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A New Generation of Change - Generation Y and its Attitude towards Organizational Change Projects

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Background: In today’s fast-moving society organizational changes have become absolutely essential for long-lasting success. A great challenge is to create the internal support for change projects among the employees in order to avoid failure. The underlying problem to this study focuses on the perception towards change under the aspect of a new generation which more and more represents today's workforce.

Research Question: Are there relations between distinct characteristics of Generation Y and their attitude towards change and does this result in new approaches for practical implementations?

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to scrutinize typical characteristics of Generation Y and find out if they influence their attitude (“Readiness for change”, “Commitment to change”, “Openness to change” and “Cynicism about change”) towards change projects. This enhances existing knowledge about the attitude towards change and how this interrelates with specific characteristics. The authors aim is to find out which characteristics can be identified as beneficial for change and how that can be useful for collocating successful change project teams.

Method: A qualitative research method with an abductive approach was used in this study. The authors were conducting two phases of qualitative interviews. The first interview phase composed of eight respondents with distinct expertise in change projects and the second phase composed of nine (three respondents each from Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers) interviews. The respondents had no specific knowledge in the field of change but experience in working with Generation Y which assisted to expose their specific characteristics.
Theoretical Framework: The underlying theories consist of employees’ general attitude towards organizational change as well as the distinct characteristics of Generation Y. For a more practice-oriented evaluation of the implementation of organizational change, the theory about change project teams is presented as well.

Findings: The study revealed that members of Generation Y are well equipped with a set of distinct characteristics that positively influence their attitude towards organizational change. Characteristics like “Informationalization”, “High level of education”, “High level of flexibility”, “Critical Thinking” and “Globality” were evaluated as having positive effects on their “Openness to Change”, “Readiness for Change”, “Commitment to Change”, and “Cynicism about Change”. Furthermore, those findings enhance existing selection processes when it comes to the collocation of change projects teams.
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1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a presentation of the background for this study, starting with an overview of today’s circumstances leading on to organizational change and the opportunities arising from demographic and generational change. A rough insight into the different generations and their characteristics is given, showing the potential for generational conflicts in change context. The discussion ultimately leads up to the investigated knowledge gap and research question.

1.1 Problem Background

The increasing acceleration of entrepreneurial processes implies new challenges for managers and their employees. Organizational change processes are needed due to external pressure as well as competitors and high-cost pressure. These factors often result in shifting production abroad to low-cost-countries, mergers and acquisitions, restructuring and job cutbacks are the consequences. The rapid technological development also forces organizations to introduce dynamic organizational changes (Lehner, 2015). It is the organizations’ duty to implement the changes and make these challenging restructuring processes happen. Nevertheless, the employees who are the ones to realize change must be taken into account. They have to be at particular focus when there are a number of sequenced change processes happening in times of constant development regarding environmental and technological issues (Lehner, 2015). Therefore, it is likely that within the classic “Unfreeze - Move - Refreeze” model by Lewin (1947) the “refreeze” stage often isn’t even reached because new changes have to be made before the latest change process has been fully implemented. According to Luhmann (1987), systems are not only adaptive but also structurally oriented towards their environment, and organizational changes are necessary to stay alive. When an organization has to change permanently, individuals’ characteristics become more and more important for the success of implementing changes and so do the different generations. Eventually, some individuals will not be able to keep the pace of change, and others will be scared of losing their job (Schreyögg, 1999; Lehner, 2015).

Not only the employees but also the executives are affected. They may feel over-challenged with their tasks and emotions, but also with leading of their employees in times of change and handling of their emotions. On the one hand, there is the demographic change which leads to employees having new demands and beliefs of their job. On the other hand, there are potentials and problems of the collaboration of different generations (Lehner, 2015).

In recent years organizations employ people from five different generations, and it is obvious that this occasion leads to new circumstances which have to be taken into consideration. These generations are differentiated in Post-war Generation (born 1946 – 1955), Baby-Boomers (born 1956 – 1965), Generation X (born 1966 – 1980), Generation Y (born 1981 – 1997) and Generation Z (born after 1995) (Kanning, 2016; Oertel, 2007). The definition of which age belongs to which generation varies considerably in the literature. The focus of this study lies on Generation Y where the boundaries for the beginning of the generation vary between the year of birth 1978 and 1984. The same applies to the end of the generation (1994 - 2000) (Schulenburg, 2016; Kanning, 2016; Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014;
Ruthus, 2014). To define a representable frame for this study, the authors decided to set the period from 1981 to 1997 which represents the average range of the current literature.

Without a doubt, a variety of generations in the workforce is capable of initiating new possibilities and opportunities for an organization such as increased creativity and enhanced problem-solving competencies. At the same time, varying beliefs and expectations in everyday work life could also lead to generational conflicts (Kerschreiter, Mojzisch, Schulz-Hardt, Brodbeck & Frey, 2003). In this context, different mindsets, working procedures as well as prejudices might especially have a negative impact on atmosphere and performance of employees. (Wegge, Roth & Schmidt, 2008).

This is the point where shifts in the implementation of change initiatives arise. Generation Y has replaced other generations and has become more dominant within the last decade. This generation seems different and their distinct characteristics could have an impact on change and the associated project teams, which are the basis for successful change projects. A proper combination of individuals is necessary to build a competent team. It may have to adapt to GenYers attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, a process in times of generational change will not be sufficient if only technical coherences from a rational and analytical perspective are taken into consideration (Lehner, 2015). The employees themselves are given a crucial role as they are the ones who have to support the goal of being achieved actively. A change process will only succeed if human factors, as well as all other factors, are being taken care of (Ellebracht, Lenz & Osterhold, 2009).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Organizations facing a constantly changing environment which requires them to adapt to changes to maintain their position within the market and furthermore keep up with continually emerging new business models (Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo & Shafiq, 2012). In times of organizations’ workforce consist of five different generations, change must be adjusted to the characteristics of new generations such as Generation Y. The latter may undoubtedly be considered the next generation in charge of organizational change (Schulenburg, 2016). They build the future and will increasingly take over more and more responsibility within the future development of organizations. It is, therefore, crucial to examine the attitude that characterizes how this generation encounters organizational change because change as such has become a constant momentum within the organizational life cycle (Georgalis, Samaratunga, Kimberly and Lu, 2015).

To examine the attitude towards change, the authors focus on four constructs which have been broadly studied in the context of organizational change. “Readiness for change” (Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby, 2000; Benzer, Charns, Hamdan & Afable, 2017), “Commitment to change” (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Morin, Meyer, Bélanger, Boudrias, Gagné, & Parker, 2016), “Openness to change” (Wanber & Banas, 2000; Augustsson, Richter, Hasson & von Thiele Schwarz, 2017) and “Cynicism about change” (Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2000; Oreg, Bartuneck, Lee & Do, 2018). Those attitudinal constructs are often used as critical variables in change literature and have distinct meanings and emphases. Therefore, they can provide different information about employees’ evaluation and concerns about organizational change initiatives (Choi, 2011). Choi (2011) states that the constructs are susceptible to situational variables and may change over time as the individual experiences
change. It could be, for example, influenced by positive experiences with previous change initiatives which then decreases bias against following change initiatives. The constructs will be briefly explained in the subsequent paragraphs to provide a rough understanding.

“Readiness for change” originally stems from the health sector and implies readiness on an individual level to end harmful health behaviors such as smoking or drug abuse and starting positive ones (Choi, 2011). In this context, readiness is concerned with the individual belief that change is needed and that the individual has the capacity for it (Choi, 2011). The concept of “Readiness for change” can also be applied to an organizational context. Hereby, employees try to make sense of a new environment and conclude its possible outcomes to evaluate whether the change process for the organization is needed and which implications the change has on them as individuals (J. D. Ford, L. W. Ford & D’Amelio, 2008). According to Jansen (2000), readiness for change is defined as the need for a specific change initiative and the organizational capacity to implement it successfully.

The construct “Commitment to change” has received great attention in change related studies. Commitment to change as an attitudinal construct for change is closely related to the employee’s commitment to an organization which has been defined by Mowday, Steers & Porter (1979) as “the relative strength of an individual’s linkage to the organization” (p.226). Following Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), employees’ commitment can be applied to various targets, for example, towards change. They follow up on that and further define “Commitment to change” as “a force (mindset) that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative” (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002, p. 475). They distinguish three different forms of this force, the desire to provide support for the change driven by the belief in its benefit (affective commitment), perceived costs that are associated in case of failure (continuance commitment), and a sense of obligation to provide support (normative commitment). Further research on “Commitment to change” has been built upon the three-component model by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) (Bouckenooghe, Schwarz & Minbashian, 2015; Mercurio, 2015; Foster, 2010).

Organization's employees play a significant role in a change initiative (Augustsson et al., 2017). Augustsson et al. (2017) state that the employees’ belief and attitude towards change do have a substantial impact on its progress and outcomes. They need to be open to change in order to support it positively, otherwise, the change will fail (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). “Openness to change” is defined as the willingness to support change and positively affect the potential consequences of change (Devos, Buelens & Bouckenooghe, 2007). There are some traits which can predict the openness of employees towards organizational change, such as self-esteem, risk tolerance, need for achievement, and locus of control (Oreg, 2006; Wanberg & Banas, 2000; Judge, Thoresen, Pucik & Welbourne, 1999; Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1994; Lau & Woodman, 1995). “Openness to change” also goes in hand with the employees’ information environment (Ertürk, 2008). When employees are well-informed about their role and the internal affairs of the organization, and when the quality of the received information is high, it could positively affect employees’ openness towards change (Miller et al., 1994).

The last construct “Cynicism about change” means having a pessimistic view about change efforts being successful and blaming the responsible change managers for being unmotivated and incompetent (Choi, 2011; Albrecht, 2008; Cindy, Neubert & Xiang, 2007; Bernerth, Armenakis, Feild & Walker, 2007; Wanous et al., 2000). Cole, Bruch & Vogel
(2006) defined it as “an evaluative judgment that stems from an individual’s employment experiences”. It comes from expectations, the experience of disappointment from failing to meet those expectations and eventually results in frustration (Andersson, 1996). Cynicism is capable of increasing the perception of being treated unfair, feelings of distrust as well as actions against the organization. As a consequence, symptoms such as emotional fatigue, burnout, lower organizational commitment and lower intention to engage in organizational citizenship behavior might appear (Bommer, Rich & Rubin, 2005; Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly, 2003) and may also influence other aspects of work like motivation to work (Choi, 2011).

