Thesis
Master Programme in Business Studies

What do they expect?

A case study on the work expectations of the working German Generation Y

Authors: Céline Rossier & Theresa Rudzki
Supervisor: Lenka Klímplová
Examiner: Tao Yang
Subject/main field of study: Human Resource Management
Course code: FÖ3027
Credits: 15
Date of public presentation/examination: 1st June 2015

At Dalarna University, you are able to publish your student thesis in full text in DiVA. The publishing is Open Access, which means your work will be freely accessible to read and download on the internet. This will significantly increase the dissemination and visibility of your student thesis.

Open Access is becoming the standard route for spreading scientific and academic information on the internet. Dalarna University recommends that both researchers as well as students publish their work Open Access.

We give our consent for full text publishing (freely accessible on the internet, Open Access):

Yes ☒ No ☐
Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to identify the expectations of the working German Generation Y regarding its current work and employer. As a result, the main elements which could be considered by companies to retain the Generation Y in Germany will be pointed out and discussed.

Design/methodology/approach – Semi-structured interviews were used in order to explore the work expectations of this young generation within a German company. A non-probability and purposive sample was used and six respondents part of the Generation Y and working in the same company were interviewed. Furthermore, a seventh interview was conducted with the HMR of the company.

Findings – Several findings are consistent with previous results of Gen Y from other nationalities than Germany such as the importance of varied tasks, opportunities for self-development, responsibilities and a pleasant working atmosphere. However, differences were found in particular regarding the importance of the work-life balance and new expectations such as trust, autonomy and internationality have been brought to light. Furthermore, several findings are also consistent with other studies about employee retention, commitment and job satisfaction.

Originality/value – This research extended previous studies of the expectations of the Generation Y by providing firstly findings for Germany, a country where such studies have not been conducted yet and secondly by focusing on the Generation Y who is already working and therefore not studying anymore.

Keywords  Generation Y, Millennials, Expectations, Retention, Career, Work, Germany

Paper type  Case Study
Dedication and acknowledgements

We would like to dedicate this work to a person who left us some days ago and without who it would not have been possible to conduct our research within Audibene. We would like to thank Marie Hörter from the bottom of our hearts for her kindness and her help throughout our study and, we would like to dedicate our thesis to her. Our thoughts are with her family and friends.

We would like to thank our supervisor, Lenka Klimplová, for her encouragements and guidance throughout our courses as well as this research. We also thank our respondents who have generously taken time to provide us important information for the understanding of our research topic. We would like to take the opportunity as well to thank our beloved families and friends for their endless encouragements throughout our studies. Their support particularly the one of our parents have meant a lot to us.
# Table of Content

1. Introduction........................................................................................................................................... 1
2. Conceptual Framework .......................................................................................................................... 4
   2.1 Generation Y ....................................................................................................................................... 4
      2.1.1 Characteristics .............................................................................................................................. 4
      2.1.2 Generational differences ............................................................................................................. 6
   2.2 Employee expectations ....................................................................................................................... 7
      2.2.1 Definition of employee expectations .......................................................................................... 7
      2.2.2 Expectations of the Generation Y in different countries .......................................................... 8
   2.3 Employee retention and its determinants .......................................................................................... 11
      2.3.1 Organisational commitment and job satisfaction ................................................................. 11
      2.3.2 Other factors influencing retention ......................................................................................... 13
      2.3.3 Retaining the Generation Y ..................................................................................................... 14
   2.4 Cultural differences ........................................................................................................................... 15
      2.4.1 Culture ......................................................................................................................................... 15
      2.4.2 The German Culture based on Hofstede’s Dimensions ......................................................... 16
      2.4.3 Germany compared to other countries ...................................................................................... 18
3. Methodology ............................................................................................................................................ 23
   3.1 Research design ................................................................................................................................. 23
      3.1.1 Research strategy ......................................................................................................................... 23
      3.1.2 Data sampling technique ........................................................................................................... 26
      3.1.3 Data collection ............................................................................................................................ 28
      3.1.4 Type of questions ...................................................................................................................... 29
      3.1.5 Method of data analysis ............................................................................................................ 29
      3.1.6 Data quality issues .................................................................................................................... 30
   3.2 Research limitations ............................................................................................................................ 31
4. Findings .................................................................................................................................................... 33
   4.1 Expectations of the German Generation Y ...................................................................................... 33
   4.2 Interview with the HRM ................................................................................................................... 40
5. Discussion ............................................................................................................................................... 44
   5.1 Our findings compared to previous results in other countries ................................................... 44
   5.2 Our findings compared to the assumptions based on Hofstede .................................................. 48
   5.3 Employee retention ........................................................................................................................... 49
List of Tables

Table 1: Cultural comparison between Germany and different countries based on the six dimensions model of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). ......................................................... 18

Table 2: Expectations of the Generation Y according to studies conducted in Finland, UK, USA, Canada and Australia ........................................................................................................... 22

Table 3: Overview of the respondents ........................................................................................................... 27

Table 4: Summary of the findings ..................................................................................................................... 40

Table 5: Expectations of the Generation Y according to studies conducted in Finland, UK, USA, Canada and Australia & the expectations of the German working Gen Y ....................... 43
1 Introduction

The human resource management (HRM) of a company has several important functions and one of them is the retention of employees (George, 2015). In fact, “retaining the best professional talent is of great practical significance to organisations as it eliminates the recruiting, selection and on-boarding costs of their replacement, [and] maintains continuity in their areas of expertise […]” (Tymon, Stumpf & Smith, 2011, p. 293). Several studies also claimed that companies with high employee stability are having better performance than companies with a high staff turnover (Pitts, Marvel & Fernandez, 2011; Shaw, Gupta & Delery, 2005). Therefore, employee retention plays an important role for companies which are nowadays employing a heterogeneous workforce (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

In fact, companies are currently employing three different generations: “Baby Boomers (born 1946-1961); Generation X (born 1962-1979) and Generation Y (born 1980 onwards)” (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008, p. 892). The term generation is described as an “identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages” (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66). Changes in the sociocultural environment and specific events such as the development of new technologies, wars, globalisation, etc. which are experienced by some generations lead them to develop characteristics that differ from the other generations (Macky, Gardner & Forsyth, 2008). These characteristics will be expressed “in personality traits, work values, attitudes, and motivations to work” (Macky, Gardner & Forsyth, 2008, p. 859).

It has been agreed by several researchers that the characteristics of the Generation Y related to work are different from the other generations (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013; Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). In fact, the Generation Y is characterised by being the first generation which is born and has grown up with the latest digital technologies (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). There is a broad agreement that they have “a demand for autonomy and flexibility to get the task done in their own way, at their own pace” (Martin, 2005, p. 40). They also seem to “seek work life balance and if forced will select family and friends over work” (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008, p. 368).

This new generation, the Generation Y or also called Gen Y or the millennials, has already started to enter the labour market (Barnes, 2009) and represents the largest generation who has ever joined the employment market (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013). Furthermore, in
the coming years, the majority of the employees belonging to the Baby Boomers and Generation X will retire and will be replaced by workers from the Generation Y (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). As a result, the upcoming challenge for companies and HRM will be to attract, commit and retain this new generation (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). As a matter of fact, “organisational survival will depend largely on their [the organisations] ability to recruit and retain Gen Y employees” (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013, p. 287).

Several studies have found out that the expectations of young employees such as tasks, autonomy, salary, promotion, etc. are often underestimate by companies, and therefore their expectations are unmet (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013; Arnold, Schalk, Bosley & Van Overbeek, 2002; Zhao, 2006). Moreover, the Generation Y workers seem to be more ready than the previous generations to change employers after only a short period (Martin, 2005). As a consequence, they might be willing and ready to leave their current company, if they think that their expectations are not fulfilled by their employer (Martin, 2005). As mentioned previously, employee retention is important for companies and having a high employee turnover could be problematic (George, 2015). Therefore, a better understanding of the expectations of the Generation Y could help companies to adapt their methods and policies towards them and as a result retain them.

The current scientific literature has mainly focused on the expectations that the Generation Y has about its future jobs, but not on how companies could retain them (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010). Moreover, most of the research from the last decade has been essentially concentrated on students and graduates who were about to commence their working life, and only few studies have focused on Generation Y individuals who have already been working (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). The expectations of this new generation could actually change and be different once they have started and been working in a company (Arnold & Mackenzie, 1992; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013). Therefore, a research concentrating on these specific individuals, the Generation Y who has already been working could contribute for HRM and managers to a better understanding of their real expectations, and what measures and policies could be undertaken in order to retain them in their companies.

Furthermore, the current literature also contains another gap. In fact, the studies focusing on the Generation Y and HRM implications have been conducted in several countries and continents such as the United Kingdom (UK) (Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge & Ogden, 2007; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010), Australia (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013), Canada
(Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010), the United States (US) (Richardson & Thomas, 2012; Hurst & Good, 2009) and Finland (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014), but some other demographically and economically significant countries have not been taken into consideration yet. This is the case, for instance, of Germany.

The German economy is not only one of the largest economy in Europe, but also worldwide and counts a labour force estimated in 2013 of 44.2 million people (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). Every year, newly graduated students join this workforce. In 2012 over 241.000 students graduated in Germany with a Bachelor or Master degree and in 2013 they were over 285.000 (Statista, 2015). However, according to a report of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung), not enough young people will follow to satisfy the demand of the labour market in Germany (Börsch-Supan, 2011). Therefore, employee retention will become a very crucial matter for German companies (Börsch-Supan, 2011) and it could be at their advantage to meet the expectations of their Generation Y employees in order to retain them as they will soon represent the complete workforce of companies.

The aim of this thesis is therefore firstly to answer the following research question: *What does the working German Generation Y expect regarding its current work and employer?*, and secondly based on the findings, to discuss possible suggestions in order for companies to retain their German Gen Y employees.
2 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework builds the foundation for this research by defining and providing an understanding of the key concepts in the field of the Generation Y, its work expectations and its retention. Both theory and empirical findings are used as basis and frame.

2.1 Generation Y

2.1.1 Characteristics

In general, there is a debate between the authors concerning years of birth of the Generation Y. In fact, the time interval is from 1977 (Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge & Ogden, 2007; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013; Parment, 2013) to 2001 (Dries, Pepermans & de Kerpel, 2008). However, most of the researchers agree on the fact that the Generation Y started to be born in the beginning of the 1980s (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Eisner, 2005; Barnes, 2009; Dries, Pepermans & de Kerpel, 2008) and ended around 1994 (Barron et al., 2007; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013; Barnes, 2009). Consequently, this time interval between 1980 and 1994 will serve as reference in this thesis.

In order to have a better understanding of this generation, it is necessary to have knowledge of the factors which influenced them when they were coming of age. One factor which is reported in many papers is technology (Sujansky, 2004; Wong, Gardiner, Lang & Coulon, 2008; Martin, 2005; Barnes, 2009; Parment, 2013). Eisner (2005, p. 6) indicated that this generation is “continually wired, plugged in, and connected to digitally streaming information, entertainment, and contacts […]”. This mentality to be “always on”, 24 hours every day of the week has also consequences on its working behaviour. This is obvious especially regarding communication. This generation is more an “expert at electronic than interpersonal communication” (Barnes, 2009, p. 58). Additionally, Millennials are mostly multi-taskers, doing many things at the same time (Parment, 2013) and are quickly bored due to the fact of “being chronically stimulated since childhood” (Barnes, 2009, p. 62). As a consequence, they are always looking for new challenges and opportunities (Martin, 2005). One “year is long-term to a Gen Yer and three years is just a mirage” (Martin, 2005, p. 41). This illustrates how the Millennials are dealing with change (Barron et al., 2007). In fact “they not only expect change – they demand it. They are looking for work places where they
can move from project to project, position to position, department to department, location to location.” (Martin, 2005, p. 42).

