reputation and present the employer in a positive light as only employees can (cf. Esch 2018, pp. 168-171). However, the possibility of digital communication can lead to an imbalance between consumer expectations and corporate competence. Digitalization makes communication between brands and employees possible at a greater distance, on a mass scale, via multimedia, more directly, faster and at any time compared to traditional analog media. While at the same time employees expect companies to provide personal, individualized, constant and authentic **personal communication** via social media, messenger, e-mail, chat or voice bot. The competence of proper interaction with the target group is therefore a necesity

and a crucial skill in a digital world of communication (cf. Gabriel/Röhrs 2017, p. 83). However, once the know-how is acquired social media is an excellent tool for authentic employer branding (cf. Runkel 2018, p. 114). The proliferation of social media offers companies the attractive option of communicating directly and relatively informally with prospective employees on the one hand, and the opportunity to communicate the employer's brand identity in a targeted manner and at low cost by using employees as virtual brand ambassadors on the other (cf. Büttgen/Kissel 2013, p. 110). This can for example be done by praising excellent performance, milestone achievements of their employees or team building events publicly on social media platforms. Praising employees promotes the employer brand while giving the organization a personal touch. The information given becomes part of the brand knowledge about the employer brand. This interactive nature of social media and the variety of media communication options bring the employer brand very close to potential applicants, further intensifying the user experience (cf. Büttgen/Kissel 2013, p. 114). This **creates proximity** to Generation Z, while the company gains access to information about their interests, opinions and needs, as well as the brand's reputation (cf. Behrendt 2014, p. 423). Multimedia formats such as emotional images, influential videos, games, and more are especially appealling. These formats are the media of the future in social media communication (cf. Runkel 2018, p. 181). This new ability, which traditional media could not provide, is particularly effective in reaching the upcoming Generation Z. For them, social media use is especially deeply embedded in their everyday lives, as they have grown up right in the midst of technological advancement. In addition, digitization even accelerates this primarily digital behavior (cf. Hesse et al. 2019, p. 72 f.).

4.2 Social Media Employer Branding Communication for Generation Z in the Workforce

As already mentioned, due to the fundamentally hybrid, but **primarily digital behavior of Generation Z**, which sets them apart from previous generations, they are more interested in online brand touchpoints. Therefore, Austria's Generation Z is inseparably linked to the digital world. Since they explicitly expect to interact with potential employers in social networks, social media cannot be regarded merely as another communication channel (Bruhn 2014, p. 1036). It is a necessity to reach this digital cohort. Since Generation Z is predominantly mobile and communicates digitally, communication needs to be on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. Especially the smartphone plays a key role. For the target group-oriented presentation of textual or multimedia content, it is essential to adapt it to mobile screens and display it adequately, depending on the format ("*mobile first*") (cf. Elbdudler 2018, p. 5). Additionally, the majority of this tech-savvy Generation Z is familiar with smartwatches, virtual reality and chatbots. 70% of them perform their tasks digitally and almost all of them cannot imagine life without the Internet (cf. Livadic 2018, p. 48). Social media communication means transmitting company-related messages (BGC) on various platforms on the Internet as well as receiving suggestions, criticism or praise (UGC) and thus entering into dialog with the target groups (cf. Pein 2020, p. 32 f.). This explanation already shows two fundamentally different types of social media communication: active communication through interaction with other users and passive communication through silent reception and observation of content and opinions, so-called "*monitoring*" (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1089). In the context of employer branding, companies need to communicate with the target group, as it is a matter of mutually exchanging information and building social relationships. Companies and (potential) applicants are at times senders and at times recipients. Generation Z expects customized and relevant content. Growing up in an era of selective audience targeting, data analytics and machine learning Generation Z is used to content tailored towards their unique needs (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 27). The core feature of social media communication is the **active participation** and value creation of users, as to a previously predominantly passive recipient role. Therefore, the greatest potential of social media lies in portraying the brand identity and to make it appear more likeable (cf. Büttgen/Kissel 2013, p. 110). The brand identity is the starting point of the concept of brand personality and

represents the fact that brands can exhibit human personality traits These human personality traits are usually created through communication with a personal touch and interaction and not through cool, theory-driven corporate communication (cf. Aaker 1997, p. 347 f.). Employer brands can benefit enormously from growing sympathy through professional and target group-oriented social media communication (cf. Runkel 2018, p. 114). As already mentioned above Generation Z is especially seeking personal and recognizable individuality. Meaning that emotionalizing and personal approaches in communication are particularly valuable for this generation (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 16). Generation Z also makes intensive use of social media to stay up to date, exchange ideas with friends and pursue their passions. They are mainly active on WhatsApp (88%), YouTube (84%) and Instagram (80%), Snapchat (60%), Facebook (52%) and TikTok (43%). Around 63% use **social media as their main source of information** and inspiration, and 63% talk to their friends on messaging apps every day, 89% stream music, 80% videos, and 67% play video games. These are the results of a new study by the market research institute Kantar, which surveyed 600 respondents in Austria between the ages of 18 and 24 on behalf of Mastercard (cf. Mastercard 2021). Furthermore, the McDonalds Education Study (2019) indicates that in Austria, the three most trustworthy channels to find information about employers are conversations with parents (89%), conversations with friends and acquaintances (77%) and research on the Internet (70%). According to the study, this means that Generation Z's most important online source of information about career opportunities is the Internet (cf. Hurrelmann/Köcher/Sommer 2019, p. 82). More precisely, the study Junge Österreicher:innen (2021) by Simon Schnetzer suggests that the company website is in Austria the most important online source of job information for potential employees. The second most important online source of information is Google search, and the third most important is the use of job portals such as Karriere.at or Stepstone (cf. Schnetzer 2021, p. 26). And Since Linkedin also offers jobs, it is currently the fastest growing business network, especially for Generation Z. Plus, Generation Z engagement on **LinkedIn** has reached an all-time high, according to LinkedIn Internal Data 2021. LinkedIn is Generation Z's preferred tool for career networking, learning and research (cf. Linkedin 2021a). In contrast, however, Facebook is a platform that is not relevant for this generation, as it is increasingly being used by older generations X and Y (cf. Hesse et al. 2019, p. 76).

5 Development of an Employer Branding Communication Concept

In this chapter the development of an employer branding concept is demonstrated. As already mentioned, there is no consent or consistency in literature, on the definition of employer branding or as well as on the stages of an employer branding concept. As a result, the following concept is based on the typical project phases: initial phase, analysis phase, planning phase, implementation, and monitoring phase. The following graphic illustrates the proposed phases and shows the associated sub-steps:

Figure 10: Concept steps in the typical project phases (prepared by the author)

Since the practical part of this thesis emphasizes employer branding for the Generation Z in the banking sector, the different steps concentrate on how to establish an organization as an attractive employer for this external target group. In the absence of a universally valid employer branding concept, opinions differ, as they do on the question of who is responsible for employer branding activities. However, it is universally agreed upon that a strong collaboration between top management, human resources, marketing, and the communications department is vital for the success of an employer branding concept (cf. Heizereder 2021, p. 524).

5.1 Definition of Employer Branding Objectives

The central goal of employer branding is to establish a distinctive and unique employer brand among the relevant target group - Generation Z. To be able to measure the success or failure of any employer branding activity, quantitative objectives must be defined. This is particularly difficult in the area of communication. But it is precisely here that communication objectives require a particularly careful planning procedure, since so much depends on their specification. Unfortunately, the scientific discussion of target planning in communication is rudimentary in literature. Therefore, the impression can easily arise that communication goals to be aimed for are autonomous decisions of the management that need no further justification. However, communication objectives should only express desirable outcomes that can be achieved and influenced by the organizations own actions, which can be attributed to the organization in isolation. Meaning that a direct correlation must be given (e.g., a predominantly communication-related responsiveness). However, all measures must be aligned with the economic objectives. Therefore, corresponding communication sub-goals must be derived (cf. Steffenhagen 2016, p. 295 f.):

- *Recruitment objectives:* These refer to the quantity of applications (applicant volume) and the quality of applications (fit) (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016c, p. 219 f.).
- *Psychographic brand objectives*: These refer to the perception and assessment of the employer by the target group. A distinction is usually made between employer attractiveness, employer image and employer awareness (cf. Collins/Kanar 2014, pp. 284-286).

Psychographic brand objectives are also referred to as *"intermediate factors*" or "*mind set metrics"* in Anglo-American language. These intermediate factors are the knowledge, attitudes, interests and behavioral readiness associated with an object of communication (e.g., an employer brand). Psychographic brand objectives can be specifically built up or changed through communication measures (cf. Steffenhagen 2016, p. 295 f.). The psyche of consumers is highly responsive to communication. These communication effects can then be sufficiently specific measured. They therefore have the necessary control power

for communication activities. These variables are also referred to in literature as "*psychological goals*" (cf. Bruhn 2019, pp. 162-164). More importantly, these intermediate factors are prior to the observable behavior, which shows that recruitment goals in employer branding can only be achieved through psychographic brand objectives. The following graph illustrates the chronological order of communication objectives (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016a, p. 13):
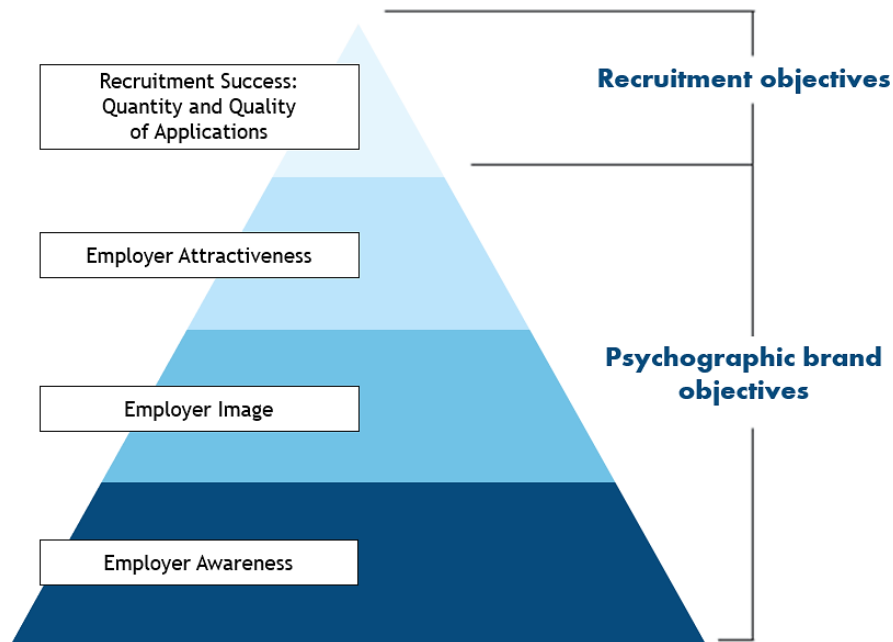
Figure 11: Target pyramid of employer branding (based on von Walter/Kremmel 2016a, p. 13)

Accordingly, recruitment success is based on the level of employer attractiveness achieved, which in turn is based on the employer image. However, a prerequisite for building up a successful employer image is sufficient awareness of the company as an employer. It can be said that recruitment objectives can only be achieved via effective employer branding objectives such as (cf. Collins/Kanar 2014, pp. 284-286):

- *Employer attractiveness:* This is according to Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005) *"the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organisation"* (Berthon/Ewing/Hah 2005, p. 156).
- *Employer image:* This is a mixture of subjectively perceived and individually evaluated mental images that relate to an organization as an employer (cf. Runkel 2018, p. 125).

- *Employer awareness:* This is the awarenes or familiarity with an employer. Familiarity with the employer refers to the person's previous experience with the employer (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016c, p. 210).

However, companies with too little employer awareness, must increase their awareness. From the perspective of brand management or employer branding, awareness is a prerequisite for employees to be able to ascribe certain characteristics to a brand in the first place (cf. Henkel/Wentzel/Tomczak 2021, p. 156.).

5.2 Identification of the Target Group

As mentioned earlier, the core of any employer branding strategy is to identify and understand the relevant target group in order to communicate the employer brand to them as effectively as possible. As already mentioned in this employer branding concept targets external target groups. Therefore, the target group consists of potential employees and not current employees belonging to Generation Z, as this thesis focuses specifically on Generation Z. In order to better examine Generation Z, the previous generations and the general characteristics of Generation Z have been described in chapter 2. The target group segmentation according to generations was justified by the fact that generation-related target groups can primarily be clustered according to age cohorts and thus be easily distinguished from one another. Additionally, the concentration, combination and accumulation of data is an opportunity for employer branding communications in general to pinpoint trends and changing perceptions that apply to this cohort, that go beyond simple reference to sociodemographic criteria such as age, gender, or national affiliation (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 3). Further elaboration related to these reasons can be found in chapter 3.3.

Since the target group is Generation Z (sociodemographic criteria), it can be further categorized by job-related criteria and personality-based criteria. Labor market criteria or occupational criteria are usually easy to distinguish and are easily connected to hiring practices. Typical job-related criteria are:

- Work Experience (e.g., entry-level, young professionals, experienced professionals)
- Functional Area (e.g., employees for production, development and administration)
- Field of Study (e.g., economists, engineers)
- Educational Background (e.g., school graduates, university graduates)
- School/College (e.g., graduates of certain universities) (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016a, p. 11 f.).

Personality-based criteria includes skills, interest, and values. However, the criteria are often combined. Once the exact segmentation criteria have been defined, the available target group must be analyzed in respect of their significance for the company. Target groups for which there is a current and rising future need are considered highly significant (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016a, p. 12).

5.3 Situation Analysis

A crucial step to a successful employer branding communication concept is to analyze the current situation of the company. In the potential analysis, the internal and external conditions form important starting points for subsequent decisions (cf. Seng/Armutat 2012, p. 19). Since the development of an employer brand communication concept is not a short-term project, but rather a long-term directional decision, a well-founded factual basis is required (cf. Graf/Pett 2009, p. 15). The analysis is recommended, although the scope and intensity of the analysis can be adapted to the company's circumstances. Von Walter and Kremmel (2016) identified three key approaches to obtain the necessary data for the internal and external analysis:

- *Qualitative Research*: Uncovering employer characteristics through guideline-based focus groups and interviews with existing and potential employees.
- *Using existing Inventories as a Repertoire of Possible Employer Characteristics:* Orienting to existing sets of instrumental and symbolic employer characteristics (e.g., Lievens and Highhouse 2003)
- *Evaluation of Strategic Policy Documents and Communication Materials*: Content analysis of own documents as well as communication materials of relevant competitors with regard to employer characteristics (e.g., job advertisements, career websites, corporate visions, mission statements) (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016a, p. 14).

5.3.1 Internal situation analysis

The internal situation analysis examines among other things the success of previous communication measures (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1066 f.). A feasible and analytical approach stems from Bruhn (2014), which will be explained below. The following table illustrates the company's initial situation with regard to social media communication, as this is the focus of this concept:

Questions	Answers	Strengths/Weaknesses
Company-related questions		
How developed are the current competencies in regard to social media?		
How is the availability of enough relevant content?		
How strongly can the company distinguish itself central competitors in terms of communication?		
Are the values of Generation Z present in the communication with them?		
How is the representation of the employer throughout the channels?		
The job offers are easily visible and distributed on the social media platforms?		

Table 2: Internal questionnaire for SWOT analysis (based on Bruhn 2014, p. 1072)

As part of the internal situation analysis, the success of previous measures, the assessment of social media competence or future application possibilities are considered, among other things (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1067).

5.3.2 External situation analysis

The external analysis, on the other hand, examines the factors that are significant for future success. Important factors are the extent to which competitors are using employer branding communication or the expectations of the target group. Besides, the labor market environment should also be taken into account. The following table illustrates the starting points according to Bruhn (2014) for the external situation analysis with regard to social media:

Questions	Answers	Opportunities/Threats
Competition-related questions		
How active is the competition on social media platforms?		
Which social media activities do the competitors carry out?		
With what intensity and success do they pursue their social media activities?		
Target group-related questions		
To what extent does the communication represent expectations of the target group towards Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG as an employer?		
What are the critical success factors in communicating with Generation Z?		
What communication style does Generation Z prefer?		
Market-related questions		
How high is the social media affinity in the labor market?		
Is social media suitable for addressing potential employees?		
On the labor market, how high is the willingness of Generation Z to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG?		

Table 3: External questionnaire for SWOT analysis (based on Bruhn 2014, p. 1072)

In addition, a target group analysis should be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the target group's expectations towards their employers. The

target group analysis involves analyzing which communication media and platforms the target group uses (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1067). Beyond this, a competitive analysis but also the regular analysis of one's own social media activities can be conducted to determine the extent to which competitors are using social media communications in employer branding (cf. Grabs/Bannour 2012, p. 51). Once all the information is gathered, the internal and external analysis can be combined, and a SWOT analysis can be carried out (cf. Weihrich 1982, p. 60).

5.3.3 SWOT Analysis

The so-called "*SWOT*" analysis is a simple method of strategic management. The abbreviation stands for "*strengths" "weaknesses" "opportunities"* and "*threats*" (cf. Immerschitt/Stumpf 2019, p. 72 f.). The SWOT analysis examines the organizations internal strengths and weaknesses and compares them to external opportunities and threats. Once the data from the internal and external analysis has been collected, it can be transferred into a matrix for illustration and strategy derivation. Through the comparison, a structured derivation of strategies can take place (cf. Weihrich 1982, p. 60).

		External factors	
		Opportunities 1. 2. 3.	**T**hreats 1. 2. 3.
Internal factors	**S**trengths 1. 2. 3.	**SO-Strategies**	**ST-Strategies**
	Weaknesses 1. 2. 3.	**WO-Strategies**	**WT-Strategies**

Table 4: SWOT analysis with strategies (based on Weihrich 1982, p. 60)

It is crucial to find the appropriate strategies, namely for those constellations where external factors meet internal ones (e.g., the combination of strengths with opportunities or the interplay of weaknesses with risks). The following gives a brief description of the possible strategies:

- *SO-strategies*
  This strategy utilizes strengths and opportunities. When both a company's strengths and opportunities are strong, resources can be leveraged to take advantage of the market for long-term success. If this is the case, this combination is ideal and should be pursued and expanded in the long term.

- *ST-strategies*
  This strategy is used when the company's strengths are used to reduce the threats in the environment. With this strategy, it is important to use one's own strengths to successfully counter external risks. Moreover, existing successes need to be defended.

- *WO-strategies*
  This strategy is based on the fact that there are opportunities for the company, but the weaknesses do not allow it to take advantage of them. The aim in this case should be to mitigate the weaknesses or even turn them into strengths.

- *WT-strategies*
  This strategy is used when a company's weaknesses and risks coincide. The aim in this case must be to bring the internal weaknesses under control as quickly as possible, otherwise the long-term stability of the company is at stake (cf. Weihrich 1982, p. 61).

Overall, when defining the employer branding concept, it is important that the basis for the concept is an analysis of the company (cf. Immerschitt/Stumpf 2019, p. 53). Only when planning is based on up-to-date facts, it forms the basis for a long-term and successful employer branding concept that is not left to coincidence (cf. Graf/Pett 2009, p. 15).

5.4 Strategy Development

In efficient and effective employer branding communication that specifically address Generation Z, it is important to incorporate critical success factors into a digitally driven employer brand strategy that is integrated into the company's overall brand strategy. The central element of the employer brand strategy is hereby the employee value proposition (EVP), which portrays the core of an employer brand and its strategic direction in the labor market (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016b, p. 113 f.).

5.4.1 Critical Success Factors

Successful employer branding communication is driven to reach members of Generation Z via the appropriate media channels in a technically precise and situationally appropriate manner. Factors such as relevant content, personalized offers, and an emotionalizing and personal approach play an important role in communication with Generation Z. According to Kleinjohann and Reinecke (2020) the following critical success factors must be considered to achieve the desired attention, relevance, and impact among this young cohort:

- *Accessibility through Media Channels and Instruments*
- *Relevance through Content and Offer*
- *Identification through Values*
- *Authenticity through Congruence*
- *Uniqueness due to Personalization*
- *Emotionalization by Experiences* (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, pp. 25-32).

Moreover, every company, whether consciously or unconsciously, represents an employer brand that implies certain benefits for its employees. Therefore, an unmanaged employer brand can express itself in a mishmash of sometimes even contradictory messages to all kinds of target groups. In order to avoid conflicting messages and to attract much needed talent, defining and adjusting the strategic EVP is of tremendous importance as well (cf. Baran 2018, p. 47).

5.4.2 Formulation of an Employer Value Proposition

The EVP portrays the core of an employer brand and its strategic direction in the labor market. It also represents a promise to current and potential employees, similar to a unique selling proposition (USP) in product marketing (cf. Trost 2013, p. 16). Lievens, Van Hoye and Anseel (2007) state that instrumental employment characteristics are becoming progressively more resembling to one another, so organizations should offer symbolic employment characteristics to differentiate themselves from competitors in the labor market (cf. Lievens/Van Hoye/Anseel 2007, p. 48). The possibility to compare employment offers makes organizations require to differentiate themselves more from the competition to create increased attractiveness as an employer (cf. Lievens/Highhouse 2003, p. 75). For this reason, an EVP contains attributes that employees value, such could be fringe benefits, work policies or a set of rewards (cf. Aloo/Moronge 2014, p. 142). Overall, an EVP should be composed of functional, economical, and psychological benefits (cf. Ambler/Barrow 1996, p. 187). The development of this employer promise is usually preceded by a comprehensive reflection of the organizations own strengths as an employer, the preferences of relevant target group and the characteristics of competitors. The following illustration provides a brief overview of the composition of an EVP (cf. Trost 2018, p. 100):
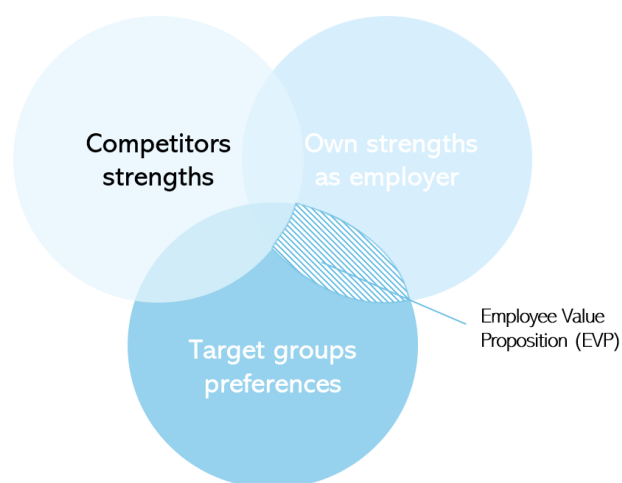
Figure 12: The simplified logic of an EVP (based on Trost 2018, p. 100)

Ultimately, the EVP reflects those aspects that can be offered as an employer which simultaneously appeal to the preferences of the target group, at a position where the competition has less to offer (cf. Trost 2018, p. 100 f.).

5.5 Social Media Communication Strategy

In efficient employer branding communication that specifically addresses the Generation Z, it is important to integrate critical success factors (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 25) and to develop/modify the EVP into a digitally influenced strategy (cf. Baran 2018, p. 47). Li and Bernoff's (2009) The P.O.S.T. method is by far one of the earliest and simplest approaches to a social media strategy and, most importantly, it is effective. *P.O.S.T.* is an acronym and stands for the four planning steps: People, Objectives, Strategy and Technology (cf. Li/Bernoff 2009, p. 75). The following figure provides an overview below:

Figure 13: P.O.S.T. framework according to Li and Bernoff (based on Li/Bernoff 2009, p. 75 f.)

Overall, the strategy focuses on the fundamentally digital brand identity as well as the relevant brand channels to communicate with the target group (cf. Decker 2019, pp. 126-128).

5.5.1 People

The first step in Li and Bernoff's frame of reference is to determine which target group the company intends to address (cf. Li/Bernoff 2009, p. 75). It is important to find out whether and on which social media channels the target group spends time to be able to address them successfully. To achieve this, activities must be specifically geared to the prioritized target group and their communication needs (cf. Bruhn 2019, p. 181). As already mentioned, the target group is Generation Z, and their communication behavior is explained in more detail in chapter 5.2.

5.5.2 Objectives

Once the target group has been defined, the social media objectives must be set. However, it is vital not to pursue stand-alone social media objectives that jeopardize the actual employer branding objective. Therefore, Social media objectives are to be derived on the basis of the employer branding objectives (cf. Runkel 2018, p. 134 f.):

- *Employer attractiveness*: Applause metrics (e.g., likes, favorites, hearts) and engagement metrics (e.g., shares, interactions) are useful for determining whether the preferences of the target group were met (cf. Tuten 2021, p. 371). According to Chaffey and Smith further engagement metrics are network size and growth, as well as social sharing (e.g., retweets) on the social site (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 237).

- *Employer image*: Capturing a brand's image online to measure the sentiment is a good indicator, according to Chaffey (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 237).

- *Employer awareness*: The KPI's for increasing awareness of the employer brand are reach, views/impressions, eWoM mentions and cost per mille (CPM) (cf. Tuten 2021, p. 371).

Nevertheless, social media objectives should always be *SMART*, this acronym stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (cf. Tuten 2021, p. 123). Key performance indicators (KPI's) meet these criteria and are ideally suited for social media objectives. These are metrics that are central to the specific business objective or, in this case, the concept objective (cf. Sterne 2010, p. 4). The success of any endeavour is usually measured using several KPI's. Nowadays, precise KPI's can easily be formulated, as their measurement has become more feasible with a variety of analytics applications (cf. Peterson 2006, p. 3). Once the objectives have been set, it is necessary to proceed with the elaboration of the strategy (cf. Li/Bernoff 2009, p. 75).

5.5.3 Strategy

The strategy is designed to transform the current state into the desired state defined by the objective above. In this third planning step, Li and Bernoff describe the change in the relationship between the company and its target group (cf. Li/Bernoff 2009, p. 75 f.). The first step hereby is to determine the **communication object**. Possible communication objects can be, for example, brands, products, services, nonprofit companies (e.g., advertising by political parties and interest groups), people (e.g., politicians in campaign advertising) and industries (e.g., joint advertising by the chemical industry). Most frequently, however, brands, products and services are advertised (cf. Esch/Winter 2016, p. 331). With brand **positioning**, the focus is on a few positioning characteristics from the abundance of characteristics that shape the nature of the brand, which correspond to the wishes and needs of potential employees. They need to be relevant to them and convey an independent and distinctive profile in comparison to competitors (cf. Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2015, p. 89). There are basically four positioning options to choose from according to Kroeber-Riel and Esch (cf. Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2015, pp. 98-140):

- *Positioning through emotion*

  The task of positioning through emotion is to anchor the offer in the consumer's emotional world of experience and thus to generate preferences. When emotional involvement is high, stakeholders hardly engage in rational discussions, instead they rely on their emotional impressions of the brand. This emotional involvement is closely related to personal values, motives and attitudes. For example, employees want to feel positive about their employer. (cf. Esch/Hardiman/Mundt 2006, p. 228). Experiences that can be communicated include social happiness, independence, nature, health, prestige, security, activity, enjoyment, and so forth. Effective communication of emotional experiences is highly tied to the use of images that are capable of evoking emotions in recipients. According to the principle of emotional conditioning, specific emotions are associated with a previously neutral brand through many repetitions. This experience assignment takes place with little mental control in a habitual-associative manner. The aim is to build up key strategic images that provide the brand or the company with an attractive experience profile (cf. Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2015, p. 121 f.).