A great number of researchers argue that change initiatives often fail since change leaders tend to underestimate the central role individuals play in the change process (Dievernich, Tokarski, & Gong, 2016; Choi, 2011). The individual plays a significant role on both sides, the change leader who needs to be fully committed to change to motivate the employees and drive the change and on the other side the employees who are essential to carry it out. The attitudinal constructs represent the employees’ attitudes towards organizational change and can be evaluated to understand which variables need to be adjusted in order to influence the mindset regarding change. As mentioned above the current workforce consists of five different generations that all have different mindsets regarding their position in an organization, their fulfillment at work, work-life balance and other factors. Thus, it is not only hard to manage and lead different generations in an organization, but also a big challenge to implement change with employees from different generations (Schulenburg, 2016; Parment, 2013; Klaffke, 2011, 2014).

Generational effects have been at focus of research for a long time and there are contradictory views on generational differences being existent or if age simply causes them. Kanning (2016) holds the view that generational effects do exist but that the main impact on differentiating attitudes is based on the stage of life. According to him, declining ambition to achieve prosperity through work is a simple effect of age. Some have already made it to decent prosperity which automatically diminishes the motivation to strive for more. However, there is much research focussing on the specific characteristics of generations and their influences on general economic aspects. For instance, there has been research on the subject how generational changes influence leadership and management approaches (Schulenburg, 2016; Parment, 2013; Klaffke, 2011, 2014).

However, there is a lack of research about Generation Y and their potential to perform differently in the situation of organizational change based on their distinct set of characteristics. The authors believe that this is useful to develop the understanding of specific generational characteristics and their effects on the attitude towards change. Knowledge about characteristics that affect the attitude towards change entails the likelihood to create successful change teams and ultimately implement organizational change more sufficient. Hence, the authors seek to answer the following research questions on the basis of this study.

1.3 Research Question

*Are there relations between distinct characteristics of Generation Y and their attitude towards change and does this result in new approaches for practical implementations?*
1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to scrutinize typical characteristics of Generation Y and find out if they influence their attitude (“Readiness for change”, “Commitment to change”, “Openness to change” and “Cynicism about change”) towards change projects. This enhances existing knowledge about the attitude towards change and how this interrelates with specific characteristics. The authors aim to find out which characteristics can be identified as beneficial for change and how that can be useful for collocating successful change project teams.

1.5 Delimitations

The range of this study is limited to that extent that it is only concerned with the characteristics the authors define for the members of Generation Y. Certainly, characteristics may deviate from one individual to another. This might even be the case if they are part of the same generation. Therefore, this study concentrates on the generalized characteristics that commonly describe the members of Generation Y. Those common characteristics have been examined by various researchers typically from the western world. The authors are aware of the fact that those characteristics might differ in other parts of the world. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the members of Generation Y, for example in eastern countries, might have evolved other characteristics. Most likely due to different circumstances they grew up with.

Another delimitation to this study has already been elaborated in chapter 1.1 and addresses the different opinions in the literature regarding which years of birth belong to Generation Y. To define a representable frame for this study, the authors decided to set the period from 1981 to 1997 which represents the average range of the current literature.

1.6 Key Concepts

*Generation Y*

“Generation Y” terms young people born between 1981 and 1997 (Kanning, 2016). The term was first used in 1993 by the magazine Ad Age ("Generation Y", 1993). Y is the logical consequence of the previous Generation X, but it also stands for “Why” which stands for the scrutinizing character of Generation Y. They are also called the “Millennials” as they are the youngest generation by the turn of the millennium (Forrester Consulting, 2006). GenY, as they are sometimes referred to within this study, are at the beginning of their careers and therefore soonly have to face what is the so-called ‘Rush Hour of Life’ (Klaffke, 2011). They grew up in a globalized world which is shaped by growing insecurity. The main collective catastrophic event was the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on 11th September.
The members of GenY are characterized by many similar traits which might influence the implementation of change initiatives.

**Attitudinal Constructs**

The Attitudinal Constructs have been used to serve as key variables in the organizational change context (Vakola, 2014; Marchalina & Ahmad, 2017; Augustsson et al. 2017; Oreg et al. 2018). The reaction to organizational change has been studied before considering general job attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment or person-environment fit (Choi, 2011). In this case, the attitudinal constructs are used to accurately identify people's attitude towards organizational change. In order to differentiate that, the authors specified their research on the following constructs: “Readiness for change”, “Commitment to change”, “Openness for change” and “Cynicism about change”. Generally, the attitude towards something can be seen as a mental and emotional entity which characterizes a person. This study focuses on the attitude towards organizational change.

**Organizational Change**

Organizational change can be described as an ongoing process in which an organization seeks to change its methods and aims to deal with new situations on the respective market. Following Jacobs, van Witteloostuijn & Christe-Zeyse (2013) organizational change is omnipresent but still often associated with failure. According to the majority of researchers, the success of organizational change increasingly relies on the positive reactions of change recipients (Tsaousis & Vakola, 2018). In times of increasing globalization, rapid pace of technological innovation, a developing knowledge workforce and changing social and demographic trends, the importance of organizational change becomes indispensable for organisations that have the aspiration to compete on an international level (Todnem By, 2005) and ensure their performance-survival aspects (Jacobs et al. 2013).

**Change Project Teams**

Project teams are essential in many parts of an organization. Those teams are mainly used to cope with additional or specific situations that an organization occasionally has to face. Often, different departments are involved (cross-departmental) in those projects which
makes it necessary to create a team of representatives of each department. Change related projects are a suitable illustration for cross-departmental teams being recommended, especially when it comes to organizational change projects. The team building might be the most critical phase of the project progression (Lauer, 2014). The heterogeneity of the team members often involves the risk of conflicts and misunderstandings which then often lead to inefficient team performances (Lauer, 2014).

1.7 Disposition

The study will follow the structure visualized below:

- The following chapter will provide relevant theory for the studied problem in order to provide a base for further examination. It starts with a presentation of attitudinal constructs in the field of change, four distinct constructs will be explained. The second part deals with common characteristics of the Generation Y members and finally the theoretical foundation of change project teams is presented.

- Chapter three outlines the methodology used in this study. The selection and collection of data used for the literature review, which serves as a basis for our theoretical framework, will be described.

- Chapter four contains the empirical findings which were gained by conducted interviews. As the interview questions derived from previous research and theories the findings are also disposed in the same structure to ensure clarity.

- Chapter five represents the analysis which contains of three consecutive levels of development. First, the two independent theories are interrelated and results are presented in Table 1. Second, the underlying theories were compared to the empirical findings of the first interview phase (Table 2), Third, the results of the second interview phase were integrated into the analysis. Chapter five ends up with a summary of the results and the conceptualization of a model (Figure 5).

- The last chapter serves to draw conclusions on the basis of the the previous chapters in order to present the findings of this study. This chapter will furthermore include practical implications, limitations and suggestions for further research.

Figure 1. Disposition of the Following Chapters
2. Theoretical Framework

The following chapter will provide relevant theory for the study at issue to provide a base for further examination. It starts with a presentation of attitudinal constructs in the field of change; “Readiness for change”, “Commitment to change”, “Openness to change” and “Cynicism about change”. The second part of the theory will deal with the characteristics of members of Generation Y and its effects on change initiatives in the workplace.

2.1 Attitudinal Constructs

Organizational change has been at focus of research for a long time. John P. Kotter is one of the most popular researchers in the field of change management. His change management model was first published in 1995 and was revised several times. Kotter (1995) created eight steps to transform organizations. These steps have in common that all of them describes some action related to people. Kotter emphasizes two crucial aspects for successful change. The first aspect is time, according to Kotter every change process goes through a series of phases that usually follow consecutively and require a considerable length of time (Kotter, 1995). The second significant aspect to take into consideration for successful change is the people and their perception towards change. The authors of this study acknowledge Kotter's emphasis on people and further believe that the success of change is highly dependent on people's attitude towards change.

To examine the attitude towards change more specifically, four different constructs are presented in the following chapter (Oreg et al., 2018; Choi, 2011; Oreg, Vakola & Armenakis., 2011; Rafferty, Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013). The extent to which a member of an organization is willing to strongly support organizational change, depends on various circumstances which are grounded in the individual mindset. The following paragraphs serve to further elaborate on four attitudinal constructs which have been studied as key variables to represent people's attitude towards change. Firstly, each of the constructs is outlined in general and will be presented in the context of organizational change afterward.

2.1.1 Readiness for Change

Origin of Readiness:

“Readiness for change” originates from the individual readiness which has been mainly studied in the health, psychology and medical literature. It is correlated to the level of self-efficacy of an individual (Cunningham, Woodward, Shannon, Macintosh, Lendrum, Rosenbloom & Brown, 2002; Oreg et al., 2011). An individual with a higher level of self-efficacy can be associated with a higher level of readiness for individual changes (Oreg et al., 2011). The studies concerning health, psychology and medical issues primarily focussed on the discontinuance of harmful health behaviors such as smoking or drug use. Readiness, in that respect, is concerned with the individuals’ beliefs that a change (stop smoking, stop using drugs) is essential at the individual level and can be successfully implemented (Choi, 2011). “Readiness for change” on the individual level can also be applied to the organizational level. The organization itself could be seen as an individual who needs to achieve a certain level of
readiness for change to successfully implement the changes. As the organization is represented by its employees (including all levels of management), the “Readiness for change” of an organization highly depends on the readiness of its members.

**Readiness in the Context of Organizational Change:**

The first construct is “Readiness for change”. Readiness can be compared to the Lewin’s (1947) concept of unfreezing which is reflected in employees’ beliefs, attitudes, and intentions respecting the extent to which change is needed and the organization’s ability and capacity to accomplish those changes (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993). The concept of unfreezing has also been at focus of more recent change literature. Rosenbaum, More & Steane (2018) investigated the development of planned organizational change models from Lewin’s three-step model until today and revealed that all 13 models have clear linkages to Lewin’s framework for change.