Two other influencing factors were the economy uncertainty (Eisner, 2005; Parment, 2013) and the fact that the “world was no longer safe and reliable” (Barnes, 2013, p. 59). This sentiment was caused by events such as the Columbine school shooting or 9/11, followed by terror and the Iraq War (Eisner, 2005; Barnes, 2009). Additionally, a “loss in feeling of security” was caused by “[t]he financial turbulence of the early 1990s” (Parment, 2013, p. 192). Although this generation was confronted with these events they are still “optimistic and enthusiastic about the future” (Eisner, 2005, p. 9).

*Family* has also influenced of the Millennials (Eisner, 2005). In fact, they were taught by their parents that they can do and achieve everything (Martin, 2005). Moreover, the parents of the Gen Y advocated giving them a voice in decision processes (Eisner, 2005). As a result, as young employees they want to be incorporated in decisions and want to receive responsibility (Morten, 2002). Furthermore, they have the attitude that there is always more than one way to achieve a goal (Martin, 2005). It illustrates that this generation questions and reflects the issues they are confronted with (Parment, 2013). This might be also one of the reasons why this generation is called Generation Y (= Why).

Through those influencing factors a generation “who believes education is a key to success” has emerged (Martin, 2005, p. 39). These entrepreneurial thinkers look for tasks which challenge them and try to find solutions for them in their own way (Martin, 2005). Moreover, they have targets (Martin, 2005) and are highly motivated (Howe & Strauss, 2000 as cited in Krahn & Galambos, 2014), however, they need to see a sense in the jobs they do. “They want to know: What value can I add today? What can I learn today? What will you offer me today? How will I be rewarded today?” (Martin, 2005, p. 41). Hereby, it is obvious that these young employees want to “play meaningful roles doing meaningful work” and they are seeking it in challenging tasks (Martin, 2005, p. 40). In order to accomplish these goals, they prefer to work in teams with high motivated colleagues (Martin, 2005).

However, this meaningful work has to be in conformity with their private life, the so called work-life balance. This subject is mostly mentioned when characterising the Generation Y (Martin, 2005; Cennamo & Gardner 2008; Eisner, 2005). Family is a valued factor for these young people (Eisner, 2005) which might be attributed to their “strong parent connection”
(Barnes, 2009, p. 60). Consequently, this generation wants to combine both a meaningful job and a fulfilled private life (Martin, 2005, p. 40).

2.1.2 Generational differences

According to Kupperschmidt (2000, p. 66) each generation has its specific values and attitudes, however “they are influenced by and reflective of those of previous generations”. The following paragraphs will describe the previous generations which influenced the Generation Y and presents an overview of what the main differences between them are. As mentioned in the introduction, companies employ three generations at the moment, the Baby boomers and the Generation X and the Generation Y (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Each generation has different expectations regarding their work and life.

Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1961 (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). The Baby Boomers were raised up in a world of economic and educational expansion (Kupperschmidt, 2000). In fact, it was difficult for the Baby Boomers to find a balance between work and life (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Eisner (2005, p. 5) described their working attitude as followed: “Baby Boomers tend to want it all and seek it by working long hours, showing loyalty, and being ruthless if necessary; many do not plan to retire”. Hereby, one of the main differences with the Generation Y seems obvious, the work-life balance. According to Smola and Sutton (2002), Baby Boomers rely on the traditional work behaviour which includes commitment and hard work. As Eisner (2005, p. 5) describes it “[…] many do not plan to retire”. This illustrates that work became for many of them the purpose of life. In contrast, the Gen Y wants it balanced (Eisner, 2005; Martin, 2005), thereby freedom is much more important to the Millennials than to the Baby Boomers or the Generation X (Smola & Sutton, 2002); freedom also in the sense of deciding how to work. In comparison to Baby Boomers who were more into the traditional work models, the Millennials “demand the freedom and flexibility to get the task done in their own way, at their own pace” (Martin, 2005, p. 40).

Another main difference is the motivation factors. Kupperschmidt (2000, p. 68) described that Baby Boomers were mainly interested in “value promotions, titles, corner offices, and reserved parking spaces”. Also Eisner (2008, p. 5) mentioned that “[t]hey tend to be driven to succeed and to measure that success materially”. The Generation Y will not “be lured by promises of climbing ladders, paying dues, and cashing out at retirement” (Martin, 2005, p.
41). They need to see a sense in the work they are doing (Martin, 2005). Thereby, they favour receiving a day off instead of receiving money (Eisner, 2005).

The Generation X was born between 1962 and 1979 (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008) and is the generation that has rarely been noticed. Growing up in the shadow of the Baby Boomers, influenced by the highest divorce rate in history (Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000). The Gen X were raised with “rapid technological and social change representing financial, family and social insecurity and has entered the workforce without expecting job security” (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008, pp. 892f.). The Gen X has already more in common with the Millennials than the Baby Boomers. As described by Kupperschmidt (2000) the Gen X are multi-taskers and interested in technique. However, it can be assumed that Kupperschmidt (2000) was not referring to be “always on” like the Gen Y when she mentioned technique.

One major difference between the Gen X and Gen Y is the willing to work in teams. In fact, Eisner (2005) mentioned that members of the Generation X are self-reliant and individualistic. Moreover, Martin (2005) found that members of the Gen Y prefer to work in cooperation, much more than the Generation X.

To summarise, it can be said that the Gen Y differs from the Baby Boomers much more than from the Generation X. In particular, the attitude towards the work-life balance and the motivation factors might be important to be considered by the management. It could be an advantage for companies to be conscious about these differences because it might be helpful for the retention of the Generation Y.

2.2 Employee expectations

2.2.1 Definition of employee expectations

The term expectation relating to employee expectations has been defined by Woods (1993, p. 15) as being “formed as a result of life experiences, and an expectations profile of any employee is as unique as a fingerprint”. Woods (1993) emphasised that every employee starts working “with an individual set of expectations” (1993, p.15). In fact, before commencing a job, employees form expectations about how their work is going to be. This anticipation is preconceived and is “based on existing work and life experiences, career aspirations and dreams, and personal characteristics” (Woods, 1993, as cited in Hurst & Good, 2009, p. 574). As time passes, the employee expectations are constantly evolving and changing (Woods,
These “expectations are reflected in the attitudes and actions of employees, and in their work motivation” (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013, p. 274). Moreover, employees might express their expectations in different ways which can be solicited and unsolicited. They can appear in complaints, in suggestions, in feedbacks, in reports or during meetings. They can also be revealed to employers during job interviews with new employees or during exit interviews (Woods, 1993).

This definition and explanation of the term expectation will serve as reference throughout this paper.

2.2.2 Expectations of the Generation Y in different countries

There is a lack of research “which has sought to identify the key work expectations and goals of Gen Y, or at least to define work-related characteristics into the more specific categories of expectations and goals” (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013, p. 273). However, there are empirical researches which have investigated the factors motivating or demotivating the Generation Y (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014) and the career expectations and priorities of Generation Y graduates (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013). The following paragraph will provide a review of studies conducted in different countries.

Finland

Kultalahti & Viitala (2014, p. 105) “wanted to examine the motivational perceptions of those Millennials who have started full-time work”. This study did not exactly focus on the work expectations of the Generation Y, but on the motivating and demotivating factors relating to work. However, due to the fact that its findings are interesting and are very similar to the expectations found in other studies (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Hurst & Good, 2009; Richardson & Thomas, 2012; Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013), the results of this research have been reported in this chapter. Kultalahti and Viitala (2014) found that several and different factors were repeatedly mentioned by their respondents regarding motivation. In fact, the content of work is a crucial factor and Generation Y is demanding for varying, challenging and interesting projects and tasks (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). Another important factor is the work-life balance. As reported by Kultalahti and Viitala (2014), work should not take over
their life and the Millennials “want to have enough time for the things they love: hobbies, physical exercise, family and friends” (2014, p. 576). Moreover, flexibility in their working hours, a pleasant community and colleagues and to be considered as more than just employees are other elements which resulted from the research. Regarding the factors which demotivate the Generation Y, the respondents mentioned a boring job and a feeling of stagnation, inflexibility in the working hours, incompetent supervisors, the lack of feedback or solely negative feedbacks and poor communication and conflicts between the employees (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). It is interesting to note that the participants did not mention promotions, status and job security as motivating factors, and that the salary was also not mentioned as factor for a poor motivation (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014).

**United Kingdom (UK)**

The authors Maxwell, Ogden and Broadbridge (2010) aimed to discover the expectations of students of the Gen Y. They ascertained, concerning the initial expectations of the Millennials that being determined to success is the most important aspect for the majority of the participants, followed by meeting personal goals and receiving a good compensation. Furthermore, an opportunity for self-development and possibilities for training are also valued and important to them (Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010). In contrast, the Generation Y aspires for the long term in job promotion, a good compensation and job security (Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010).

Broadbridge, Maxwell and Ogden (2007) wanted to examine the attitude of the Generation Y towards the retail business. Hereby, they found out that the majority of the students who participated in the research want to enjoy their work. Moreover, they wish to have an employer who is fair with their employees. Additionally, the possibility to develop their career and a work-live balance are important to them as well. It is also reported that time off is more important to the young employees than the money (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007).

**United States (USA)**

Hurst and Good (2009) had the purpose to investigate the career expectations of the Millennials. They discovered that the students took part in their research mentioned an enjoyable work has the main priority, followed by a sense of accomplishment and a good
payment. The opportunity to learn new things and having a stable job also play an important role for these graduates (Hurst & Good, 2009). The work-life balance was ranked in only eighth position, whereas it was mentioned as an important factor for most of the Millennials in previous researches (Martin, 2005; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

Richardson and Thomas (2012) questioned students about their perceptions of the hospitality industry. They tested how important 20 different career factors were for these students. Hereby, the authors ascertained that finding the job enjoyable is the most important factor for the participants when choosing a career. Moreover, a pleasant working atmosphere and the opportunity for promotion are almost as important as job security (Richardson & Thomas, 2012).

**Canada**

Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons (2010) did an extensive research about the career expectations and priorities among students of the Generation Y. They found out that work-life balance is a desired work attribute of the Millennials. Moreover, it is also important for them to have pleasant colleagues and supervisors. Additionally, they expect training opportunities and developing new skills. However, the most important work attribute for the Generation Y was the opportunity for advancement.

**Australia**

Luscombe, Lewis and Biggs (2013) found similar expectations as Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons (2010). The purpose of their research was to examine the expectations and goals of students and working Millennials in Australia. They also found out that the work-life balance is a crucial factor for these young adults. Furthermore, training opportunities and developing of new skills are also expected from the respondents.

A table (Table 2) which summarises the findings about the above studies regarding the different expectations of the Generation Y in different countries can be found at the end of this chapter.
2.3 Employee retention and its determinants

George (2015) revealed that HR managers should start to think about the characteristics of a firm which makes employees stay instead of analysing why they left. The following paragraph will briefly define the term retention and how retention can be reached.

According to Heery and Noon (2008a, n.p.), retention “is the ability to hold on to employees”. If a firm is losing valuable personnel it might have a retention problem. As George (2015) stated, in this case companies should not think about why these employees left, but instead they might think about what can make them stay. For instance, companies could use measures such as “an ongoing attitude survey […] ; a training needs analysis; and exit interviews” (Heery & Noon, 2008a, n.p.). As Deery (2008) declared, job satisfaction and commitment have a great impact on the employees’ leaving intention. As a consequence, it is an advantage for companies to know how to strongly commit their employees and what satisfy them (Deery, 2008).

2.3.1 Organisational commitment and job satisfaction

Organisational commitment

Commitment is a complex term which can be associated with many types of relationships such as the relationship between business to business or between customer to business (Parsa & Cobanoglu, 2011). Another possible relationship is the one between the employee and the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991) which is the relationship this thesis concentrates on.