- *Positioning through information*

  The task of positioning through information is to make the particular suitability of the offer for satisfying existing needs clear. Information is usually presented in linguistic or numerical form. Under the pressure of a general information overload, even interested and engaged recipients often stop taking in promotional information. For this reason, techniques must be used that enable rapid and selective information absorption and usage. These include using illustrations to explain facts, breaking up the text with subheadings, highlighted keywords, or presenting information hierarchically (cf. Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2015, pp. 105-107).

- *Positioning through emotion and information*

  However, positioning through emotion and information is a typical application, (e.g., in corporate image advertising). This makes it ideal for employer branding purposes. More differentiated considerations are required for the design implementation. In this mixed positioning, the design depends on the respective focus. If the emphasis is more on appealing to needs, the same considerations apply as for positioning with an emphasis on experience. If the focus is on information about the suitability of the communication object for satisfying needs, similar considerations apply as for fact-oriented positioning (cf. Esch 2005, p. 725).

- *Positioning through topicality*

  Positioning through topicality is associated with market situations characterized by low involvement. A brand that stands out from the competitive environment due to its topicality is perceived as a preferred alternative due to its stronger mental presence. A brand can succeed in assuming a "*top of mind*" position simply through an attention-grabbing appearance with numerous repetitions. This requires communicative measures that are highly noticeable, put the brand in the spotlight, and are memorable and easy to remember (cf. Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2015, pp. 132-134).

The next step is to define the **communication message**. The communication message embodies the core content that needs to be communicated. The starting point for any consideration of the communication content is the brand identity. This involves answering the question of what a brand actually stands for or should stand for in the future. Brand identity encompasses the essential characteristics and features of a brand. It describes the self-image that is defined by the company (internal perspective) (cf. Esch 2018, p. 79 f.). Fundamental implications for the communication message and the design framework of the message can be derived from the respective positioning (cf. Esch/Winter 2016, p. 336). However, a brand message is not the same as its claim. While the employer branding claim is a short but concise mission statement that sums up the authentic core of a brand, the brand message embodies the complete answer to the question of what a brand actually stands for. This complete answer to a company's offerings and values is not always realizable and feasible, claims are used to underpin the brand image to the outside world. A **claim** is often used as a synonym for slogan, although there are slight nuances between the terms. A Slogan means something like war cry or battle cry, while the claim represents an aspiration, assertion or even a promise. The claim thus expresses what a brand holds to be true. It is the most direct means of positioning after the brand name. However, there are different types of claims:

- Corporate claim for long-term use
- Product or brand claim for medium-term use
- Campaign claim for short-term use (cf. Samland 2006, p. 114 f.).

The claim positions the brand in relation to the target group and differentiates it from competitors A prime claim is distinctive, timeless and positive. Its functions range from explanatory to inviting and animating to representing a brand statement. This statement can contain a direct brand reference or be neutral (cf. Samland 2006, pp. 115-117). To increase brand awareness excellent claims should also be eye-catching or attention-grabbing (cf. Esch/Hardiman/Mundt 2006, p. 226). They should have a certain originality and can include puns or onomatopoeic effects, there are no limits to creativity here (cf. Samland 2006, pp. 120-122). This is because claims are instruments or means to convey underlying messages. Messages can be complex statements or signs that do not necessarily exist in verbal form, and are often not remembered literally, but in form of a claim they enter the

recipient's system primarily by association (cf. Law 2002, p. 367). However, claims are not the same as **slogans**. Ideally, slogans should be vivid and concrete rather than formulated in abstract terms. In addition, slogans could also be provided with an acoustic image (e.g., a catchy jingle), so that access to the slogan is facilitated. However, these same rules apply to slogans as well as to claims (cf. Esch 1998, p. 80). Since the target group cannot be motivated by a claim and slogans alone, these core messages must be expanded to include user-specific content. There are various forms of **content,** which are listed below:

- *Infotainment:* Combination of information and entertainment (e.g., Facts, stories)
- *Entertainment:* Pure entertainment content (e.g., Viral videos, memes, contests)
- *Education:* Combination of knowledge transfer and entertainment (e.g., Trainings) (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1088).

When choosing the right form of content, the target audience and objective must be considered. Additionally, when creating content for social media, the most important aim is to connect the employer brand with the target group (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 3 f.). Since advertising is generally met with rejection by Generation Z (cf. Reitbauer 2018, p. 346 f.). It is important to design content and offers so interesting, attractive and relevant for the target group that they are not only perceived by them, but also received by them (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 3 f.). Critical factors for relevant communication that create added value are clearly defined for Generation Z. A third (33%) finds content interesting if it is humorous but also fits them, as well as if it is a great offer on a product they were going to buy anyhow. Another third (29%) are interested in advertising if the content is thematically interesting to them (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 13). To achieve thematically interesting content, a communication message that is relevant in the eyes of the target group is essential. The following *factors* have to be taken into account to create relevance:

- The content should be useful, educational, informative, exciting, entertaining, or humorous so that readers will ideally read, like, share, and comment on it.
- At its core, it is about conversations. Therefore, content should typically be more personal, authentic and appealing than classic advertising copy.
- Dominantly sales-oriented content should be avoided.
- A transparent content calendar or editorial plan must be developed. This specifies which topics will be addressed by whom and when content should be deleted due to obsolescence.
- Communication in social media should have clear external and internal social media guidelines (cf. Kreutzer 2021, p. 4).

Additionally, the following *areas* in a content strategy for social media can be defined as relevant:

- General and exclusive information (e.g., about the company, the corporate culture or employees)
- Texts, photos and videos about the company (e.g., which encourage employment or the intention to switch employers)
- Invitation to participate in events (e.g., invitation to an open house) (cf. Kreutzer 2021, pp. 4-6).

The latest topics and trends (19%), storytelling (13%) and socially relevant topics (13%) are also crucial for brand communication that is perceived as relevant. However, the **type and tone** of communication also have a significant impact: 13% find advertising particularly appealing when it comes in a hip format (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 13). Especially regarding the tone of voice used, it is important to make the brand appear approachable and to communicate clearly in the language of Generation Z. Nevertheless, the success of communication depends above all on the extent to which it is possible to create harmony between the verbal language and the **visual elements**. In employer branding, the visual brand identity should be understood as the body language of the brand. The corporate brand identity serves as the starting point for all decisions regarding the representation of the employer brand from a visual perspective (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 34 f.). The reason for this is that the employer branding strategy is integrated into the company's overarching general brand approach (cf. Kriegler 2022, p. 38 f.). In fact,

the majority of top organizations have established corporate brand identity guidelines that are intended to address all forms of communication (cf. Mackin 2016, p. 1122 f.). Ideally, these guidelines should include instructions for visual elements. This way they serve as a general framework and support the visual implementation of the employer brand. However, it is a well-established procedure to adapt the appearance of corporate communication to the unique preferences of the target group. This results in adapting the corporate brand identity guidelines and key visuals to the more human context of employment (cf. Emerson/Prang 2016, pp. 943-946). However, successful communication depends not only on the message content, but also on the distribution of the message itself (cf. Schweiger/Schrattenecker 2021, p. 340).

5.5.4 Tactics

When formulating the communication strategy, it is important to determine the general importance of individual media as carriers of the communication message. When speaking of communication, only personal communication channels are considered. This is due to the earlier mentioned fact that social media is a matter of mutually exchanging information and building social relationships. Through channels, the employer brand becomes known on the labor market, establishes the desired employer image and builds employer attractiveness. New channels can be used for campaigns as well as existing ones. The main instruments in this concept are social media activities. When making use of social media platforms, it signals to Generation Z that the organization is informed about new trends, supports modern developments and communicates with potential applicants on an eye-to-eye level (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 213 f.). The next step is to select which social media platforms can be used for the communication message. Basically, there are a variety of media evaluation criteria that can be included in the decision-making process. One of these is the media usage of the target group. Information about this, forms the starting point for considerations about the media selection (cf. Esch/Winter 2016, p. 337).

Once a selection of appropriate channels has been made, it is important to translate it into a coherent communications plan. In this context, the consideration of communication **timing** plays a significant role (cf. Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/von Walter 2016, p. 183). Communication timing is a decision about the intensity of the communication measures, as well as the time frame. With regard to the time frame and intensity of the communication effort, the question arises as to whether communication activities should be concentrated or continuously distributed over several periods. This decision depends highly on the communication objectives. When a company wants to cover a personnel peak in the shortest time possible, a concentrated effort is necessary. In contrast, when the aim is to build up a new brand or maintain the image, continuous communication efforts will be beneficial. By focusing on time, a temporal focus can be placed on specific months, weeks, or days of the year, depending on the usefulness (cf. Esch/Winter 2016, p. 340).

5.6 Implementation

The next step is to implement the communication at all relevant channels. Each individual channel contributes to the employer brand's image. It is therefore crucial that the messages are coherent and sufficiently present in all relevant channels. As already mentioned, the authenticity of the message is of enormous importance (cf. Sponheuer 2010, p. 225). For this reason, it is advised that the company develops a personnel communication policy, that involves translating the brand identity and values into claims, core messages, a consistent design and uniform imagery (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 221). This is often referred to as the "***copy strategy***". Kremmel, Hofer-Fischer and von Walter (2016) argue that a copy strategy represents the conceptual link between strategic employer branding and its operational implementation in communications (cf. Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/von Walter 2016, p. 173). This is followed by the determination of the budget, the selection of concrete communication instruments and the transfer of the selection into a written **communication plan** (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016a, p. 23). Additionally, it should be mentioned that employer branding is not an activity that ends with the identification of the target group or the implementation of specific campaigns. Analysis, strategy and implementation are carried out continuously as part of employer marketing. This employer brand cycle is shown graphically below (cf. Trost 2013, p. 18):

Target Group Definition

Implementation
Communication material,
Rules & Processes, Validation,
Campaigns

Analysis
Employer image,
Target Group Preferences,
Employer Characteristics,
Competition

Strategy
Employee Value Proposition,
Media Strategy, Target Group Focus,
Local Differentiation

Figure 14: The employer branding cycle (based on Trost 2013, p. 18)

5.7 Monitoring

The evaluation of the results provides information about the effectiveness and efficiency of the communication strategy and allows conclusions to be drawn about possible deficits in the employer branding strategy. It assesses the extent to which the objectives set for the employer brand are being achieved. Ultimately, systematic employer brand controlling determines when the employer brand objectives have been accomplished. Therefore, the basis of successful employer brand controlling is a system of key performance indicators (KPI's) (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016c, p. 216).

- Depending on which employer branding objective has been selected, the social media objectives change and so the KPI's. Relevant **KPI's** reveal where the organization is underperforming or where it is excelling. They reveal the extent to which the social media objectives have been achieved and ultimately the overarching employer brand objective of the concept (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016c, p. 217).

- To determine whether the overarching employer branding objectives have been achieved, a standardized survey of the target group needs to be carried out. This is explained by the fact that psychographic brand goals, employer attractiveness, employer image and employer awareness, are generally measured by a **standardized survey with established scientific scales** (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016c, p. 220).

In summary, the KPI's measure the success of the social media concept and a standardized survey the overall success of employer branding. Feasibility and relevance take precedence over what is theoretically possible. Organizations should limit themselves to a small number of meaningful metrics. In addition, the metrics should be based on a clear employer branding objective (cf. von Bothmer/Graf 2013, p. 200).

6 Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG was founded in 1825 as "*Vereinssparkasse*", making it the oldest financial institution in Styria. Today, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is not only the oldest, but also the largest credit institution in the country with total assets of EUR 19.6 billion. 3,009 employees working at 231 locations in Austria and the Western Balkan region. More than 805,000 customers currently use the wide range of services offered by Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. In addition to its nationwide commitment in Styria, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is successfully represented in six countries in the Western Balkan region in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia (cf. Sparkasse 2022a).

6.1 Facts and Figures

Erste Group Bank AG is the holding company and is organised in 7 regional associations (cf. Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG 2021):

Figure 15: Erste Group structure (Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG 2021)

This Figure shows that Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG, is the umbrella association in Austria. This association is in turn divided into savings banks in Austria's federal provinces, the largest of which is Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. In order to achieve a uniform image, a nationwide campaign was

launched to communicate the brand of Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG. This campaign focuses strongly on the corporate purpose and attitude. The corporate purpose hereby is to create and spread prosperity. To do so for all people in all regions in which they operate (cf. Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG 2021).

The entire body of thought was taken from Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG, underlying the founding of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG "*Unser Land braucht Menschen*" (Gradischnig 2022). To be able to work with this in today's stimulus-flooded world, they have summarized their purpose, their attitude, in a single sentence:

„Unser Land braucht Menschen, die an sich glauben. Und eine Bank, die an sie glaubt." (Gradischnig 2022).

This sentence specifies what Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG stand for as a brand and what they desire to stand for in the future. This sentence is their campaign claim (cf. Gradischnig 2022).

#glaubandich
They often communicate their central promise in an abbreviated form - with #glaubandich. This works in both directions, internally and externally. On the one hand, #glaubandich refers to the company itself, to all employees, because they should believe in themselves, their strengths and their abilities. On the other hand, it refers to existing and potential customers. They want to encourage them to believe in themselves and to push forward with the things that are important to them in life. Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG intends their brand to be felt in all areas, in which they operate, this also includes Styria (cf. Sparkasse 2022b).

However, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG does not have its own employer branding concept so far. Activities are limited to media presence on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn. These platforms are supplied with mixed content (cf. Freidorfer 2022).

6.2 Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Based on their business model, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG intends to grow continuously with their customers in a risk-conscious manner. They wish to be the best in terms of quality of advice, economic competence, speed of decision-making and regional anchoring in Styria and in the Western Balkans region (cf. Sparkasse 2022c).

Mission

Their private customers should be able to rely on a strong branch network in the region and on the finest financial advisors. They claim the leadership role locally. They are the only bank with foreign holdings in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. Together with Erste Group, they are building a strong banking network in the Western Balkans that offers attractive business opportunities (cf. Sparkasse 2022c).

Values

Credibility: They make decisions that are understandable and comprehensible. This gives them credibility in every respect.

Reliability: They are a reliable partner. Security, trust and quality form their basis. Their commitments are based on sound decisions and are mandatory.

Passion: They are passionately committed to the concerns of their customers. They seek to inspire with their services and commitment (cf. Sparkasse 2022c).

7 Research Design

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about the secondary and primary research conducted as part of this master's thesis.

7.1 Secondary research

Secondary research is a method of marketing research that makes targeted use of existing internal and external secondary data. Internal data consists of facts and figures that are present within an organization and have been accumulated over the years through business transactions, while external data is data that can come from a variety of sources outside of an organization (cf. Proctor 2005, p. 70 f.). In this thesis, social media communication of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG as an employer on the labor market is analyzed and evaluated within the framework of secondary research.

7.1.1 Social Media Analysis

Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG uses various channels to search for potential new employees. In addition to their website, the current job offers can be found on the job portal Karriere.at. On LinkedIn and kununu.at, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG presents itself with an employer page. Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are also operated by Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. In order to gain further insights into how Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's communications meet the expectations of Generation Z, a social media channel analysis was carried out (see chapter 1.1 of the appendix).

Criteria for the analysis of social media channels
The channels to be analyzed were ranked based on Generation Z's communication behavior. The data was taken from the study commissioned by Mastercard, as this was the most recent study conducted in Austria (cf. Mastercard 2021). Unfortunately, the study did not include data about LinkedIn, so the "OK Zoomer" study by the marketing agency House of Yas was used to supplement it. LinkedIn is currently used by only 11% (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 17). This is explained by

the fact that Generation Z is still relatively fresh on the labor market, and this is a business network that is mainly used for networking, learning and research (cf. Linkedin 2021a). Furthermore, this network is steadily gaining in importance (cf. Schnetzer 2021, p. 27). However, four of the six critical success factors cited by Kleinjohann and Reinecke (2020) for communicating with Generation Z were applied to form the analysis categories (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, pp. 25-32). To further specify the category "*Relevance through content and offer*", data from the "*Elbdudler*" study from 2022 was also included. The study identified the following factors as relevant for Generation Z to follow a brand on social media: Interest in news (63%), interest in offers (43%) and attachment to the brand (31%) (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 14). In addition, the critical success factor "*emotionalization through experiences*" was changed to "*emotionalization*" since it is unfeasible for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG to design augmented reality experiences on social media (cf. Freidorfer 2022).

In the following the key findings are presented:

- Their most popular channel is Facebook with 20,375 followers.
- The channel with the least followers is YouTube with 109 followers.
- Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG offers news update on all channels.
- They offer promotions and offers across all their channels except YouTube.
- Their claim #glaubandich is present on LinkedIn and Facebook.
- On Instagram the claim #steiermärkische is apparent.
- Employer information is only provided on LinkedIn and Instagram.
- Important Generation Z values were represented in all channels except transparency and openness.
- Emotionalization through photos and videso is also apparent through all channels.

The full analysis can be found in chapter 1.1 of the appendix*.*

7.1.2 Competition Analysis

In the long term, an employer should differentiate itself from its competitors through its employer brand. It is not necessarily about being unique, but special in a certain way. A company should not only consider its absolute strengths as an employer, but also see these strengths in comparison to their competition in the labor market. When the majority of competitors offer career opportunities as a benefit, this fact loses its significance as a USP. To ultimately stand out with an appropriate employer brand, it is necessary to understand the competition in the labor market and their activities (cf. Trost 2013, p. 21 f.). To find out this essential information about the competitive position of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, a competitive analysis is carried out using data from Statista. The following four largest banks in Austria - Raiffeisenverband Steiermark, UniCredit Bank Austria AG, Bawag Group AG, Oberbank AG - were identified as competitors (cf. Statista 2019b).

Criteria for the analysis of communication channels

Channels were identified on the basis of Generation Z's communication behavior. Since this is an employer branding concept with focus on social media, job career portals were initially selected. Karriere.at was selected because it is Austria's largest and best-known job portal (cf. Karriere.at 2022). Subsequently, business social media platforms (LinkedIn, XING) were identified. The remaining channels were determined based on user frequency of Generation Z: WhatsApp (88%), YouTube (84%), Instagram (80%), Snapchat (60%), Facebook (52%) and TikTok (43%) (cf. Mastercard 2021). Mere messenger services were excluded from the analysis of the competition, as they are not supported by Bank und Sparkassen AG (cf. Freidorfer 2022). In summary, the aim is to determine how active the competition is on social media, what activities are carried out and to classify the positioning of their values. For these reasons, the number of followers, time span between posts, time span to respond, jab vacancies, content and values portrayed are analyzed.

In the following the key findings are presented:

- All competitors are active on Karriere.at, LinkedIn and YouTube.
- However, most of them are active on Karrier.at, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.
- Unicredit Bank Austria AG is the only one active on TikTok.
- Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG has the fewest followers (109) on YouTube.
- On Instagram, they have the second most followers after Raiffeisenverband Steiermark.
- Overall, their followers rank in the middle of the competition.
- The values portrayed mostly differ from those of the competition.
- The values community, sustainability and social purpose are used quite frequently by the competition.
- The content mix of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG also differs from the competition.
- However, Bawag and Oberbank share some commonalities in their content mix.
- The frequency of posts of Steiermärksiche Bank und Sparkassen AG is the highest among the competitors on Instagram.
- Overall is their frequency of posts depending on the channel quite similar to the overall competition.

The full analysis can be found in chapter 1.2 of the appendix.

7.1.3 Target Group Analysis

As outlined in the introduction, the main task of this thesis is to develop an employer branding communication concept to attract the Generation Z. The prerequisite for doing so is to gain knowledge about their expectations towards their employers. The expectations, values and needs of the target group are essential for the communicative approach. Therefore, a target group analysis is carried out with regard to Generation Z's social media behavior. An employer brand must know the preferences of the target group and respond to them. At the very least, the answer to the question of why an applicant should be interested in a company should not contradict the preferences of the target group. However, the target group analysis also involves analyzing which communication media and platforms the target group uses (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1067). The main aim is to discover which communication style and values this age group prefers towards their employers. For this purpose, secondary research is ideally suited, since secondary research consists of the analysis of research that has already been collected, assembled, concluded, and published by other researchers. As a starting point for a target group analysis, research generally uses the following four areas (cf. Janich 2013, p. 27):
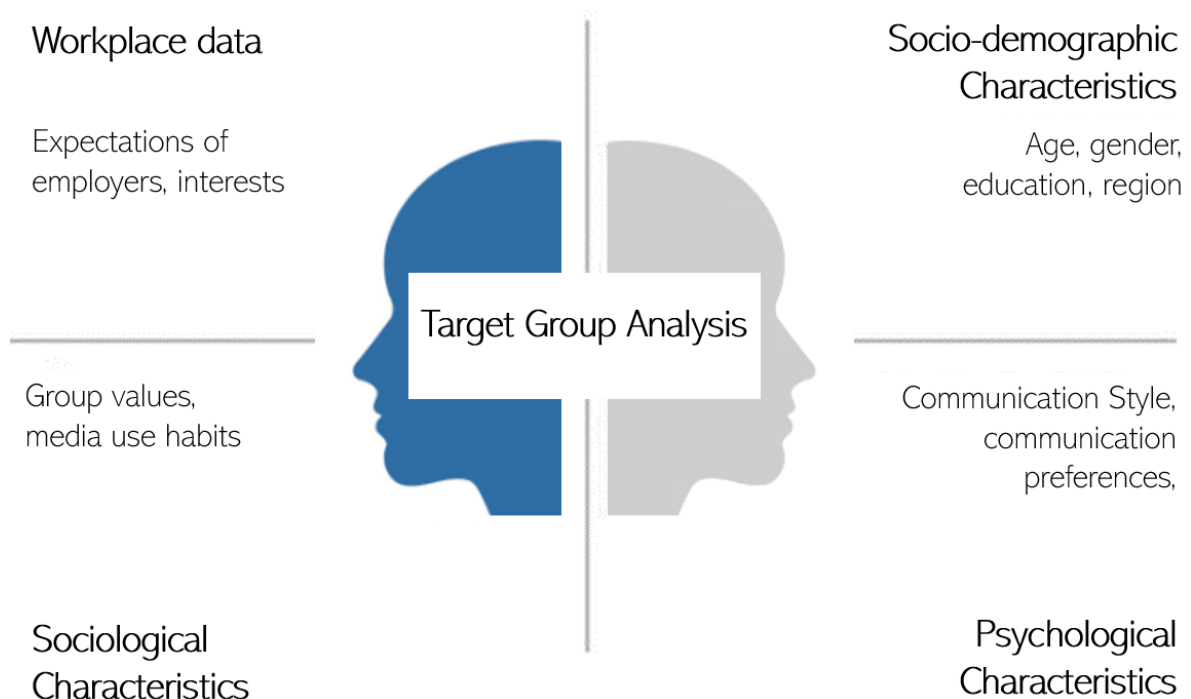
Figure 16: Areas of a target group analysis (based on Janich 2013, p. 27)

For the target group analysis, Generation Z in the employable age range of 16 to 26 years was selected:

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Psychological Characteristics	Sociological Characteristics	Workplace data
Age: ▪ Generation Z, born between 1996-2006	**Communication Style:** ▪ They post (almost) nothing, but like to see the content of others (40%), they mainly post content on certain occasions (31%) (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 5) ▪ Active on WhatsApp (88%), YouTube (84%), Instagram (80%), Snapchat (60%), Facebook (52%) and TikTok (43%) (cf. Mastercard 2021)	**Core values:** ▪ Transparency (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 36) ▪ Individuality and uniqueness (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 16) ▪ Equality and diversity (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 34) ▪ Sustainability (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 20)	**Expectations of employers:** ▪ Salary & benefits (74%) was the biggest motivation for performance, followed by atmosphere (71%), job security (71%), work-life balance (61%), and financial health (61%) (cf. Randstad 2021, p. 11) ▪ Social Purpose (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 21) ▪ 50% of candidates indicate that they would not work for a company with a poor reputation (cf. Randstad 2021, p. 5)

Gender:	Communication preferences:	Media use habits:	Interests:
▪ All genders	▪ Humorous tone at eye-level (33%) (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p.13) ▪ Visual media, authentic content and a wide coverage of their interests (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 18) ▪ Identity-based, transparent, direct, and proactive (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 31)	▪ Nearly 100% of Generation Z owns a smartphone (cf. IZI 2022, p. 5) ▪ 50% are constantly active on their smart phone (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 6) ▪ Instagram and YouTube are their favourite app (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 17) ▪ They spend about four hours per day online (cf. MPFS 2020, p. 33)	Racism (57%), animal welfare (57%) and climate change (53%) are top issues (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 31)
Education: ▪ A-level and below			
Region: ▪ Styria, Burgenland and Carinthia			
Economic Environment: ▪ Financially secure living conditions (cf. Hurrelmann/Köcher/Sommer 2019, p. 10)			

Table 5: Target group analysis (prepared by the author)

The numbers above (or see graph A-25) reveal that "*Facebook Fatigue",* a phenomenon increasingly discussed in the press and among investors, is indeed occurring. This refers to the increasing migration of young people away from Facebook (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1061).

After defining the target group and identifying their preferences, it is necessary to be able to compare which requirements the company already meets and where gaps exist between the perception of the company and its current offering. This is done to make the employer as attractive as possible (cf. Graf/Pett 2009, p. 33). Since there is no data on how Generation Z perceives Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG (cf. Baier 2021) or how they would like to be addressed, primary research must be conducted in addition to secondary research in order to close this information gap. For this purpose, a standardized survey is conducted with subsequent statistical analysis of the data obtained (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016a, p. 27). However, in order to conduct primary research in the form of a standardized survey, general hypotheses must first be derived from scientific literature and published research findings (cf. Raithel 2008, p. 33).