As mentioned above, “Readiness for change” can be related to the unfreezing phase and therefore, it can be described as the prior attitude towards change. Thereby, this construct can be distinguished from the others. Armenakis et al. (1993) argue that readiness is the “cognitive precursor to the behaviors of either resistance to, or support for, a change effort”. Schein (1979) stresses that an insufficient unfreezing process results in a high level of resistance towards change efforts among employees and is the reason that many change efforts fail. In accordance with that, Latta (2015) assessed that resistance to change efforts has detrimental effects on the implementation of change. This view is also supported by Georgalis et al. (2015).

Holt, Armenakis, Feild & Harris (2007) agree that readiness as a unique construct is one of the most critical factors involved in employees’ support for change initiatives. It has to be created a state of “Readiness for change” among the employees to implement change. This state of readiness has to be created before the introduction of change to minimize resistance after introducing the change intention (Holt et al., 2007). The attitude of an individual towards change in general consists of a person's affective reaction to change, cognitions about change and behavioral tendency towards change (Kwahk & Kim, 2008; Oreg et al., 2011). The affective reaction is characterized by the feeling of being linked to, satisfied with, or anxious about change (i.e., how they feel). The cognitive responses are the opinions the individual has on advantages, disadvantages, usefulness, and necessity of change and the knowledge and information needed to handle it (i.e., what they think). The behavioral responses can be considered the actions the individual has taken or may take in the future for or against the change (i.e., what they intend to do) (Vakola, Armenakis & Oreg, 2013; Kwahk & Kim, 2008).

Vakola (2014) emphasizes the differences between the individual and organizational “Readiness for change”. She describes an individual who is ready to change as one who exhibits a proactive and positive attitude towards change, which equals willingness to support change and confidence in succeeding in change. Vakola (2014) further argues that this attitude depends on whether the perceived benefits of change outweigh the anticipated risks. The perception of that is different for everyone. Employees who perceive a workplace change which affects them more directly, for instance, experience higher stress and therefore are more likely to develop a negative attitude towards change (Vakola, 2014). Oreg et al. (2011) reviewed that perceived advantage or disadvantage of change which directly affects the
employees’ work, has an impact on their job satisfaction levels, stress levels, psychological states, willingness to accept change and post-change job attitude.

According to Vakola (2014) and Oreg et al. (2011), the way employees respond to change is related to the individuals’ characteristics such as personality traits, coping styles, motivational needs, and demographics. This is consistent with Armenakis et al. (1993) who states that people will not perform well in change projects if they are not confident about their abilities. According to Judge et al. (1999), the positive affectivity is an additional strong and consistent dispositional variable related to coping with change.

2.1.2 Commitment to Change

Origin of Commitment:

The construct of “Commitment to change” has received great attention in research. It has been mainly conceptualized regarding employees’ organizational commitment in the area of psychology and management literature (Choi, 2011). Mowday et al. (1979) defined organizational commitment as, “the relative strength of an individual’s linkage to the organization” (p. 226). A more recent and general concept of commitment has been created by Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), who define commitment as “a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets” (p. 301). According to Owoyemi, Oyelere, Elegbede & Gbajumo-Sheriff (2011), commitment is not only a relation concept but also associated with generating human energy and activating the human mind. Furthermore, the implementation of new ideas and initiatives would be compromised without the employees’ commitment (Jaw & Liu, 2003). Mercurio (2015) stresses that commitment increasingly raises concern in organizational development as well as human resource development. Furthermore, committed talents can ensure and maintain a competitive advantage on the market which makes it a significant task for leaders to engage employees (Alvino, 2014). External factors such as the modern environment of economic uncertainty, fast changes, globalization, increasing competition and the rise of the flexible new generations drive the importance of employee commitment even more (Morrow, 2011).

Commitment in the Context of Organizational Change:

Building on the general theory of organizational commitment, Herscovitch & Meyer (2002) defined “Commitment to change” as “a force (mindset) that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative” (p. 475) within their new model. Conner (1993) describes “Commitment to change” as “the glue that provides the vital bond between people and change goals” (p. 147). This construct describes the attitude of the change recipients during the change project. Thus, “Commitment to change” differs from the remaining constructs.

Herscovitch & Meyer (2002) further differentiate between three types of “Commitment to change”: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance. The types derived from the three-component model of organizational commitment by (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The three states or mind-sets describe the likelihood of an employee remaining in an organization. The affective commitment represents the desire to remain; the continuance commitment describes the anticipated cost of leaving, and the normative commitment is the perceived obligation to remain. Meyer & Allen (1997) referred to the measures of the three mindsets as an employee’s commitment profile. Meyer & Herscovitch
(2001) argue that the core essence of commitment is the same disregarding of the target of that commitment. That means the three-component model could also be applied to “Commitment to change”. Following the approach of Meyer & Herscovitch (2002), (a) affective “Commitment to change” can be seen in a desire to provide support for the change based on the assumption of its essential benefits, (b) continuance “Commitment to change” describes the recognition of associated costs with the failure which motivates to provide support for change, and (c) normative “Commitment to change” emphasizes a sense of obligation to provide support for the change. Meyer & Herscovitch (2002) claim that these three mindsets can be measured independently from one another. Choi (2011) also argues that “Commitment to change” is a better predictor of support for change than organizational commitment.

In sum, the literature of “Commitment to change” reveals that different behavioral consequences are associated with different forms of “Commitment to change”. Effective leadership practices as stated by Michaelis, Stegmaier & Sonntag (2010), adequate technology/infrastructure to support change (Shum, Bove & Auh, 2008) and satisfaction with Human Resource practices (Conway & Monks, 2008) are correlated with a high level of “Commitment to change”. The three distinct constructs (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment) have also been utilized in recent research to show coherence between internal communication and “Commitment to change” (Marchalina & Ahmad, 2017). Soenen & Melkonian (2017) emphasize that “Commitment to change” is a crucial determinant of employees’ actual behavioral support for change and the cooperation in change. The literature has continuously agreed upon the fact that committed employees are the key to the ultimate success of change initiatives (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, Srinivas, Lal & Topolnytsky, 2007; Soenen & Melkonian, 2017).

2.1.3 Openness to Change

Origin of Openness:

Openness has been explored as an underlying trait of flexibility and it is compared to intolerance, rigidity, dogmatism, and premature closure (McCartt & Rohrbaugh, 1995). Psychologists argue that being cognitively and behaviorally flexible in dealing with new situations is a primary key factor in personality structure (Digman, 1990). Especially openness to experience defines individuals as having a range of interests and a fascination with novelty (Robbins, 2005). While people who are extremely outgoing, are usually characterized as being creative, curious, and artistically sensitive; people who are slightly introverted, are described as being more conventional and tend to feel more comfortable in their comfort zone (Choi, 2011).

Openness in the Context of Organizational Change:

A change initiative usually requires a collective behavioral change by employees (Nielsen, Randall, Holten & Rial Gonzale, 2010; Weiner, 2009; Weiner, Lewis & Linnan, 2009). The affected employees are not only passive recipients of change, but they instead play an active role in the change process (Augustsson et al., 2017). That means their beliefs and attitudes about a change process are likely to have substantial impact on its progress and outcomes (Augustsson et al., 2017; Damschroeder, Aron, Keith, Kirsch, Alexander & Lowery, 2009; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate & Kyriakidou,
It has been argued by Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder (1993), that employees need to be open to change to support it. Insufficient “Openness to change” among involved employees can be one of the reasons why change initiatives fail (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). “Openness to change” is a crucial attitudinal mindset prior to the change initiative as well as during the change project.

According to Devos et al. (2007), “Openness to change” is defined as the willingness to support change and positively affect the potential consequences of change. Other researchers found that traits such as self-esteem, risk tolerance, need for achievement, and locus of control can predict the openness of employees towards organizational change (Oreg, 2006; Wanberg & Banas, 2000; Judge et al., 1999; Miller et al., 1994; Lau & Woodman, 1995).

In 2008, Ertürk showed that the information environment also affects employees’ attitude towards organizational change. Employees who are well-informed about their role and the goings-on within the organization in the initial stage of change and when they feel included in the task and social information network, they are likely to be open to change. It was also found that the perceived quality of received information about change could positively affect the “Openness to change” of employees (Miller et al., 1994), as well as participating in the decision process and being exposed to change (Ertürk, 2008; Axtell, Wall, Stride, Pepper, Clegg, Gardner & Bolden, 2002). Trust in leaders and a successful personal history of change are also positively related (Choi, 2011; Devos et al., 2007). Other studies have shown that employees with a high level of change self-efficacy, internal locus of control, personal resilience and need for achievement are also more likely to be open to change (Choi, 2011; Wanberg & Banas, 2000; Miller et al., 1994). Oreg et al. (2018) state that change disengagement is linked to adverse outcomes for change recipients, such as higher cynicism, which leads to the following attitudinal construct.

2.1.4 Cynicism about Change

Origin of Cynicism:

Cynicism can be understood as “an evaluative judgment that stems from an individual’s employment experiences” (Cole, Bruch & Vogel, 2006, p. 463). It contains three dimensions. Firstly, the belief that the organization has a lack of integrity. Secondly, the negative effect towards the organization. Moreover, the third dimension is the tendency to derogatory and critical behavior towards the organization which is consistent with these beliefs and affects (Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar, 1998).

Bommer et al. (2005) showed that cynicism leads to an increase of the belief of unfairness, feelings of distrust, and other actions against the organization. Other researchers found that regardless the certainty or validity of the individuals’ perceptions on which the cynicism grows, the result of organizational cynicism are real consequences (Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly, 2003; Abraham, 2000). Examples are emotional fatigue, burnout, lower organizational commitment, and lower intention to engage in organizational citizenship behavior (Liegman, 2015; Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly, 2003).

Andersson (1996) studied organizational cynicism from the viewpoint of social exchange theory. He wrote that cynicism comes from expectations, the experience of disappointment from failing to meet those expectations and following frustration. Employees who see an organization as generally dishonest and cheating do not expect that organizational
changes will be undertaken seriously, and they then naturally expect the change initiative to fail (Dean et al., 1998).