Organisational commitment is defined as “an individual's psychological attachment to an organisation and desire to remain part of it” (Law, 2009a, n.p.). This commitment is mostly measured by means of three separate dimensions:

1. “Affective commitment is an emotional attachment to the organisation and a belief in its values” (Robbins & Judge, 2012, p. 41). Employees who feel this kind of commitment stay in the company because they want it (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Thereby, factors such as organisational structure or personal characteristics can influence the affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). However, Meyer and Allen (1991) stated that affective commitment is mostly a result of work experience,
and therefore, employees mainly want to stay in a company that offers positive experiences (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

2. “Continuance commitment is the perceived economic value of remaining with the organization”. This means the worker might be committed because of the salary he earns. (Robbins & Judge, 2012, p. 41).

3. “Normative commitment is an obligation to remain with the organization for a moral or ethical reason”. This means that if an employee for instance launches a project he will feel responsible to supervise it from the beginning to the end. (Robbins & Judge, 2011, p. 41).

Robbins and Judge (2012) explained that each kind of commitment has a different impact on the behaviour. Moreover, they declared that affective commitment is a kind of allegiance and normative commitment is kind of an obligation to the company. Whereas continuance commitment can also be offered by someone else, and is consequently not a real commitment (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

These three dimensions have been taken into account in our research. It will be discussed if the values and goals of the company coincide with the expectations of its employees. For the second dimension, it will be considered to what extent the salary plays a role for these young employees. Eventually, the findings will be examined concerning projects and to what extent the employees have the willingness to bring them to an end.

**Job satisfaction**

According to Coleman (2009, n.p.) job satisfaction is “the degree to which employees are content with their jobs”. Thereby, job satisfaction has two components: the expectations the employee has concerning his work and his employer, and the actual situation in which this person is situated. Job dissatisfaction is therefore caused if the expectations are higher than the actual situation (Coleman, 2009). This means that if the expectations of an employee are not met, job satisfaction cannot eventuate. It is acknowledged that an absence of job satisfaction can lead to several issues for companies such as absenteeism and an important employee turnover (Law, 2009b). Therefore, employee retention could be increased by ensuring that workers are satisfied with their job (Law, 2009b).

Job satisfaction is dependent on many factors, two of them are the traits a person has and the characteristics of a job (Wexley & Yukl, 1984, as cited in Rast & Tourani, 2012). This paper
will focus on the job characteristics due to the reason that these factors can be actively influenced and organised by the companies. Job satisfaction is consequently a crucial factor for the retention of employees. In order to reach this satisfaction, the expectations of the employees have to be fulfilled, and therefore, it is necessary for companies to know what their employees expect.

2.3.2 Other factors influencing retention

Several researches and papers have focused since decades on strategies and policies in order to retain employees as turnover can be costly and detrimental to companies (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee, 2001; Steel, Griffeth & Hom, 2002; Terera & Ngirande, 2014; Steinmetz, de Vries & Tijdens, 2014). Evaluating the reasons and factors which make employees satisfied or dissatisfied with their job and processing to changes accordingly is a strategy for retaining staff members and reducing the turnover used since many years (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee, 2001). In fact, the literature about employee retention advocates to companies to continuously assess the job satisfaction of their employees and to be prepared to undertake changes based on the assessment they have made (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee, 2001). For instance, it is recommended to companies to offer flexible work hours, to establish a mentoring system, to propose sabbaticals after a fixed number of years and other perks such as tickets to events, to provide training and a long-term career development (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee, 2001).

Furthermore, it was found out that a variety of factors related to sociodemographic characteristics such as the age and education of the employees, to professional perception such as job satisfaction and to work-related characteristics such as the quality of the relationships among workers companies can have an impact on the employee turnover (Steinmetz, de Vries & Tijdens, 2014). The sociodemographic characteristics are referring to our specific target of employees, that is to say to the German Generation Y who has graduated and is already working. The career expectations of this workforce will be investigated and it is reasonable to think that factors from the professional perception and the work-related characteristics will be mentioned by our respondents.

Recent studies which were conducted among nurses have reported interesting results (Steinmetz, de Vries & Tijdens, 2014; Terera & Ngirande, 2014). In fact, Steinmetz, de Vries and Tijdens (2014) found that employees in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands are less willing to stay with the same employer if they have non-standard working hours as well as
over time hours. Steinmetz, de Vries and Tijdens (2014) also observed that staff members have lowest intention to stay with their current companies if they are not satisfied with their wage. As for Terera and Ngirande (2014), which conducted their study in South Africa, they reported that most of their respondents would remain in their companies if they receive monetary and non-monetary rewards such as reasonable wages, bonuses for their performances, promotions and extended leaves.

Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen and Moeyaert (2009) also emphasised the importance of constant learning. In fact, the learning of employees “has a strong positive effect on retention” (Kyndt et al., 2009, p. 197). “If employees feel they are not learning and growing, they feel they are not remaining competitive with their industry peers for promotion opportunities and career advancement” (Rodriguez, 2008, p.53). As a consequence, if they feel they are stagnating, they will start looking for other job opportunities (Rodriguez, 2008).

2.3.3 Retaining the Generation Y

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, the Millennials are a generation which is looking for and demanding changes; change in their working tasks (Martin, 2005), in the industry they are working in (Barron et al., 2007) or by quitting their job (Martin, 2005; Brown, Thomas & Bosselman, 2015). This generation considers one year as a long term (Martin, 2005) and it is not their purpose to find a job for a whole lifetime (Oliver, 2006 as cited in Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013). As a consequence, this attitude makes it very difficult for managers to retain these young people.

Martin (2005) referred to this problematic by giving advice to managers on how to make the Millennials stay in a company. In order to formulate these advice, Martin (2005) conducted his research among hundreds of individuals who belong to the Gen Y and managers in the USA. He stated that the secret behind a successful retention is the relationship between the immediate manager and his employees. Therefore, the manager should get to know the Gen Y employees as persons and should show that he cares about their success. Furthermore, Martin (2005) recommended that managers should be teachers to help them to develop, however, they still should be treated equally like colleagues. Moreover, a flexible and individual schedule can be helpful as well as constant feedback and praise. According to Martin (2005), these six “rules” should help to retain the Generation Y.
Brown, Thomas and Bosselman (2015) focused among others things on the leaving intention of the Gen Y in the hospitality industry in the USA. They found out that for most of the students, the conflict between work and life would be the main reason to leave a company. This underlines again the significance that the work-life balance has for the Generation Y. Other important factors which were mentioned as reasons to leave are the remuneration, the working conditions, working hours and a better opportunity (Brown, Thomas & Bosselman, 2015).

2.4 Cultural differences

2.4.1 Culture

Hofstede defined culture as “the collective mental programming of the human mind which distinguishes one group of people from another” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a, n.p.). The characteristics of a culture “are imparted to societal members through everyday exposure to customs, laws, norms, scripts, and organisational practices that are shaped by and express the prevailing cultural values” (Schwartz, 1999, p. 25). Furthermore, the sharing of culture in nations is essentially resulting from “a single dominant language, educational system, army, and political system, and shared mass media, markets, services and national symbols (e.g. flags, sports teams)” (Schwartz, 1999, p. 25). Therefore, each country has its own and specific culture which influences the population in their way of thinking and acting (Schwartz, 1999).

As this study focus on the German Millennials and their work expectations, it is necessary to demonstrate that the culture of Germany is different from the ones of the countries were the previous researches of the expectations of the Generations Y have been conducted, and therefore that the results may differ in Germany. In order to identify the cultural differences between Germany, Finland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia which could explain the reasons why the results of the previous findings may be different in Germany, the six dimensions model of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) has been used.

The six dimensions model of Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010) originated from the research of Hofstede around 1970 who proposed a new model to study cultural differences (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). This first model was based on four dimensions regarding national culture: power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity and uncertainty avoidance (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). Thereafter, as a result of collaborative works with a Chinese university and with Minkov, two additional dimensions were added to
the model: long term orientation and indulgence (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). This model has been chosen to explain cultural differences between Germany and other countries as this model is “a cornerstone for cross-cultural research, providing an extremely popular method for the study of cultural differences in a wide range of disciplines” (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011, p. 10). The six dimensions of this model are the following:

The *power distance* refers to “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a, n.p.).

The *individualism* refers to “the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a, n.p.)

The *masculinity* refers to “what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine)” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a, n.p.).

The *uncertainty avoidance* refers to “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a, n.p.).

The *long term orientation* refers to “how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a, n.p.).

The *indulgence* refers to “the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a, n.p.).

### 2.4.2 The German Culture based on Hofstede’s Dimensions

This subchapter will describe the German culture by means of the six dimensions of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010).

*Power Distance*

Germany is a country with a low power distance and characterised by a middle class. In their working life, German employees desire a participatory communication. Furthermore,
Germans do not appreciate control and leadership is mainly accepted when it is based on expertise (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b).

**Individualism**

According to Hofstede, Germany is an individualistic country, with small families and a strong relationship between the children and their parents. Loyalty, sense of duty and responsibility are very important to Germans. Concerning the communication, Germany is regarded as one of the most direct countries in the world and honesty is primordial even if it is upsetting (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b).

**Masculinity**

Germany has a masculine society where performance is highly regarded and required already since a young age. Germans very often define themselves through their work and the tasks they carry out and like to show their status by exhibiting expensive cars and watches. It is expected from managers to be determined and assertive. (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b).

**Uncertainty Avoidance**

Germany slightly prefers to avoid uncertainty. The German way of working is characterised by structure and an orientation to details which creates certainty. Combined with the low power distance, decisions of German employees are not covered by the responsibility of their boss. They try to compensate their uncertainty by relying of their own expertise. (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b).

**Long term orientation**

Hofstede stated that Germany is a pragmatic country. Germans have the “ability to adapt traditions easily to changed conditions” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b, n.p.). Moreover, they have a strong will to save and invest money and they have a high endurance in achieving their goals. (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b).

**Indulgence**

According to Hofstede “the German culture is restrained in nature” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b, n.p.). It is common that these kinds of cultures tend to be cynical and pessimistic. Moreover, they do not value free time so much and have the feeling “that their actions are
restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong” (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b, n.p.).

2.4.3 Germany compared to other countries

Based on this model (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), the German culture has been compared to the Finnish, British, American, Canadian and Australian cultures. The table 1 indicates the result of the comparisons by stating the score of each dimension for Germany and followed by the score of the compared country. The highest score differences occurring between Germany and the compared countries, that is to say the two dimensions which have the scores the most apart from the ones of Germany, have been highlighted in grey in the table and are explained thereafter.

Table 1: Cultural comparison between Germany and different countries based on the six dimensions model of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Germany - Finland</th>
<th>Germany - UK</th>
<th>Germany - USA</th>
<th>Germany - Canada</th>
<th>Germany - Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power Distance</strong></td>
<td>35 – 33</td>
<td>35 – 35</td>
<td>35 – 40</td>
<td>35 – 39</td>
<td>35 – 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculinity</strong></td>
<td>66 – 26</td>
<td>66 – 66</td>
<td>66 – 62</td>
<td>66 – 52</td>
<td>66 – 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long term Orientation</strong></td>
<td>83 – 38</td>
<td>83 – 51</td>
<td>83 – 26</td>
<td>83 – 36</td>
<td>83 – 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indulgence</strong></td>
<td>40 – 57</td>
<td>40 – 69</td>
<td>40 – 68</td>
<td>40 – 68</td>
<td>40 – 71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Hofstede Centre (2015a).