7.2 Hypotheses

This section presents the hypotheses formulated based on the results of the literature and studies previously discussed, in other words, secondary research. In the preceding sections, the values of Generation Z and Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG were discussed separately. This section is about finding commonalities between the values of Generation Z and the values of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG in order to propose a communication concept that can attract suitable Generation Z candidates to apply for a position at Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. This communication concept meets Generation Z's expectations in terms of values towards an employer and fulfills Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's need for young talent. Using selected communication characteristics of Generation Z from the scientific literature and supported by studies, five hypotheses were formulated. Unfortunately, the various studies do not show homogeneous results on the values of Generation Z, instead merely a direction can be derived (cf. Hurrelmann/Köcher/Sommer 2019, p. 15, Schnetzer 2021, p. 4, Mastercard 2021, OC&C 2019, p. 8 f.). However, from scientific literature, the following values could be established according to Buschmann, Fournier and Mattmüller (2019): transparency and openness, equality and diversity, flexibility and individuality and furthermore sustainability (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 210). These have been supported by empirical study results, which are presented in the target group analysis. In addition,

Immerschitt and Stumpf (2019) point out that preferences in the choice of employer have changed over time as a result of changes in values and mentality as well as current developments (cf. Immerschitt/Stumpf 2019, p. 11). Accordingly, preferences in the choice of employer change because of a change in values. To address this issue, this thesis examines the significance of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's values for Generation Z in Styria. Steiermärksche Bank und Sparkassen AG stands for the values of credibility, reliability, and passion (cf. Sparkasse 2022c). Therefore, the following hypotheses can be derived:

H1: A high value congruence of Generation Z with the value credibility has a positive effect on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

H2: A high value congruence of Generation Z with the value reliability has a positive effect on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

H3: A high value congruence of Generation Z with the value passion has a positive effect on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

In addition, Weber Shandwick and KRC Research's study, *"The Employer Brand Credibility Gap: Bridging the Divide",* found that only 19% of employees found a strong match between employer promise and actual experience. The study was based on 1,902 full-time employees in 19 markets across the globe (cf. Weber Shandwick 2017, p. 4). A credibility gap is detrimental to any employer brand. As already mentioned, several times, identification (33%) is crucial for Generation Z (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 13). They value openness and transparency. Meaning that the employer brand identity and the brand experience should allign at every touchpoint. It is important to tell an authentic and identity-based brand story to create a convincing image among them (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 33). For these reasons, the following hypothesis is derived as follows:

H4: A credibility gap has a negative impact on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

Brand or employer image is important where direct experience is not possible or only possible under difficult conditions. Since a detailed examination of the large number of potential employers is not possible for employees, the employer brand serves to reduce the perceived risk of making a wrong decision when choosing an employer. This implies that the employer brand has a significant function in the pre-selection of potential companies for employees (cf. Sponheuer 2010, p. 102 f.). However, it is tempting to think that a company does not have an employer brand unless it is communicated to the outside world, but generally, every company has a public reputation and, of course, an employer image. As Paul Watzlawick's pragmatic axiom from 1969 states "*Man kann nicht nicht kommunizieren*", meaning that it is not possible to *not communicate* (cf. Watzlawick/Beavin/Jackson 2017, pp. 58-60). Unfortunately, the image of Austrian banks has suffered greatly in recent years, as impressively demonstrated by the McDonalds Education Study (cf. Hurrelmann/Köcher/Sommer 2019, p. 65). For this reason, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG has difficulty maintaining a positive charged employer brand. In order to clarify this issue, this thesis examines the negative image of the banking sector in relation to the employer brand of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. Therefore, the following hypotheses can be derived:

H5: A negative image of the banking industry has a negative impact on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

7.3 Primary research

The primary research builds on the findings and hypotheses of the secondary research and aims to provide further insights into the communication style and values of Generation Z especially in Styria. For this reason, the primary research consists of an external standardized online survey conducted using Unipark. Unipark is a web-based software solution for academic research (cf. Unipark 2022). In scientific research, quantitative research refers to objects that can be expressed in terms of quantities, or something that can be counted (cf. Mishra/Alok 2017, p. 3). A quantitative approach was chosen due to the necessity of testing existing hypotheses as opposed to developing new hypotheses. Moreover, this decision is based on the fact that the theoretically gained insights are the starting point for data collection to be empirically verified. In addition, the quantitative research method basically represents one of the best-known research approaches. The data collection is standardized, and its analysis can be carried out with the help of statistical programs, such as SPSS. The advantage of such an approach is that a relatively large and above-average number of people can be surveyed on a particular topic and provide a reliable picture of the current situation (cf. Raithel 2008, p. 8). An online survey was chosen as the most appropriate market research method, as the target group, Generation Z, interacts predominantly online and is easily accessible via their mobile devices. For more information on the questionnaire, please visit the appendix (see A-9).

7.3.1 Research objectives

The primary research objective is to close the information gap regarding perceptions of and desires for the employer brand Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. In addition, the following sub-objectives are relevant:

- Analysis of the current employer brand perception of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG
- Analysis and evaluation of employer values from secondary research
- Analysis and evaluation of communication behavior of Generation Z from secondary research

The questionnaire is divided into four sections concerning the communication behavior of Generation Z, industry image, employer image and values (see A-9).

7.3.2 Target group

In order to address a problem or question more precisely and subsequently test hypotheses, it is necessary to clearly define in advance the target groups about whom these statements are to be researched (cf. Raithel 2008, p. 54). In this thesis, the focus is on Generation Z. As mentioned above, the data collection of the present study takes place within a definable population cohort, meaning all persons who are connected by the same birth period. This is due to the fact that this generation will dominate the labor market in the medium to long term. The questionnaire was provided in German and the following table provides more information about the target group:

Factor	Characteristics
Planned responses	100+
Country	Austria
Age	16-26
Gender	50% Female 50% Male
Education	A-level and below
Sector	Economics

Table 6: Target group characteristics in primary research (prepared by the author)

In order to participate in the survey, participants had to meet some requirements that were set in advance:

1. Defined birth period
Since this study is about Generation Z, the participants in the survey must belong to a specific birth period. In literature, the chronological classification varies, but this study is based on all participants born between 1996 and 2006.

2. Reference to economic or financial sector
Finally, the subjects must be somehow related to the economic or financial sector. The population of this survey is therefore targeted at all Generation Z workers and students studying economics or something of that nature.

3. Defined Area

Another condition for participation is a habitual place of residence in Styria or neighboring federal provinces such as Carinthia or Burgenland. These provinces are essential, as this is an employer branding communication concept for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, which have their headquarters in Graz, Styria.

4. Employment

This section is intended to provide insight into the employment considerations in this study. An existing employment relationship is not a mandatory condition for participation. This is because a secure employment relationship is not relevant to key aspects of the survey, which relate to the perception of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. Similarly, pure full-time students or current unemployed persons are likely to have been in previous employment relationships and are therefore in a position to make adequate statements about their perceptions.

However, since it is not possible to conduct a complete survey of this population, the data is merely collected for a part of the relevant group of people, the so-called "*sample*". The sample is ultimately a reduced representation of the population. To ensure that the sample is as meaningful and representative as possible, the selection procedure is of particular importance. However, MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, and Hong suggest that an estimated sample size of 60 subjects (N=60) already allows for a significant result. When the sample is smaller, it is not sufficiently informative (cf. MacCallum et al. 1999, p. 93).

7.3.3 Time planning

The time dimension of the research design is a crucial criterion (cf. Raithel 2008, p. 50). In the present study, one survey phase was planned, which means that it is a cross-sectional design. This implies that data collection is only possible during a clearly defined point in time, or rather during a predefined period of time. This time span is determined and given by the author. The questionnaire was available from June 1st, 2022 to June 11th, 2022. Furthermore, this work is based on a specific cohort, i.e., a group of people who are characterized by a common and long-term event. Thus, this survey can also be called a "*cohort study*", since the focus is on Generation Z (cf. Raithel 2008, p. 53).

7.3.4 Findings from primary research

Within the scope of the quantitative survey, the perception of the employer brand of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, the evaluation of employer values and the communication behavior of Generation Z were analyzed. The validity of the hypotheses derived from the secondary research was tested, and the main findings of the study are summarized in this chapter.

In this thesis, the present sample includes 105 subjects (N=105). The sociodemographic distribution shows 65 women (62%) and 39 men (37%). One respondent chose the answer category "*Divers" (=non-binary)*, which corresponds to a share of about one percent. The following table provides detailed information on the distribution of the sociodemographic variables in the sample:

		N	Percent
Total		105	100
Gender	Man	39	37,1
	Woman	65	61,9
	Divers	1	1
Year of Birth	2006	5	4,8
	2005	12	11,4
	2004	8	7,6
	2003	6	5,7
	2002	4	3,8
	2001	4	3,8
	2000	12	11,4
	1999	11	10,5
	1998	20	19,0
	1997	12	11,4
	1996	11	10,5
State	Styria	95	90,5
	Burgenland	4	3,8
	Carinthia	6	5,7
Current Status	Pupils	22	21,0
	Students	35	33,3
	Other	2	1,9
	Maternity leave	3	2,9
	Job seeking	8	7,6
	Employed	32	30,5
	Civilian and military service	3	2,9

Table 7: Sociodemographic distribution of the sample (prepared by the author)

To test the formulated hypotheses, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. The Kruskal-Wallis test - also called the "*H-test*" - for independent samples is used to test whether the central tendencies of several independent samples differ. It is applied when the requirements for an analysis of variance are not met. Prerequisites for the Kruskal-Wallis test are:

- that the dependent variable is at least ordinally scaled and
- that there is an independent variable that is used to form the groups to be compared (cf. Landau/Everitt 2004, p. 156 f.).

Since the requirements for an analysis of variance were not met because the data were not interval scaled, and the prerequisites for the Kruskal-Wallis test were fulfilled, the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. The test results of the hypotheses tested are illustrated below and subsequently discussed individually:

Kruskal-Wallis Test

	Willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG	N	Mean Rank
Credibility	Yes	25	34,02
	No	30	32,70
	Don't know	11	34,50
	Total	66	
Reliability	Yes	36	47,88
	No	35	39,07
	Don't know	14	40,29
	Total	85	
Passion	Yes	31	38,71
	No	30	34,83
	Don't know	9	26,67
	Total	70	
Credibility gap	Yes	46	63,33
	No	43	43,92
	Don't know	16	47,72
	Total	105	
Banking industry image	Yes	46	40,40
	No	43	65,66
	Don't know	16	55,19
	Total	105	

Table 8: Kruskal Wallis test results from SPSS (prepared by the author)

Test Statistics[a,b]

	Credibility	Reliability	Passion	Credibility gap	Banking industry image
Kruskal-Wallis H	,137	3,539	3,432	10,765	17,533
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	,934	,170	,180	,005	<,001

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

Table 9: Significance of the formulated hypotheses (prepared by the author)

Hypothesis Test Summary

Statistics

Item	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of credibility is the same across the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG?	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,934	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of reliability is the same across the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG?	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,170	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of passion is the same across the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG?	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,180	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of uncredibility is the same across the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG?	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	,005	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of a negative banking industry image is the same across the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG?	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	<,001	Reject the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is ,050.
b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Table 10: Summary of Kruskal Wallis test results (prepared by the author)

Further results of the quantitative research are incorporated at the appropriate points in the practical part in chapter 8. In the following, only the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test for the hypotheses will be discussed:

Hypothesis 1

According to hypothesis H1, a high value congruence of Generation Z with the value credibility has a positive effect on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. In other words, the more important the value of credibility is to the applicants, the more willing they are to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. As the Kruskal-Wallis test revealed, this hypothesis turned out to be false and the null hypothesis must be retained. This result could be due to the fact that credibility was ranked last in primary research (see graph A-39).

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis H2 investigates whether a high value congruence of Generation Z with the value reliability has a positive effect on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. In other words, the more important the value of reliability is to the applicants, the more willing they are to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. Unexpectedly, the Kruskal-Wallis test shows that the hypothesis is false and the null hypothesis must be retained. Nevertheless, this is a scientific finding. For explanations, further statistical tests (i.e., effect size, error type 2) and other parameters should be considered.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis H3 assumes that a high value congruence of Generation Z with the value of passion has a positive effect on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. In other words, the more important the value of passion is to the applicants, the more willing they are to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. Also in this case, the Kruskal-Wallis test showed that the hypothesis is false and the null hypothesis must be retained. This could be due to the fact that Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is only perceived as passionate by around 22% of survey participants (see graph A-40).

Hypothesis 4

According to hypothesis H4, a credibility gap has a negative impact on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. This means that applicants who do not find Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG credible are not willing to work for them. After all, the null hypothesis can be rejected for this hypothesis, as the significance level is below 0.05, and the counterhypothesis H4 can be accepted. This means that information asymmetries do have a negative influence on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis H5 assumes that a negative image of the banking industry has a negative impact on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. This means that applicants who have a negative view of the banking industry would not consider working for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. Again, the null hypothesis can be rejected with a high level of significance and the counterhypothesis H5 can be accepted. For Steiermärkische Bank and Sparkasse, this indicates that a negative image of the banking industry has a negative impact on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

In summary, it can be stated that the values emphasized by Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG do not correlate in any way with the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. However, further statistical tests (i.e., effect size, error type 2) are required to clarify this result. Additionally, other parameters should be considered, such as the applicants' history with Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG or its products. On the contrary, it could be demonstrated that information asymmetries and the negative image of the banking industry have a negative impact on the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

8 Employer Branding Communication Concept for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

In this chapter, the previously discussed theories are combined with the findings from secondary and primary research to generate an employer branding communication concept for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

8.1 Definition of Employer Branding Objectives

The employer branding objective for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG refers to psychographic brand targets, as already mentioned. A distinction is usually made between employer attractiveness, employer image and employer awareness (cf. Collins/Kanar 2014, pp. 284-286). Since Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG has not yet conducted any targeted employer branding on its social media for Generation Z (cf. Freidorfer 2022), the employer branding objective is to generate awareness.

- *Increasing the awareness of the employer brand*
  This objective is based on the realization that the relationship with brands is nowadays increasingly shaped by the brand experience on social media. However, creating awareness for the general brand is different from creating awareness of the organization as an employer. Oftentimes, people are aware of a brand, yet not attracted to it as an employer. An honest and constructive exchange between company and employees, but also between the employees themselves, ideally has a positive effect on the awareness and the attractiveness of the company as an employer (cf. Sponheuer 2010, pp. 39-41).

However, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG benefits from the #glaubandich campaign, which is run by Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG. The campaign has an impact internally and externally, for the company itself and for all employees (cf. Sparkasse 2022b).

8.2 Identification of the Target Group

As already mentioned in chapter 5.2 the target group consists of Generation Z. The advantages of segmentation by generation can be found in chapter 3.3. The vision of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is, among other things, to be the best in terms of quality of advice and competence. For this reason, they need an increase in applications of well-qualified graduates and young professionals. To address them the target group of Generation Z needs to be further specialized by job-related criteria and personality-based criteria, such as work experience or values. For the job-related criteria, the educational background is defined in more detail. For the personality-related criteria, only the values are defined. Since it has been proven, that besides the professional qualifications, a high degree of cultural fit has a significant influence on the success of the employer-employee relationship (cf. Meyer/Dietz 2019, p. 65). An overview of the target group can be found in the table below:

Demographics	Geographic	Educational Background	Psychographic
All genders 16-26	Styria Carinthia Burgenland	A-level and below Field of economics	Values similar to Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

Table 11: Target group characteristics (prepared by the author)

In addition, the target group must also be analyzed in terms of its importance for future needs of the company. Generation Z is highly relevant for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG in the future, as its mission is to specialize in the house bank function, which requires a considerable amount of personnel (cf. Baier 2021).

8.3 Situation Analysis

In order to build a credible employer brand, it is essential to examine how Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG sees itself as an employer. When the employer brand is not derived from real employer characteristics, contradictions arise between the marketing content and the employee experience. Contradictions are detrimental to the credibility of any employer marketing activities (cf. Valentin 2018, pp. 287-290).

8.3.1 Internal situation analysis

The following table depicts Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's internal situation regarding their communication on social media platforms:

Questions	Answers	Strengths/Weaknesses
Company-related questions		
How developed are the current competencies in regard to social media?	Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG has a department, which is responsible for social media activities. A special person assigned as head of social media management enjoys continuing training. For this reason, no competence deficiencies can be identified (cf. Freidorfer 2022).	S

How is the availability of enough relevant content?	According to Ms. Freidorfer, the social media chief officer, there is a content plan and content ideas for "*buffer time"* have already been developed for 2022 as well. Furthermore, the marketing department is regularly supplied with ideas and images by other departments or branches (cf. Freidorfer 2022).	S
How strongly can the Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG distinguish itself central competitors in terms of communication?	Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is part of a wider marketing campaign (#glaubandich) which is innovative and future-oriented, distinguishing them from the competition. They also use a highly emotionalized approach through many videos, pictures and reels (see social media channel analysis).	S
Are the values of Generation Z present in the communication with them?	Most of the values of Generation Z are present in current communication. However, transparency and openness are missing (see social media channel analysis).	W

| How is the representation of the employer throughout the channels? | Only on LinkedIn there was a sufficiently satisfactory representation of the employer. On the other channels, the presentation was very brief or non-existent (see social media channel analysis). | W |
| The job offers are easily visible and distributed on the social media platforms? | The channel analysis showed that there is a lack of job offers or references on most channels (see social media channel analysis). | W |

Table 12: Internal questionnaire for SWOT completed (based on Bruhn 2014, p. 1072)

8.3.2 External situation analysis

The external situation analysis of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG regarding communication on social media is presented below:

Questions	Answers	Opportunities/Threats
Competition-related questions		
How active is the competition on social media platforms?	Direct competition of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is on the main social media channels present. The level of activity depends on the channel and the respective competitor (see competition analysis).	T
Which social media activities do the competitors carry out?	They perform different types of activities on social media. These include employee portraits, company news, and promotion of career events (see competition analysis).	T
With what intensity and success do they pursue their social media activities?	Success depends on the individual competitor, but overall, they are implementing measures to digitally target Generation Z with solid success (see competition analysis).	T

Target group-related questions

To what extent does the communication represent expectations of the target group towards Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG as an employer?	The expectations towards Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG were identified in primary research. Existing EVP benefits of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG were re-assessed by the survey applicants. The results imply that variable working hours, health and fitness are most important benefits for this target group (see graph A-37).	T
What are the critical success factors in communicating with Generation Z?	Accessibility through media channels and online instruments are crucial for Generation Z, due to their digital communication behavior. Relevance through content, offers and identification through values is paramount to reach them despite content clutter. 92% of the survey applicants agreed that they would prefer an employer with the same values (see graph A-38). But also, uniqueness through personalization and emotionalization by experiences are essential factors (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, pp. 25-32)	T
What communication style does Generation Z prefer?	Generation Z likes to be addressed informally on social media (see graph A-30). They prefer an eye-to-eye tone that is humorous, emotional, brief, and dynamic, accompanied by lots of emojis (see graph A-31).	O

Market-related

questions

How high is the social media affinity in the labor market?	According to primary research, the 105 applicants use on average three social media platforms regularly. Instagram is the most used social media channel (28%), followed by TikTok (18%) and Facebook (17%). This reflects the high affinity for social media in the labor market (see graph A-25).	O
Is social media suitable for addressing potential employees?	Social media is not among the top three job search channels (see graph A-28), but about 63% use social media daily as their main source of information and inspiration (cf. Mastercard 2021).	O
On the labor market, how high is the willingness of Generation Z to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG?	44% of the survey participants would consider Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG as an employer to work for (see graph A-35). In relation to the poor image of the banking sector, this is an excellent rating (see graph A-33)	O

Table 13: External questionnaire for SWOT completed (based on Bruhn 2014, p. 1072)

8.3.3 SWOT Analysis

Once the data from the internal and external analysis had been collected, it was transferred into a SWOT matrix to derive the strategy:

		Opportunities	Threats
		1. High social media affinity in labor market **2.** Communication style of Generation Z well suited for social media **3.** High willingness of Generation Z to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG	**1.** Competition also runs measures to digitally target Generation Z **2.** Expectations of the target group are not fully reflected in the EVP **3.** Only partially coherent values of Generation Z with Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG
Internal factors	Strengths **1.** Excellent social media competencies through training **2.** Availability of sufficiently relevant content **3.** High emotionalized communication through videos and photos	**SO-Strategies** **1.** Foster employer brand promotion for Generation Z mainly on social media with relevant content (O_1, S_1, S_2) **2.** Adapt the communication style to the emotionalized, specific language of Generation Z (O_2, S_2, S_3) **3.** Leverage high willingness with highly emotionalized content and specific language of Generation Z (O_3, S_1, S_3)	**ST-Strategies**
	Weaknesses **1.** No explicit communication about transparency and openness **2.** Insufficient employer presentation throughout the channels **3.** Missing Job offers throughout the channels	**WO-Strategies**	**WT-Strategies**

Table 14: SWOT analysis with underlying strategies (based on Weihrich 1982, p. 60)

Based on the analysis, the SO-strategy that focuses on strengths and opportunities is most ideal. The SO-strategy is recommended as it enables Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG to leverage its strengths to take advantage of the great opportunities in the labor market. In total, three SO-strategy approaches have been developed, which can be applied to Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's communication concept:

- Fostering of employer brand promotion for Generation Z mainly on social media with highly relevant content.
- Adaptation of the communication style of the employer brand to the emotionalized, specific language of Generation Z.
- Leverage of high willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG with emotionalized content and easy application options.

The next step is to incorporate these findings into a consistent strategic approach that can be applied to social media. Only when planning is based on a substantiated database it can form the basis for a successful employer branding concept (cf. Graf/Pett 2009, p. 16).

8.4 Strategy Development

In this chapter critical success factors for the communication with Generation Z will be discussed and the EVP will be adopted to fit the needs of Generation Z.

8.4.1 Critical Success Factors

Successful marketing communications are driven to reach members of Generation Z via the appropriate media channels in a technically precise and situationally appropriate manner. Factors such as relevant content, personalized offers, and an emotionalizing and personal approach play an important role in communication with Generation Z. Based on findings from primary research and according to Kleinjohann and Reinecke (2020) the following critical success factors must be considered to achieve the desired attention, relevance, and impact among this young cohort (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, pp. 25-32):

Accessibility through Media Channels and Instruments

Generation Z communicates almost exclusively digitally and uses social media more intensively than any generation before. This behavior represents a new challenge. On one hand, digital channels can be used to address, reach, and maintain contact with this generation (see graph A-25). While on the other hand, this form is almost the only effective form of marketing communication to capture their attention and generate interest. However, when communicating with Generation Z, the primary strategy is not to be direct selling the employer brand, but rather the creation of an atmospheric and thematic environment that is useful, enriching and entertaining for these young employees. Through their intensive and extensive digital media consumption and the associated constant reception of content, they easily grow into brand ambassadors or influence friends and family members. Content marketing is particularly effective in this regard as it is indeed the new form of advertisement (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawa 2017, p. 123). The following graphic indicates which content they are particularly interested in with regard to an employer:

Relevant social media content for Generation Z

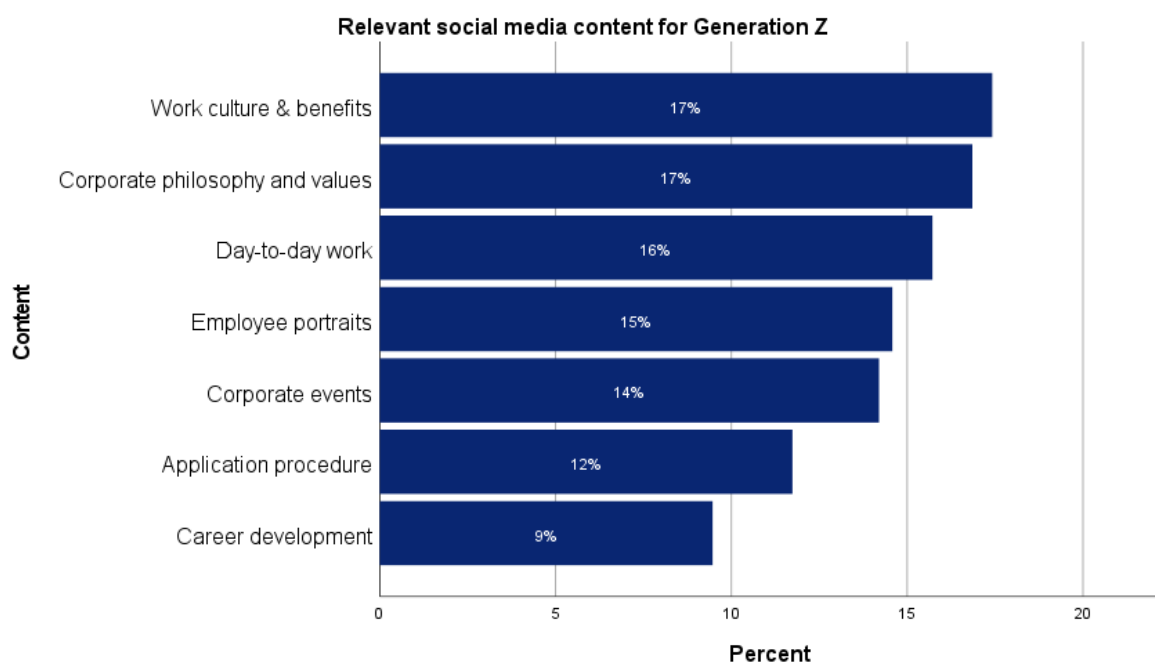| Content	Percent
Work culture & benefits	17%
Corporate philosophy and values	17%
Day-to-day work	16%
Employee portraits	15%
Corporate events	14%
Application procedure	12%
Career development	9%

Figure 17: Relevant social media content for Generation Z (n=105) (prepared by the author)

The ideal aim of marketing communications should be to create a hype (e.g., with viral hits) around the employer brand, which will attract members of Generation Z. The hype is all about winning over members of Generation Z as convinced "*superfans*" and then using them as authentic multipliers. To achieve this company-, employee- or campaign-specific hashtags or benefits (e.g., contests, prizes) increase the reach of digital communication and motivate interaction (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 26). Since Instagram is the most popular social media channel besides WhatsApp for Generation Z, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG should focus on Instagram to reach Generation Z. The full potential can be utilized through targeted communication via emotionally impactful and influential photos and videos that appeal especially to members of Generation Z (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 18). The following graph illustrates that:
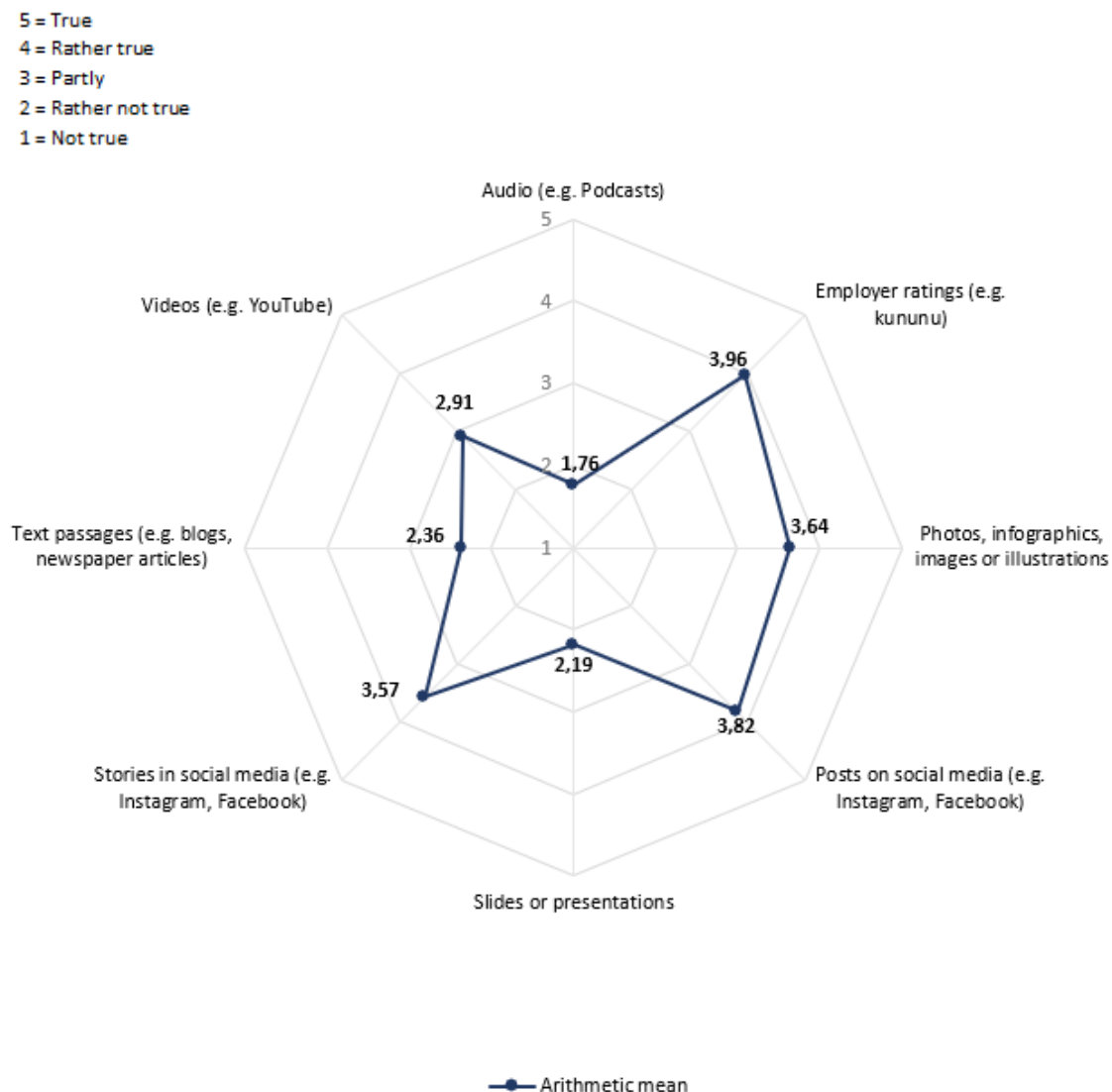

Figure 18: Preferred employer online formats (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Due to the high relevance of mobile communication (cf. Elbdudler 2018, p. 5), the smartphone should be an integral part of direct marketing communication for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. In addition, Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG already operates a successful #glaubandich campaign that works both ways, internally and externally, for all Sparkassen in Austria as well as for all employees. Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG can therefore leverage this content and awareness for their employer branding (cf. Sparkasse 2022b).