**Cynicism in the Context of Organizational Change:**

“Cynicism about change” is defined as a pessimistic view about change efforts being successful. It can arise even before a change project has started when the dedicated staff has gained negative experiences in the past, as well as during the change initiative. The responsible individuals for initiating the changes are blamed for being unmotivated and incompetent (Choi, 2011; Albrecht, 2008; Cindy et al., 2007; Bernerth et al., 2007; Wanous et al., 2000). As one can see, the definition is a composite of two different elements. The pessimism about change being successful and blaming the responsible managers for one’s pessimism (Brown & Cregan, 2008; Wanous et al., 2000).

“Cynicism about change” must be seen critically because it activates the self-fulfilling prediction and can create a dangerous cycle (Choi, 2011). When “Cynicism about change” leads in the end to failed implementation, the failure supports the cynical beliefs, and it comes to new attempts for change, which are even less likely to succeed (Bommer et al., 2005). However, that is not the only consequence. “Cynicism about change” can also flow over into other aspects of work life and may decrease the commitment and motivation to work (Choi, 2011).

To sum up the aforesaid, researchers found that effective leadership practices, trust in leaders and positive experience with previous change initiatives are negatively related to “Cynicism about change” (Bateh, Castaneda & Farah, 2013; Qian & Daniels, 2008; Cindy et al., 2007; Bommer et al., 2005), as well as involvement and participation can lower cynicism (Oreg et al., 2018; Brown & Cregan, 2008).

2.2 Characteristics of Generation Y

Nowadays, Generation Y is almost entirely integrated in the workforce. Baby Boomers are retiring, the Great Recession has had a massive impact on business, technology has grown exponentially and has a great impact on the working world in different ways (Hobart & Sendek, 2014). Within the next years, the Gen Y will have the majority in the workforce, that is more than a good reason to study it in detail, especially in respect of the increasing number of change initiatives in organizations (Hobart & Sendek, 2014). Generation Y brings new leadership challenges as they claim a different set of leadership and mentoring than the previous generations. This is mainly affected by circumstances in which the members of Generation Y grew up (Kanning, 2016). To identify in which way the Gen Y differentiates from other generations, its’ characteristics need to be discussed in detail. It will be reviewed how researchers have analyzed their characteristics and which impact they have on the attitudinal constructs “Readiness for change”, “Commitment to change”, “Openness to change” and “Cynicism about change”. These constructs have significant influences on the successful implementation of change initiatives.

When first GenYers came into the workforce in 2000, Howe & Strauss, a renowned team when it comes to the analysis of generations’ characteristics, studied their distinguishing traits. The authors defined the characteristics of GenYers as unique and vital. They are full of promise, not only for themselves but also for the future. They are sheltered because they have
been smothered with safety rules and devices. As a result of their trust and optimism, they are confident and also characterized as team-oriented, been raised on sports teams and group learning. They are seen as achieving because they experienced higher school standards and got taught a sense of accountability. They are in a way pressured, need to excel, and do the best they can (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Seven years later, in 2007, when some members of Generation Y were already well-established in the workplace, Howe & Strauss followed up on their previous research and analyzed them in “Harvard Business Review” to extend their existing investigations. They emphasized that Generation Y is more confident, trusting, and teachable in the workplace than the Generation X and the Baby Boomers. They are also seen as more pampered, risk-averse, and dependent. Employers say that they need constant feedback and have a weakness in fundamental job skills such as punctuality and proper dress. Managers described that they can perform great when they are allowed to work in teams towards clearly defined goals (Howe & Strauss, 2007). They have a talent for cooperation and organization skills, which would lead to less rivalry and more cooperation if the majority of the workforce are GenYers. Generation Y needs a more ordered work environment and a manager with more definite lines of authority and supervision. According to Howe & Strauss (2007), a greater number of team projects is needed to get the best performance out of Generation Y. They also value non-monetary benefits, such as job security and balance between their work lives and their private lives, higher than bonuses.

In 2014 Hobart & Sendek discovered some novel characteristics of GenYers and also supported the previous work by Howe & Strauss (2000; 2007). They state that Generation Y has a need for personal growth and their self-development should contribute to the organization’s success (Hobart & Sendek, 2014). They also highlight that the GenYers need constant feedback, as Howe & Strauss (2007) stated before. Besides that, the employees of Generation Y are likely to affect long-term change (Hobart & Sendek, 2014).

The authors identified a lot of different characteristics of Generation Y from various studies. Most of the characteristics complemented each other, but some also interfered. The authors tried to find the essence of these characteristics and put them into superordinate categories. This reduction narrowed down ten personality traits which are seen, by the majority of researchers, as commonly distinct among Generation Y and serve as an excellent foundation to investigate the correlations between the characteristics and the attitude towards change. However, the authors do not assume that these traits characterize all GenYers to the same extent. One should rather see them as characteristics which are well- or less-marked on specific individuals. If one assumes a normal distribution, like it is common in the field of personality traits (Hossiep & Paschen, 2003), there is, for example, on average a significant stronger achievement orientation in Generation Y in comparison to previous generations (Schulenburg, 2016). However, it cannot be ruled out that there might be GenYers who are less achievement-oriented than individuals from previous generations, but the probability for such a constellation is relatively small.

For practice, this means that one can find specific traits of Generation Y, but each GenYer is an individual, who is unique regarding personality. But for the record, the chances that the characteristics apply to an individual of Generation Y are high. In the following paragraphs, the authors will present those ten characteristics mentioned above more detailed to display possible correlations optimally.
2.2.1 Informationalization

The first characteristic of Generation Y is “Informationalization. It describes the importance of information and the flow of information for Generation Y. Generation Y can be described as a group of individuals, who have a wide variety of information or who can get this information in short time (Schulenburg, 2016). The reason for that is the development and spreading of the internet and availability of computers and smartphones. Generation Y grew up with these technologies and learned to intuitively deal with a high volume of information at the same time, also known as multitasking (Stenger, 2014; Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014). It also stands for permanent communication via social media and as well a need for permanent feedback and the latest hardware for information processing as a status symbol (Schulenburg, 2016).

2.2.2 Achievement Orientation

Another trait of Generation Y is a definite “Achievement orientation”. The increase in wealth over the last decades is the reason why work isn’t interpreted as securing one’s livelihood anymore. For Generation Y, it is more the realization of one’s demands and wishes. The focus is no longer on earning money, but on the intrinsic motivation of the work itself. Another reason is an increasingly competitive society through globalization and the Schengen Area, which leads to higher performance and self-discipline (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014).

2.2.3 Educational Level

A high level of education characterizes the members of Generation Y. One reason for that is that they spend more time on education which results in a higher level of knowledge (Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2010). Another reason is the increased wealth which takes the pressure from the GenYers to get as quickly as possible a job to earn money. Hence, more time for education is left over. The third reason is the increased variety of education through the Bologna-process. A higher educational level makes the individuals of Generation Y willing to have a challenging job. The longer time they spent learning, familiarize them with learning and let them experience it no longer as a burden but as a tool for personal development (Schulenburg, 2016).

2.2.4 Community Orientation

Strong “Community orientation” is a trait which applies to any individual independent of their generation (Aronson, Wilson & Akert; 2011). The special feature of Generation Y is the increasing importance of social interactions within groups as well as the variety of forms of social communities (Schulenburg, 2016). From the beginning of the 1980s, life is shaped by “Internationalization” and increasing competition what leads to increasing complexity of life. This occasion made people move together and create social communities.

Another point is that the increasing wealth let young GenYers early move away from their families and interact more with their circle of friends. Belonging to a social community strengthens social competencies, to arrange oneself with other group members (Schirmer, Kiesling, Nolde & Spengler, 2014). Thus, it creates the possibility for teamwork and the necessity for social aspects in work life. Besides, the digital era let GenYers think in networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn (Breuer, 2011) and strengthen the ability to socialize.
2.2.5 Flexibility

Another personality trait of GenYers is their high level of “Flexibility” (Schirmer et al., 2014). According to Hurrelmann & Albrecht (2014) one reason could be that GenYers grew up in times of political, economic and social changes and they adapted to these environmental changes with a high level of “Flexibility”. Another reason could be that one has to stay flexible to stay competitive (Bullinger, 2002) in times of short innovation cycles. For employers, the familiarization to innovation may make organizational changes more straightforward to implement.

2.2.6 Low Power Distance

“Low power distance” is a characteristic of Generation Y as well (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014). It is a term which was first used from Hofstede. It is used to describe how individuals in lower positions react to the unequal distribution of power in comparison to their superior managers. When the power distance is low, it means that the GenYers see the unequal distribution of power as negative. They do not accept it because they often have a better education than their managers. Consequently, there is no reason for this inequality of power, and Generation Y likes flexible and flat hierarchies (Röttig, 2011).

2.2.7 Self-confidence

Strong “Self-confidence” is in some way linked to the trait before (Pendergast, 2010). GenYers are optimistic and see their working life as a chance where everything is possible (Röttig, 2011). The “Self-confidence” of Generation Y grew over the years because their parents, advertisement on the consumer goods market and employers courted them. Also, the shrinking birth rate is a factor influencing their “Self-confidence”. Parents who deliberately decided for children show more appreciation for them and their “Self-confidence” increases (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014). Besides, the skill shortage positively influenced GenYers’ self-confidence. They expect high salaries, individual treatment and supervision and enjoyment of work, otherwise, they will look for a new and better job.

2.2.8 Freedom Orientation

Another characteristic of GenYers is that they are highly freedom-oriented. One reason for that is the European liberalization, which means that borders are open and everybody was free to move across them. “Freedom orientation” is like a status symbol for the Generation Y and it leads to the wish for realizing one’s own goals and active participation in their work life. The wish for self-fulfillment results in high demand for free time to realize aims in their personal life. Furthermore, the “Freedom orientation” results in a particular need for good work-life-balance (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014).

2.2.9 Critical Thinking

Van Rooi (2011) says that the Generation Y is extremely critical of anything made into an absolute truth which let them look at things from different perspectives. Everything that’s fixed into categories is to be seen as critical in their eyes. The reason for that is that they are well educated, tolerant and free to think in different and new ways. This skepticism made the need for transparency grow. Instructions, decisions and also performance evaluations of managers have to be reasonable and fulfill specific criteria.
2.2.10 Globality

The last characteristic of the Generation Y is high “Globality” (Donnison, 2007). Globalization affects open-mindedness and tolerance. GenYers are more open to things they are not thoroughly familiar with. They see the diversity of individuals not as a barrier but as a valuable source of inspiration and new ideas (Huntley, 2006). They are willing and able to work in heterogeneous teams, and it is nothing exceptional anymore to go abroad (Ruthus, 2014).