*Germany compared to Finland*

Based on the six dimensions model of Hofstede, the German culture differ the most from Finland with the long term orientation and the masculinity (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). In fact, for these two dimensions, Germany scores higher than Finland (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a).
Regarding the long term orientation, the high score of Germany suggests that it is a pragmatic country. In other words, Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) explained that societies which are pragmatic have the ability to well adapt their traditions according to the current conditions and to show perseverance to achieve results. On the contrary, the score of Finland indicates that its society is more normative and desires to maintain its norms and traditions and is suspicious with societal change (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

In regard to the dimension of masculinity, the score of Germany indicates that its society highly value performance and this since the early age (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Moreover, it suggests that work is very important for German people and that they draw self-esteem from their working tasks (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Hofstede and his co-authors (2010) also insinuated that in a society with a high score of masculinity, the social status is frequently shown by purchasing and using expensive watches, cars and technical devices. On the opposite, the score of Finland is low which indicates that in this society, the important and main values are the quality of life and to care for others (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Therefore, it seems that German people are more motivated by the want of being the best while Finish people by the want of liking what they do (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a).

**Germany compared to the United Kingdom**

The two main dimensions which differ the most between Germany and the UK are the uncertainty avoidance and the indulgence (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). The high score for the uncertainty avoidance of Germany suggests that its population prefers deductive approaches for thinking and planning. In other words, they need an overview of all relevant elements in order to proceed and they like to rely on expertise (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). On the contrary, the British people are more flexible and are ready to change their plans as new information is brought to their attention (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a).

Regard the indulgence, the low score of Germany shows that its culture is restrained and that its population tend to be cynical and pessimist (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). Moreover, Hofstede also suggested that these kind of restrained societies do not highly value leisure time and that the social norms do not allow them to indulge themselves (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). On the opposite, the high score of the UK suggests that its population is willing to follow their impulses and wants in order to enjoy life (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a).
Germany compared to the United States of America, Canada and Australia

The USA, Canada and Australia can be regrouped together as their scores are very similar and due to the fact that the two dimensions which differ the most between them and Germany are for these three countries the long term orientation and the indulgence (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). In regard to the long term orientation, as with the comparison between Germany and Finland, there is an important difference in the score. In fact, Germany scores high while the USA, Canada and Australia low which means that German people are pragmatic and adapt their customs if necessary while the USA, Canada and Australia are normative and want to maintain their norms and are sceptical towards changes in the society (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

Concerning the dimension of indulgence there is an important score difference as with the comparison between Germany and the United Kingdom. Germany has a low score while the USA, Canada and Australia have a high score (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). It means that the German society is more retraining itself with norms and rules than the American, Canadian and Australian societies (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a).

Summary

To summarise this subchapter, each national culture is different and specific due to the fact that it is influenced by a political system, by an educational system, by a language, etc. (Schwartz, 1999). Specifically, Germany was compared using the six dimensions model by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) to the five other cultures where research was already done concerning the expectations of the Generation Y.

Germany and the other compared countries have almost the same score in the dimensions of power distance and individualism (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). Consequently, no major differences are expected regarding the participative communication, the dislike of control and the importance of expertise between these different countries.

In regard of the dimension masculinity, Germany and Finland differ the most from each other (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). Germany has a more masculine culture than Finland. In fact, Germans define themselves a lot through work and value status symbols (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b). As a consequence it can be expected that the German Gen Y might not value a work-life balance and might more value their status.
Regarding the *uncertainty avoidance*, Germany differs the most from the UK (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). In fact, people in Germany try to avoid uncertainty. They do it by means of working in a really structured way (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b). Therefore, it can be expected that the German Generation Y values structures and expertise.

In comparison to four of the five countries (Finland, Canada, USA and Australia) Germany has a more *long term orientation*. Its society is pragmatic and can easily adopt new elements and people are perseverant in achieving their goals (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a, b). Therefore, it can be expected that the German Gen Y is open to changes and can adapt to them.

Concerning the dimension *indulgence*, Germany differs especially from the UK, USA, Canada and Australia (The Hofstede Centre, 2015a). In fact, Germany is considered as a country which does not value so much leisure time and which is rather cynic and pessimistic (The Hofstede Centre, 2015b). Consequently, it can be expected that Germans are more pessimistic concerning their future and therefore, rather stay in the company they are working in at the moment. Moreover, it can also be expected that work-life balance is not such an essential aspect for Germans.

Based on these differences in the six dimensions model between Germany and the other compared countries, it can be presumed that the work expectations of the working German Generation Y might be different than the ones found among other nationalities, and therefore motivates the choice of focusing on the working Millennials from Germany.

The following table (Table 2) serves as an overview of the expectations of the Gen Y which have been found in the previous studies conducted in different countries. The fields which are grey show that this topic was not mentioned in the research. All in all, it can be said that work-life balance and self-development are two important factors for the Generation Y. Furthermore, a pleasant working atmosphere and good relationships with the supervisors and the colleagues are also expected by this generation.

The last row indicates what can be the assumed expectations of the working German Generation Y according to the main elements of this conceptual framework. In fact, these expectations stemmed from the six dimensions of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) and the previous findings about expectations. However, it is important to note that as it is an explorative study, other expectations which are not mentioned in this table could arise.
Table 2: Expectations of the Generation Y according to studies conducted in Finland, UK, USA, Canada and Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Work-Life Balance</th>
<th>Self-development</th>
<th>Job-tasks</th>
<th>Job itself</th>
<th>Social interactions at work</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland*</td>
<td>- Important</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- Varying, challenging &amp; interesting projects &amp; tasks</td>
<td>- Flexibility in working hours - Feedback</td>
<td>- Pleasant community &amp; colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>- Important</td>
<td>- Being determined to success - Meeting personal goals - Possibilities for training - Job promotion - Development of the career</td>
<td>- Enjoyable work - Stable job</td>
<td>- Fair employer</td>
<td>- Good compensation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- Sense of accomplishment - Opportunity for promotion</td>
<td>- Enjoyable work - Stable job</td>
<td>- Pleasant working atmosphere</td>
<td>- Good payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>- Desired</td>
<td>- Expect training opportunities - Expect possibility to develop new skills - Opportunity for advancement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- Pleasant colleagues &amp; supervisors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>- Important</td>
<td>- Training opportunities - Development of new skills</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Methodology

This chapter describes the approach chosen to investigate what are the expectations of the working German Generation Y regarding its current job and employer, and help companies to retain their employees who are part of this new generation. A qualitative methodology has been chosen for several reasons which will be evocated thereafter and also because “there is still a lack of qualitative empirical research on Generation Y” (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014, p. 571).

3.1 Research design

The research design explains how the research has been conducted and how we intended to answer our research questions (Saunders et al., 2012). Firstly, the chosen research strategy will be described and will be followed by the data sampling technique which has been used to collect primary data. Thereafter, the selected method to analyse these data will be explained and data quality issues will be mentioned.

3.1.1 Research strategy

This study intends to investigate the different expectations that the German working Generation Y has regarding its current work and employer, and secondly give suggestions in order to help companies to retain their German Gen Y employees. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore a phenomenon, the work expectations of this new generation entering the workforce, and to generate new insights and ideas, which makes of this research an explorative study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornill, 2012). This qualitative research is undertaken through the strategy of a single case study. In fact, according to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 179), a case study “is most often used in explanatory and exploratory research” and is an appropriate method when the purpose of a research is to understand a social phenomenon in “the real-world context in which it occurred” (Yin, 2014, p. 19). As pointed out by Cassel and Symon (2014) as well, a case study research is a detailed investigation and requires collecting data within their context. A context has been defined as “the surroundings associated with phenomena which help to illuminate that (sic) phenomena” (Cappelli & Sherer, 1991, p. 56) and can be of different kinds such as organisational, temporal, national, etc. (Poulis, Poulis & Plakoyiannaki, 2013). Taking into account our research aim, the
organisational context was considered to be the most appropriate and relevant context to conduct our study because it is the organisational characteristics which can affect the individuals who are in the organisation (Johns, 2006). Therefore, in order to have the same organisational context for all the respondents, the research has been conducted in one German company, Audibene.

This strategy enabled us, firstly, to access a German company and its employees who are part of the Generation Y, and therefore to obtain information regarding the expectations this workforce has regarding its job. Secondly, based on the findings of our first research question and through the interview of the head of HRM of Audibene, we were able to make suggestions to Audibene which might help retaining its Generation Y employees, and more generally suggestions to other companies which may have an interest in satisfying and retaining their German Millennials. The reason for conducting an interview with the head of HRM is to confront the expectations which have been revealed by the interrogated working Gen Y with their feasibility within a company. Conducting this research by taking into account these both sides, the perspectives of the employees and the HRM, has enabled to have a realistic reflection and discussion of the investigated phenomenon. Furthermore, to some extents which will be discussed at a later stage, the obtained findings and suggestions could be relevant and of interest for managers from other companies.

Motivation for the case selection and description of Audibene

As pointed out by Cassell and Symon (2004, p. 323), “in organisational research, the case study is likely to be one or more organisations”. Moreover, as the application of a case study requires a real-world context in which the investigated phenomenon occurs (Yin, 2014), this research focused on one German company, Audibene.

There are several reasons for the choice of Audibene for this case study. Firstly, this enterprise is a start-up which has been established in the last years and which is employing a majority of Generation Y workers. In fact, the average age of the employees is under thirty years old as it was mentioned by our contact in this organisation. Moreover, Audibene is currently expanding. In fact, in the next three years Audibene will expand into 35 countries¹ and in order to manage this rapid growth a team who knows the company is needed. A high turnover rate is therefore not desired and could jeopardise this expansion. Hence, it is crucial

¹ This information was provided by the respondent 1 who will be presented in the following sub-chapter.
for this company to make its employees stay\textsuperscript{1} and to know the expectations of its workforce which is mainly constituted of Gen Y individuals. Moreover, Audibene is still flexible regarding its structures and policies which mean that they could be changed or adapted if needed. These different reasons and the fact that it is reasonable to think that other German companies may be in the same situation, make of Audibene a relevant case for this paper.

Audibene was founded in Berlin in May 2012. The company consists now of 184 employees where 142 are part of the Generation Y (born between 1980 and 1994). Audibene consists of five departments: Marketing, Customer Service, IT, Back-end and administration department\textsuperscript{2}. The hierarchy itself is really flat (Audibene, 2015a). The work is divided according to the level of experience\textsuperscript{3}, which makes it a more natural hierarchy.

Since its creation three years ago, the company has been constantly growing. At the moment, they have entered three markets besides Germany. These markets are Switzerland, Netherlands and Malaysia. Their aim is to provide hearing aids in a good quality for a low price with the goal to consult professionally and neutrally and their mission is to facilitate the access to the hearing aids (Audibene, 2015a). Therefore, Audibene builds up a network with the producers of the hearing aids. They buy huge contingents of hearing aids from their partners, the producers. When a customer is interested in a hearing aid, he can contact Audibene and the customer service team analyses and compares the best alternative for the client. The customer will then be referred to one of the partner acousticians near his home. This service greatly facilitates the process for the client because the hearing aid market is very confusing. At the partner acousticians, the hearing aid will be adapted to the customers. If everything is fine with the hearing aid the client will then purchase the hearing aid over Audibene and stays consequently a client of Audibene. This concept has advantages for all sides. Due to the reason that Audibene buys a big contingent of hearing aids from their partner acousticians, Audibene can offer their clients a cheaper price (Audibene, 2015a). This concept will be implemented in the next three years in 35 other countries. One of the markets that will still be entered this year is France and the USA.