Relevance through Content and Offer

The selection of the right media channels, the content and the employer image conveyed with it are further important success factors for marketing to Generation Z. In practice, this means that Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG must be identified with relevance and value by Generation Z (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 14). Additonally, the emotional and experience-oriented charged EVP of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is of great importance. The EVP adapted to the needs of Generation Z should be communicated pointedly, authentically and on eye-level in order to make Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG appear "*unique*" and stand out in comparison to the competition (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 45).

Identification through Values

As committed consumers who are consciously concerned with their own consumption and that of society, Generation Z also expects any brand, including Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, to act in an ethically and socially responsible manner (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 29). Since Generation Z can effortlessly obtain information due to its digital networking, they are able, for example, to critically examine Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG' employment practice and, if necessary, expose it as inauthentic (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 31). Therefore, the positioning of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG should be truthful and authentic to convince Generation Z. It is advisable to communicate values more intensively within this target group, since 92% prefer an employer with whose values they agree with (see graph A-38). Based on the values embedded in the brand DNA, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG should increasingly

communicate the values that correspond to this target group. The following graphic depicts the most important values of Generation Z concerning a good employer:
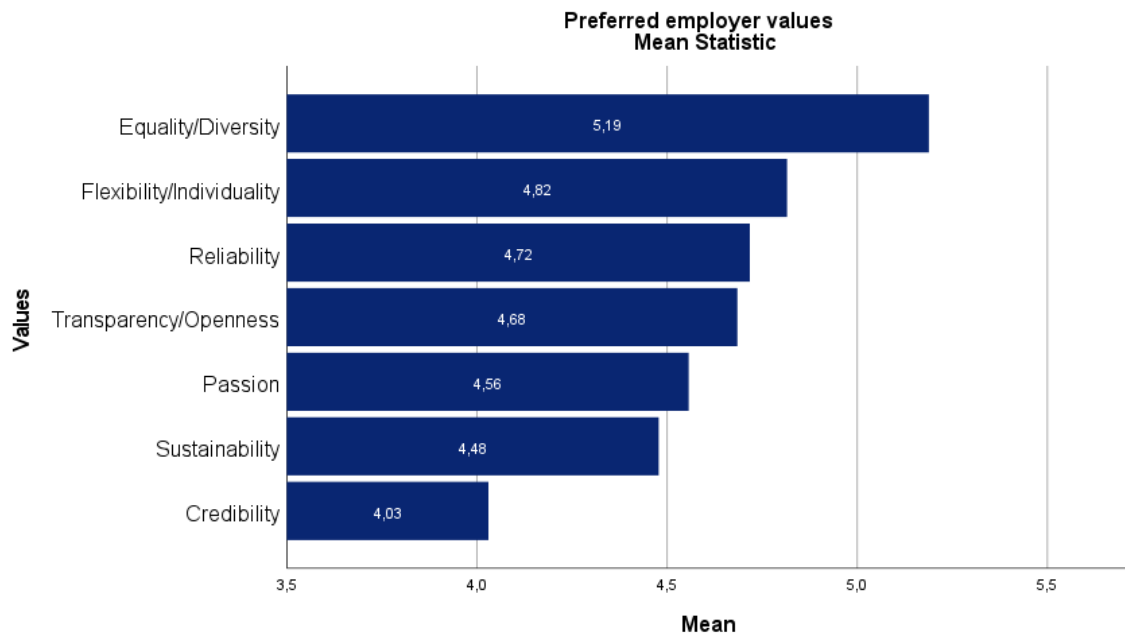

Figure 19: Preferred employer values by Generation Z (n=105) (prepared by the author)

The results reveal that the values represented by Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG (credibility, reliability and passion) are to be found at third and fourth place. However, according to primary research only 40% (n=42) of Generation Z perceive Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG as reliable and 22% (n=23) as passionate (see graph A-40). For this reason, it is recommended to communicate the values of reliability and passion more intensively among this target group. Furthermore, communication should be identity-based, quick, uncompromising, and honest (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 47). By engaging Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's employees as "*brand ambassadors*", they can act as multipliers and influencers, promoting the employer brand values of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG both internally and externally (cf. Immerschitt/Stumpf 2019, pp. 131-134). In addition, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG should highlight ethical issues in social media communications (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 31).

Authenticity through Congruence

In marketing communications with Generation Z, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG should consistently convey authentic and convincing messages and "*tell stories*" about themselves, the employer brand, and their employees (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 32). The employer brand identity and the emotional brand experience should be congruently and harmonious conveyed to Generation Z at every touchpoint (omnichannel strategy) to create an authentic and identity-based employer brand image (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 28).

Uniqueness due to Personalization

The striving for uniqueness and the presentation of one's own personality and individuality in this age cohort leads to the fact that, particularly unusual or unique offers are preferred (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 25). Members of Generation Z want to stand out both within and outside their age cohort - even if they only implement this within fixed boundaries due to their likewise existing desire for stability and order in the offline world. For Steiermärkische Bank Sparkassen AG, this means that individual and unique approaches should be preferred over mass processing, for example with personalized laptops and smartphones (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 211).

Emotionalization by Experiences

The desire of Generation Z for experiences despite or precisely because of their pronounced digital communication and consumption behavior leads to further possibilities in the presentation and communication of employer brands. For example, *"pop-up stores"* in a university or educational institution could allow visitors to experience Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG in a three-dimensional, emotional and real way, at least for a limited period of time (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 18). Additionally, through the integration of social media, employer brand ambassadors could offer live "*question and answer*" sessions or even talk about their current profession. This is a suitable way to engage directly with this age group, as the emotional experience of brands is particularly effective due to digital imprinting (cf. Pina/Dias 2020, p. 99).

8.4.2 Formulation of an Employer Value Proposition

Generation Z has significantly different expectations of an employer than previous generations. In particular, the values have changed (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 15). Since this concept seeks alignment of the employer promise with the relevant values of Generation Z, the EVP needs to be altered to be aligned with the preferences of the target group - Generation Z (cf. Baran 2018, p. 51).

Existing EVP of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG
As mentioned earlier, according to Barrow and Mosley, the EVP is the sum of the specific benefits promised to different audiences (cf. Barrow/Mosley 2005, p. 125). Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG portrays their EVP on their website as follows (cf. Sparkasse 2022d):

Kantine
Wir bieten unseren Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern Vergünstigungen in diversen Restaurants.

Laptop und Smartphone
Abhängig von der Position erhalten unsere MitarbeiterInnen Laptops und Smartphones.

Gesundheit und Fitness
Unser Team des hauseigenen Gesundheitsmanagements stellt jährlich den Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern ein Programm mit zahlreichen Fitness- und Gesundheitsveranstaltungen zur Verfügung. Bei längeren Krankenständen wird ein betrieblicher Wiedereingliederungsprozess angeboten.

Bank-Konditionen
Unsere Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter bekommen vergünstigte Konditionen bei unseren Serviceleistungen.

Betriebliche Altersvorsorge
Die Steiermärkische Sparkasse leistet Zahlungen in eine betriebliche Pensionskasse.

Variable Arbeitszeit
Unsere Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter können – unter Berücksichtigung eines reibungslosen Arbeitsablaufes – innerhalb bestimmter zeitlicher Rahmen ihre Arbeitszeit mit ihrer Führungskraft vereinbaren.

Einkaufen
Unsere Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter profitieren von vergünstigten Konditionen bei diversen Supermärkten, Parfümerien, Bekleidungsgeschäften, etc.

Versicherungen
Zu diversen Versicherungsthemen gibt es vergünstige Konditionen. Zusätzlich bieten wir einen monatlichen Zuschuss für eine Krankenzusatzversicherung.

Aus- und Weiterbildung
Wir bieten unseren Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern eine gezielte, umfangreiche Aus- und Weiterbildung. Sie haben die Möglichkeit an Trainings, Workshops, Seminaren, Konferenzen, E-Learnings, etc. teilzunehmen.

Paten- & Mentoren-Programm
Jede neue Mitarbeiterin und jeder neue Mitarbeiter erhält für die ersten Monate einen Paten als Unterstützung. Zusätzlich finden regelmäßige Mitarbeitergespräche statt.

Figure 20: EVP of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG (Sparkasse 2022d)

The EVP consists of canteen, laptop and smartphone, health and fitness, special banking and insurance conditions, company pension plan, variable working hours, employee conditions, training and further education, sponsorship and mentoring program (cf. Sparkasse 2022d). As part of the primary research, the social benefits offered by Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG were re-evaluated in a survey to find out how important these benefits are to Generation Z. Bank and insurance conditions were combined into one benefit. A total of nine employee benefits were re-evaluated. The results of the study are shn the following graph:

5 = Important
4 = Rather important
3 = Neutral
2 = Rather unimportant
1 = Unimportant
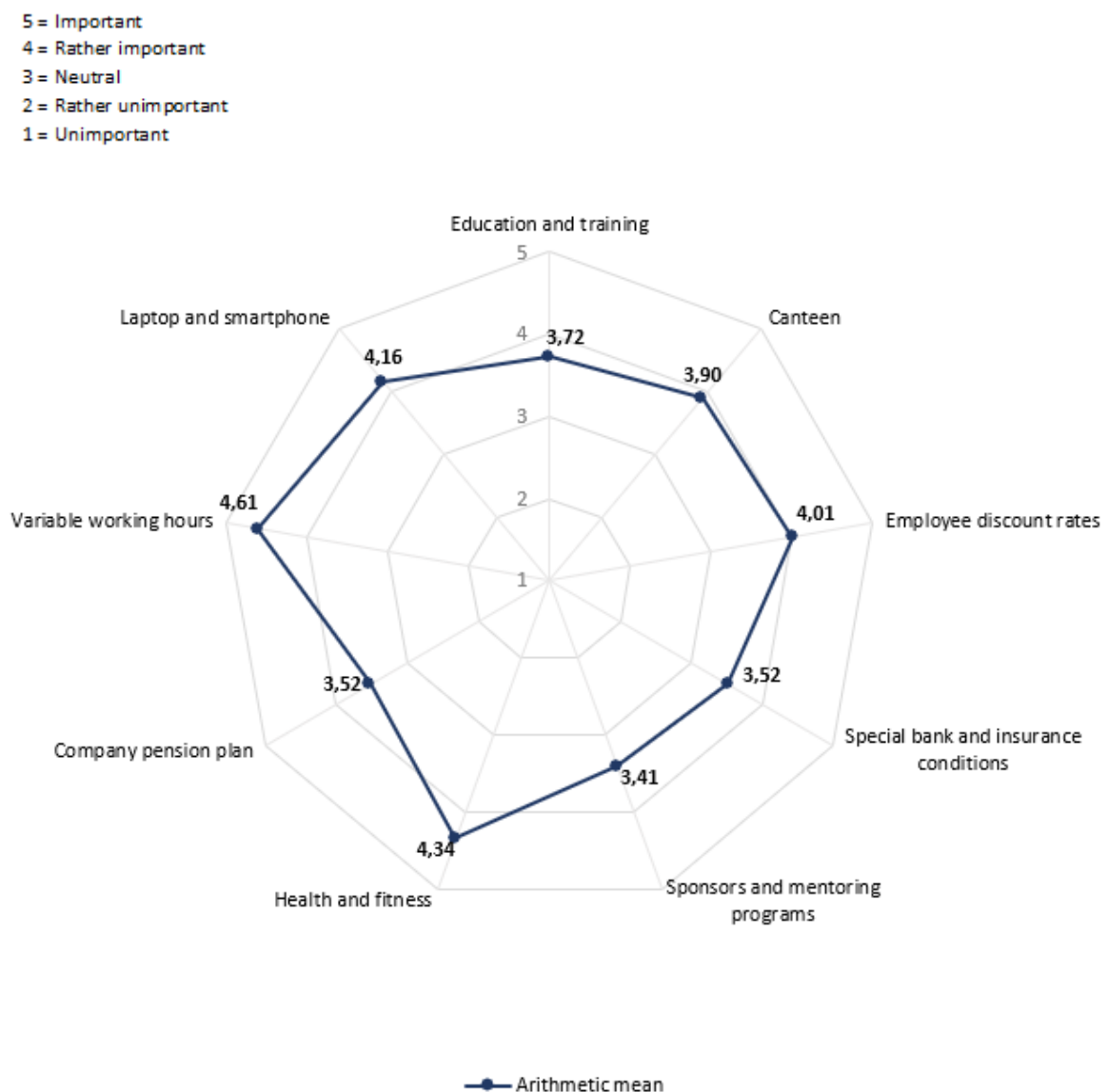
Figure 21: Preferred employer characteristics by Generation Z (n=105) (prepared by the author)

The findings clearly indicate that variable working hours are the most important employee benefit for Generation Z. The second most important employee benefit is health and fitness, followed by providing a laptop and a smartphone at third position. Communication with this young cohort should focus on these top three employee benefits. In addition, these benefits should be specifically tailored towards Generation Z to better meet their unique needs:

Revision of the EVP of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG for Generation Z

Existing EVP	Revised EVP	Values - Generation Z
Variable working hours	*Remote work possibilities and flexible time models*	Flexibility (see graph A-39)
Health and fitness	*Interesting and varied sports activities with sustainable snacks*	Sustainability (see graph A-39)
Laptop and smartphone	*Personalized and high-performance laptop or smartphone*	Individuality (see graph A-39)

Table 15: Revised EVP for Generation Z (prepared by the author)

Once a suitable EVP has been formulated that aligns with the preferences of Generation Z, competitive benefits need to be considered for uniqueness. However, during the competition analysis it was not found that exactly these three benefits were offered in combination by any competitor. For this reason, the revised EVP is unique and relevant to Generation Z. At this point, the process of designing an efficient and effective social media communications strategy can take place (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2021, p. 509).

8.5 Social Media Communication Strategy

In this thesis, the P.O.S.T. method is used to align the social media communications strategy with the fundamentally digital employer brand. P.O.S.T. stands for the four planning steps: People, Goals, Strategy and Technology. In the first step, the target group is defined (cf. Li/Bernoff 2009, p. 75).

8.5.1 People

The target group for the social media communication strategy is the same as for the employer branding concept mentioned in chapter 8.2. This is because Generation Z communicates predominantly via smartphone, and spends around 400 minutes a day consuming audiovisual media (cf. IZI 2022, p. 7 f.).

8.5.2 Objectives

The social media objectives must be consistent with the employer branding objective defined earlier in section 8.1. Accordingly, the main objective of social media is to raise awareness. This involves actively shaping opinions and creating new content, promoting eWoM and sharing the employer brand. However, objectives must be specific and measurable, have a starting point with a timeline and be realistic:

- Therefore, the aim of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is to increase awareness on social media with an absolute **increase of 5% exposure** within half a year of implementing the social media communication concept.
- In addition, a **3% increase in reach** is also anticipated (cf. Tuten 2021, p. 123).

Exposure and reach can be easily determined with a social media analytics tool (cf. McGuirk 2021, p. 365). Such analytics tools collect data from social media, analyze it, summarize it, and visualize it to transform the data into relevant information, trends, and behaviors (cf. Zhan et al. 2021, p. 1 f.). Once the objectives have been set, it is necessary to start elaborating a strategy (cf. Li/Bernoff 2009, p. 75).

8.5.3 Strategy

There are various types of brand management. The type of brand management where the **communication object** is the brand identity is referred to as identity-based brand management. This approach represents the current scientific standard and is seen as the logical and historical consequence of all preceding approaches to brand management (cf. Esch 2018, p. 77). Originally related only to human beings, this theory of brand identity or personality was defined by Azoulay and Kapferer in 2003 as *„the set of human personality traits that are both applicable and relevant for brands"* (Azoulay/Kapferer 2003, p. 151). The brand personality is therefore the central starting point for positioning Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG in the labor market (cf. Niederhäuser/Rosenberger 2021, p. 70 f.).

The **positioning** according to Kroeber-Riel and Esch (2015) will be done through emotion and information (cf. Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2015, p. 98 f.). This positioning is well suited for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, as the focus is on emotions while still providing the target group with sufficient information about Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG as an employer. With this positioning emotional experiences are largely tied to the use of images that have a powerful beneficial impact on the target group. However, this requires long-term visual planning, as the aim is to evoke certain emotions through many repetitions. Therefore, the aim for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG is to build up strategic key images that provide an attractive employee experience (cf. Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2015, pp. 98-104).

Once the positioning is determined, the corresponding **communication message** can be defined. As already mentioned, the communication message embodies the core content to be conveyed, namely the brand identity (cf. Esch 2018, p. 79 f.). Hereby the task of social media communication is to specifically convey the identity-based employer brand characteristics, such as brand personality and values to the target group in a clear, illustratively, and authentic manner (cf. Niederhäuser/Rosenberger 2017, pp. 86-88). For Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, this brand personality encompasses aspects such as innovation, development and collaboration (cf. Baier 2022), while its values are credibility, reliability and passion (cf. Sparkasse 2022c). However, the self-image (identity)

stands in contrast to the external image of a company. The main aim is therefore the alignment of the brand identity with the brand image (cf. Esch 2018, p. 91). However, the EVP mentioned in chapter 8.4.2 is also part of the brand identity, as it defines the identity of the brand from the employees' point of view. This adopted EVP should be communicated in a humorous, emotionalized, and brief manner accompanied by lots of emojis (see graph A-31).

In addition, claims are used to convey messages briefly and precisely, as Generation Z prefers. Since Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG already has a campaign **claim** (#glaubandich) (cf. Sparkasse 2022b). Therefore, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG can utilize the existing awareness of Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG for its own employer branding and build on it. However, Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG has especially three core topics, that Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG also values:

- *"Glaub an die Zukunft"* - this topic is about innovation, customer orientation and the question of meaningfulness.
- *"Glaub an Entwicklung"* - the focus of this core topic is on professional and personal development as well as on the wide range of tasks.
- *"Glaub an uns"* - this topic is about cooperation, diversity and mutual trust as important elements (cf. Baier 2022).

From these core themes, a unique claim is to be developed specifically for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. There are many ways to formulate an employer branding claim (cf. Samland 2006, pp. 120-122). However, the following claim is a proposal that includes these exact topics:

- #glaubandeinezukunft

The claim contains the core theme of the future and is compatible with the campaign claim #glaubandich of Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG. It comes in the usual hashtag form, which Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG has already used several times in the past (cf. Sparkasse 2022b).

Slogans are now being formulated to support the claim. Again, there are many ways to formulate slogans. Possible slogans might be:

- *"Die Steiermärkische macht den Job"*
- *"Steiermärkische steckt in dir"*
- *"Weil ich Steiermärkische bin"*

Since involvement in the awareness phase is low, integration through images is recommended to support the slogans. This means that the slogan should always be paired with an image to enter into the recipient's system more easily (cf. Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2015, p. 121 f.). After claim and slogan have been defined and since the target group cannot be motivated by a claim and slogans alone, user-specific content must be defined (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1088). The following figure displays attractive employer **content** for Generation Z according to primary research:
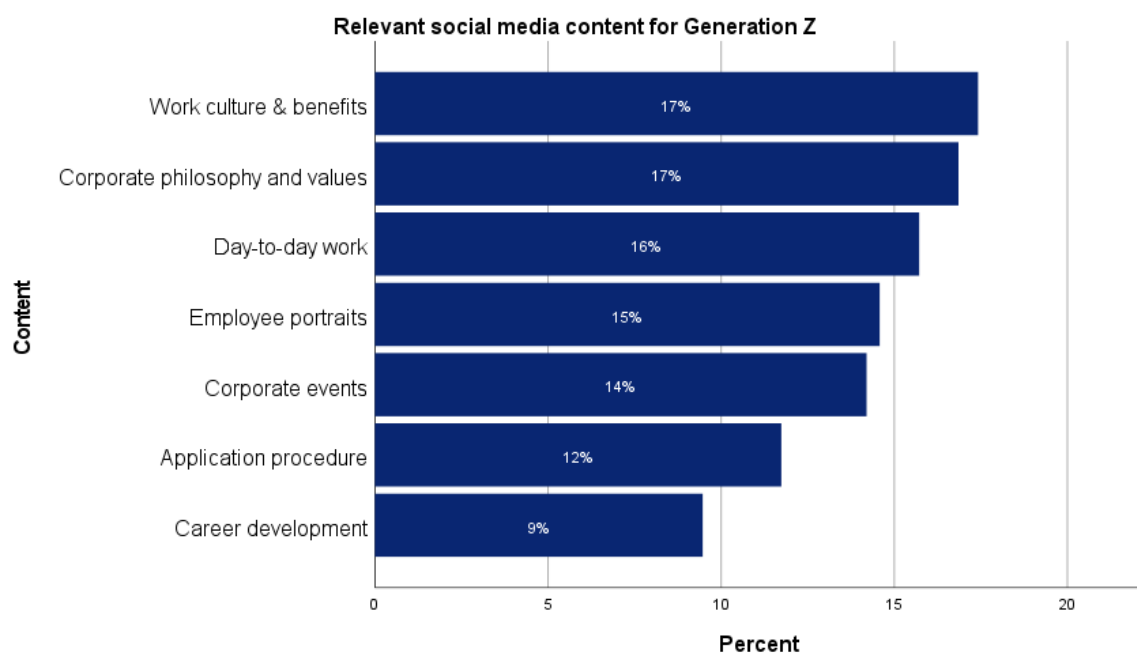
Figure 22: Relevant social media content for Generation Z (n=105) (prepared by the author)

It can be seen that work culture and social benefits, as well as corporate philosophy and values, and day-to-day work are interesting topics for Generation Z. These are to be visibly communicated in the social media strategy of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. Furthermore, pure entertainment content is recommended, such as viral videos, memes and contests. Correspondingly snackable content and visual and entertaining messages resonate particularly well with them (see graph A-

31). The heritage of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's brand should be given a prominent role in the digital representation and perception of the employer brand. Pronouncing the historical roots of the brand ("*heritage"*) contributes to credibility and reliability. These values are particularly important to Generation Z. They act ethically and socially responsibly and expect the same from every brand (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 29). For this reason, the key to a successful brand relationship with Generation Z is for the employer brand to advocate for a cause (e.g., climate change, gender equality, or diversity in the workforce) that is important to this generation. From a firm perspective *"Purpose Driven Branding"* is best suited for this task (cf. Hajdas/Kleczek 2021, p. 360). In addition, new innovative and unconventional formats are well received by Generation Z. Digitization has brought new challenges in creating a digital "*brand experience*" due to the lack of personal contact between the employee and the employer brand. Gamification has become a very successful approach to overcome this hurdle for employer branding. Prospective employees are not just overwhelmed with information - instead they are involved in the process in a playful way, which can generate a significantly better engagement (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 214). The digital image of the employer brand should be consistent with all multisensory components of the brand and especially with the tonality towards Generation Z (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 35).

The **tone** of the employer branding communication should be chosen to evoke positive emotions, because employees should feel good about their employer (cf. Esch/Hardiman/Mundt 2006, p. 228). It is intended to make Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG appear approachable. The following graph from primary research shows Generation Z's preferred tone of an employer on social media:

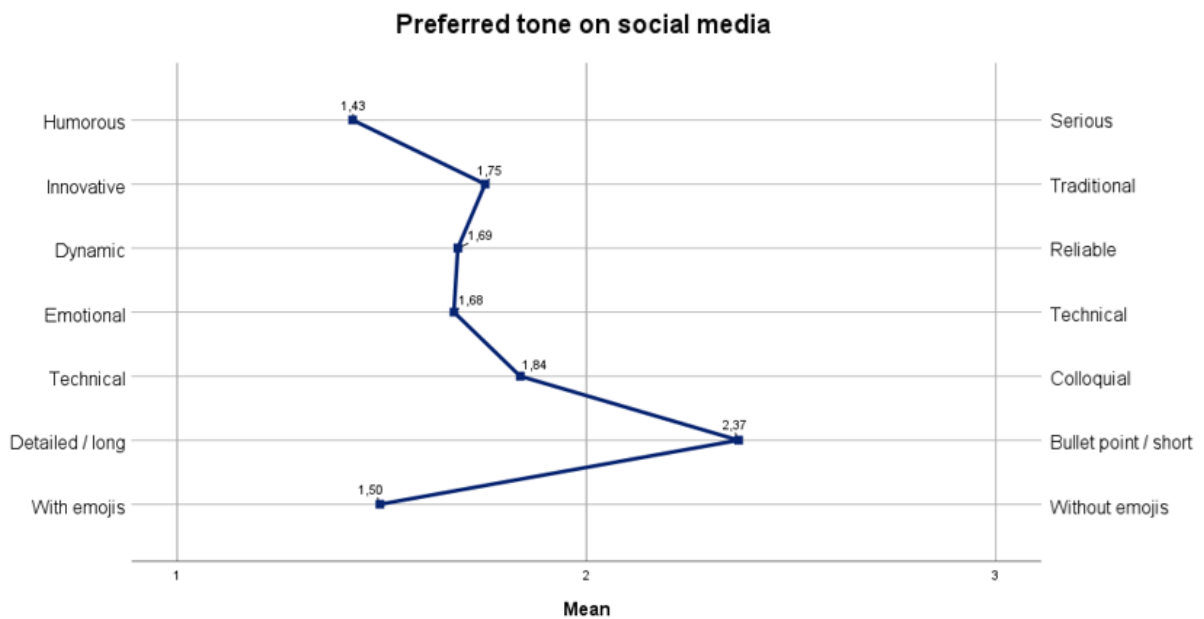**Preferred tone on social media**

Figure 23: Preferred tone on social media by Generation Z (n=105) (prepared by the author)

The graph above indicates that Generation Z strives for a brief, humorous communication style with lots of emojis. Especially regarding the tone of voice used, it is important to make the brand appear approachable and understandable in the language of Generation Z (cf. Kleinjohann/Reinecke 2020, p. 35). This can be accomplished by using an informal *"Du"* approach on social media, as this is preferred by 86% of Generation Z, according to primary research (see graph A-31). In addition, Buschmann, Fournier and Mattmüller (2019) argue that the language used to generate interest should be *"bold and cheeky"*, because hardly any members of Generation Z seek to work for a supposedly boring company. Instead, they would like their employer to be a bit like themselves. Therefore, the communication approach should also be as individual and personal as possible (cf. Buschmann/Fournier/Mattmüller 2019, p. 214).

In addition, it is critical to also establish compatibility between the verbal language and the **visual elements** of the employer brand. Visual elements can often be used from corporate identity guidelines. Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG has such guidelines, but still needs to fill in gaps where necessary. Instagram and TikTok are the most popular social media channels for Generation Z (see graph A-25) Therefore, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG should focus on emotionally impressive and influential photos and videos (see graph A-29). Closely linked to the design of the message is the choice of channel, as this determines the modalities available for the design (cf. Esch/Winter 2016, p. 336).