2.3 Organizational Change

Organizational change is in the focus of theorists for many decades. The necessity for organizations to implement change as a process goes back to the early work of Lewin (1947) who conceptualized change in successive phases of unfreezing, moving and refreezing. Even though concepts have developed further, the initial idea remains. Schein (1988) argues that organizations constantly have to achieve “external adaptation and internal integration” (p. 94) to successfully operate in multiple environments. Those are divided into temporal, external and internal environments (Senior & Fleming, 2006). Furthermore, organizations have to deal with adaptations and integrations rapidly to anticipate opportunities and/or threats and react to them with according knowledge (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990; Senior & Fleming, 2006; Jacobs et al., 2013). Although, organizational change has become indispensable the implementation is still associated with a high number of failures (Jacobs et al., 2013; Georgalis et al., 2015). Failure is often precipitated through poor planning, frustrating results and unexpected consequences that alter resources from operational tasks, disturb routines and badly influence the trust of employees (Jacobs et al., 2013). Pieterse, Cанизls & Homan (2012) mention that only one-third of organizational change initiatives were considered as a success by their leaders. Those low success rates are often also related to resistance to change among the employees of an organization as they play a significant role in the implementation of organizational change (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). Overcoming resistance to change and turn it into “Commitment to change” as a critical determinant of employees’ behavioral support for change is the crucial step for successful organizational change (Soenen & Melkonian, 2017).

Organizations are dealing with change in different ways; the approach is mainly dependent on the size of the respective organization. Some bigger organizations have their own project department with supporting in-house consultants whereas smaller organizations are dealing with it ad hoc where change is required. It is also common to acquire assistance from external consultancies to facilitate organizational change (Jacobs et al., 2013). In any case, organizational change is diverse and often affects the entire organization (e.g. strategy, performance, future goals and objectives et cetera) which is why many different departments should be involved. Consequently, change is generally performed in project teams with representatives from different departments to cover all perspectives. The next chapter will elaborate on change project teams and their ideal collocation.

2.3.1 Change Project Teams

Change processes in organizations are usually implemented through organizational teams or project teams. Change projects slightly differ from other projects which makes them
unique and more challenging. Change is likely to affect the entire organization which means that some people, especially in large organizations, are differently affected by change (Kaune, 2010). Therefore, the right team building, the progress and the results-oriented control are essential success factors for organizational change processes (Kaune, 2010; Pläge, 2011).

The team building process has to consider certain aspects, such as organization policies, individual aspects and objective aspects (Kaune, 2010). To avoid renegotiations with the works council, it is advisable to have representatives of the works council in the change team. Thus, the employees’ interests are taken care of during the entire change process. Individual aspects of the team building are essential to create a diverse team where the members are chosen according to their strength and weaknesses (Belbin, 2010). Belbin (2010) distinguishes between eight conceptualized team roles which are all evaluated according to their strength and weaknesses. They complement each other and build the basis for a successful team (Belbin, 2010). The distinct roles of the team members by Belbin gained a great deal of attention in the literature. They were based on the results of a case study which was conducted to find out about important factors of building a successful management team. The eight distinct roles are distinguished by their specific characteristics and capabilities which are sufficient to create a vital balance of different personalities. Belbin (2010) named them according to their primary objective for the team performance. “Chairman”, “Shaper”, “Planter”, “Monitor Evaluator”, “Company Worker”, “Resource Investigator” and “Completer” (Belbin, 2010). Each role has a certain function in the team which is based on their capabilities and strength. It has to be mentioned that the compound of teams in practice is always dependent on the capacities. Thus, it is not reasonable to staff a small team with every single role above. It is rather important to keep a good balance of the characters among the team members. E.g. a team which only consists of creative team members might lose the “down-to-earthiness”. It is therefore important to complement the creative team with some serious and reliable members. Lauer (2014) states that one of the most challenging aspects of change teams is their cross-functional character which makes them more heterogeneous than projects teams within the same department. Combining members of different departments with each other to form a successful change team is on the one hand challenging but on the other hand inevitable.

Czichos (2014) argues that the ideal staffing for change projects consists of a project manager, functional experts and representatives of the affected divisions. Representatives of the HR department, the works council, and the IT department are some examples which have to be involved in a change project as they are usually affected by the change. Even though these guidelines still apply to an effective team building process, new advancements are constantly changing the environment in which team’s work. Technological advancements, for example, have given employees and employers greater possibilities. It enables them to expand their location of work towards other places than the physical workplace, which has become popular among employees and favors a better work-life balance. Besides that, technological advancements have created the potential to work with business partners all over the world (Finkelstein, Truxillo, Fraccaroli & Kanfer, 2015). This aspect also brings new opportunities regarding the composition of work teams. The teams are no longer restricted to the same geographical position to work together properly as the communication in real time has developed so efficiently and inexpensively. The endless combination of talent and characters in project teams is, of course, a tempting but also risky
option (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Virtual teams require, for example, new skills among managers to guarantee effectiveness.

### 2.4 Analysis Model

The theory of Generation Y Characteristics and Attitudinal Constructs were compared and significant relations developed in a matrix. The theoretical developments were verified by the empirical findings and then applied to the context of organizational change and change projects.

#### Figure 2. Analysis Model

#### 2.5 Theoretical Development

The theoretical findings of this study are mainly focusing on the attitude towards change which is presented in four different constructs and the universal characteristics of Generation Y. The constructs “Readiness for change”, “Commitment to change”, “Openness for change” and “Cynicism about change” have been evaluated to determine and define the general behavior of employees in changing situations. Furthermore, the authors have examined ten specific characteristics of Generation Y which are generally applicable to the majority of the GenYers. In the next step, the authors have interrelated the four constructs and the characteristics of Generation Y to find relations between them. The authors evaluated those relations as positive, neutral or negative effects on the respective attitudinal construct.

**Readiness for Change and its Interconnection with Generation Y Characteristics:**

As Vakola (2014) and Oreg at al. (2011) emphasized, the way employees respond to change is related to the individuals’ characteristics, such as personality traits, coping styles, motivational needs, and demographics.

In a change process, there is a high level of knowledge and information needed to handle it (Kwahk & Kim, 2008). Generation Y can deal with a wide variety and a high
volume of information at the same time and the members know about the importance of a permanent flow of information (Schulenburg, 2016). Members of Generation Y are also able to communicate as well as receive and give feedback permanently. Therefore, these skills are helpful to let the “Readiness for change” of Generation Y increase and better information processing lets the skepticism prior to the change decrease.

Readiness is also favored of “Achievement Orientation”, which is characterized by the realization of one’s demands, wishes and the intrinsic motivation of the work itself (Schulenburg, 2016). It leads to higher performance and self-discipline (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014).

As Oreg et al. (2011) stresses, an individual with a higher level of self-efficacy can be associated with a higher level of “Readiness for changes”. Individuals who are ready to change are willing to support it (Vakola, 2014). The self-efficacy mentioned above and willingness to support change can be equated with motivation for the work itself and high performance and self-discipline to realize one’s demands and wishes.

Also, the “Educational level” can have positive influences on the readiness for change. A high educational level makes individuals willing to have a challenging job. They see learning as a chance for personal development and growth (Schulenburg, 2016). That implies that Generation Y is ready for change because change is rather considered as an opportunity for personal development. They see it as a challenge, and they mainly focus on the advantages for themselves than on occurring disadvantages.

Before the introduction of change, many employees are afraid because it will bring more work which means a higher personal stress level (Vakola, 2014). A high level of “Flexibility” implies that an individual is familiar with changes and know how to handle it. For Generation Y, being flexible means staying competitive and achieving work life goals. “Flexibility” in relation to high “Achievement orientation” means that the GenYers know how to handle a higher stress level. They are ready to address the changes because they are not gridlocked. They grew up in a permanently changing environment and are used to it.

Pendergast (2010) stated that Generation Y is self-confident. They are optimistic and see their working life as a chance where everything is possible (Röttig, 2011). Choi (2011) wrote that readiness is concerned with the individuals believes that a change at the individual level is essential and can be successfully implemented. This can also be applied to the organizational level. Trust in the own performance and abilities positively affect “Readiness for change”. Vakola (2014) describes an individual who is ready to change as one who exhibits a proactive and positive attitude towards change, which equals confidence in succeeding in change. This goes hand in hand with Armenakis et al. (1993) who said that people would not perform well in change projects when they are not confident about their abilities.

As the last point, the authors found that “Freedom Orientation” as a characteristic of Generation Y has negative influences on the “Readiness for change”. “Freedom Orientation” is characterized by the wish for self-fulfillment which results in high demand for free time and a good work-life balance. This need does not fit more working hours and a higher level of stress during change projects.

The authors could not find any interconnections between “Readiness for change” and “Community orientation”, “Low power distance”, “Critical Thinking” and “Globality”.
Commitment to Change and its Interconnection with Generation Y Characteristics:

Generation Y is said to be achievement-oriented. They want to realize their demands and wishes. Their focus is not on earning money but on the work itself. To achieve a job that is set as a goal in work life, it is crucial to be committed to an organization. The longer an individual works for an organization, the better are the chances of advancement. Being intrinsically motivated means that the work itself motivates an individual. When it comes to a change project at work, members of Generation Y have a desire to provide support for the change based on the assumption of its essential benefits for the organization and also for their job (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2002).

Working in a changing organization implies having a challenging job. For a change project, every employee from the simple worker to the top manager is important to implement the changes successfully. Each employee has to learn new processes and broaden his or her skill set. Additional work is necessary and members of Generation Y are more open for that. They pursue ambitious jobs and see learning new things during change projects no longer as a burden but as a tool for their personal development (“High level of education”) (Schulenburg, 2016).

Meyer & Allen (1997) described organizational commitment with the likelihood that an employee will remain in an organization dependent on the desire to remain, the perceived costs of leaving, and the perceived obligation to remain. Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) argue that this model can also be applied to “Commitment to change”. In the literature Generation Y is seen as having a high “Flexibility” (Schirmer et al., 2014). Grown up in times of constantly changes, Generation Y is open for personal changes and undeterred of the pace of changes around them. Consequently, this means, that the members of this Generation do not hesitate to apply for new jobs when they do not like the current one anymore. They are not bonded to an organization in the same way as it was the case some decades ago with previous generations.