\textsuperscript{1} This information was provided by the respondent 7 who will be presented in the following sub-chapter.
\textsuperscript{2} This information was provided by the respondent 1 who will be presented in the following sub-chapter.
\textsuperscript{3} This information was provided by the respondent 5 who will be presented in the following sub-chapter.
3.1.2 Data sampling technique

A non-probability and purposive sample has been used to explore the case and to answer the research questions of this study. In fact, purposive samples are frequently used in qualitative research and enables the researchers to select the respondents who are the most appropriate to answer the research questions (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Furthermore, this technique is used to select a small number of respondents who are particularly informative and who fulfil predetermined criteria (Symon & Cassell, 2012). In fact, in order to answer the research questions, respondents who are part of the Generation Y were necessary. Moreover, other selection criteria have been determined for the choice of the participants: their age, their education and their working experience. The reason for their age is that they have to be part of the Generation Y as it is the focus of our research and therefore be born between 1980 and 1994. As for their education, they should have at least a Bachelor degree, due to the fact that this research should be comparable to the findings of previous studies (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007; Hurst & Good, 2009; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Richardson & Thomas, 2012; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013). As the available research on the Generation Y has mainly focused on students and not on Gen Y individuals who are already working (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013), our respondents should be working at least since six months within the company. In fact, it is reasonable to think that this minimum period has enabled them to know their enterprise, the working conditions, their tasks as well as their colleagues. As this research does not focus on the gender of the respondents, it has been decided to select the same number of female and male respondents.

The first contact with Audibene has been made through an acquaintance of a friend who is working at Audibene. We sent to this person an email mentioning that we received her contact details from her friend and explained the purpose of our research and what her company could gain from it as well. We have also explained our requirements for the respondents and that one of us will come to their office in Berlin to conduct the interviews face-to-face. Our contact has suggested us, based on our criteria, possible respondents who were willing to take part in our research. The interviews took place in Berlin between the 8th and the 22nd of April, 2015.

As recommended by Saunders et al. (2012), the minimum sample size for semi-structured interviews is between five and 25 respondents. Six participants who are German Generation Y employees of Audibene have been interviewed and eventually a seventh interview has been
conducted with the Head of HRM of the company. The selection of respondents in qualitative research is made with the aim to “explore the range of opinions and different representations of an issue” (Gaskell, 2000, as cited in O’Reilly & Parker, 2012, p. 192). Therefore, the sampling pertains with the richness of the obtained data (Kuzel, 1992) and the number of respondents depends on the subject of the research (Gaskell, 2000). In other words, “the number of required subjects becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data (data saturation)” (Marshall, 1996, p. 523). This data saturation has become obvious while conducting our sixth interview. In fact, the respondents were not mentioning new themes of expectations anymore, but were repeatedly referring to the same elements. It has therefore been decided to terminate the collection of data with the interview of this sixth working Generation Y individual.

The following table (Table 3) shows an overview of the different respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year of birth</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Length of employment</th>
<th>Job title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>2 years &amp; 2 months</td>
<td>Head of Displays and Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Online Marketing Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>1 year &amp; 7 months</td>
<td>Product Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>1 year &amp; 10 months</td>
<td>Cooperation Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>2 years &amp; 8 months</td>
<td>Head of International Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Business Development Trainee Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>Head of HRM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews with respondents R1-R7

In order to preserve the anonymity of the respondents, the obtained data have been processed in a way that makes them non-attributable (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, the names of our respondents have not been divulged in our research, and instead we refer to them by using a reference code.
3.1.3 Data collection

The type of data which has been collected is primary data using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews enable the researchers to have a list of themes and important questions to be approached and discussed with the respondents, but if necessary it is possible to omit some questions or themes (Saunders et al., 2012). Furthermore, this type of interviews also allows the researchers, during the interviews, to come up with additional questions which may be necessary for the exploration, as well as changing the order of the themes or questions depending on the conversation (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, these characteristics have enabled us to use the key themes which resulted from our conceptual framework, as well as important predetermined questions, but still left the opportunity to explore more deeply answers and comments from the respondents. In fact, as we conducted an explorative study, we are not restricted with the findings of previous studies, but were open for new factors and ideas in order to thoroughly understand what the working German Generation Y expect from its work and employer and to offer the best suggestions to companies.

The formulation of appropriate questions was very important as it enabled us to investigate and answer our research questions (Saunders et al., 2012). The use of open questions in our semi-structured interviews is the most suitable to explore and obtain the information we were searching. In fact, with this type of questions, respondents are able to provide comprehensive answers and even to develop them further which can lead us to the acquisition of information which did not arise in our conceptual framework (Saunders et al., 2012).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with the respondents in their office in Berlin. A face-to-face interaction has several benefits comparing to other electronic means of communication. In fact, face-to-face interactions enable the interviewer and the interviewees to see social cues such as the facial expressions and the gestures and to hear the voice tone of each other (Hislop, 2013). Furthermore, the communication is synchronous and the interviewer is able to directly clarify points if needed which could prevent bias (Saunders et al., 2012; Hislop, 2013).

The interviews have been conducted in German which is the mother tongue of the respondents and the interviewer as well. In order to have the complete answers for the transcriptions as well as the most accurate translation, the interviews have been recorded.
3.1.4 Type of questions

The main themes which have stemmed from our conceptual framework have served as common thread for our semi-structured interviews with the respondents R1 to R6. As it is an explorative study, we wanted to investigate what are the work expectations of our respondents, and therefore we did not want to only stick to our themes, but we wanted to see if the respondents have other ideas and elements to report. Therefore, based on our conceptual framework, the main themes for the interviews were:

- Work-life balance
- Content of the work and tasks
- Working atmosphere
- Self-development
- Salary
- Opportunities for advancement and promotion

Our questions to the respondents were open-ended and we let them discuss as much as they wanted because our purpose was to investigate and explore their expectations. However, it happened that for some questions, the participants only gave us short answers. We therefore had to ask them follow-up questions which were more direct or which were including examples. The interview guide for our interviews with the respondents R1 to R6 can be found in the first appendix.

Regarding the questions for the interview with the Head of HRM (R7), they have been developed once the interviews with the respondents R1 to R6 had already been conducted because it enabled us to specifically target the questions according to what has been mentioned and brought to our attention by the respondents. The interview guide for the respondent R7 can be found in the second appendix.

3.1.5 Method of data analysis

As previously mentioned, the data have been collected through semi-structured interviews which were recorded, gradually transcribed and translated. These interviews transcripts provide a descriptive account of the research (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). Thereafter, the content of these interviews has been thematically analysed. It “involves
discovering themes in the interview transcripts and attempting to verify, confirm and qualify them by searching through the data and repeating the process to identify further themes and categories” (Burnard et al., 2008, p. 430).

The analysis of the data has been done separately by the two authors. In fact, one author has manually proceeded to the analysis and to the codification into themes of each interview transcript, while the second author has performed the analysis and codification through the use of the fully functioning free trial of the software NVivo. It is important to emphasise that NVivo only helps to structure and categorised the qualitative data in order to proceed to the analysis, but does not make any analyses by itself (Saunders et al., 2012). The organised dataset of each of the authors resulted in the same categories which have then been used to write the report of the findings.

3.1.6 Data quality issues

Semi-structured interviews could lead to several data quality issues such as reliability, forms of bias and validity (Saunders et al., 2012). Reliability and issues of bias seem to be probable in our research. In fact, as the interviews were conducted face-to-face, the voice tone, the non-verbal behaviour or remarks of the interviewer could have caused bias in the answers of the respondents. Moreover, as our research involves semi-structured interviews which were conducted in a specific situation and time, it is doubtful that other researchers would obtain exactly the same results. However, as asserted by Saunders et al. (2012), the replication of qualitative and non-standardised research is unrealistic, but they advised to “make and retain notes relating to your research design, the reasons underpinning the choice of strategy and methods, and the data obtained” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 382). This information are provided in this chapter or in the appendix and could therefore be consulted by other and future researchers in order to perceive the analysis we have conducted.

The validity of the research is also an issue which could arise. In fact, it “refers to the extent to which the researcher has gained access to a participant’s knowledge […] and is able to infer meanings that the participant intends from the language used by that person” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 382). In order to prevent this issue, the interviews have been conscientiously conducted and the elements or terms which necessitated further explanation have been clarified with the respondents. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in German which is the mother tongue of the interviewer as well as of the respondents. Therefore, the risk of
misunderstanding has been reduced to a minimum. The fact that all interviews have been recorded and fully transcribed in German and translated into English enabled a thorough examination of the data (Bryman, 2008). Furthermore, it opens “the data to public scrutiny to other researchers, who can evaluate the analysis that is carried out by the original researchers of the data” (Bryman, 2008, p. 451) and it also “helps to counter accusations that an analysis might have been influenced by a researcher’s values or biases” (Bryman, 2008, p. 451).

3.2 Research limitations

There are several limitations with the methodology used for this research. Only one company constituted our case which limits the generalisability of our findings within this organisational context. Moreover, our sample is also a limitation to this research. In fact, our respondents do not represent the whole range of the working German Generation Y due particularly to their education level and age. All our respondents have a Bachelor or Master degree because it was one of our selection criteria in order to ensure that our findings can be compared with the previous studies about the expectations of Gen Y which have been conducted among graduates (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007; Hurst & Good, 2009; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Richardson & Thomas, 2012; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013). However, the education level of our respondents does not constitute the level of all German Millennials who are working. Furthermore, the age of our respondents who happen to be all born between 1988 and 1990 represents individuals who are only two years apart from each other while the Generation Y includes all individuals born between 1980 and 1994.

Another limitation is that our contact at Audibene through who it has been possible to approach the direction and received the approval to conduct the interviews with the employees of the company, has also helped us to select the respondents according to the criteria previously mentioned. It might be possible that our contact has suggested us respondents based on her affinity with them, and therefore some other employees who could have been relevant to interview are not part of our respondents. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the interviews were conducted in German. Although both authors are fluent in both languages and have conscientiously worked on the translations in order to have the most accurate translations as possible, it might, however, be possible that some inaccuracies
happened. Finally, the method to analyse our data, the thematic content analysis, also represents a research limitation as it is subject to the researchers’ subjectivity.
4 Findings

The respondents R1 to R6 are all part of the Generation Y and are working as employees at Audibene. These respondents provided the findings which refers to the expectations of the working German Gen Y regarding its current work and its employer. The respondent R7 had a different interview as this participant is in charge of the HR department of the company. Therefore, this chapter will first describe the findings about the first group of respondents, the Gen Y employees, followed by the results of the discussion with the Head of HRM.

4.1 Expectations of the German Generation Y

The following part, will present what has been found out in the interviews concerning the expectations of the respondents. It is divided into the different themes which were mentioned by the participants.

Tasks

All respondents mentioned several characteristics relating to their tasks which they consider as primordial. For all of them, the variety of their tasks is one of the most essential characteristics. In fact, they all appreciate to work on several and different projects, but also not to have to do the same work every day, and as a result not to have a routine (R2; R3; R4). Another important characteristic is that their tasks should enable them to continuously learn new things and develop their knowledge as well (R2; R3; R6). Two respondents also emphasised the fact that they do not only want to carry out their tasks, but they want to be able to see the results of the tasks they have accomplished and witness the impact they have on their company (R4; R5). For one of the respondents, it is also necessary to have clear goals regarding the tasks and to have a combination between finding solutions on their own and following instructions (R1). Furthermore, one respondent particularly values the fact to be able to build and accomplish something for his company which will last for a while even if he leaves the company (R1).

When the respondents were questioned about the best attributes of their work, the majority of them replied with answers which are related to their tasks (R2; R3; R5; R6). For instance, they mentioned the variety of tasks (R3; R5; R6) or the mixture of the creative and analytical
component of their job (R2). Furthermore, two of them emphasised that Audibene offers them the opportunity to build up things on their own, which, in their opinion, other companies would probably not (R1, R6).