8.5.4 Tactics

When it comes to content placement, the question arises as to which platforms are the most suitable. To answer this question, the channels most frequently used by Generation Z form the starting point for consideration, as shown below:
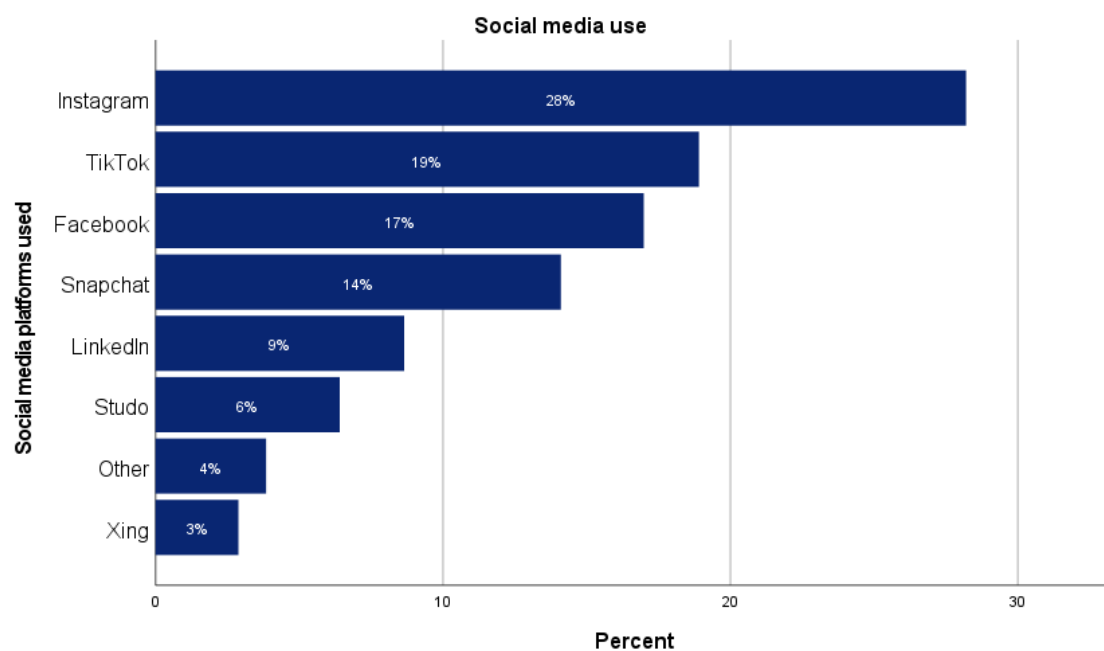
Figure 24: Social media use by Generation Z (n=105) (prepared by the author)

However, potential future employees of Generation Z mostly actively search for an employer via channels other than social media. Only LinkedIn ranks fourth among the channels used to actively search for an employer, as the following graphic illustrates:
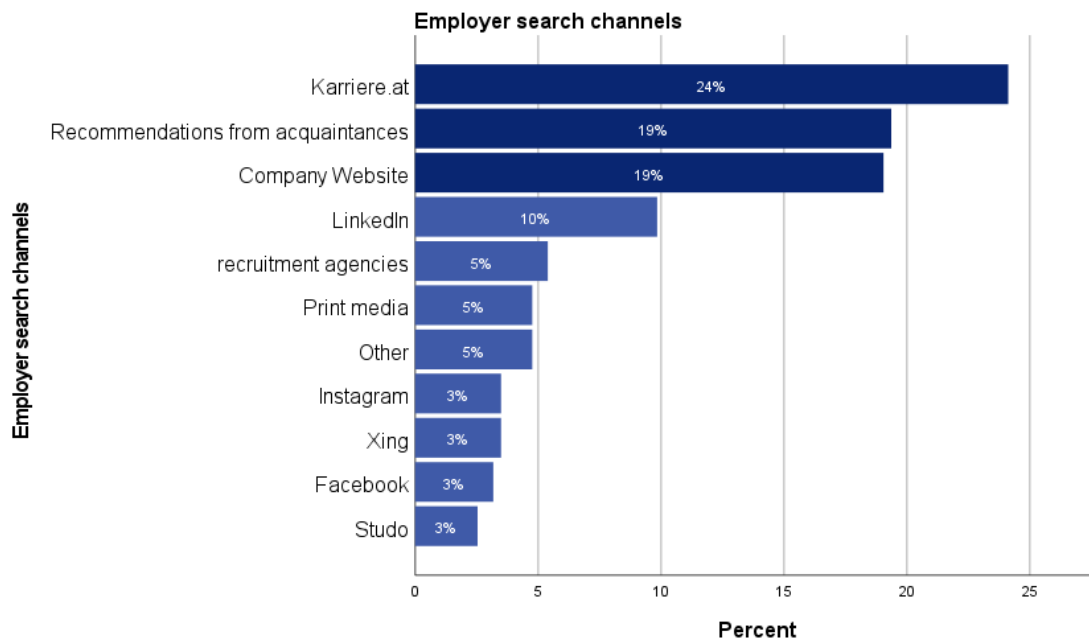
Figure 25: Employer search channels by Generation Z (n=105) (prepared by the author)

For this reason, it is of paramount importance that this employer branding communication concept is implemented on LinkedIn and Instagram, as Instagram is their preferred social network (see graph A-25). However, an omnichannel campaign is recommended, using Generation Z's favourite channels (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 28). According to graph A-25, these are Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Snapchat. In addition, the phenomenon of *Facebook Fatigue* should be noted, and a declining reach on Facebook needs to be expected. Since Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG does not intend to operate Snapchat, as it is a messenger service (cf. Freidorfer 2022), the concept is to be implemented on Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and Facebook.

The main aim is to make Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG known as an attractive employer through continuous communication efforts. Particular attention will be placed on the second quarter of the year. This is due to the need to address the target group of teenagers and students shortly before they complete their educational training. However, timing must be ensured through a coordinated communications schedule (cf. Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/von Walter 2016, p. 183).

8.6 Implementation

The planning phase is followed by the implementation phase (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2021, p. 509). In this phase information asymmetries can affect the general corporate image and weaken the brand (cf. Valentin 2018, pp. 287-290). To prevent this, it is advisable to involve employees in the development and implementation of the employer brand. The authenticity of the employer brand is at stake when employees are not involved in the brand building process (cf. Backhaus 2016, p. 197). Brand competence is therefore achieved through consistent, honest and authentic communication. For this purpose, the following figure shows a copy strategy for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG:

Target group	Generation Z		
Employer Value Proposition (EVP)	*Benefit:* Remote work possibilities and flexible time models

Reason Why: Home office possibility, Flextime | *Benefit:* Interesting and varied sports activities with sustainable snacks

Reason Why: Snack machine from Pastaria Graz, Erste Bank Sparkasse Running | *Benefit:* Personalized and high-performance laptop or smartphone

Reason Why Devices available with individual cover design or stickers |
Tonality	humorous, to the point, emotional and dynamic with emojis		
Claim	#glaubandeinezukunft		
Slogans	*Die Steiermärkische macht den Job*	*Steiermärkische steckt in dir*	*Weil ich Steiermärkische bin*
Central idea	Graduates in a professional context, preferably own employees as models		
Key visuals	Employees doing sport activities	Employees working on personalized laptops	Employee portraits

Table 16: Copy strategy for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG (based on von Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/von Walter 2016, p. 178)

When planning and implementation are completed, monitoring needs to be substantiated with the proper KPI's (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016c, p. 217).

8.7 Monitoring

As already mentioned in chapter 5.7, monitoring is vital for the long-term success of the employer brand. The KPI's for increasing awareness of the employer brand are reach (cf. Tuten 2021, p. 371) and exposure (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 120). The following table provides metrics for these KPI's:

Key Performance Indicator	Definition	Metric
Exposure	The number of times content is viewed on a social media platform	Visits Views on a video Viewed blog posts (page views) Facebook impressions Clickthrough Number of ratings Number of comments
Reach	The number of people who have come into contact with the social media platform or relevant content	Page likes Followers/Subscribers Unsubscribed followers Number of people participating in discussions Virality (growth rate of followers)

Table 17: KPI's and metrics related to awareness on social media (prepared by the author)

These metrics can be easily monitored on an ongoing basis with a social media analytics tool (cf. McGuirk 2021, p. 365). To measure employer awareness, a standardized survey must be conducted, preferably annually. Feasibility and demand of information have priority over what is theoretically attainable (cf. von Walter/Kremmel 2016c, p. 229).

9 Recommendations

This final chapter of the employer branding communications strategy focuses on the recommendations and the budget. The recommendations are derived from the main findings of this thesis:

- Since Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG has not conducted an employer branding campaign, Generation Z must be sensitized through increased communication on social media.
- According to primary research, credibility gaps or information asymmetries have a negative impact on the employer brand of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. For this reason, they need to be avoided.
- In addition, a negative industry image has a negative impact on the employer brand. For this reason, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG must differentiate itself strongly from the industry image in its communications.

However, according to primary research, there is no correlation between the values especially held by Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG and the willingness of Generation Z to work for them. For this reason, the recommendations do not include further emphasizing these values to Generation Z. Based on the communication strategy for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, specific measures were developed in the following to fulfill the previously defined objectives:

Objective	Task	Total Costs
Optimization of credibility gaps and information asymmetries	Uniform communication of the employer branding strategy and the EVP [internally] and externally. - Informing employees of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG - Reprocessing of the corporate identity guidelines - Creation of a communication policy for social media - Development of key strategic images	€ 2.249,-
Raising awareness among Generation Z through increased communication of the employer brand	Emotional/humorous appeal to the target group Consistent communication of the communication message (claim, slogans, adapted EVP) - Employee videos - Job stories	€ 8.486,-
Differentiation of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG from the industry image	Strongly differentiate appeal from the industry image to the target group - Image videos - Image stories	€ 6.764,-

Table 18: Recommendations for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG (prepared by the author)

Based on the steps above, employer branding communication costs were calculated by estimating project labor hours and cost per hour for each employee. The total cost of all the measures carried out is approximatelly EUR 17,499. Further information on the calculation can be found in the appendix (see A-43).

In addition, the specific communication instruments selected are translated into a written communication schedule, seen below:

Social media communication schedule

	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23
Communication of the employer branding strategy												
Informing employees about campaign	■											
Reprocessing of the corporate identity guidelines	■											
Development of key strategic images	■											
Creation of a communication policy for social media	■											
Content Creation Employees												
Employee videos			■	■								
Job stories			■	■								
Content Creation Image												
Image videos				■	■							
Image stories				■	■							
Social Media Campaign												
Content plan creation	■											
Instagram						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
LinkedIn						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
TikTok						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Facebook						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Controlling										■	■	■

Table 19: Social media communication schedule (prepared by the author)

There is a particular focus on the second quarter of the year. This is due to the need to address the target group of graduates and students shortly before they complete their training.

However, employer branding controlling also contributes significantly to success. Employer branding controlling is a continuous process that should be reviewed regularly. There should be an in-depth analysis of the KPIs over the respective period. This is shown in the schedule from September to November. The full-size schedule can be found in the appendix (see A-45).

10 Conclusion

In an era of restrained economic activity and uncertain labor market developments due to Covid-19, the *war for talent* is more relevant than ever. Industries such as financial services are having a particularly hard time under these conditions, as they are additionally confronted with a decline in employer attractiveness. Activities such as, placing newspaper ads or posting employment openings on career websites are increasingly unlikely to bring the desired success in the form of sufficiently high-quality applications. To not lose in the competition for the best talent, employers cannot afford to miss out on the opportunities social media has to offer for employer branding activities. Active communication of employer attractiveness and employee benefits are becoming a decisive factor for corporate success. However, the greatest challenge in employer branding is maintaining a realistic and positive employer image while still being truthful. Therefore, both primary and secondary research was conducted in this thesis. The results provide valuable insights for the creation of an authentic and transparent communication concept for Generation Z on social media. However, the main research objectives analyzed were the importance of values, the consequences of credibility gaps and the influence of the negative image of the financial sector on the employer brand of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

Ensuring that potential candidates can identify with Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG as an employer is critical to maintain a healthy and productive workforce. However, according to primary research, there is no correlation between the specific values held by Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG and the willingness to work for them by Generation Z. For that reason, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG should place more emphasize on communicating their employer personality. In addition, social media is subject to enormous transparency. Everything posted on social media can be reviewed by the community at any given moment. This means that inconsistencies and contradictions can be easily uncovered to negatively impact the employer brand. These credibility gaps and information asymmetries can lead to a decline in promising applications. In the case of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, the research results clearly indicate that this is the case. Information asymmetries and credibility gaps indeed affect the willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG and must

accordingly be avoided. In this regard, operational guidelines should assist Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG in its efforts. Moreover, the research also revealed that the negative image of the banking industry leads to a lower willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG. Therefore, the aim is to differentiate Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG from the industry image and make them part of the *evoked set* of this young cohort by convincingly marketing their adapted employment promise to young members and graduates of Generation Z.

Overall, this thesis has highlighted that effective employer branding communication on social media is a necessity in today's unprecedented labor market. Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's decision to present itself as an attractive employer for Generation Z on social media is therefore the right step towards a successful future.

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Appendix

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1 Appendix: Secondary research

This section summarizes all data analyses from secondary research for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG.

1.1 Social Media Channel Analysis

The following table illustrates the results of the social media channel analysis:

Social Media Channel Analysis

		LinkedIn	YouTube	Instagram	Facebook
Accessibility through Media Channels	Page Operator	Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG	Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG	Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG	Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG
	Followers	3.631	109	2.915	20.375
	Interested parties	Bank customers/employees/applic	Bank customers/employees	Bank customers/employees	Bank customers/employees
	Relevance for Generation Z	LinkedIn (11%)	YouTube (84%)	Instagram (80%)	Facebook (52%)
	News	yes	yes	yes	yes
	Interesting offers	yes	no	yes	yes
	Postings	weekly	monthly	2-3 a week	2-3 a week
	Job offers	5	-	0	0
Relevance through Content and Offer	Company presentation	Yes, employee-oriented	Playlist 'Steiermärkische Sparkasse	Career and team, but no employer presentation	Only reference to the landing page for private customers
	Claim	#glaubandich	-	#steiermärkische	#glaubandich
	Employer information	Corporate Culture, Best of South East, Employee references	-	Application process, employee por	-
	Transparency and Openness	-	-	-	-
Identification through Values	Equality and Diversity	#vielfaltbringts, reference to diversity management on website	Best of South-East	#vielfaltbringts, Day of barrier-free accessibility, reference to diversity mgmt on website	#vielfaltbringts, Generational diversity in the workplace, World Refugee Day
	Flexibility and Individuality	#thefutureisyours, individual careerpath	Startup portraits, GründerCenter	-	Flexible learning methods, working time models
	Sustainability	Sustainable projects e.g., photovoltaic installations, cycling	Sustainability strategy of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG	#glaubanmorgen, present topic on channel, reference to sustainability practices on website	#glaubanmorgen, sustainability projects, e.g., bees, caritas, sustainable urban development
Emotionalization	Photos	Edutainment: news/events, employee portraits, podcast, Branch anniversaries	-	Entertainment: lotteries, event promotion, memes	Infotainment: lotteries, event promotion, tips
	Videos	employee welcome, sustainable projects, finance oriented content	kids content, Start-Up content, mixed content of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG	Employee reels, job application tips and more (Reels are videos up to 60 seconds)	Job Offer, divers

Table A-1: Social media analysis of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG (prepared by the author)

1.2 Social Media Competitive Analysis

The following table provides an analysis of the social media communication of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's competitors:

	Steiermärkische Sparkasse	Raiffeisenverband Steiermark	UniCredit Bank Austria AG	Bawag Group AG	Oberbank AG
karriere.at	https://www.karriere.at/f/steiermärkische-sparkasse	https://www.karriere.at/f/raiffeisen-banking-gruppe-steiermark	https://www.karriere.at/f/unicredit-bank-austria	https://www.karriere.at/f/bawag-psk	https://www.karriere.at/f/oberbank
job vacancies?	12	69	1	64	72
content?	Everyday work, values, employee benefits	Hard facts, employee benefits	Number of employees, industry	Mission, employees	Values, employee benefits
values portrayed?	Safety	none	none	Flexible, Determination, Friendliness	Uniqueness
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/steiermarkische/	https://www.linkedin.com/company/rlbsteiermark/	https://www.linkedin.com/company/unicredit/	https://www.linkedin.com/company/bawag-group/	https://www.linkedin.com/company/oberbank/
followers?	3,631	2,344	384,654	5,020	4,714
time span between posts?	1 week	2-3 days	2-3 days	2 weeks	3 posts a week
time span to respond?			don't respond	don't respond	immediate
job vacancies?	5	29	593	1	171
content?	Events, employee benefits	Events, News	Social Purpose, Mission	News	Career News
values portrayed?	Diversity, Innovation	Community	Empowerment	Efficiency, Safety	Uniqueness
XING	-		https://www.xing.com/pages/bankaustria	https://www.xing.com/pages/bawagpsk	https://www.xing.com/pages/oberbankag
followers?			3,989	2,001	1,213
time span between posts?			once a month	once a month or less	twice a month
time span to respond?				-	
job vacancies?			0	0	0
content?			Social responsibility, talent acquisition	promotion	News
values portrayed?			Culture	Innovation	Innovation
WhatsApp	Messaging Service				
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCr5gu_AIPT1-g056OxlC-g/videos	https://www.youtube.com/user/raiffeisensteiermark	https://www.youtube.com/c/bankaustria	https://www.youtube.com/c/BAWAGPSK	https://www.youtube.com/c/OberbankAG
followers?	109	155	2.43K	3.43K	790
time span between posts?	1-3 months	1-3 months	every two weeks	3-4 videos a year	every week
time span to respond?	no response	comments are turned off	no response		
content?	Events, About us	TV-spots, about us, sustainability	TV-spots, educational content	TV-spots, mixed	TV-spots
values portrayed?	Community	Regionalism, Sustainability	Sustainability	Social purpose	Social purpose
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/steiermarkische.sparkasse/	https://www.instagram.com/raiffeisenclub_steiermark/		https://www.instagram.com/bawagpsk/	https://www.instagram.com/oberbankag/
followers?	2,915	4,268		2,150	1,409
time span between posts?	2-3 a week	2 a week		1-2 week	once a week
time span to respond?	no response	immediately		no response	no response
job vacancies?	0	0		0	0
content?	Promotion, events, career	Youth culture, competitions		Employee portraits	Career events, news
values portrayed?	Innovation	Community		Diversity	Individuality
SnapChat	Messaging Service				
facebook	https://www.facebook.com/steiermarkische	https://www.facebook.com/raiffeisenclubsteiermark		https://www.facebook.com/bawag.psk	https://www.facebook.com/oberbank
followers?	20,375	18,015		111,200	21,303
time span between posts?	2-3 a week	2-3 a week		once a week	3 a week
time span to respond?	no response	no response		no response	
job vacancies?	0	0		0	0
content?	Promotion	No employer branding content		Employee portraits	Employee portraits
values portrayed?	Community	Community		Empowerment	Social purpose
TikTok			https://www.tiktok.com/@unicreditbankaustria?lang=en		
followers?			4,055		
time span between posts?			1-2 a day		
time span to respond?			immediate		
job vacancies?			0		
content?			Employees cartoons/jokes		
values portrayed?			Diversity		

Table A-2: Social media competitive analysis (prepared by the author)

1.3 Target Group Analysis

The following table contains a target group analysis for Generation Z in the employable age group of 16 to 26:

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Psychological Characteristics	Sociological Characteristics	Workplace data
Age: • Generation Z, born between 1996-2006	**Communication Style:** • They post (almost) nothing, but like to see the content of others (40%), they mainly post content on certain occasions (31%) (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 5) • Active on WhatsApp (88%), YouTube (84%), Instagram (80%), Snapchat (60%), Facebook (52%) and TikTok (43%) (cf. Mastercard 2021)	**Core values:** • Transparency (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 36) • Individuality and uniqueness (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 16) • Equality and diversity (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 34) • Sustainability (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 20)	**Expectations of employers:** • Salary & benefits (74%) was the biggest motivation for performance, followed by atmosphere (71%), job security (71%), work-life balance (61%), and financial health (61%) (cf. Randstad 2021, p. 11) • Social Purpose (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 21) • 50% of candidates indicate that they would not work for a company with a poor reputation (cf. Randstad 2021, p. 5)

Gender:	Communication preferences:	Media use habits:	Interests:
▪ All genders	▪ Humorous tone at eye-level (33%) (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p.13) ▪ Visual media, authentic content and a wide coverage of their interests (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 18) ▪ Identity-based, transparent, direct, and proactive (cf. OC&C 2019, p. 31)	▪ Nearly 100% of Generation Z owns a smartphone (cf. IZI 2022, p. 5) ▪ 50% are constantly active on their smart phone (cf. Elbdudler 2022, p. 6) ▪ Instagram and YouTube are their favourite app (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 17) ▪ They spend about four hours per day online (cf. MPFS 2020, p. 33)	Racism (57%), animal welfare (57%) and climate change (53%) are top issues (cf. House of Yas 2021, p. 31)
Education: ▪ A-level and below			
Region: ▪ Styria, Burgenland and Carinthia			
Economic Environment: ▪ Financially secure living conditions (cf. Hurrelmann/Köcher/Sommer 2019, p. 10)			

Table A-3: Target group analysis (prepared by the author)

2 Appendix: Primary research
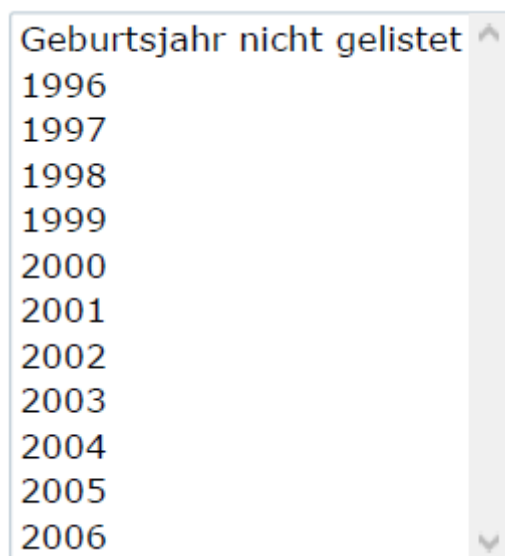
2.1   Online Questionnaire

An online survey of 19 questions was designed for the primary research. The questions and answers options are presented in the following section.

1. Geschlecht

  ○   Mann

  ○   Frau

  ○   Divers

2. Geburtsjahr

```
Geburtsjahr nicht gelistet  ∧
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006                        ∨
```

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Hier handelt es sich um die Generation Z (zwischen 1996-2006 geboren), laut Ihrem Geburtsdatum gehören Sie zu einer anderen Generation.

3. Bundesland

○ Steiermark

○ Burgenland

○ Salzburg

○ Tirol

○ Kärnten

○ Wien

○ Vorarlberg

○ Oberösterreich

○ Niederösterreich

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Hier handelt es sich um die Generation Z (zwischen 1996-2006 geboren) in der Steiermark, Kärnten oder Burgenland, laut Ihrer Angabe leben Sie in einem anderen Bundesland.

---

4. Höchste abgeschlossene Ausbildung

Pflichtschule
Lehre
Lehre mit Matura
Berufsbildende mittlere Schule (BMS)
Berufsbildende höhere Schule (BHS)
Allgemein bildende höhere Schule (AHS)
Hochschule / Universität (Bachelorstudium)
Hochschule / Universität (Masterstudium)
Kolleg / Akademie
Sonstiges

Sonstiges [   ]

5. Derzeitiger Status

○ Schüler:in

○ Arbeitssuchend

○ Student:in

○ Mutterschutz / Karenz

○ Zivil- und Präsenzdienst

○ Berufstätig

○ Sonstiges:

5a. Schulform (Schüler:in)

- ○ Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (AHS)
- ○ Oberstufenrealgymnasium (ORG)
- ○ Handelsakademien (HAK)
- ○ Höhere Bundeslehranstalten für Wirtschaftliche Berufe (HBLA)
- ○ Höhere Technische Lehranstalten (HTL)
- ○ Höhere Gewerbliche Lehranstalten (HGLA)
- ○ Höhere Landwirtschaftliche Bundeslehranstalten (HLBA)
- ○ Sonstiges:

5b. Studienrichtung (Student:in)

- ○ Wirtschaft & Recht
- ○ Ingenieurwesen & Technik
- ○ Gesundheit, Medizin & Sport
- ○ Pädagogik, Verwaltung & Soziales
- ○ Sprachen, Kultur- & Geisteswissenschaften
- ○ Medien & Kommunikation
- ○ Informatik & IT
- ○ Design, Kunst & Musik
- ○ Umwelt- & Agrarwissenschaften
- ○ Naturwissenschaften
- ○ Sonstiges:

> Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!
>
> Hier handelt es sich um die Generation Z (zwischen 1996-2006 geboren), die in einem wirtschaftlichen Bereich tätig ist.

Im Folgenden geht es um die Generation Z und Ihre Bedürfnisse an einen Arbeitgeber. Bitte beantworten Sie die Fragen anhand Ihrer Erfahrungen im Zusammenhang mit einem Arbeitgeber.

Sollten Sie sich noch nie bei einem Arbeitgeber beworben haben, stellen Sie sich bitte vor Sie bewerben sich bei einem Arbeitgeber und beantworten Sie dann den Fragebogen.

6. Welche der folgenden Social Media Plattformen nutzen Sie regelmäßig?

- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Studo
- ☐ Xing
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Sonstiges:

7. Welche drei der folgenden Kanäle nutzen Sie am häufigsten für die Suche nach einem Arbeitsplatz?

- ☐ Karriere.at
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Studo
- ☐ Xing
- ☐ Empfehlungen von Bekannten
- ☐ Printmedien
- ☐ Personalagenturen
- ☐ Unternehmens Website
- ☐ Sonstiges:

8. Welche Onlineformate bevorzugen Sie bei der Arbeitgebersuche?

	trifft voll zu	trifft eher zu	teils	trifft eher nicht zu	trifft nicht zu
Arbeitgeberbewertungen (zB. kununu)	○	○	○	○	○
Beiträge in den sozialen Medien (zB. Instagram, Facebook)	○	○	○	○	○
Videos (zB. YouTube)	○	○	○	○	○
Audio (zB. Podcasts)	○	○	○	○	○
Fotos, Infografiken, Bilder oder Illustrationen	○	○	○	○	○
Folien oder Präsentationen	○	○	○	○	○
Textpassagen (zB. Blogs, Zeitungsartikel)	○	○	○	○	○
Stories in den sozialen Medien (zB. Instagram, Facebook)	○	○	○	○	○

9. Wie möchten Sie von einem Arbeitgeber in den sozialen Medien angesprochen werden?

Informell (Du)
Formell (Sie)

10. Wie sollen Arbeitgeber mit Ihnen in den sozialen Medien kommunizieren?

	weiß nicht	
humorvoll	○	seriös
innovativ	○	traditionell
dynamisch	○	zuverlässig
emotional	○	technisch
fachlich	○	umgangssprachlich
detailliert / lang	○	stichpunktartig / kurz
mit Emojis	○	ohne Emojis

11. Welche Social Media Inhalte von Arbeitgebern interessieren Sie?

	Ja	Weiß nicht	Nein
Arbeitskultur & Benefits	○	○	○
Stellenangebote	○	○	○
Kurzvorstellungen der Mitarbeiter	○	○	○
Karriereentwicklung	○	○	○
Unternehmensveranstaltungen	○	○	○
Bewerbungsverfahren	○	○	○
Unternehmensphilosophie und Werte	○	○	○
Arbeitsalltag	○	○	○

12. Wenn Sie an die Bankenbranche denken, wie fühlen Sie sich?

○ ausgezeichnet

○ gut

○ weiß nicht

○ schlecht

○ miserabel

13. Würden Sie ein Unternehmen in der Bankenbranche als Arbeitgeberin Betracht ziehen?

○ Ja

○ Nein

○ Weiß nicht

14. Würden Sie die Steiermärkische Sparkasse als Arbeitgeber in Betracht ziehen?

○ Ja

○ Nein

○ Weiß nicht

14a. Warum?