Moreover, strong “Self-confidence” negatively influences “Commitment to change”. Generation Y expects high salaries, individual treatment, and supervision as well as the enjoyment of work (Schulenburg, 2016). These high expectations towards their jobs are not met very often. When a member of Generation Y is, for example, not satisfied with his salary, he or she will look for a new job which is better paid (Schulenburg, 2016).

According to Owoyemi et al. (2011) commitment is not only a relation concept but also associated with generating human energy and activating human mind. Without employees’ commitment, the implementation of new ideas and initiatives would be compromised (Jaw & Liu, 2003). This definition can be set into relation with the “Critical way of thinking” of Generation Y. Van Rooi (2011) says that GenYers are seeing things from different perspectives and think in different and new ways. These are precisely the skills which are needed to implement changes successfully.

Besides new and different ways of thinking, Generation Y is open minded towards other people as well (“Globality”) (Schulenburg, 2016). Especially in collaboration with heterogeneous groups of colleagues or with external consultants, members of Generation Y are tolerant and willing to adapt to different situations.

The authors could not find any interconnections between “Commitment to change” and “Informationalization”, “Community Orientation”, “Low Power Distance” and “Freedom Orientation”.
Openness to Change and its Interconnection with Generation Y Characteristics:

According to Ertürk (2008), the information environment affects employees’ “Openness towards change”. Employees who are well informed and feel included in the task and social information network of the company are likely to be open to change. Also, the quality of the received information has a positive impact on openness (Miller et al., 1994). Since high “Informationalization” is a specific trait of Generation Y, the members can deal with a high volume of information at the same time and additionally need permanent feedback (Schulenburg, 2016). Hence, it is especially for Generation Y most important to receive much information. The more information, feedback and “insider information” about the change process members of Generation Y get, the more they feel as being a part of the team, trust in the leaders and consequently the more open they are to change.

Choi (2011), Wanberg & Banas (2000) and Miller et al. (1994) showed in their studies that employees with a high “Achievement Orientation” are more likely to be open to change. Also, other researchers found that traits such as self-esteem and need for achievement can predict the openness of employees towards organizational change (Oreg, 2006; Judge et al., 1999; Lau & Woodman, 1995). Augustsson et al. (2017) wrote that employees affected by change are not only passive recipients of change, but they play an active role in the change process, which means they have a substantial impact on its progress and outcomes. That is exactly what achievement-oriented individuals from Generation Y like and what they aim at.

The “High educational level” of Generation Y, already mentioned in the sections above, makes the members willing to have a challenging job and learn new things (Schulenburg, 2016). These are good requirements to be open towards change. Besides that, GenYers are characterized as having a range of interests, a fascination with novelty and being curious (Choi, 2011; Robbins, 2005). All these personality traits also match people who are familiar with and excited about learning new things for personal development, such as GenYers.

Aronson et al. (2011) found that Generation Y has strong “Community Orientation”, and it is vital for the members to interact within groups socially (Schulenburg, 2016). Belonging to a social community let individuals arrange oneself with other group members and create the possibility of teamwork (Schirmer et al., 2014). Members of Generation Y tend to see their organization they are working in as a community. If they work together in project teams with colleagues, it is rather likely that they work together with their friends and see the team as a social community. When it comes to change projects, GenYers rather participate and work for their team which they see as a social community, than for the change project or the organization itself.

Schirmer et al. (2014) found in their studies that Generation Y stands out due to a high level of “Flexibility”. It is closely related to the attitudinal construct of openness. It has been explored as an underlying trait of “Flexibility” (Choi, 2011; McCartt & Rohrbaugh, 1995) and psychologists argue that being cognitively and behaviorally flexible in dealing with new situations is a key factor in personality structure (Digman, 1990). For the success of change projects, the “Flexibility” of involved employees can be seen as a determinant. The involvement of flexible GenYers and their familiarization to innovation may make organizational changes easier to implement.

Furthermore, Röttig (2011) describes Generation Y as optimistic. The members see their working life as a chance where everything is possible (Röttig, 2011). This attitude makes
GenYers perfectly fitting for participating in change projects. They are convinced that new plans will work out and be successful in the end. Their high “Self-confidence” in combination with “High level of education” and “Achievement Orientation” can even help to convince colleagues who are pessimistically minded of the contrary.

Another characteristic of Generation Y is that the members are extremely “Critical” of anything made into an absolute truth. This can have positive influences on “Openness towards change”. Extremely open people are characterized as creative and being fascinated with novelty (Choi, 2011; Robbins, 2005). These two traits can be compared with the characteristics of critical GenYers, who are seeing things from different perspectives and being tolerant and free to think in new ways.

Also, high “Globality” of Generation Y can have a positive impact on “Openness to change”. In times of change, employees are confronted with many new situations, proceedings, and ideas. High “Globality” makes individuals more open to things they are not entirely familiar with and see new situations as a valuable source of inspiration and new ideas.

The authors could not find any interconnections between “Openness to change” and the characteristics of “Low Power Distance” and “Freedom Orientation”.

Cynicism about Change and its Interconnection with Generation Y Characteristics:

The last attitudinal construct “Cynicism about change” is the only one having a negative impact on change. Highly educated members of Generation Y might be less afraid of change processes. They might have a better understanding that changes in the organization are necessary to stay competitive. Cynicism grows when the workers cannot understand why procedures from their everyday work life have to be changed after decades of doing it the old way. Employees often build habits when their job is the same every single day. This is the case in jobs at a lower level which are performed by lower educated people. The jobs on management level are more varying, and the higher educated employees on this level do not build strong habits. As a consequence, it comes to cynicism more rarely on the management level.

Also, the characteristic “Low Power Distance” is having an impact on the attitudinal construct of “Cynicism about change”. It means that the members of Generation Y see an unequal distribution of power as negative. This might have an influence on change and cynicism in two ways. The first scenario is that Generation Y does not accept their managers because they often have a better education than them and there is no reason for this inequality. They blame the upper-level managers as incompetent. The other scenario is that one GenYer is working in a company with flat hierarchies. When it comes to change projects in such an organization, and everybody is nearly on the same level, the change progress would be plodding. Every employee would discuss every little step in detail, and the change would stagnate. In some implementation phases of change, it is essential to have a leader who is calling the shots.

The next characteristic strong “Self-confidence” exhibits similar influences as “Low Power Distance”. A member of Generation Y who is strongly self-confident wouldn’t take their change manager seriously. The members of Generation Y are entirely convinced about their skills and would be cynical towards a person in charge who handles something differently than he or she would do it. Just the smallest mistake of the manager would be a
reason for them to be skeptical and doubtful. A strongly self-confident person might even tell and infect colleagues with this way of thinking.

As the last characteristic, “Globality” stands for open-mindedness and tolerance towards new ideas. Members of Generation Y see the diversity of individuals not as a barrier but as a valuable source of inspiration. This personality trait is totally different from the characteristics of cynical people towards change. Cynical people are blaming others for being incompetent and unmotivated. They are pessimistic towards new approaches and change being successful. Comparing “Globality” and “Cynicism about change” shows that the strongly marked characteristic of “Globality” weakens the potential of GenYers being cynical towards change managers.

The authors could not find any interconnections between “Cynicism about change” and “Informationalization”, “Achievement Orientation”, “Community Orientation”, “Flexibility”, “Freedom Orientation” and “Critical Thinking”.

2.6 Theoretical Development Matrix

This own developed model is based on the previous discussion about the interconnections of the two main theories, Attitudinal Constructs and specific Generation Y characteristics. No empirical data from the interviews is included at this first stage of the analysis.

In the left column, the ten distinct characteristics of Generation Y are listed. Each row represents one characteristic. Each of the four vertical columns represents one attitudinal construct. When there is a positive influence of one of the characteristics on the constructs, it is marked with a “+”, negative influence is marked by a “-” and when no influence could be examined it is marked with an “o”.

It is important to mention that “Cynicism about change” is the only attitude which negatively influences change. Therefore, the plus implies that cynicism is diminished by a strong form of the according characteristic and the minus on the other side implies that the characteristic favors cynicism.
3. Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology used in this study is presented. The selection and collection of data used for the literature review, which serves as a basis for our theoretical framework, will be described. Since qualitative studies may hold a certain amount of subjectivity related to the authors’ values and interpretations, for the increase of the quality and trustworthiness of this master thesis, the authors will present besides the data collection, the research approach, research strategy, analysis, quality criteria and ethical considerations.

3.1 Literature Review

For this master thesis, the authors have been using scientific articles and books to have a broad insight into the studied field and a basis for the theoretical framework. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), a literature review is the best way to examine what is already known about the studied field, which theories are relevant and which methods have been used to study the field before. It is also important to see if there are deviations in the findings and if there is a research gap or any other unanswered questions which can be studied further (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The articles and books have been found and accessed through Google, the Halmstad University library and especially Google Scholar. Keywords such as “Organizational Change”, “Attitudinal Constructs”, “Generation Y”, “Millennials”, “Generation Y characteristics”, “Personality Traits”, “Change Project”, “Change Teams”, and “Attitude towards Change” have been used to find relevant articles and books on these databases. The authors aimed to choose up-to-date literature, as the studied field is quite novel, and theory and findings can change quickly.

Table 1 Theoretical Development Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Readiness for Change</th>
<th>Commitment to Change</th>
<th>Openness to Change</th>
<th>Cynicism about Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informationalization</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement orientation</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level of education</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-orientation</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level of flexibility</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Power Distance</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong self-confidence</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom-orientation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: positive influence +, negative influence −, no influence o
When the authors were reviewing the literature, they figured out that change management, resistance to change and Generation Y have been extensively studied. Since these are broad fields which are widely researched, a great difficulty for the authors in this qualitative data collection was that they found a lot of relevant data. Of course, this makes the process more interesting, but also more difficult (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The authors got a deep insight into the relevant theories and underlying causes, but a large amount of data made it difficult for them to identify the fundamental concepts and issues in this field (Bryman & Bell, 2011). They noticed that there is no previous research in the field GenYers’ characteristics and traits in relation to the attitude towards organizational change. At that stage, the authors found the research question for their master thesis. They found correlating but also contradicting Generation Y characteristics in the literature. The authors compared these to each other and decided for the ten most frequently mentioned characteristics. Besides the literature review in the field of characteristics, the authors focused on four most influential attitudinal constructs towards change on the personal level. These two independent theories and their correlation were the basis for the analysis at a later stage of the thesis. In order to develop some practical implications based on this study, the authors also included literature on change project teams and their efficient collocation.