**Responsibility**

The element which was the most often mentioned by the respondents is responsibility. Having responsibility is an important topic for all the respondents. In fact, they enjoy having a lot of responsibility and see this as a crucial factor in their jobs. Two of the respondents think that they have a lot of responsibilities at Audibene and really appreciate it (R2; R6). The respondent R6 pointed out that she feels encouraged to take responsibility by the fact that if she makes a mistake, no one will be angry at her, and she therefore feels that she can rather try something. Several respondents also said that they think that other companies could or would probably not offer them responsibility to the same extent as Audibene does (R1; R2; R5; R6). However, two participants declared that they even wish to have more responsibility in the future (R2; R3).

Moreover, the respondents really appreciate to have the chance to receive a lot of responsibility as soon as they have started working for the company, and that even if they had not a lot of previous working experiences (R2; R3; R4; R6). This responsibility gives them courage (R3) and self-confidence (R2), and therefore have the opportunity develop themselves. One participant indicated that before accepting his job at Audibene, he was thinking about founding his own company (R1). However, now with the responsibilities he is having, he does not feel this need anymore because he considers himself to be fully part of his current company and to consider it a little bit as his “baby” (R1). Furthermore, it was also said that getting more responsibility is a kind of promotion at Audibene because due to the flat hierarchy, it is not always possible to receive a job promotion through a title, but more through additional responsibilities (R1; R5). Moreover, promotion was equated with more responsibility (R1; R5). If a person does a good job, he can get more and more responsibilities within a very short time (R5). Another respondent emphasised that the responsibility she is having is the reason why she is really satisfied at the moment (R2). However, it was also reported that it could be a problem that everybody should feel responsible for everything (R2). In fact, this makes it very difficult for the employees to know who is responsible for what (R2; R3). One of the respondents said that it is on the one hand good, but on the other hand that she has sometimes no idea what to do (R2). Another one would wish more structure (R3).
Consequently, taking over responsibility is a liked and important aspect in the job for all the participants. Audibene satisfies this expectation of the Gen Y already quite good due to the reason that the employees receive immediately a lot of responsibility.

**Self-development**

The possibility of self-development is also another element which is important for all the respondents. In fact, the respondents referred to it as having the opportunity to always undertake new activities and tasks and to learn new things, but also to have developed confidence and other skills (R1; R2; R3; R6). They appreciate to continuously learn new things. It is an element which they think could not have been possible to such an extent in other companies (R2; R5; R6). Furthermore, some of them have even declared that if at some point, they reach a stage where they feel that they cannot learn more in their company, they will consider looking for another job opportunity (R1; R6).

Audibene enables its employees to learn new things which is strongly connected to the high level of responsibility everyone has (R2; R5). As a consequence, many employees have a steep learning curve (R2; R4; R6). Another important aspect is the growing opportunities the company offers (R4). Moreover, some respondents also feel driven by the company and feel they are growing with it (R1; R5). One of them mentioned that it is not possible to grow further and faster than in any other companies because they are not restricted by rules which could exist in classical companies (R5). One of the participants mentioned that everyone who is coming to Audibene, at least most of them, have clearly a will of development (R5).

The respondents greatly appreciated the opportunities they have to learn constantly new things and to develop further. Additionally, through the internationalisation of Audibene there will be even more possibilities for the employees to learn new things.

**Working atmosphere**

For all the six participants, having nice colleagues is an essential factor in order to have a pleasant working atmosphere. Two of them mentioned that it is very primordial to them to work with people who are motivated and enthusiastic in what they do (R1; R4). Someone who is just waiting for the day to pass, is consequently not really appreciated (R1). One of the respondents even admitted that if she would not get along with new employees, she may
consider resigning (R3). Another important point which was raised is that the firm culture should not be formal or rigid (R2; R4). Some participants, for instance, also said that they could not imagine to sit alone and isolated in their office, and therefore the open space offices are really appreciated (R4; R6). This also enables the communication between the employees which is seen as a crucial factor, too (R5; R6).

As a matter of fact, the respondents appreciate to have colleagues with who they get on well and have good relationships with (R2; R3; R4). They all like the nice and familiar atmosphere of the company and are used to have a beer together when they stay late in the office or to spend time with their colleagues in their free time as well (R2). The fact that the atmosphere is informal and relaxed is consequently really appreciated (R2; R4). This was illustrated with the fact they do not use the formal and polite you which is specific to the German language (R2; R4). The respect between the employees, the feeling to always being able to ask when something is unclear and the configuration of the office in an open space are also appreciated (R4; R6). Another aspect which is valued by most of the respondents is the atmosphere and the team spirit of the company as well. This team spirit is even described as being unique to Audibene (R2).

Consequently, Audibene seems to fulfil most of the expectations and wishes of the respondents regarding the working atmosphere.

*Autonomy and Trust*

What is also appreciated are the autonomy and trust they receive when carrying out tasks. In fact, a respondent illustrates it by explaining that she is pretty free at Audibene and can try and do what she wants (R3). This means, if someone is convinced of an idea, it is sufficient to convince someone else. It is not necessary to hand it in to the boss who presents it then to someone else and a half year later the person receives a feedback (R3). Moreover, the employees have the possibility to try and fail. However, if they fail it is expected from them to learn from their mistakes (R2; R6). As a result, it is how the company can generate many new good ideas because its employees are encouraged to constantly try new things (R3; R6). The trust which was mentioned by two respondents (R1; R2) also refers to the fact that the employees can follow their ideas without always having to get the approval of their superiors. Furthermore, the respondent R2 emphasised that it is greatly appreciated to feel trusted by managers and colleagues even if the employee has little experience.
Internationality

The subject of internationality plays an important role for four of the respondents (R1; R3; R4; R6). Three of the respondents mentioned the wish to live abroad in the coming years (R3; R4; R6), whereas the forth one has already clear plans to build up the marketing department in the USA in the following months (R1). All four of them mentioned that the internationalisation process of Audibene is very exciting. One of them even decided to work for Audibene because he was promised that an international expansion will happen (R4). However, he declared that if the international expansion has not started to happen, he would have probably left the company.

Work-life balance

When the subject of work-life balance was discussed with the respondents, they all admitted they do not really have a balance between their work and their personal life. One respondent even emphasised that he cannot separate what is work from what is life (R5). Most of them do not mind not to have a work-life balance and to work more than 40 hours per week (R1; R4; R5; R6). The reasons that they have given are multiple: they are young and graduated recently and have therefore a lot to learn, they enjoy their job and work in a pleasant and convivial atmosphere or they consider accomplishing things for the company as a hobby. However, one respondent admitted that if he was carrying out his job without enjoying it and if he was not seeing any opportunity for development, then he would very rapidly move to a “nine-five state of mind” and not cut back on his private life (R1). Two other respondents have a different opinion about the lack of a work-life balance. In fact, the respondent R2 indicated that for the moment, it is still fine, but in a couple of years when she will turn 30 years old, she wants to have a job where the working hours are confined and where she will have more time for a private life and maybe for a family. In regard to the respondent R3, she would like now to have a work-life balance and not working so much anymore. In the beginning, it was fine for her because she was newly graduated, but now, she would like more time for her private life. Consequently, the work-life balance does not play such a crucial role for these young people.
Salary

Salary was only mentioned once during the six interviews by the respondent R3. She declared that the salary is not an important factor to her, but that it should be fair because she works more than 40 hours per week. She also pointed out that enjoying her job is more important than earning a lot of money. The topic of money was mentioned by another respondent (R1), but it was in the case if the company could not offer him further personal development, he would not keep working even if he is offered a very high financial compensation because he thinks that he is still too young to receive more money in order to compensate his lack of development (R1).

Expectations when the respondents were students comparing to nowadays

When the respondents were questioned concerning if the expectations they had when they were still students have changed now since they are working, their answers were varied. In fact, most of them declared that their expectations have changed because when they were students or trainees, they have not been yet confronted with the reality of a job and all its implications. Of course, an internship is a job, but one respondent pointed that during her internship, she did not have so many duties to do which is totally different now (R2). Another respondent claimed that the reality is better than he had expected because he never thought that he can be part of a team and participate to the success of the company (R1). Moreover, he even considers his current company as “his baby”. The other respondents who mentioned their previous expectations declared that either they have not changed yet (R3) or that they honestly did not think about them at this time (R4).

Reasons why the respondents left their previous jobs

Not all the respondents had a previous job before starting working at Audibene. For the ones who did, they gave several reasons for having left their job. One respondent wanted to be offered some percentage of the company he was working for and therefore becoming partially an owner and to be part of the company (R1). He also wanted to go back to study in order to complete a Master degree and to travel between his Bachelor and Master. Another respondent enumerated different aspects that she had experienced and which she does not want to face again such as an incompetent boss, not having enough work and being bored, sitting alone in an office and feeling isolated and having to distort results. In this specific case, she was
conducting a survey and knew that the way she and her colleagues were asked to do it was not representative and that the results would be distorted (R6).

**Expected next career steps of the respondents**

At the moment, all respondents want to stay at Audibene. Most of them are excited and look forward to the expansion of the company in new international markets because they will be either in charge of a new market, responsible for the development of a new country or even work in another country. One of the respondents, however, mentioned that he is perhaps thinking at some point to study a Master programme and that it would probably not be compatible with his job at Audibene (R4).

**Summary**

It appeared during the interviews that the topics of the variety of tasks, responsibility, self-development and working atmosphere play a crucial role for the respondents. Moreover, the topics of autonomy, trust and internationality are also very important for most of them, whereas the topic of salary was only mentioned once. What came to light is that all the respondents like working at Audibene and none of them want to leave the company at the moment. In fact, the most important expectations or wishes they have about their jobs are met by Audibene. The following table (Table 4) recapitulates the main findings of the interviews.
Table 4: Summary of the findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety of the tasks</th>
<th>It is essential. Tasks should be diversified. Routine is not appreciated. They also want to enjoy their job and to see the impacts of their tasks and actions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lot of responsibilities</td>
<td>It is primordial. They especially value having a lot of responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibilities for self-development</td>
<td>It is essential. The respondents want to always learn new things and develop new skills. No opportunity for further development could be a reason to leave their job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant working atmosphere</td>
<td>It is also highly important. A pleasant and informal working atmosphere, but also to work with nice, enthusiastic and motivated colleagues. The open space office is also appreciated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>It is valued to have the autonomy to make decisions and try new things is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>It is also important. They appreciate to know that they are trusted by their bosses and colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationality</td>
<td>It is important. Most of the respondents want to work abroad or to be in charge of international markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td>It is not very important, at least for the moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>It was not really mentioned by the respondents, except in one case, to explain that the salary should be fair regarding the time invested in the work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Interviews with the respondents R1-R6

4.2 Interview with the HRM

In order to answer the second research question, we confronted the head of Human Resources with our findings. The second research question is how the knowledge about the expectations of the Generation Y can be used to retain this young workforce.
What Audibene does for its employees

Audibene does a lot to strengthen the team spirit and to improve the working atmosphere. This was also mentioned on several occasions by the respondents in the interviews. In fact, one of the respondents said that she would quit if she would not get along with the people anymore (R3). Another one mentioned that it is very important to like the people because you often work in a team together (R2). To create a good team spirit Audibene offers activities such as the “Lucky Lunch” which supports the networking between the staff. Employees join this lunch on a Friday with other employees in order to get to know each other better, on a professional and personal level. This can facilitate the communication and the employees start knowing what everyone is doing in the company, so if they have a question later the inhibition level is not so high anymore (R7). Another opportunity for networking is the “after-work get-together” which takes place every first Thursday of the month. Furthermore, each department has frequently team events where they have nice dinners together or participate in activities such as playing laser tag or bowling. Another aspect that strengthens the team spirit is the open-space offices. Accessibility and reachability are very important at Audibene (R7). Everything is designed for communication (R5). However, through the expansion of the company this disposition could be more difficult to keep in this form.

Another expectation of the respondents is the self-development. This aspect is promoted by the company through upcoming new projects. In fact, due to the internationalisation, there will be many new projects (R7). This has also the consequence that there will not be a proper work-life balance during the next time (R7).