15. Wie wichtig sind Ihnen die folgenden Merkmale bei einem Arbeitgeber?

	wichtig	eher wichtig	neutral	eher unwichtig	unwichtig
Bank- und Versicherungskonditionen	○	○	○	○	○
Variable Arbeitszeit	○	○	○	○	○
Betriebliche Altersvorsorge	○	○	○	○	○
Kantine	○	○	○	○	○
Laptop und Smartphone	○	○	○	○	○
Gesundheit und Fitness	○	○	○	○	○
Mitarbeiterkonditionen	○	○	○	○	○
Paten und Mentoren-Programm	○	○	○	○	○
Aus- und Weiterbildung	○	○	○	○	○

16. Bevorzugen Sie einen Arbeitgeber, mit dessen Werten Sie übereinstimmen?

Ja
Nein
Weiß nicht

17. Welche Werte verbinden Sie mit einem guten Arbeitgeber?

Bitte ordnen Sie Ihre Werte nach Rangfolge und lassen Sie irrelevante übrig.
(Bei mobiler Nutzung, bitte Werte antippen)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Transparenz / Offenheit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Verlässlichkeit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gleichberechtigung / Diversität	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Leidenschaft	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Nachhaltigkeit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Flexibilität / Individualität	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Glaubwürdigkeit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

18. Welche Werte verbinden Sie mit der Steiermärkischen Sparkasse?

☐ Glaubwürdigkeit

☐ Verlässlichkeit

☐ Leidenschaft

☐ Sonstiges:

19. Inwieweit stimmen Sie zu, dass das Image der Steiermärkischen Sparkasse glaubwürdig ist?

○ Stimme zur Gänze zu

○ Stimme eher zu

○ Weiß nicht

○ Stimme eher nicht zu

○ Stimme gar nicht zu

E-Mailadresse für das Gewinnspiel:

Gewinnen Sie einen € 20 GrazGutschein

VIELEN DANK ♥
für Ihre Unterstützung

Teilen Sie die Umfrage und helfen Sie uns mehr Antworten zu bekommen

https://www.unipark.de/uc/Generation_Z_1_1/

Kontakt:
Sabrina Pospichal
Campus02
sabrina.pospichal@edu.campus02.at

2.2   Results of Primary Research

In this chapter, the results of the primary research are presented and illustrated with diagrams. An online survey of 19 questions was designed for this purpose. The survey was online from June 01st to June 11th, 2022. A total of 105 survey participants completed the questionnaire in its entirety.

Question 1: Gender

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Man	39	37,1	37,1	37,1
	Woman	65	61,9	61,9	99,0
	Divers	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-4: Analysis of Question 1 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
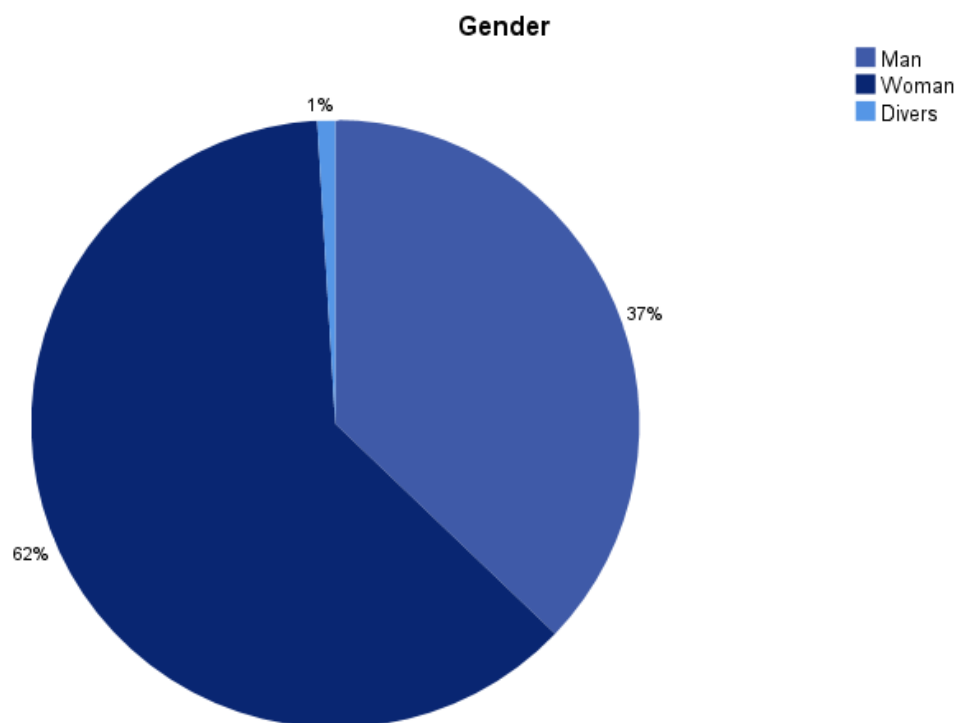
Figure A-1: Analysis of Question 1 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 2: Year of birth

Year of Birth

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2006	5	4,8	4,8	4,8
	2005	12	11,4	11,4	16,2
	2004	8	7,6	7,6	23,8
	2003	6	5,7	5,7	29,5
	2002	4	3,8	3,8	33,3
	2001	4	3,8	3,8	37,1
	2000	12	11,4	11,4	48,6
	1999	11	10,5	10,5	59,0
	1998	20	19,0	19,0	78,1
	1997	12	11,4	11,4	89,5
	1996	11	10,5	10,5	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-5: Analysis of Question 2 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
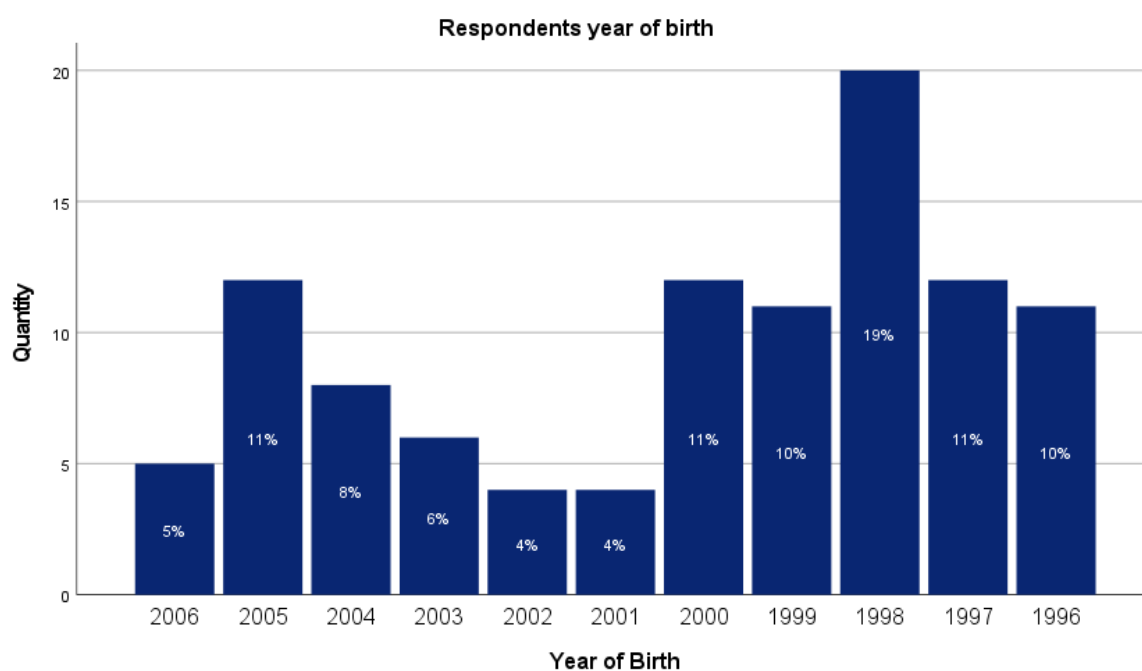
Figure A-2: Analysis of Question 2 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 3: State

Residence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Styria	95	90,5	90,5	90,5
	Burgenland	4	3,8	3,8	94,3
	Carinthia	6	5,7	5,7	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-6: Analysis of Question 3 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
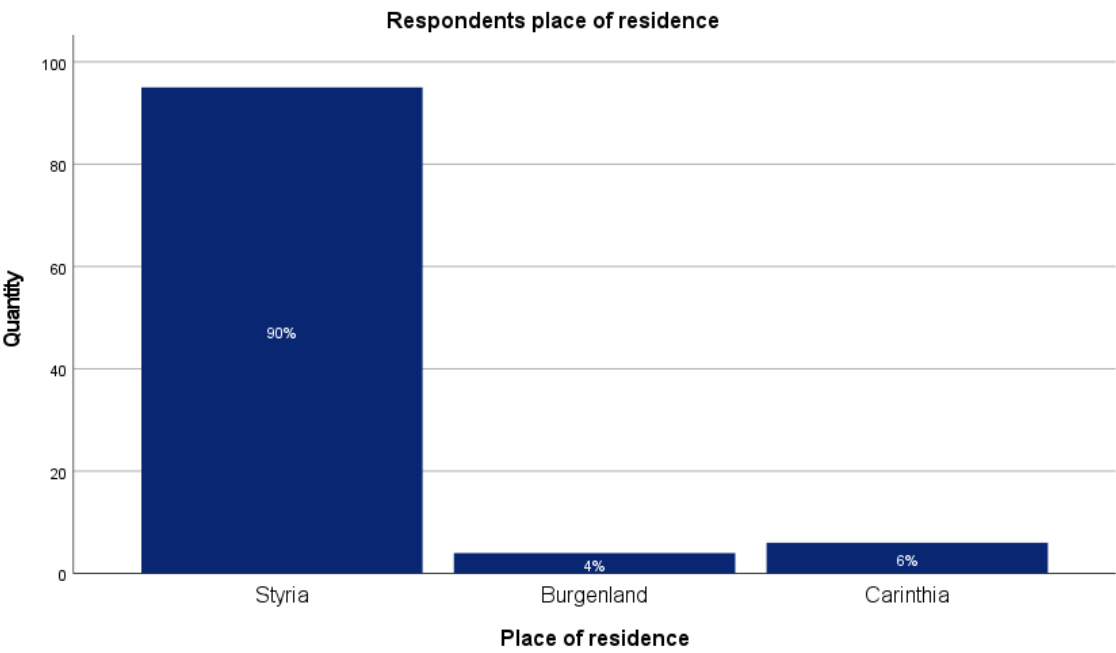
Figure A-3: Analysis of Question 3 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 4: Highest level of education completed

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Compulsory schooling	22	21,0	21,0	21,0
	Apprenticeship	17	16,2	16,2	37,1
	Berufsbildende mittlere Schule (BMS)	1	1,0	1,0	38,1
	Allgemein bildende höhere Schule (AHS)	15	14,3	14,3	52,4
	Berufsbildende höhere Schule (BHS)	20	19,0	19,0	71,4
	Kolleg / Academy	1	1,0	1,0	72,4
	University (bachelor's programme)	20	19,0	19,0	91,4
	Apprenticeship with higher certificate	6	5,7	5,7	97,1
	University (master programme)	3	2,9	2,9	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-7: Analysis of Question 4 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
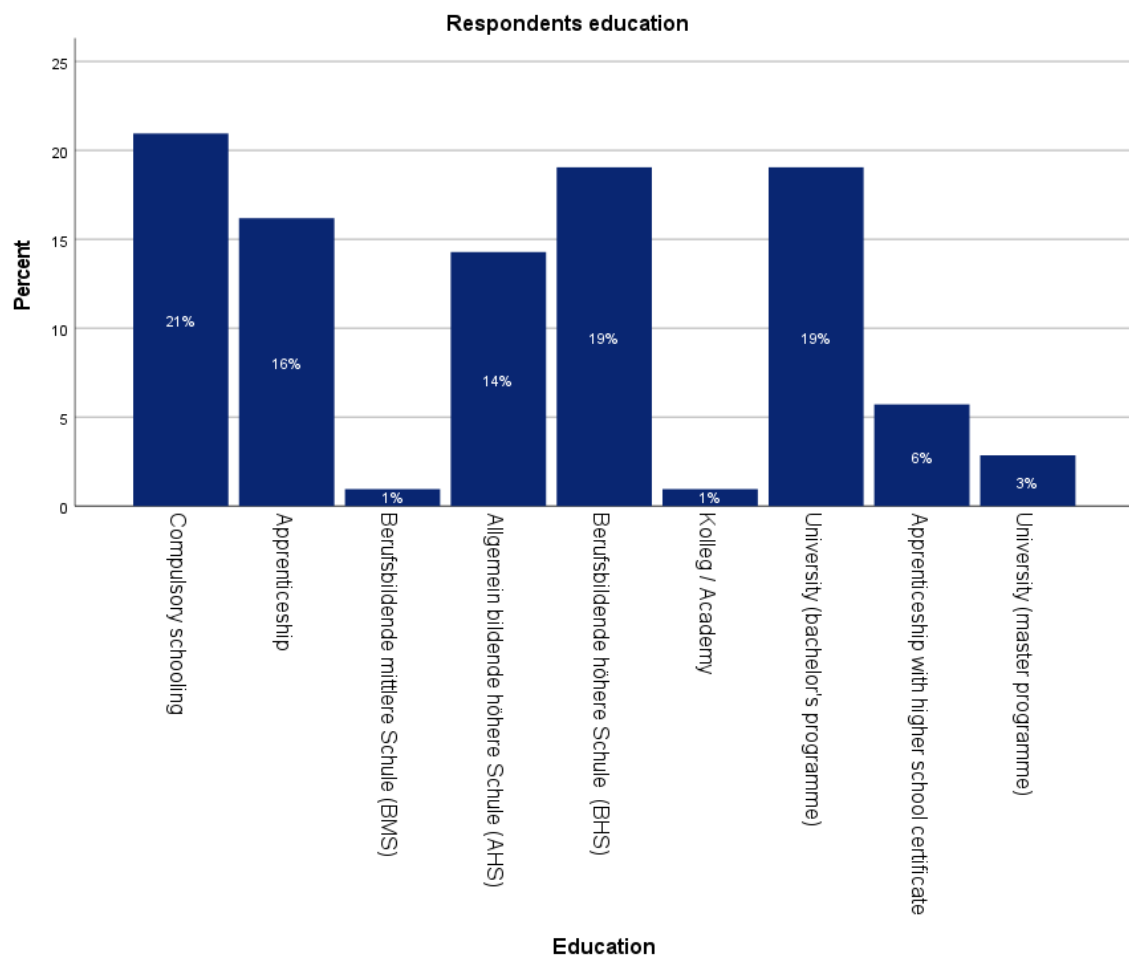
Figure A-4: Analysis of Question 4 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 5: Current status

Current status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Pupils	22	21,0	21,0	21,0
	Students	35	33,3	33,3	54,3
	Other	2	1,9	1,9	56,2
	Maternity leave / parental leave	3	2,9	2,9	59,0
	Job seeking	8	7,6	7,6	66,7
	Employed	32	30,5	30,5	97,1
	Civilian and military service	3	2,9	2,9	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-8: Analysis of Question 5 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
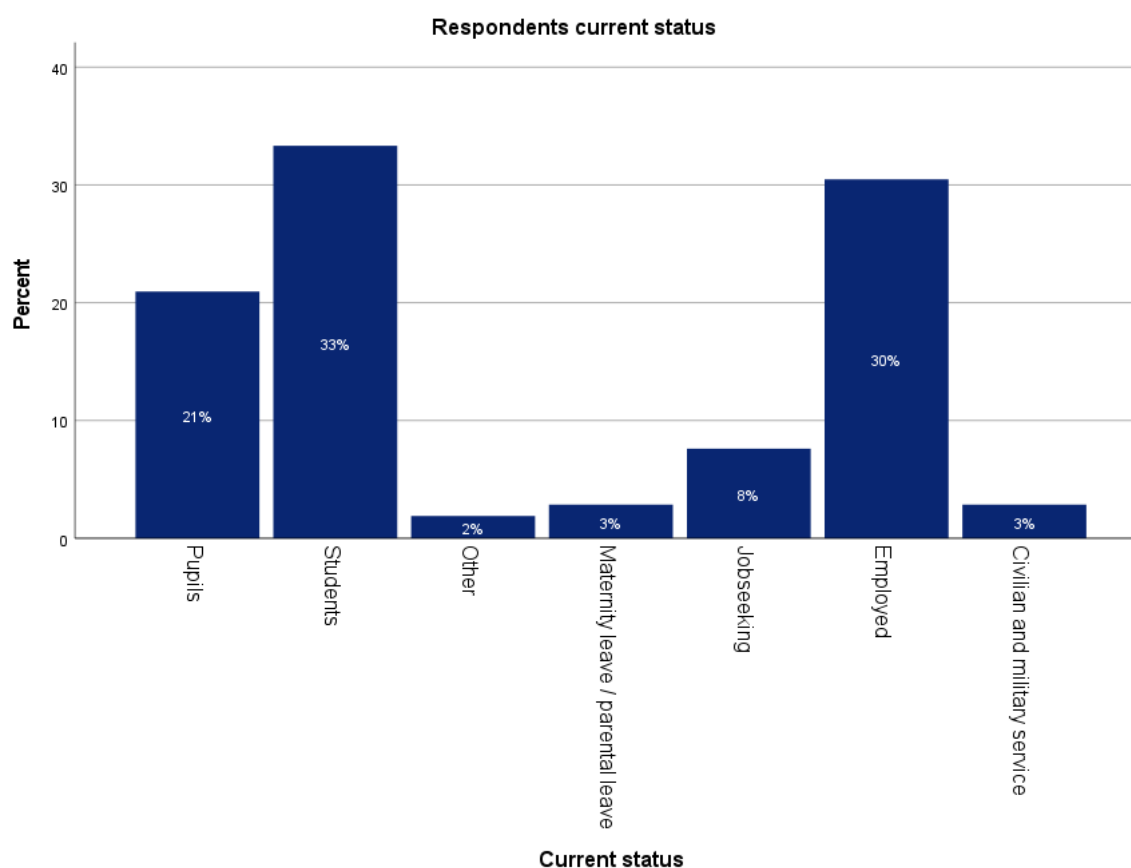
Figure A-5: Analysis of Question 5 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Blank	103	98,1	98,1	98,1
	Bildungskarenz	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
	Lehre	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-9: Analysis of *Other* Question 5 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 5a: If pupil, type of school

Respondents school type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (AHS)	5	4,8	22,7	22,7
	Oberstufenrealgymnasium (ORG)	5	4,8	22,7	45,5
	Handelsakademien (HAK)	4	3,8	18,2	63,6
	Höhere Bundeslehranstalten für Wirtschaftliche Berufe (HBLA)	4	3,8	18,2	81,8
	Höhere Technische Lehranstalten (HTL)	1	1,0	4,5	86,4
	Höhere Gewerbliche Lehranstalten (HGLA)	2	1,9	9,1	95,5
	Other	1	1,0	4,5	100,0
	Total	22	21,0	100,0	
Missing		83	79,0		
Total		105	100,0		

Table A-10: Analysis of Question 5a (n=22) (prepared by the author)
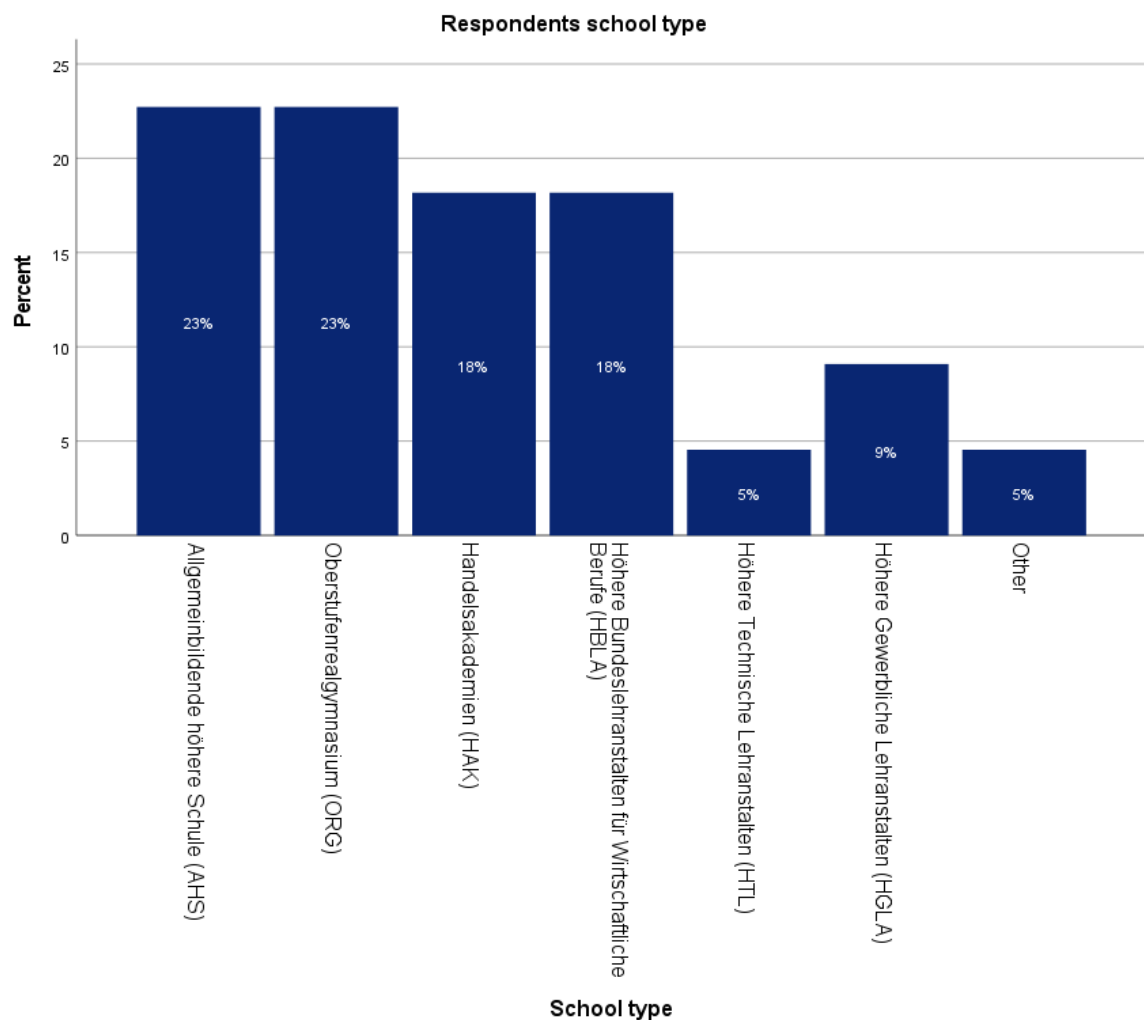
Figure A-6: Analysis of Question 5a (n=22) (prepared by the author)

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No pupil	83	79,0	79,0	79,0
	Blank	21	20,0	20,0	99,0
	Kolleg	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-11: Analysis of *Other* Question 5a (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 5b: If student, field of study

Field of study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business & Law	15	14,3	42,9	42,9
	Engineering & Technology	4	3,8	11,4	54,3
	Pedagogy, Administration & Social	3	2,9	8,6	62,9
	Languages, Culture & Humanities	4	3,8	11,4	74,3
	Media & communication	5	4,8	14,3	88,6
	Informatics & IT	3	2,9	8,6	97,1
	Other	1	1,0	2,9	100,0
	Total	35	33,3	100,0	
Missing		70	66,7		
Total		105	100,0		

Table A-12: Analysis of Question 5b (n=35) (prepared by the author)
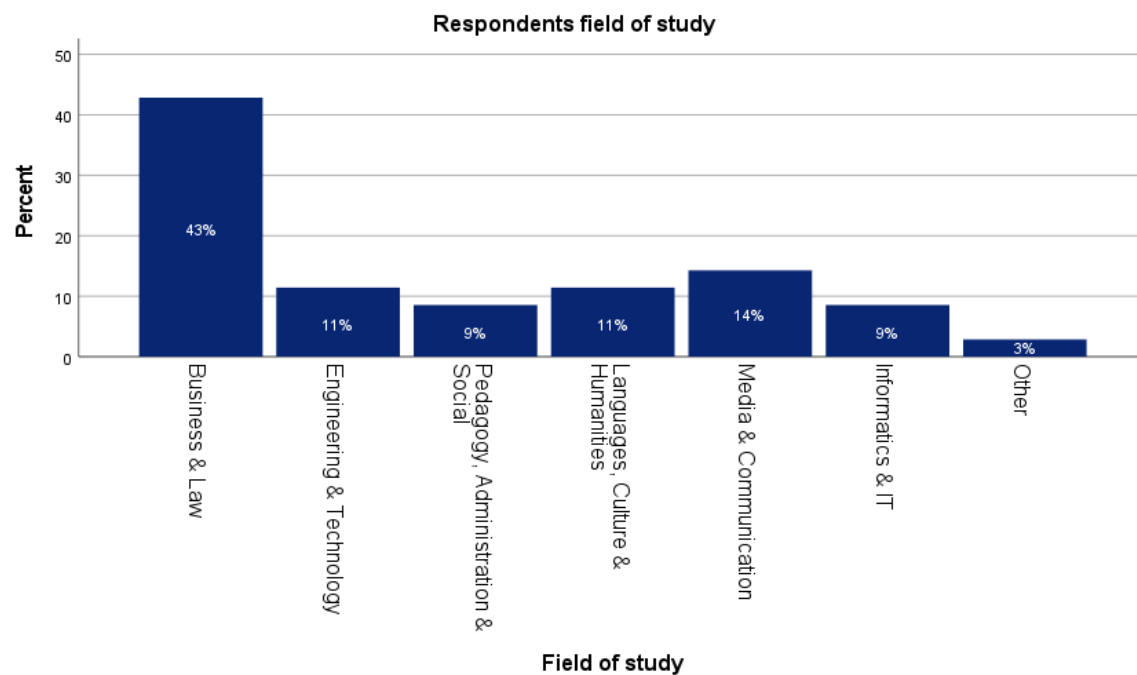
Figure A-7: Analysis of Question 5b (n=35) (prepared by the author)

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No student	70	66,7	66,7	66,7
	Blank	34	32,4	32,4	99,0
	Sozialwissenschaft	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-13: Analysis of *Other* Question 5b (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 6: Which of the following social media platforms do you use regularly

Social media use

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Social media platforms[a]	105	100,0%	0	0,0%	105	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table A-14: Cases of Question 6 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Social media use