3.2 Research Approach

The authors have been performing a qualitative study using a multiple-case study design and decided for an abductive approach. The explanation and motivation for these choices will be shown below.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research

Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler (2011) explain the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research as follows. Qualitative research is based on qualitative information such as narratives, and quantitative research is based on quantitative information such as numbers. Qualitative research is focusing on soft data such as interviews, and quantitative research is focusing more on measurements and statistics.

The authors have been using a qualitative research strategy in this study to answer the research question. They decided for that on the basis of their aim to find out which characteristics can be identified as beneficial for change. The authors think the best way to learn about this issue is to interview different individuals who have experienced a change process with employees from different generations. According to Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey (2005), a qualitative research method is preferred when the study aims to describe situations and create new theories rather than to test existing ones. The chosen abductive approach also goes in hand with the qualitative research. Bryman & Bell (2011) state in their work that researchers who use qualitative research can benefit from it when explanation and clarification is the central part of the purpose of their work. A qualitative research method also allows the authors to use other forms than numeric in the analysis and decide for a smaller number of respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The focus in qualitative research is more on words than on the amount of data collected. The tendency goes more towards the direction of induction and the need to generate new theory and concepts and
contribute to filling the research gap. Bryman & Bell (2011) say that qualitative research provides extensive information during the collection and analysis, and when the researchers interpret the collected data, further developed and more detailed conclusions can be made. Qualitative research compared to quantitative research is more flexible and less structured and formal.

3.2.2 Abductive Approach

According to Dubois & Gadde (2002), there are three different scientific approaches to relate empirical data to a theoretical framework. The authors distinguish between deduction, induction, and abduction. According to Alvesson & Sköldberg (2008), there are generally only two approaches, deduction, and induction, because abduction is only a mixture of these two. In the following, the three different approaches will be described, and the authors’ decision for one of them will be explained.

Deduction: Theory → Empirical Data
Induction: Theory ← Empirical Data
Abduction: Theory ←→ Empirical Data

The authors chose to use the abductive approach to optimize the basis for the analysis. As already mentioned above the abductive approach is influenced by both, inductive and deductive approaches (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). Bryman & Bell (2011) see the abductive approach as an alternative way to overcome the limitations the inductive and deductive approach brings. The abductive approach is based on empirical facts, such as the inductive approach, but it does not reject the theoretical approach contained in the deductive method (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). According to Dubois & Gadde (2002), the theoretical framework is developed alongside with the empirical research, what makes the process of the abductive approach more dynamic. The researchers can redefine or support their understanding or interpretations while developing the empirical data, and they can deeper understand the studied field with the help of existing theory (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). The abductive approach involves a back-and-forth-process to find the best explanation when comparing the findings of the research with available theory, which makes the researchers able to extend the understanding of the theory and the collected data (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

![Abductive Approach Diagram](image)

*Figure 3. Abductive Approach, based on Alvesson & Sköldberg (2008)*
In this study, the authors first gathered theoretical material about the isolated research areas. On the basis of the first theoretical frame, the authors conducted qualitative interviews but continued reviewing additional literature to find more information about the studied area. By using the abductive research approach, the authors avoided to reject neither the inductive nor the deductive approach and thereby guaranteed a deep understanding of the studied field. The constant back-and-forth-process between collecting data and reviewing existing theory and literature led to changes in the theoretical framework during the process and helped to close gaps that were revealed in the existing frame of references.

3.3 Empirical Data

This master thesis is based on relevant scientific articles and books concerning the topics Generation Y characteristics and attitudinal constructs of change, which were already mentioned in the section above. During this process, the authors identified potential knowledge gaps, and due to the abductive approach of this thesis, the theory was refined several times in the course of the development process of the thesis. As complementing primary data, the authors held semi-structured interviews. How and why the interview type and respondents were chosen, is described in the following paragraphs.

3.3.1 Selection of Respondents

The purpose of this study is to scrutinize typical characteristics of Generation Y and find out if they influence their attitude towards change projects. The respondents of the first interview phase (Table 2) have been selected by a range of criteria to ensure a variety of different perceptions on the underlying topic. The chosen criteria are organizational background, position within the organization, involvement in change processes and age of the respondent. According to Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007), it is necessary that the choice of respondents depends on the probability of contributing relevant data for a purposeful analysis. This is a method which is described as a strategic way to choose respondents for the study in a non-random way (Bryman & Bell, 2011). To ensure a variety of different organizational backgrounds, the authors decided on two different organizational classifications: private-sector enterprises and public-sector enterprises. In the private-sector, the interviewees were either part of a corporate enterprise or members of external consultancies. External consultants were selected to provide a more objective perspective. The positions of the respondents were also carefully considered as the authors believe that the respective position and the field of responsibility influence the perception towards change. The next criteria are that the respondents are all familiar with change processes and that they have been involved in change already. This selection criterion ensures that all respondents were able to form their own opinion regarding change and its procedures and that they can refer to their own experiences. The last criterion was the age of the respondent which plays a significant role in this study. The authors have purposely chosen respondents of different age groups to achieve a more diverse range of insights to this topic.

The authors decided to interview respondents from the three predominant generations in the workforce: Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomer Generation. They experienced change projects in public organizations, privately owned companies or
experienced change projects as consultants in external organizations and could provide useful information about the attitude towards change among different generations. These eight respondents represent a heterogeneous mixture of employees who have been involved in change processes, who differ in from which generation they come from and should give the authors an in-depth look from different angles. The authors purposely decided not to include the Generation Z because its’ members are too young to give sufficient answers related to change. Due to their short time in the workforce they are not experienced enough to have good insight into the procedures, behaviors, and attitudes during change.

The second interview phase which followed after the first eight interviews was held with the same mixture of generations, which means three interviewees from each generation (Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomers) to ensure equal distribution. These respondents were employees that were able to evaluate Generation Y characteristics in work environment context, without a specific relation to change. These interviews with its focus on the characteristics of Generation Y should confirm or disprove the statements of the respondents before. During the second interview phase, the authors illustrated each of the ten defined characteristics of Generation Y. Thereafter the respondents were asked to evaluate their answers as positive, neutral or negative regarding the characteristic.

All Respondents asked the authors to treat their personal details as confidential which the authors respected and which is why no company names or other details are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Information about the Respondents of the First Interview Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent A (RA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent B (RB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent C (RC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent D (RD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent E (RE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent F (RF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent G (RG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent H (RH)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Information about the Respondents of the Second Interview Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.2 Qualitative Interviews

For this study, the authors decided to hold qualitative interviews. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2014), this is an applicable method when the aim is to get descriptive information. Additional to this the authors also decided to hold semi-structured interviews. Bryman & Bell (2011) state that semi-structured interviews consist of determined open and broad questions. To ensure that the authors can get as detailed and correct information as possible, the interviews are completed with follow-up questions. The authors wanted to receive detailed information from the respondents’ experiences. For the respondents, this interview style is most comfortable because the interview is held in a relaxed and informal matter. For the authors, this has the advantage that there could be a decrease in risk getting exaggerated and falsified answers. A semi-structured interview creates some openness between the authors and respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Before the interviews with the respondents are held, the authors have to obtain in-depth knowledge in the specific field. It is necessary to be critical towards what the respondents say and immediately evaluate it (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). They reviewed the relevant literature to identify questions which are not answered yet and where is a need for clarification. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2014), there are six criteria for evaluating the quality of an interview:

1. Are the answers rich and spontaneous?
2. Are the questions short and the answers long enough?
3. Clarification and follow up of the answers
4. Review the complete interview
5. Check the correctness of the answers
6. Do the answers consist of detailed information?

These criteria played a significant role before the interviews while creating the interview guide and the questions, as well as during the interviews to follow up on specific essential details.

The authors developed their interview guide according to different techniques from Bryman & Bell (2011). The guide was based upon the theoretical framework, and the questions were divided into groups consisting of questions to specific fields and theories. This technique does not interrupt the flow of the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The first interview phase was held with eight respondents with experience in change projects. These interviews aimed to receive detailed information about the attitudinal constructs of change with regard to generational characteristics. The interview guide (Appendix A) was divided into five sections to mentally stick to one specific field at a time. The sections were oriented towards the attitudinal constructs “Readiness for Change”, “Commitment to Change”, “Openness to Change” and “Cynicism about Change”. The last section of questions dealt with the topic of project teams.

The second interview phase was held with nine respondents and should prove or disprove the statements of the respondents of the first phase due to their valuation of Generation Y characteristics. The authors described in detail one after another the ten different characteristics of Generation Y. Subsequently, the respondents were asked to describe their experiences from working life. As the last point, the authors evaluated their
answers as positive, neutral or negative and filled it in the second interview guide (Appendix B).

The interviews were held in German since both interviewers and the interviewees are German. Using the native language makes the interviews more flowing, and the authors think that the respondents’ answers in German would be more detailed since it is easier for them to describe their experiences. The interviews of phase one have been recorded, and principal statements have been transcribed. The outcomes of interview phase two were registered as individual evaluations on the interview guide.

### 3.3.3 Data Analysis

Based on the Theoretical Development Matrix (Table 1), the interviews of phase one were recorded to ensure that the answers can be presented in the thesis in detail and genuine, hence the authors can analyze them several times. According to Bryman & Bell (2011) recording the interview makes the respondents more careful and sometimes inaccurate. At the beginning of the interview, the authors offered all interviewees the possibility to review the transcripts and anonymity to minimize the risk of the aforesaid. For the analysis of the gathered data, the authors firstly transcribed the interviews of phase one, which allows them a detailed analysis and check the answers several times, makes the data available for other researchers and studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Following the transcription, the interviews were analyzed and categorized individually. The categories were based on the different section of the theoretical framework, “Readiness for change”, “Commitment to change”, “Openness for change”, “Cynicism about change” and “Project Teams”. Putting questions and answers into categories makes it easier for the authors to compare the different answers. So, the authors categorized the answers with same meanings to have a better overview. That is a procedure Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) describe.