The head of the HR was surprised when she was confronted with the fact that there are employees who would wish to have more of a work-life balance. However, she admitted that she is also affected by it and that it will be difficult to continue like this in the long run. However, when someone decides to work for a start-up, it has to be clear that it is not a nine to five job (R7). There are always extra hours, however, if a person feels permanently overburdened, it is not a problem at all at Audibene to hire a student or create a new position (R7). When the employees work already longer than expected, they should have a pleasant life at work (R7).

In order to have this pleasant life, several measures are undertaken. For instance, the employees receive sweets for the different holiday celebrations. The management tries to make them a bit happier through little gifts (R7). Moreover, there are also beverages for everyone as much as they like, fresh fruits three times a week and breakfast. Mothers receive
money for the children day care (R7). There is also a special email address where the employees can write when something is missing, such as coffee or a special kind of beverage. The Head of HRM mentioned that the employees should not waste their energy on those kind of things, and therefore, they are looking for one Office Manager at the moment that should make the life of the employees easy and pleasant (R7).

*How do they know what the employees want?*

Before conducting the interview, the head of HRM was questioned if there was already an examination done about the satisfaction of the employees at Audibene and she answered negatively. Consequently, we asked how it is then possible for them to know what their employees want. The HRM mentioned a box for suggestions; however, this box has not been used since she has started working for the company last autumn. During these eight months only ten notes were found in the box, which were not relevant, such as wishes for a new kind of milk. Moreover, they do not have interviews when someone is leaving the company (R7).

The following table (Table 5) will show the expectations of the German working Generation Y based on these findings. The grey parts in the table are topics which have not been mentioned in this study. This table should serve as a final overview and will summarise the results.
Table 5: Expectations of the Generation Y according to studies conducted in Finland, UK, USA, Canada and Australia & the expectations of the German working Gen Y

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work-Life Balance</th>
<th>Self-development</th>
<th>Job-tasks</th>
<th>Job itself</th>
<th>Social interactions at work</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland*</td>
<td>- Important</td>
<td>- Varying, challenging &amp; interesting projects &amp; tasks</td>
<td>- Flexibility in working hours - Feedback</td>
<td>- Pleasant community &amp; colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>- Important</td>
<td>- Being determined to success meeting personal goals - Possibilities for training - Job promotion - Development of the career</td>
<td>- Enjoy working - Stable job</td>
<td>- Fair employer</td>
<td>- Good compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>- Important</td>
<td>- Sense of accomplishment - Opportunity for promotion</td>
<td>- Enjoyable work - Stable job</td>
<td>- Pleasant working atmosphere</td>
<td>- Good payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>- Desired</td>
<td>- Expect training opportunities - Expect possibility to develop new skills - Opportunity for advancement</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pleasant colleagues &amp; supervisors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>- Important</td>
<td>- Training opportunities - Development of new skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>- Not so important</td>
<td>- Always learn new things - Development of new skills - No self-development → reason to quit</td>
<td>- Variety - No routine - Possibility to see the impact on the tasks</td>
<td>- Autonomy in trying out new things - Internationality - Receiving responsibility</td>
<td>- Nice colleagues - Team spirit - Motivated colleagues - Open-space offices - Informal &amp; pleasant atmosphere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: *Finland* (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014), *United Kingdom* (Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge & Ogden, 2007; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010), *United States* (US) (Richardson & Thomas, 2012; Hurst & Good, 2009), *Canada* (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010), *Australia* (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013), *Germany* (Respondents R1 to R6)

* The study conducted in Finland focused on the motivating and demotivating factors of the Millennials regarding their job.
5 Discussion

5.1 Our findings compared to previous results in other countries

The findings indicate that having diversified and challenging tasks, responsibilities, opportunities for self-development, a pleasant working atmosphere, nice colleagues and an enjoyable job are primordial for the respondents. These results are consistent with the previous findings about the expectations and motivations of the Generation Y (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Hurst & Good, 2009; Richardson & Thomas, 2012; Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013).

Contrary to the findings of Maxwell, Ogden and Broadbridge (2010) and the findings of Hurst and Good (2009), the salary does not seem to be a crucial element for our respondents. In fact, salary was only mentioned once to indicate that it should be fair, but there was no mention of a high salary. Kultalahti and Viitala (2014) also reported that the salary was never mentioned by their respondents as a motivating factor, but only not as a poor motivating factor. It is therefore reasonable to think that the salary may not be a main priority for our respondents.

Other elements which have not been directly revealed by our participants, but which were significant factors in the studies of Maxwell, Ogden and Broadbridge (2010) and Hurst and Good (2009) are promotion and job security. Instead our respondents often talked about the importance of having responsibility and even to receive more responsibilities in the future. It has also been mentioned that job title does not really mean anything and what is more important are the tasks, projects and responsibility that the employees have. Based on the explanations of some respondents, it can be interpreted that receiving more responsibilities is a kind of promotion for them.

A finding which contradicts the results of the previous studies (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Hurst & Good, 2009; Richardson & Thomas, 2012; Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013) is regarding the importance of the work-life balance. In fact, for our respondents it is not an essential factor. Furthermore, they admitted not having a balance at all between their professional and personal lives, but most of them do not mind. It seems that the opportunity of constantly learning new things and developing further as well as the pleasant and informal working atmosphere compensate this lack of work-life balance. Moreover, they
are aware that they are still young and have only few working experiences, and therefore they think that it is necessary to work hard. However, two respondents were not so affirmative about being fine with this lack of work-life balance (R2; R3). Even if it was not a focus of this research, it can be noted that the two respondents who have a different opinion about the lack of a work-life balance are both female, and therefore it could be possible that certain expectations might differ according to the gender of the employees. This possibility should, however, be investigated before making any conclusion and could be a subject of further research. Furthermore, it could also be assumed, as all the respondents are only working since a few months or years and therefore have not been subjected to this lack of balance for a long period yet, that this factor could change in the future and become more a priority than now. It seems also important to note that the respondents referred to the work-life balance as being the balance between their time dedicated to work and their time for personal activities, and it is with this understanding that they answered the questions related to work-life balance. However, the concept of work-life balance is broad and could perhaps include other elements. Moreover, work-life balance also seems to be different for each individual depending on his priorities. Further research could be undertaken in order to investigate what the work-life balance really represents for the Millennials and how important it might become in the future.

Our research has also brought to light expectations which have not been discovered in those previous studies. This is the case for the autonomy, trust and internationality. In fact, autonomy and trust were mentioned several times as being important to some respondents. It is very interesting to note that trust did not appear in the previous findings. However, it has been highlighted as important in the recent study of Alves, Shantz and Truss (2012, p. 409) because it fosters “positive outcomes for both individuals and their employing organisation”. Therefore, the trust which was mentioned by some of our respondents is beneficial for both the employees and the company, and it is in the best interest of the employer to maintain it.

As for the internationality, some respondents are really keen to have the opportunity to work abroad or to be in charge of foreign markets. Some of them even mentioned the fact of moving and working in another country for another company if this does not happen with their current company. It seems therefore that especially in the case of Audibene, the company should meet this employee expectation in order to ensure that its employees will stay.

The respondents of the studies conducted in the UK (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010), the USA (Hurst & Good, 2009; Richardson &
Thomas, 2012) and Canada (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons; 2010) were students while for the research conducted in Finland, they were working Millennials (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014) and for the Australian research half of the respondents were students and the other half workers (Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013). In the case of our research, all respondents are working since a certain period and this could explain some difference in the findings of this paper and the previous studies. However, Luscombe, Lewis and Biggs (2013) who compared the expectations between students and workers concluded that the results between their studying and working respondents only differed on expectations for the long-term. It is also interesting to note that when our respondents were questioned regarding if their expectations have changed between now and the time they were students, most of them answered positively. They explained that their expectations have changed because they had not been yet confronted with the reality of a job and all its implications. Therefore, it seems reasonable to think that the expectations the Gen Y has when still students could considerably be different after having been working for a certain period.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that our findings are actually relatively close to the ones of the study of Kultalahti and Viitala (2014) which was conducted among working Millennials in Finland. In fact, most of the motivating and demotivating factors which resulted of their study are also important factors for our respondents. Regarding the motivating factors, the same following factors were discovered: varying and challenging tasks, a pleasant community and colleagues. As for the demotivating factors, a boring job, a feeling of stagnation and not being able to develop further, incompetent supervisors and poor communication were also mentioned. Moreover, as during our interviews, the topics of status and job security were not mentioned by the Finnish working Millennials. These similarities could be explained by the fact that in both cases, the respondents were working and not students anymore as in the other studies.

Our interpretation of the findings also reveals that the expectations mentioned by our respondents are linked to each other. Regarding self-development, it could be considered to have a positive link on the work-life balance and salary expectations of the respondents. As previously discussed, work-life balance is not, at the moment, an important matter for the majority of the participants, while salary has only been mentioned once. Therefore, both work-life balance and salary are not important and this could be explained by the fact that the participants are benefiting from significant opportunities of self-development which counterbalances the lack of work-life balance and the importance of the remuneration.
responsibility, the fact of having them seems to have an impact on the variety of tasks and self-development of the respondents. In fact, it is reasonable to think that the more responsibilities the employees receive, the more their tasks will be varied and the more they will learn and develop new skills and knowledge, that is to say, they will have opportunities for self-development. Regarding the variety of tasks, it is highly probable that it is positively linked with the self-development of the employees. In fact, the more the tasks of the respondents are varied and different, the more they can develop their skills and evolve. Concerning the working atmosphere, a possible link between self-development and work-life balance has already been mentioned, but it seems plausible that the working atmosphere also has an impact on the work-life balance of the employees. If the work-life balance is not an important matter for most of the respondents, it could be due to the pleasant working atmosphere which exists within Audibene. In fact, the relationships between the employees are informal, friendly and respectful which engender good social interactions. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that the agreeable working atmosphere and the social interactions between the employees play a role in actually balancing the professional and personal lives of the respondents. As for the trust, the fact that the respondents feel trusted by their supervisors and colleagues might have a positive link on their self-development, responsibility, variety of tasks and autonomy. In fact, by feeling trusted, the participants are able to make decisions, and therefore having some autonomy, to undertake new activities and projects, and consequently increase the variety of their tasks and their responsibility as well as developing new knowledge. As regards autonomy, it seems plausible that its link is similar to the one of the trust. The more autonomy the participants have, the more new activities and projects can be undertaken, and this impacts the variety of tasks, the responsibilities and the self-development that the respondents have. Finally, the internationality is likely to positively impact the variety of tasks, responsibilities and self-development of the participants. In fact, the fact of living abroad should inevitably have an impact on the self-development as residing in another country requires learning or adapting to new cultures, ways of living or languages and consequently leads to the development of new skills. In the case of being in charge of international markets, it is probable that it leads to new and varied tasks, an increase of responsibilities and to the development of new knowledge as well.

It is also interesting to note that two respondents are having higher job position than the other participants and that they have started working for Audibene almost directly after its creation. They seem to be really attached and highly committed to their company and their answers regarding their expectations are sometimes different from the expectations of the other
respondents. Although no research or literature was found on the subject of the possible differences in the expectations of employees according to their position in the hierarchy or job title, it is reasonable to think that the expectations may vary between the working Millennials depending on their hierarchical position, and this could be the subject of further research.

It might also be considered that our findings are perhaps more a life cycle than a generation matter. In fact, all our respondents are still in their twenties and are only at the beginning of their career and as they grow older, their expectations may change. The statement of the respondent R2 about the fact that her work-life balance will become more important to her as she gets older can indicate that some expectations may indeed evolve. Therefore, it might be considered that the expectations evolve by following a pattern: specific expectations at the beginning of the career which change due to the age, the experiences or life priorities. This pattern may be recurrent and may have occurred for the previous generations, the Baby Boomers or the Generation X, as well. This element could be the subject of future research.