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		Amount	Percent	
Which of the following social media platforms do you use regularly?[a]	Instagram	88	28,2%	83,8%
	TikTok	59	18,9%	56,2%
	Facebook	53	17,0%	50,5%
	Snapchat	44	14,1%	41,9%
	LinkedIn	27	8,7%	25,7%
	Studo	20	6,4%	19,0%
	Other	12	3,8%	11,4%
	Xing	9	2,9%	8,6%
Total		312	100,0%	297,1%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table A-15: Analysis of Question 6 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
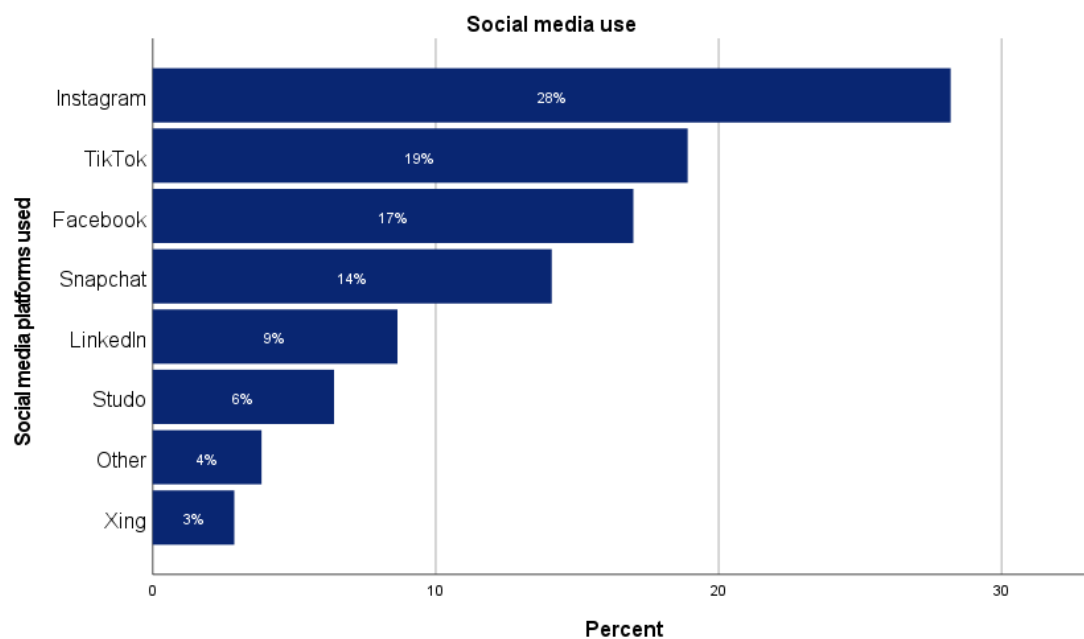
Figure A-8: Analysis of Question 6 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Blank	94	89,5	89,5	89,5
	9GAG, reddit	1	1,0	1,0	90,5
	moodle	1	1,0	1,0	91,4
	telegram	1	1,0	1,0	92,4
	Twitter	3	2,9	2,9	95,2
	WhatsApp	1	1,0	1,0	96,2
	YouTube	1	1,0	1,0	97,1
	Youtube, Pinterest	1	1,0	1,0	98,1
	YouTube, Tinder	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
	youtube, whatsapp	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-16: Analysis of *Other* Question 6 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 7: Which three of the following channels do you use most often to find an employer

Employer search channels

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
employer search channels[a]	105	100,0%	0	0,0%	105	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table A-17: Cases of Question 7 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Employer search channels

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		Amount	Percent	
Which three of the following channels do you use most often to find an employer?[a]	Karriere.at	76	24,1%	72,4%
	Recommendations from acquaintances	61	19,4%	58,1%
	Company Website	60	19,0%	57,1%
	LinkedIn	31	9,8%	29,5%
	Recruitment agencies	17	5,4%	16,2%
	Print media	15	4,8%	14,3%
	Other	15	4,8%	14,3%
	Instagram	11	3,5%	10,5%
	Xing	11	3,5%	10,5%
	Facebook	10	3,2%	9,5%
	Studo	8	2,5%	7,6%
Total		315	100,0%	300,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table A-18: Analysis of Question 7 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Employer search channels

Employer search channels	Percent
Karriere.at	24%
Recommendations from acquaintances	19%
Company Website	19%
LinkedIn	10%
recruitment agencies	5%
Print media	5%
Other	5%
Instagram	3%
Xing	3%
Facebook	3%
Studo	3%
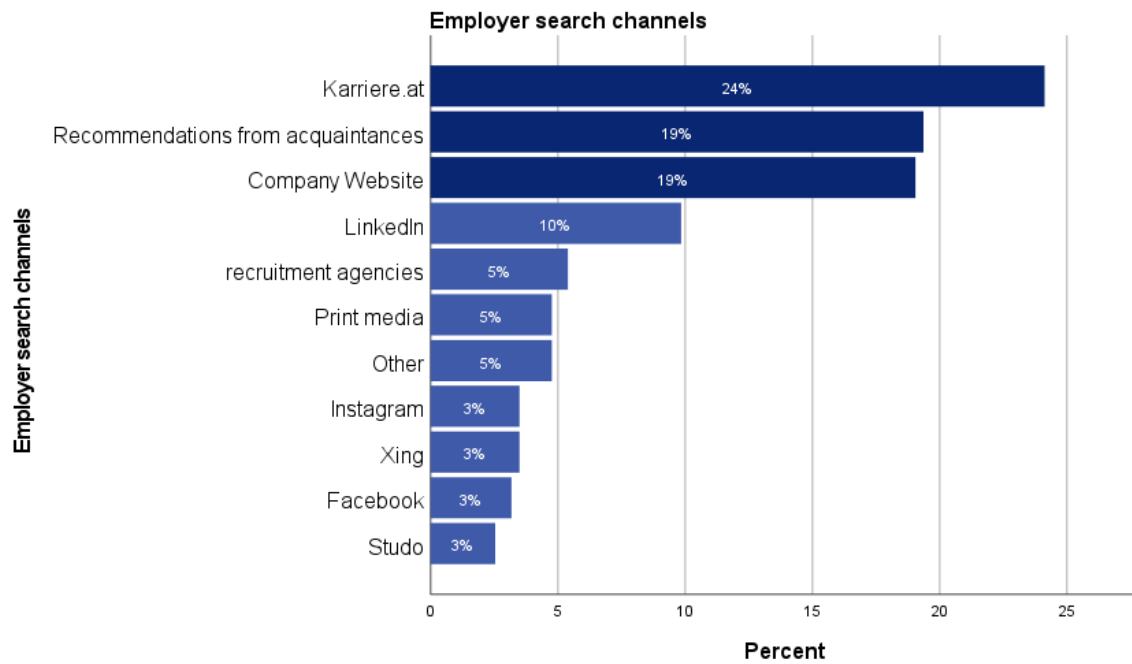
Figure A-9: Analysis of Question 7 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Blank	92	87,6	87,6	87,6
	AMS	1	1,0	1,0	88,6
	AMS Jobroom, Willhaben	1	1,0	1,0	89,5
	AMS-Seite	1	1,0	1,0	90,5
	Empfehlungen von der Familie	1	1,0	1,0	91,4
	google	1	1,0	1,0	92,4
	Google	1	1,0	1,0	93,3
	keine mehr	2	1,9	1,9	95,2
	meine Eltern	1	1,0	1,0	96,2
	sonst keine	1	1,0	1,0	97,1
	stepstone	1	1,0	1,0	98,1
	willhaben	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
	willhaben.at	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-19: Analysis of *Other* Question 7 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 8: Which online formats do you prefer when looking for employers

Preferred employer online formats

	Frequency Statistic	Mean Statistic	Mean Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
Audio (e.g. Podcasts)	105	1,76	,098	1,005	1,010
Employer ratings (e.g. kununu)	105	3,96	,111	1,134	1,287
Photos, infographics, images or illustrations	105	3,64	,141	1,449	2,099
Posts on social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook)	105	3,82	,114	1,167	1,361
Slides or presentations	105	2,19	,126	1,294	1,675
Stories in social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook)	105	3,57	,138	1,413	1,997
Text passages (e.g. blogs, newspaper articles)	105	2,36	,134	1,374	1,887
Videos (e.g. YouTube)	105	2,91	,148	1,513	2,291
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Table A-20: Analysis of Question 8 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

5 = True
4 = Rather true
3 = Partly
2 = Rather not true
1 = Not true
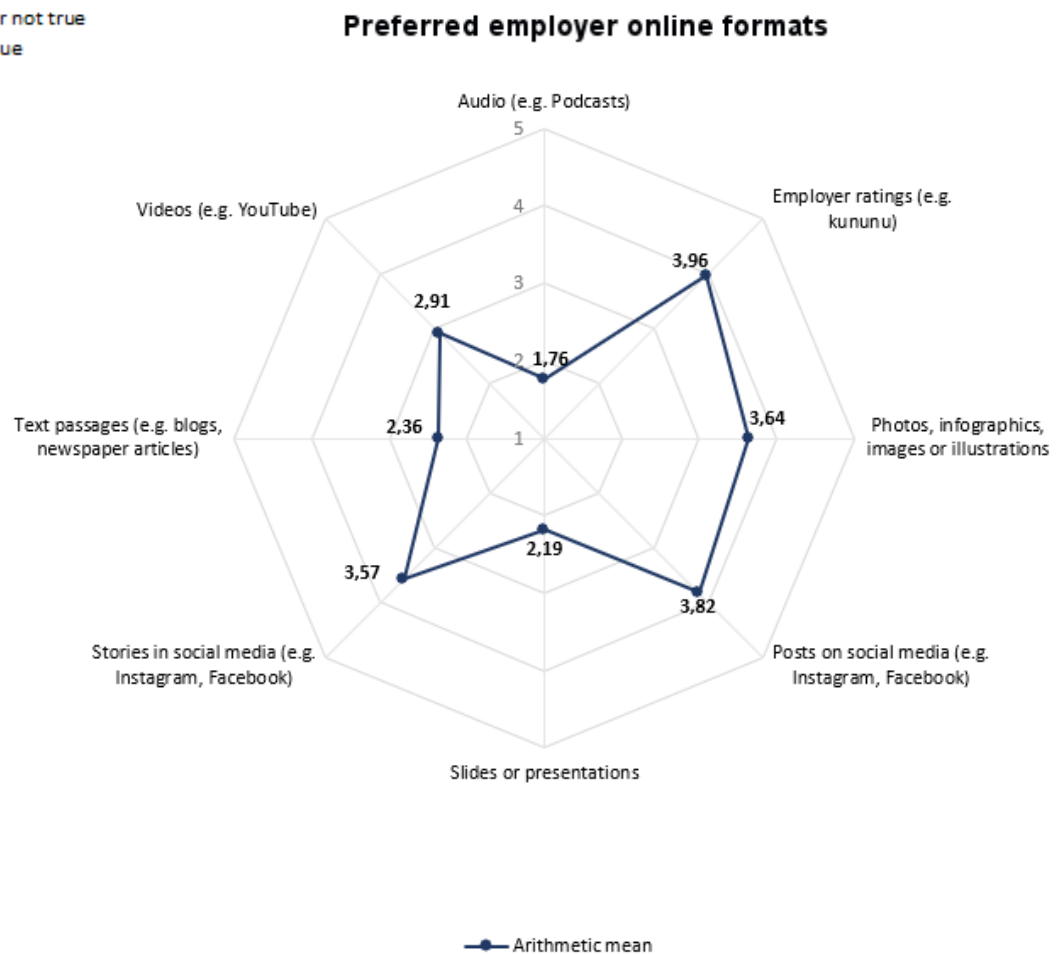
Figure A-10: Analysis of Question 8 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 9: How would you like to be addressed by an employer on social media

Preferred social media addressing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Informal (Du)	90	85,7	85,7	85,7
	Formal (Sie)	15	14,3	14,3	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-21: Analysis of Question 9 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
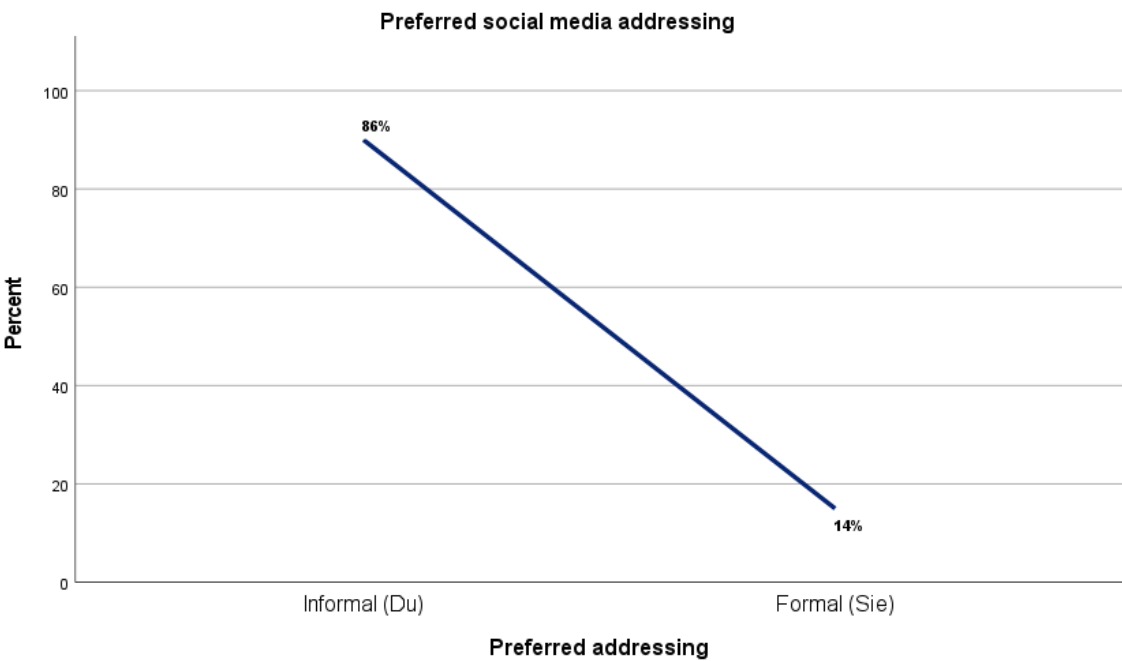
Figure A-11: Analysis of Question 9 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 10: How should employers communicate with you on social media

Preferred tone on social media

	Frequency Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
Humorous - Serious	105	1,43	,076	,783	,613
Innovative - Traditional	105	1,75	,093	,948	,900
Dynamic - Reliable	105	1,69	,078	,800	,641
Emotional - Technical	105	1,68	,077	,791	,625
Technical - Colloquial	105	1,84	,086	,878	,772
Detailed / long - Bullet point / short	105	2,37	,081	,835	,697
With emojis - Without emojis	105	1,50	,077	,786	,618
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Table A-22: Analysis of Question 10 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
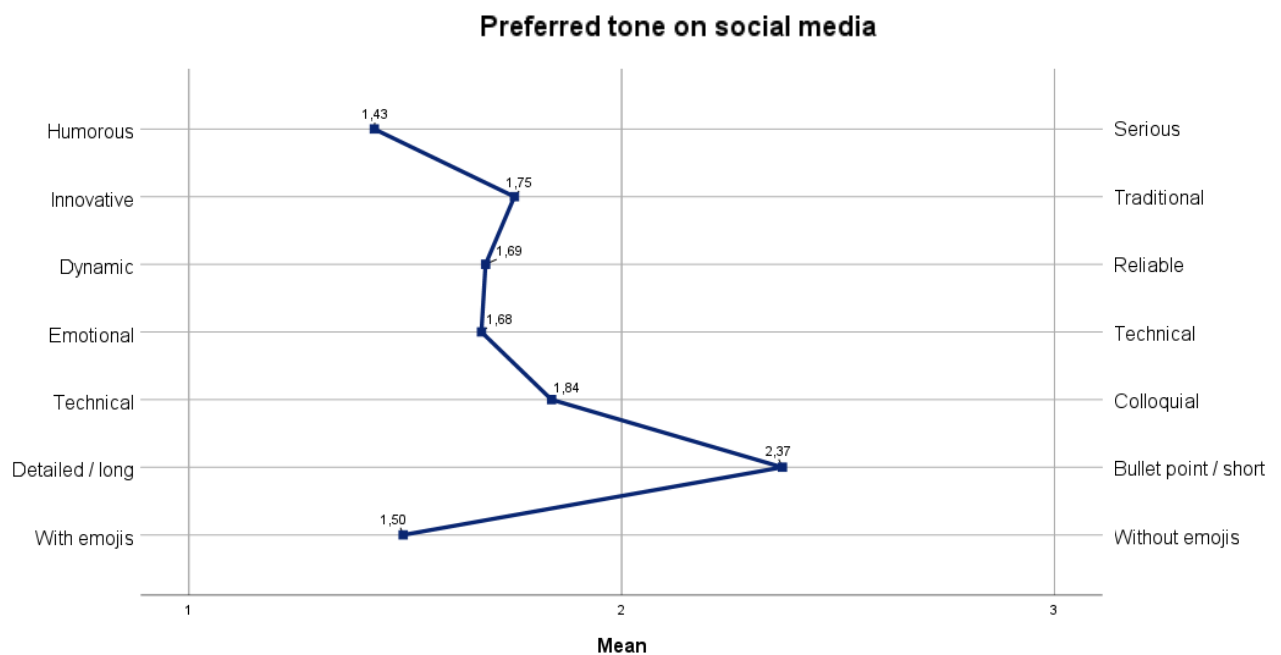
Figure A-12: Analysis of Question 10 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 11: What social media content from employers interests you

Relevant social media content for Generation Z

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Social media content[a]	105	100,0%	0	0,0%	105	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table A-23: Cases of Question 11 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Relevant social media content for Generation Z

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		Amount	Percent	
What social media content from employers interests you?[a]	Work culture & benefits	92	17,4%	87,6%
	Corporate philosophy and values	89	16,9%	84,8%
	Day-to-day work	83	15,7%	79,0%
	Employee portraits	77	14,6%	73,3%
	Corporate events	75	14,2%	71,4%
	Application procedure	62	11,7%	59,0%
	Career development	50	9,5%	47,6%
Total		528	100,0%	502,9%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table A-24: Analysis of Question 11 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
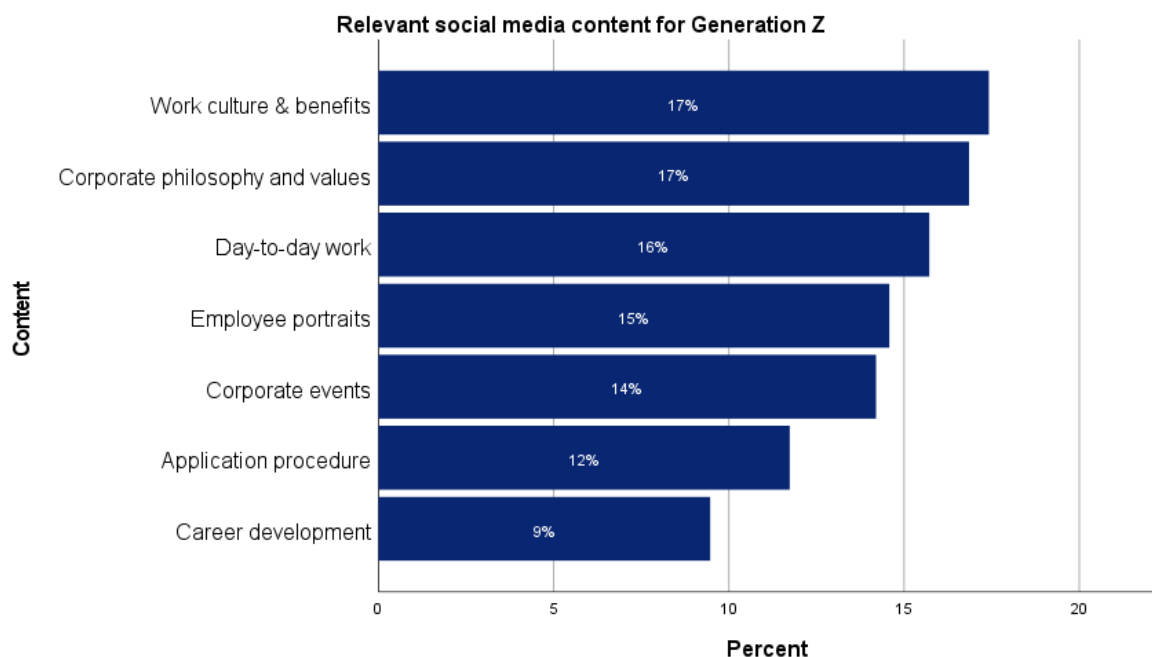
Figure A-13: Analysis of Question 11 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 12: When you think about the banking industry, how do you feel

Banking industry image

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	4	3,8	3,8	3,8
	Good	2	1,9	1,9	5,7
	Don't know	18	17,1	17,1	22,9
	Bad	44	41,9	41,9	64,8
	Miserable	37	35,2	35,2	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-25: Analysis of Question 12 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
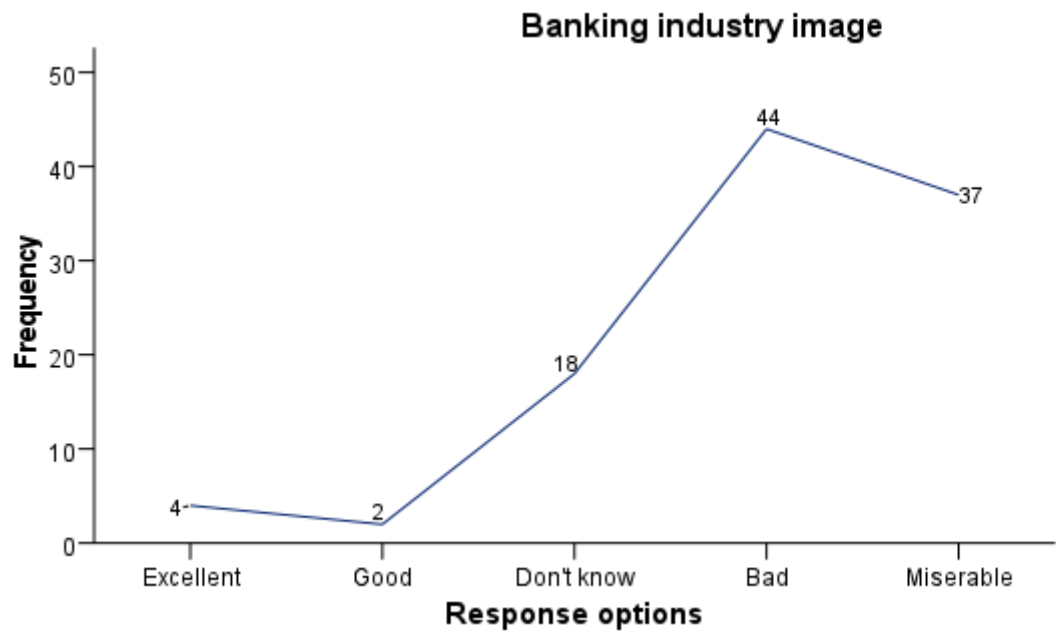
Figure A-14: Analysis of Question 12 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 13: Would you consider a company in the banking industry as an employer

Willingness to work in the banking industry

			Statistics		
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	39	37,1	37,1	37,1
	No	48	45,7	45,7	82,9
	Don't know	18	17,1	17,1	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-26: Analysis of Question 13 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
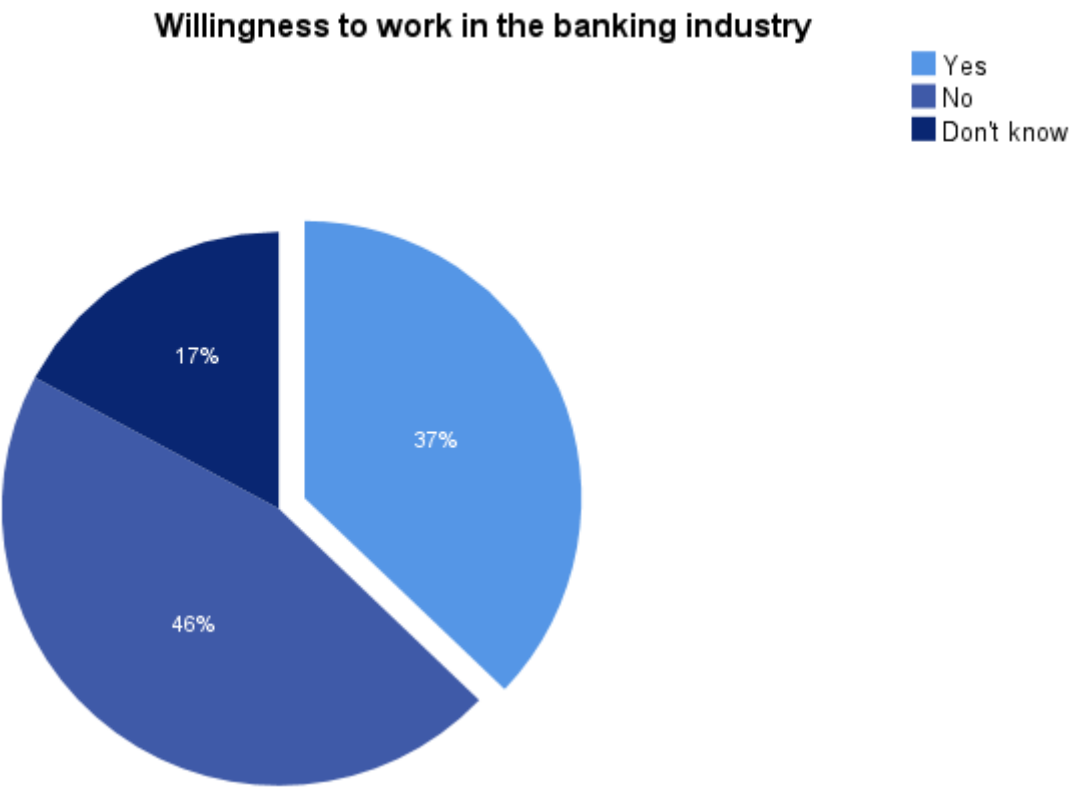
Figure A-15: Analysis of Question 13 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 14: Would you consider Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG as employer

Willingness to work for Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	46	43,8	43,8	43,8
	No	43	41,0	41,0	84,8
	Don't know	16	15,2	15,2	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-27: Analysis of Question 14 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
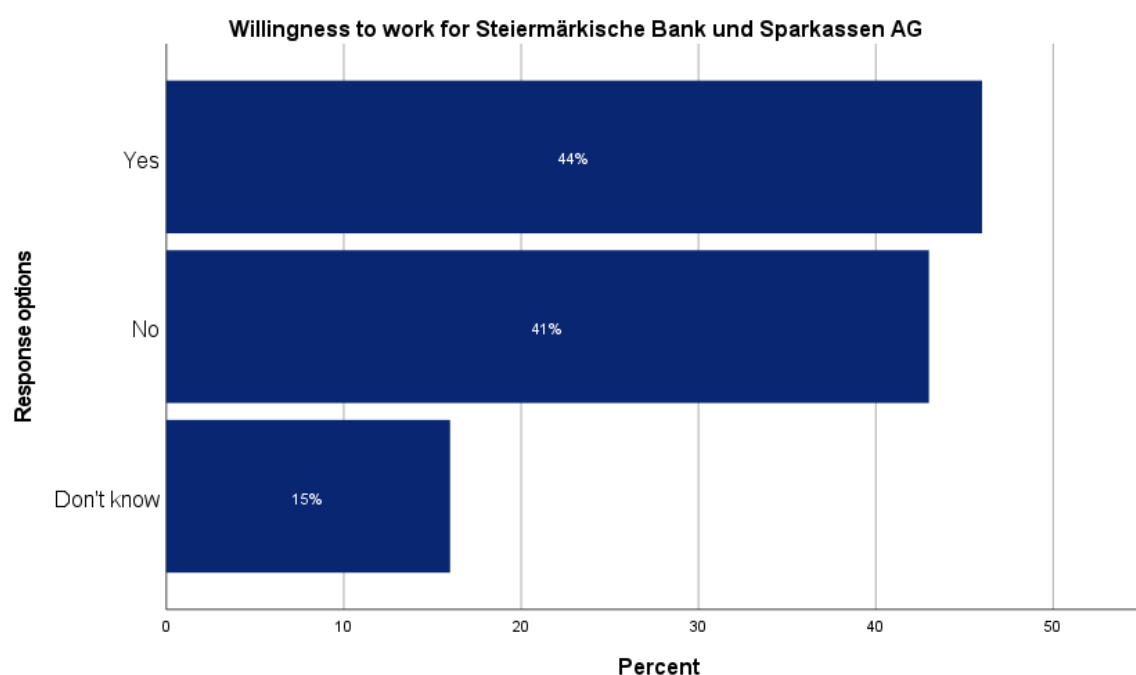
Figure A-16: Analysis of Question 14 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 14a: Why