5.2 Our findings compared to the assumptions based on Hofstede

The following paragraph will compare our findings with the expectations which were formulated based on Hofstede et al. (2010). Regarding the work-life balance, our assumption was that free time might not be valued so much by Germans which corresponds with our findings to the extent of the amount of free time at disposal. Concerning self-development and tasks, it was not possible to make assumptions based on Hofstede’s dimensions. However, many elements were mentioned during the interviews which related to them. In regard of the job itself, it was assumed that structure might be appreciated and people would be open for changes. These two elements were not mentioned by the respondents, but instead autonomy, internationality and responsibility have been reported by the interviewees. Furthermore, status was never mentioned by the participants and therefore it does not correspond with our assumptions as according to Hofstede et al. (2010), status is important for Germans. Regarding the working atmosphere, no assumptions could have been made based on Hofstede et al. (2010), but it appears that it is a crucial topic for the respondents.
5.3 Employee retention

At the moment, all the respondents want to stay at Audibene because they seem most of the time satisfy with their job. The expectations they mentioned during the interviews are mostly fulfilled by Audibene. Furthermore, as described in the conceptual framework, commitment and job satisfaction are two crucial factors which influence the employee retention. The following sub-chapters will discuss these two factors based on our findings.

5.3.1 Commitment

The organisational commitment can help to retain an employee (Heery & Noon, 2008, n.p.). The following paragraphs will show the analysis concerning the three attitudinal dimensions and it will be examined if the respondents feel committed to their current employer, Audibene. These three dimensions are: (1) the affective commitment; (2) the continuance commitment and (3) the normative commitment (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

Regarding the affective commitment, Audibene stands for a unique company culture (Audibene, 2015b) with flat hierarchies, a family and informal atmosphere and for a rapid growth and development (R1-R7). It seems clear that the expectations of the employees of Audibene fit with what the company is offering them. Moreover, the respondents seem to be having a satisfactory working experience with Audibene. Consequently, it is reasonable to think that the employees of Audibene feel affectively committed.

The second dimension, continuance commitment, is about the salary the employee earns and the accompanied commitment due to this (Robbins & Judge, 2012). During all the interviews only one of the employees mentioned salary (R3). She declared that it should be fair regarding the time invested in her work. The Head of HRM stated that the extra hours are unpaid, however, all employees work over time almost every day. Consequently, it can be assumed that salary does not play a major role for the respondents. As Robbins and Judge (2012) already highlighted, this dimension cannot commit employees for the reason that money can also be paid by another company.

The normative commitment is reached when the employee wants to stay in the firm because he feels morally or ethically committed, for instance by feeling the responsibility for bringing a project to an end which has been started by the employee himself (Robbins & Judge, 2012). The respondents reported that they value the responsibility they receive from the company,
and having their own working division from the very beginning. One of the employee stated that he wants to have the possibility to supervise a project from the beginning to the end (R5) and to see the results (R1; R4; R5).

Based on our interpretation, it is reasonable to think that the respondents feel really committed to Audibene. As Robbins and Judge (2012) stated the first and the third dimension are important to find out if an employee wants to remain in a company. The analysis of the finding shows that these two dimensions are fulfilled. This means that Audibene should theoretically have no problems to retain its workers. Consequently, it could serve as an example for other companies. This could be realised for instance by hiring people who can identify themselves with the values and goals for which their company is standing for. Moreover, long-term projects could be offered which would give employees the possibility to evolve and take over responsibility.

5.3.2 Job satisfaction

As previously mentioned in the conceptual framework, job satisfaction has two components: the expectations the employee has and the actual situation in which this person is situated (Coleman, 2009). It has been described in the findings what the respondents expect in general about their job and to what extent it is actually fulfilled by Audibene. For instance, a factor which is reported in the literature (Steinmetz, de Vries & Tijdens, 2014; Martin, 2005) and which could explain why the respondents are satisfied with their job and want to stay at Audibene could be the quality of the relationships between the employees and with the managers. Furthermore, it is also reasonable to think that one of the causes which could explain why all respondents want to keep working at Audibene is the opportunity they have to constantly learn new things and to developed new skills and knowledge. In fact, as reported by Kyndt et al. (2009), the fact that employees can learn and grow within their company “has a strong positive effect on retention” (Kyndt et al., 2009, p. 197). It enables them to remain competitive and to seek for career advancement and promotions (Kyndt et al., 2009).

To summarise, the findings show that the expectations of the employees are mostly all fulfilled. However, Audibene could pay attention to some points which will be discussed later in this chapter.
5.4 Suggestions and managerial implications

The importance of a pleasant working atmosphere has been mentioned by all the respondents. In fact, they greatly appreciate the current working atmosphere at Audibene which is friendly and informal, but it is reasonable to think that it may change with the expansion of the company. It would therefore be in the best interest of Audibene to ensure that the atmosphere will not suffer from its expansion in order for its employees to keep feeling well within the company.

As previously mentioned, the work-life balance is not, at the moment, an important factor for most of our respondents, however, it may become more significant in the coming years. In fact, our respondents are now still young and freshly graduated, but in several years, after having been working a lot, this may change. Furthermore, a previous study (Brown, Thomas & Bosselman, 2015) concerning the retention of the Generation Y has founded out that the conflict between work and life would be the main reason to leave a company. Audibene could therefore prevent these employees to leave the company by taking into consideration their work-life balance, not only by ensuring a workload which does not require overtime, but also perhaps by offering home office, flexible working times or part-time jobs for mothers.

Self-development is a crucial factor for our respondents, but also for the respondents of previous studies (Broadbridge, Maxwell & Ogden, 2007; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Hurst & Good, 2009; Richardson & Thomas, 2012; Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons; 2010, Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014; Luscombe, Lewis & Biggs, 2013). Opportunities for training and the development of new skills were constantly mentioned by the respondents of these previous researches. In our case, the opportunity to learn new things and evolve within the company were particularly also cited. Furthermore, one respondent expressed his will to perhaps study further and to undertake a Master programme (R4). However, he thinks that it would be incompatible with his current job at Audibene and could therefore consider leaving the company in order to study. Audibene or another company could risk losing some precious employees of the Generation Y who would like to undertake further studies or who would like perhaps to take some time off and travel as it was mentioned by one of our respondents when explaining one of the reasons which made him leave his previous job (R1). In order to prevent the departure of young and talented employees, Audibene or other enterprises could perhaps envisage offering the possibility of gap years or extended leaves to their employees. Or in order to prevent them to leave to undertake new studies, opportunities for further trainings
within the enterprise or by external providers could be offered to the Gen Y employees who are interested.

It is important to note that our results may not be applicable in every company employing German Millennials. In fact, the expectations might differ. However, this research has shown that it can beneficial to find out what the working Gen Y in a company expects. This knowledge can be used by the company by comparing it to the current situation and drawing conclusions about it. This could be applicable also in other companies and it could lead to a higher retention. In fact, discovering the expectations of employees can be done, for instance, by conducting surveys or feedbacks. Thereafter, possible measures could be considered in order to meet the expectations of their employees which could lead to a higher normative commitment. Moreover, it can also lead to an affective commitment. As a result, the fulfilled expectations could lead to positive work experiences which might lead to a better retention as well.

Additionally, these findings might also be interesting for international companies which employ workers from different countries. As shown in table 5, the expectations of the Gen Y might be different based on their nationality. Although, it is not possible to fulfil the expectations of every single employee, knowing the main expectations of the staff and try to satisfy them could prevent employees to leave.

5.5 Limitations and further research

This research extended previous studies of the expectations of the Generation Y. Firstly, by providing findings for Germany which is a country where such studies have not been conducted yet and secondly by focusing on the Millennials who are already working. However, this study faces several limitations. The main limitation is due to the fact that this case study is based on one company, and therefore, the generalisation of the results might not be possible as Audibene is a very specific case. It would be interesting and perhaps profitable to conduct further research in a different kind of companies, that is to say other than a start-up. It could also be interesting to conduct research about the expectations of the working Millennials during a longer period of time in order to investigate how their expectations may vary with the years. Furthermore, this research has several other limitations due to the selected methodology. These limitations have already been discussed in the chapter dedicated to the research methodology.
6 Conclusion

Several of our findings are consistent with previous findings about the expectations of Generation Y from other nationalities than Germany. In fact, the importance of varied and challenging tasks, the opportunities for self-development, the responsibilities and a pleasant working atmosphere were expectations which resulted in both our research and the research conducted in other countries among undergraduates and employees. However, new expectations have been brought to light during our exploration such as the appreciation of feeling trusted by superiors, the appreciation of having autonomy and the importance of the opportunity to work internationally either by working and living abroad or by being in charge of international markets. An interesting and considerable difference was found regarding the importance of the work-life balance. Unlike respondents of previous studies, most of our participants do not consider having a work-life balance as being important. This latter finding does, however, match the assumption based on Hofstede’s Dimensions which was that Germans may not value free time so much.

These different findings could be valuable for companies. In fact, it seems important for a firm to know what its employees expect in order to retain them. The case of Audibene has shown that employees are willing to invest more of their time and energy when they are satisfied with their job. In particular, the variety of tasks, the responsibilities, the opportunity for self-development and the pleasant working atmosphere are just some of the factors which make them satisfied. Furthermore, the fact that employees feel committed to their company contributes to the retention as well. This can be reached, for instance, through giving employees more responsibility. Although there is not a “patented recipe” on how to retain employees and especially the Generation Y, knowing what satisfy and commit them can lead to a better retention.
References


Appendix I - Interview guide for respondents R1-R6

How did you arrive at Audibene?

Does Audibene offer you something different than the other companies?

How does your job at Audibene look like?

What do you like in your tasks?

What are the aspects that you do not really like about your job? Is there something in your tasks or job which could be improved?

On the website of Audibene, it is indicated that here there is no nine-to-five jobs. How is it compatible with your work-life balance?

When you were still studying, what were you expecting of your future job? And to which extent has it changed now? Or have your expectations not changed?

How does the perfect job look like for you? By job, we mean for example your tasks, the working atmosphere, your responsibility, your self-development, etc.?

How do you see your next career steps? Or what would you like to do in the coming years? Is there already something in particular?

If you were not satisfied at Audibene anymore, this is only theoretically speaking, would you wait until something changes? Or would you simply keep working without saying something? Or would you look for another job?
Appendix II - Interview guide for respondent R7

What does Audibene for the satisfaction of its employees?

How will it be with the departments and the flat hierarchies when Audibene expand further?
Can you keep this kind of open space offices? Is it possible to keep it because in the
interviews it was said that most of the employees really appreciate this, that there is not this
kind of group separation, but that it is very familiar and that it is one. Is it possible to keep
this?

How does it look like with working hours? Are there fixed working hours?

Are the extra hours paid?

We heard in the interviews that a work-life balance does not really exist at the moment, what
can you say about that?

Some employees hope that since Audibene is growing, that more employees will come and as
a result, their work-life balance will be adjusted. What can you say about that?

They said that in a short term period it is ok because it is like this when you just graduated
and that you firstly have to work a lot because you have to learn, but in the long term, one
said: “I am ready now for a work-life balance”. What can you say about that?

Are there many employees who do not stay or who did not extend their contract or something
like this?

Do you do interviews when your employees leave to have some feedback? And do you also in
some way use the information from these feedbacks?

Do you always have permanent contracts? Or are they limited to a number of years?

Have you already changed something in the HR regarding the working conditions due to the
feedback of an intern about things which could be changed? Can the employees propose
ideas, suggestions?

If someone says that he/she wants to leave Audibene and theoretically you want to retain this
employee, what do you offer then? Do you offer what he/she wants? Or do you try to
convince him or her somehow to stay?