Answers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	-	1	1,0	1,0	1,0
	Blank	69	65,7	65,7	66,7
	???	1	1,0	1,0	67,6
	andere Tätigkeit	1	1,0	1,0	68,6
	Auf Grund des Wohnortes	1	1,0	1,0	69,5
	Bin nicht daran interessiert	1	1,0	1,0	70,5
	Bin nicht interessiert in einer Bank zu arbeiten. :)	1	1,0	1,0	71,4
	coole Bank	2	1,9	1,9	73,3
	diese branche fällt nicht in meinen interessensbereich	1	1,0	1,0	74,3
	ein attraktives Unternehmen mit gutem, ansprechendem Medienauftritt	1	1,0	1,0	75,2
	Finde unser Geldsystem nicht richtig	1	1,0	1,0	76,2
	Gibt keinen Grund dagegen	1	1,0	1,0	77,1
	gute Bank	1	1,0	1,0	78,1
	gutes Image	1	1,0	1,0	79,0
	Ich habe bereits bei Bank gearbeitet (nicht in Österreich) und es hat mich nicht gefallen.	1	1,0	1,0	80,0
	Ich mag ihre Werbung.	1	1,0	1,0	81,0
	Ja, da ich denke dass man dort viele Erfahrungen sammeln kann (im Bezug auf Finanzielles/Sachen die man nicht in der Schule lernt).	1	1,0	1,0	81,9
	jhkjhökjlk	1	1,0	1,0	82,9
	k.A.	1	1,0	1,0	83,8
	Kein Interesse an einem Job in der Bankenbranche	1	1,0	1,0	84,8
	Lehre als Einzelhandelskaufmann	1	1,0	1,0	85,7
	Nicht mein Wunschberuf, kein Bezug zum Studium	1	1,0	1,0	86,7
	Nicht meine Branche	1	1,0	1,0	87,6
	Nicht passend für meine Ausbildung. Keine Interesse	1	1,0	1,0	88,6
	so	1	1,0	1,0	89,5
	so halt	1	1,0	1,0	90,5
	Spitze Unternehmen!	1	1,0	1,0	91,4
	Super Unternehmen	1	1,0	1,0	92,4
	Weil ich im sozialen Bereich tätig bin.	1	1,0	1,0	93,3
	Weil ich mich nicht für die Bankenbranche interessiere.	1	1,0	1,0	94,3
	Weil mich weder Buchhaltung interessiert, noch die Arbeitszeiten (welche ich von meiner Bank kenne)	1	1,0	1,0	95,2
	weiß nicht	1	1,0	1,0	96,2
	Wenig Interesse an der Bankenbranche	1	1,0	1,0	97,1
	wenn das Gehalt passt ;-)	1	1,0	1,0	98,1
	wenn eine IT Stelle offen ist	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
	Will generell nicht in Bankbranche zu tun haben.	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Figure A-17: Analysis of Question 14a (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 15: How important are the following characteristics to you in an employer

Importance of employer characteristics

	Frequency Statistic	Mean Statistic	Mean Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
Education and training	105	3,72	,096	,985	,971
Canteen	105	3,90	,107	1,097	1,202
Employee discount rates	105	4,01	,098	1,005	1,010
Special bank and insurance conditions	105	3,52	,103	1,057	1,117
Sponsors and mentoring programs	105	3,41	,103	1,053	1,110
Health and fitness	105	4,34	,085	,875	,766
Company pension plan	105	3,52	,107	1,093	1,194
Variable working hours	105	4,61	,081	,826	,683
Laptop and smartphone	105	4,16	,100	1,020	1,041
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Table A-28: Analysis of Question 15 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

5 = Important
4 = Rather important
3 = Neutral
2 = Rather unimportant
1 = Unimportant
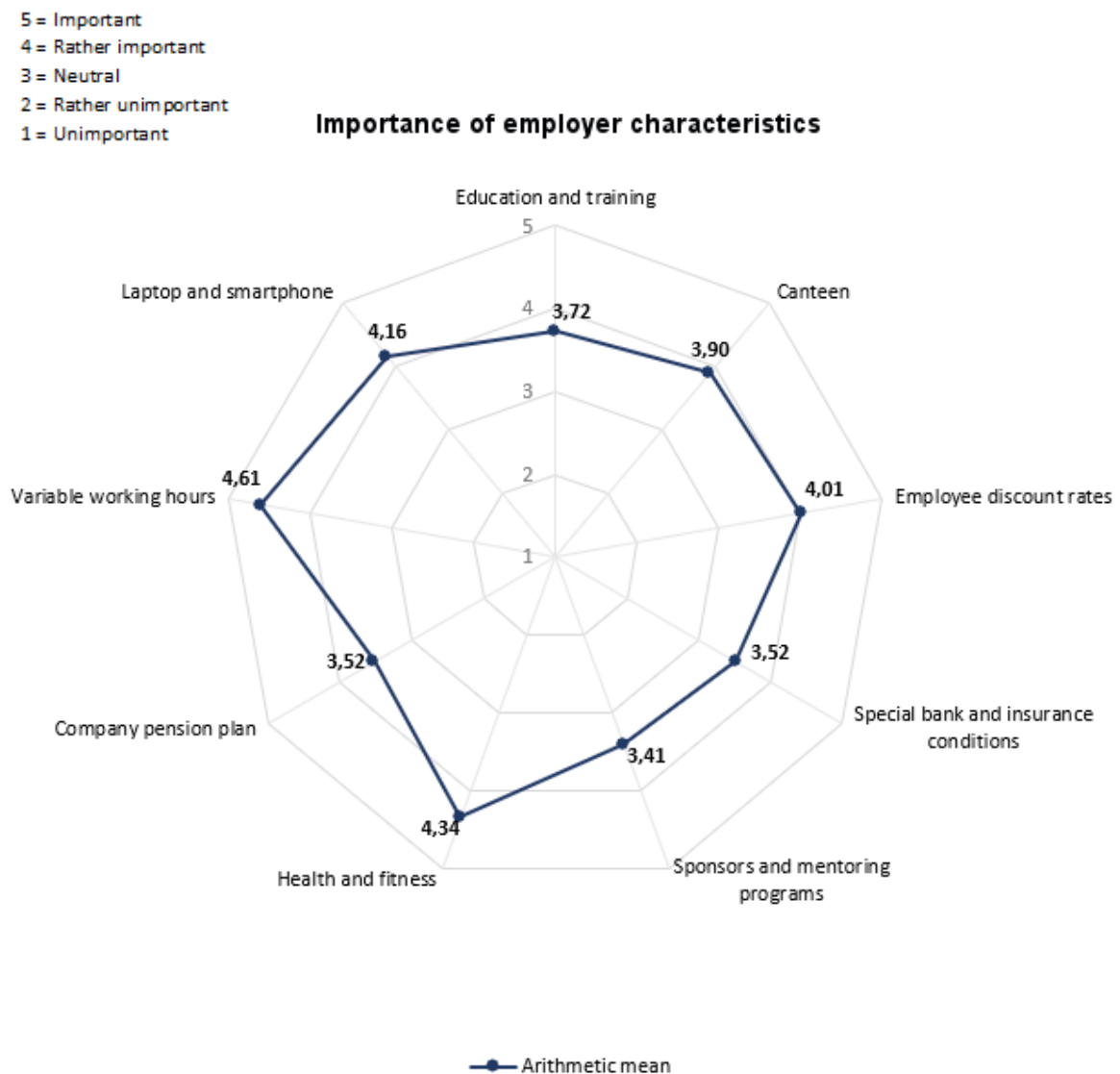
Figure A-18: Analysis of Question 15 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 16: Do you prefer an employer whose values you agree with

Preference for employers with value match

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	97	92,4	92,4	92,4
	No	3	2,9	2,9	95,2
	Don't know	5	4,8	4,8	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-29: Analysis of Question 16 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
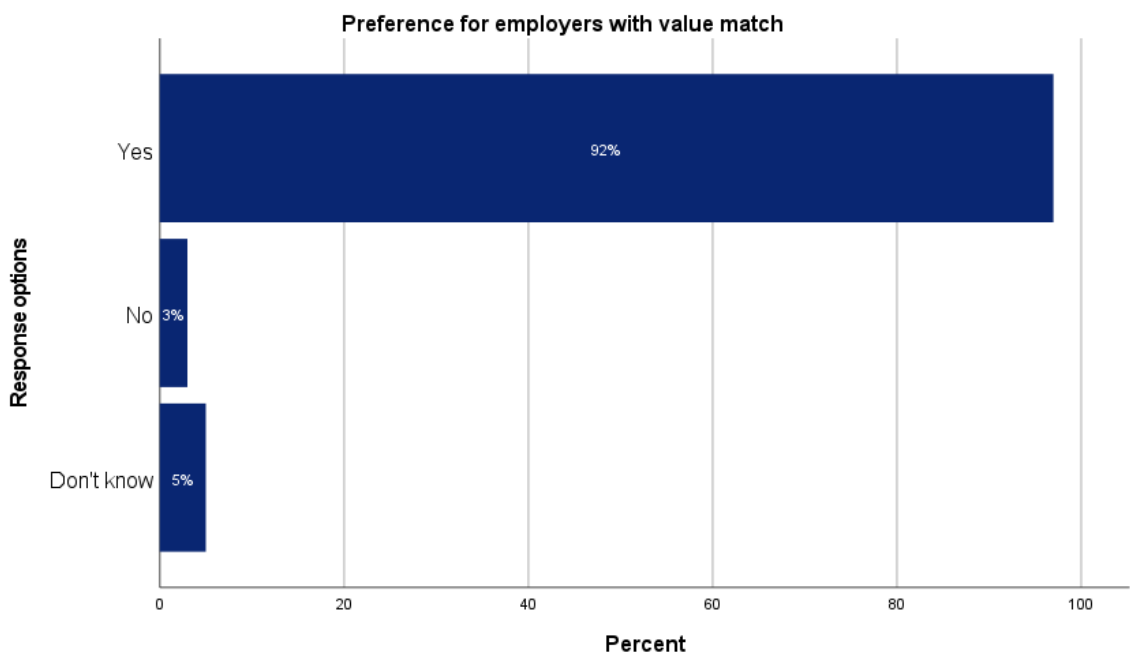
Figure A-19: Analysis of Question 16 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 17: What values do you associate with a good employer

Preferred employer values

		Transparency/ Openness	Reliability	Equality / Diversity	Passion	Sustainability	Flexibility / Individuality	Credibility
Amount	Valid	73	85	90	70	69	76	66
	Missing	32	20	15	35	36	29	39

Table A-30: Cases of Question 17 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Preferred employer values

	Amount Statistic	Mean Statistic	Mean Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
Equality/Diversity	90	5,1889	,17446	1,65505	2,739
Flexibility/Individuality	76	4,8158	,21169	1,84543	3,406
Reliability	85	4,7176	,24461	2,25521	5,086
Transparency/Openness	73	4,6849	,18900	1,61483	2,608
Passion	70	4,5571	,21976	1,83868	3,381
Sustainability	69	4,4783	,22006	1,82796	3,341
Credibility	66	4,0303	,22331	1,81421	3,291
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Table A-31: Analysis of Question 17 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
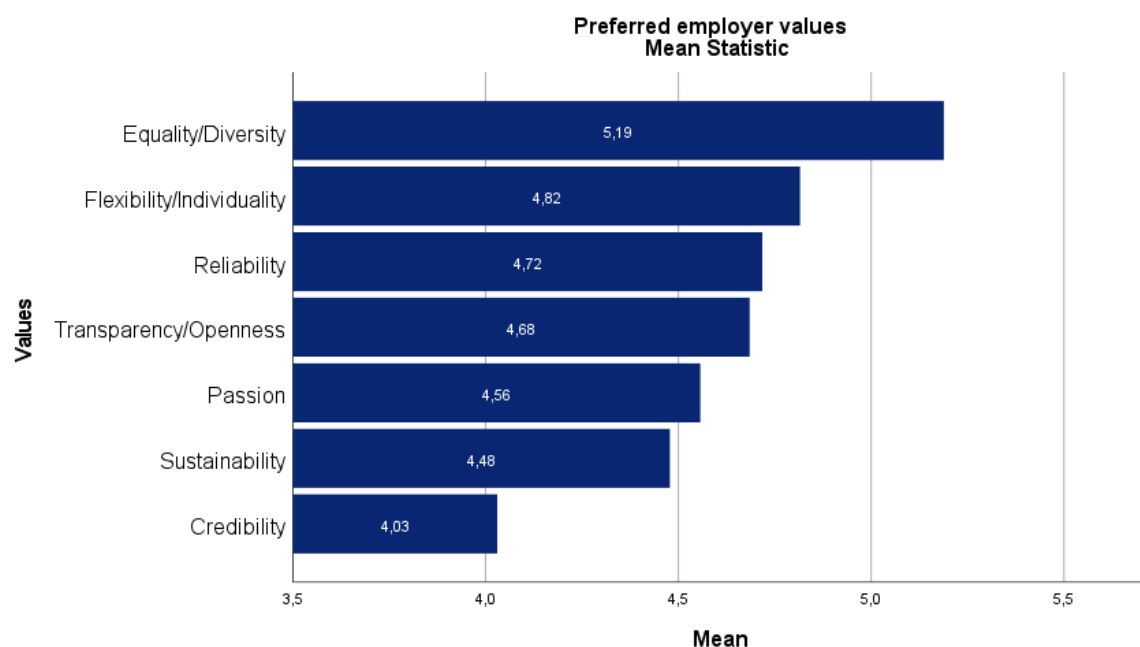
Figure A-20: Analysis of Question 17 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 18: What values do you associate with Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

Perceived values Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Values Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG[a]	105	100,0%	0	0,0%	105	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table A-32: Cases of Question 18 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Perceived values Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		Amount	Percent	
What values do you associate with Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG?[a]	Credibility	52	37,1%	49,5%
	Reliability	42	30,0%	40,0%
	Passion	23	16,4%	21,9%
	Other	23	16,4%	21,9%
Total		140	100,0%	133,3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table A-33: Analysis of Question 18 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
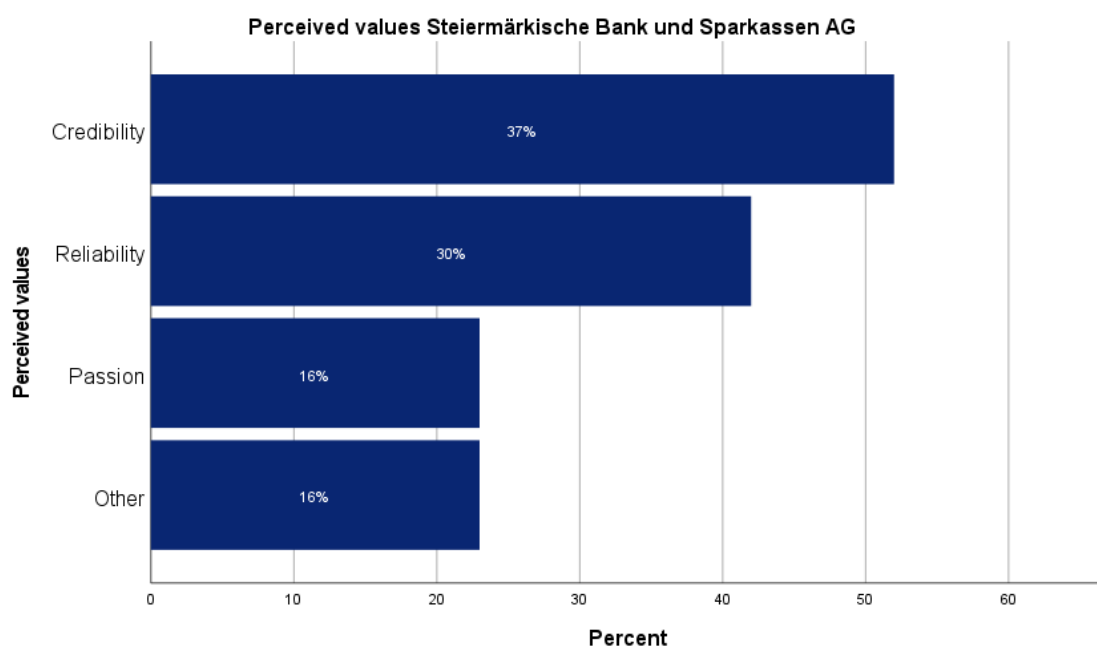
Figure A-21: Analysis of Question 18 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Blank	88	83,8	83,8	83,8
	Coolness	1	1,0	1,0	84,8
	Geld	1	1,0	1,0	85,7
	k.A.	1	1,0	1,0	86,7
	keine	2	1,9	1,9	88,6
	Keine	1	1,0	1,0	89,5
	keine ahnung	1	1,0	1,0	90,5
	keine, ich kenne sie nicht gut genug	1	1,0	1,0	91,4
	Keines	1	1,0	1,0	92,4
	Nicht viel	1	1,0	1,0	93,3
	nichts bestimmtes	1	1,0	1,0	94,3
	Nichts.	1	1,0	1,0	95,2
	Unfreundlichkeit	1	1,0	1,0	96,2
	weiß nicht	3	2,9	2,9	99,0
	Zuverlässig	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-34: Analysis of *Other* Question 18 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

Question 19: To what extent do you agree that Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG's image is credible

Perceived credibility of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	41	39,0	39,0	39,0
	Agree	32	30,5	30,5	69,5
	Don't know	29	27,6	27,6	97,1
	Disagree	2	1,9	1,9	99,0
	Strongly disagree	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	105	100,0	100,0	

Table A-35: Analysis of Question 19 (n=105) (prepared by the author)
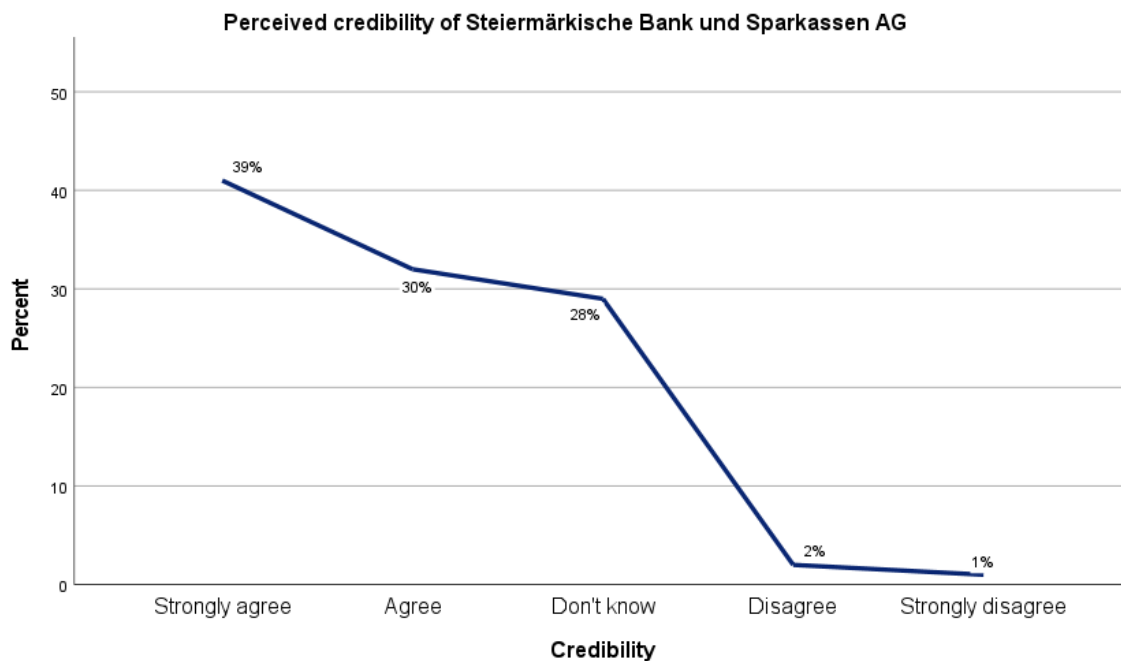

Figure A-22: Analysis of Question 19 (n=105) (prepared by the author)

3 Cost Projection for External Measures

The cost of employer brand communication was calculated based on the recommendations in this concept. For this purpose, the labor hours for the project and the cost per hour for each employee were estimated as follows:

Brand manager: € 3.530 monthly costs for employers (€ 21,72 per hour) (cf. Talent 2022a)

- Reprocessing of the corporate identity guidelines	20 hours	€ 434,40
- Creation of a communication policy for social media	30 hours	€ 651,60

Marketing manager: € 3.000 monthly costs for employers (€ 18,46 per hour) (cf. Talent 2022b)

- Development of key strategic images	50 hours	€ 923,-
- Employee videos	200 hours	€ 3.692,-
- Image videos	150 hours	€ 2.769,-

Marketing employee: € 2.597 monthly costs for employers (€ 15,98 per hour) (cf. Talent 2022c)

- Informing employees of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG	15 hours	€ 239,70
- Job stories	300 hours	€ 4.794,-
- Image stories	250 hours	€ 3.995,-

Optimization		**Raising awareness**		**Differentiation**	
Informing employees	239,70				
Reprocessing	434,40				
Policy	651,60	Videos	3.692,00	Videos	2.769,00
Images	923,00	Stories	4.794,00	Stories	3.995,00
	2.248,70		8.486,00		6.764,00

The following table illustrates the total costs of all measures with regard to the respective objective of this communication concept:

Objective	Task	Total Costs
Optimization of credibility gaps and information asymmetries	Uniform communication of the employer branding strategy and the EVP [internally] and externally. - Informing employees of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG - Reprocessing of the corporate identity guidelines - Creation of a communication policy for social media - Development of key strategic images	€ 2.249,-
Raising awareness among Generation Z through increased communication of the employer brand	Emotional/humorous appeal to the target group Consistent communication of the communication message (claim, slogans, adapted EVP) - Employee videos - Job stories	€ 8.486,-
Differentiation of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG from the industry image	Strongly differentiate appeal from the industry image to the target group - Image videos - Image stories	€ 6.764,-

Table A-36: Cost projection for recommended measures (prepared by the author)

The total cost of all measures carried out is appoximatelly EUR 17,499.

4 Social Media Communication Schedule

The specific communication measures are sequenced and translated into a written communication schedule:
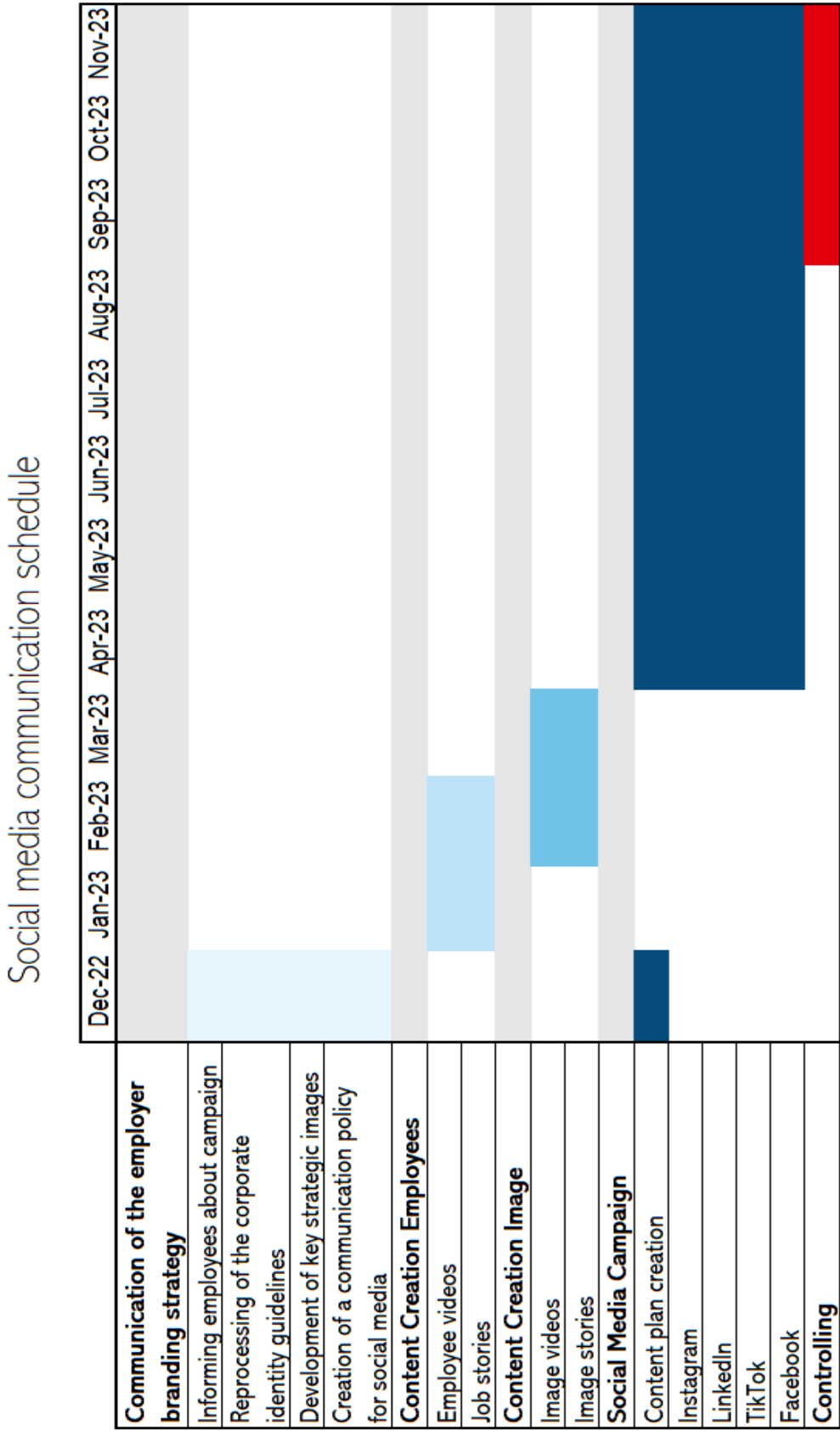
Social media communication schedule

	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23
Communication of the employer branding strategy												
Informing employees about campaign		▓	▓	▓								
Reprocessing of the corporate identity guidelines												
Development of key strategic images												
Creation of a communication policy for social media												
Content Creation Employees												
Employee videos			▓	▓								
Job stories												
Content Creation Image												
Image videos					▓	▓						
Image stories												
Social Media Campaign												
Content plan creation									▓			
Instagram										▓	▓	▓
LinkedIn										▓	▓	▓
TikTok										▓	▓	▓
Facebook										▓	▓	▓
Controlling												▓

Table A-37: Social media communication schedule (prepared by the author)

5 List of References

Contributions from internet sources

Talent (2022a): Brand Manager Gehalt in Österreich - Durchschnittsgehalt [online]
https://at.talent.com/salary?job=brand+manager [Accessed 7 Jun. 2022]

Talent (2022b): Marketing Manager Gehalt in Österreich - Durchschnittsgehalt [online]
https://at.talent.com/salary?job=marketing+manager#:~:text=Das%20durchschnittliche%20marketing%20manager%20Gehalt,%E2%82%AC%2018%2C46%20pro%20Stunde [Accessed 7 Jun. 2022]

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https://at.talent.com/salary?job=social+media [Accessed 7 Jun. 2022]