The interviews of the second phase were analyzed differently. Since these interviews aimed to confirm or disprove Generation Y characteristics and following the statements of the first interview phase, the estimation of the respondents’ experiences regarding Generation Y characteristics were shortly put down in writing in the second interview guide and clearly illustrated in a diagram (Figure 4).

The last and most important step of the analysis was to connect the theory of Generation Y characteristics, attitudinal constructs of change, the own developed Matrix (Table 1) and the empirical data from the interview phase one and interview phase two (Figure 4). The final outcome is put down in the Theoretical and Empirical Development (5.3) and the Conclusions (6.).

### 3.3.4 Generalization

The generalizability of a study is given when the research is externally valid (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Yin, 2009). When it comes to the general validity of qualitative investigations they argue that it is impossible to know how the findings can be generalized to other settings (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is therefore reasonable that findings of the qualitative research are generalized to theory instead of populations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Mitchell (1983) states that it is rather the cogency of the theoretical argument than statistical criteria which is critical in the generalizability of the findings of qualitative research. Even though the statistical
generalization of the underlying findings is not possible, the authors argue that the findings are analytically generalizable. The analytical generalization of the findings is achieved through a three-step analysis approach. In the first step, the authors compared existing theory about Generation Y and attitudes towards change which provided them with novel theory in that field (Table 1). In the second step, this developed theory was among others used for the two conducted interview phases to provide a validation of the developed theory. In the last step, the theory and the empirical findings were analyzed to develop new concepts related to the attitude towards change among Generation Y.

It can be summarized that the findings of this study are not particularly connected to specific organizations or change initiatives but rather to the general attitude towards change. Thus, the authors argue that their findings can be analytically generalized to change recipients in other contexts.

3.3.5 Ethical Considerations

The process of conducting qualitative interviews also include ethical issues which have been broken down by Bryman & Bell (2011) as the following main areas: harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. Authors shall be aware of those issues when conducting interviews and confidentially use the material of their respondents. The authors of this study have taken this into account by not mentioning the company or respondent by name and by describing their business environment only in a very vague way in order to avoid interference to the companies’ origin. All interviews have taken place via FaceTime, Skype or telephone call which ensures an adequate degree of privacy.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Validity is considered as one of the most important criteria of research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is a matter of integrity of the conclusions which were drawn from a piece of research. Bryman & Bell (2011) differentiate mainly between measurement, internal and external validity. Measurement validity primarily applies to quantitative research according to which this criterion is not as important in this study.

The internal validity relates to the issue of causality (Bryman & Bell, 2011), and involves how far the empirical data is in accordance with the presented theories. In order to assure internal validity in this study, the authors made sure that the interview guide and the procedure of choosing legitimate respondents were based on the theoretical framework. Furthermore, the authors have been reviewing and improving the theoretical framework and initiated additional contact with the respondents for supplementing questions to match with the changing theoretical framework. The authors also informed the respondents about the purpose of the study prior to the interviews and discussed the results with the respondents in order to avoid misinterpretations.

External validity is concerned with the issue if results are generalizable or not (Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2009). The issue of the generalization has been discussed earlier in this study (3.3.4). As the authors have deliberately chosen respondents of different age, different position and different organizational settings it can be expected that the results will
be generalizable and applicable to other contexts. However, the external validity is still limited in a qualitative study like this due to the small number of units examined.

Internal and external reliability is also important when conducting a qualitative research study. Bryman and Bell (2011) explained internal reliability as a way to minimize bias among the researcher. Subjectivity could be an issue in qualitative studies as the interpretation of the results could be affected by the objectivity of the author. In order to avoid this the authors aimed to apply an objective perspective for both, the empirical data collection and the analysis approach. In practice, the authors often got a second opinion of unbiased peers, friends or family members to assure objectivity during the entire research process.

The credibility of the research findings also depends on the external reliability. Saunders et al. (2016) define reliability as the extent to which the data collection techniques or analysis procedures will generate consistent findings. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), external reliability involves to what extent the results can be trusted and reconstructed. Especially anonymity of the respondents makes it impossible to replicate the same context present during the investigations. In order to still provide external reliability in this study the authors present the methodology process for selecting and collecting empirical data extensively in this chapter and the attached appendix. In addition to that, all interviews were recorded and meaningful statements were transcribed within the empirical data chapter in order to increase reliability of the empirical findings. The authors believe that their approach increases external reliability and the possibility to generalize the results of this study as far as a qualitative study allows it. However, statistical generalization is not the intention of this study, but rather to create knowledge and a frame that gives space for further discussion in the specific context.

4. Empirical Data

In this chapter, the findings of the conducted interviews are presented. As the interview questions derived from previous research and theories, the findings are also disposed of in the same structure to ensure clarity. Each respondent will be shortly introduced regarding position, age and change involvement. Furthermore, notable quotes of the interviewees will be cited within the text to reinforce the findings.

4.1 First Interview Phase
4.1.1 Respondent A

Respondent A (RA) is a just retired employee of a prominent German retail company. It is a privately owned international retail chain with head offices in two different European countries. His former position can be classified as senior management where he was the director of the German legal department and the responsible contact person for the general works council. RA has been part of the company for approximately 30 years and experienced many changes primarily because of his legal consulting position for the works council.
Readiness for Change:

The respondent holds the view that readiness for change depends more on the mentality of the individual than on the respective age of the employee. However, he also emphasizes that employees who have been doing their jobs for many years are more reserved and less flexible when it comes to changes in their workplace, which is consistent with the general reaction towards change. One of the most important things to overcome this bias is the right communication. "It is more than important to have a change concept, clearly communicate the aims and objectives and declare the changes which will affect the respective employee or department."

A sensible communication positively supports the readiness to take part in a change process within an organization. People are willing to change if they understand why. RA also mentioned that the age structure of the organization changed significantly over the last 15 years. This is related to an adverse economic trend which results in a decrease in the number of young apprentices. Thus, the average age rises, and young talents and fresh impulses stay away. RA stresses that "a good mixture of young and old members is vital to an organization and an imbalanced personnel structure has an impact on the general success."

Commitment to Change:

The “Commitment to change” is according to RA closely related to the general success of an organization. “Less successful organizations show inevitable decreasing commitment and motivation among its members.” If the organization is successful employees are proud to work for it and are as a result more committed to it and to occurring changes. Besides that, a healthy organization rather implements good changes than changes which negatively affect the employees. “In a struggling organization, the commitment and motivation to implement changes declines.” This is among others reflected in the increasing turnover of staff which makes the conditions for change even more difficult. “Civil disputes concerning labor has been increasing over the last decades up to 50 disputes per year excluding termination agreements.” The same progression happened at the management level of the organization. “Those positions used to be filled internally after a six-year qualification period, but this changed to receive external input on the management level.” RA emphasized that those changes have positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, external candidates are more likely to bring their own experiences and new approaches into an organization, but on the other hand, the commitment to the organization decreases and job-hopping increases. “The top management is replaced every 2-3 years, especially because they are not committed to the organization and think of nothing but themselves.” RA stresses that primarily the economic situation of an organization influences the turnover of staff.

Openness to Change:

When it comes to the implementation of IT programs and the “Openness” to technical changes, RA explained, that the reorientation is for some employees more difficult than for another. However, employees need to see the advantages of new technical innovations. If that is the case, it can be easily and convincingly communicated to the staff. The better informed the employees are, the easier they can see the advantages of change processes. RA mentioned that many employees of older generations are fit and flexible also at a higher age and bear all changes in the organization. However, RA also states that “there is a
tendency towards higher flexibility of younger generations, especially in the field of technical innovations.” RA declared for the avoidance of doubts that it is not the age of the employee what’s the decisive factor, it is the mentality of the individual.

Cynicism about Change:

“There will be always cynical individuals, independently from their age but influenced by negative experiences with change projects in recent years.” RA stressed that cynical employees are hazardous for the whole organization and especially for current change projects. In many cases, external consultants are called in to find the right solutions for private owned organizations. These consultants are often not accepted in the workforce. RA thinks the problem with it is that they want to “force their ideas down the organization’s throat”. The often very young consultants do not treat different organizations individually. That is why RA’s organization had “about 25 external consultancies in the last 20 years, and they are not taken seriously, also in top management.”

When it comes to technical guidance, the acceptance of external consultants is better because they often have a much higher level of specific knowledge. RA assumed that “probably, the acceptance of external consultants of experienced employees might be lower than the acceptance of younger employees because they already witnessed the failure of change projects and the consultants doubt of their work and long-established operating cycles.

Change Project Teams:

In large projects, the members of project teams have to be permitted or named by the management level. “The management often names the project team members according to one’s liking.” There is a high discrepancy between theory and practice. Normally, software which evaluates characteristics and skills of the employees is used to create an ideal team. “But once a manager has sympathies for employees, results of such software are of secondary importance.” RA emphasizes that this procedure probably has negative effects on the efficacy of project teams.

RA states that it is essential to involve employee representatives as well. When a change project has personnel consequences, the representatives are to involve anyways, and it is crucial to convince them from the beginning on that the occurring changes will be the right decision for the organization.

In smaller projects, which don’t involve the whole organization, the team members got chosen by their head of the department. They know who the most suitable employees for the jobs are. “The ideal project team member should be technically as well as socially competent.”

4.1.2 Respondent B

Respondent B (RB) is a young employee of one of the biggest insurance companies in Germany. She ran through the company’s sales trainee program and is involved in minor and major projects related to the sales department. Recently, she became responsible for a corporate change project which was implemented to deal with the increased turnover of sales staff throughout the organization. RB has the leading position in the team and is therefore also responsible for the communication to the middle and top management. The change team
consists of five members from different functional groups “to represent a variety of different insights”. The age structure is relatively young (Generation Y) except one member (Generation X).

Readiness for Change:

RB evaluated the “Readiness for change” and project work as good among her colleagues and especially in her team. This positive attitude towards new projects is, according to RB, related to the fact that everyone gets enough freedom to deal with the operational and project related work. Another incentive to participate in projects is the model of the “job family” which means, to achieve a certain management level within the organization, people have to contribute to projects throughout every department. RB confirmed that this model creates a good attitude towards project work and change. Furthermore, RB experienced more creative and proactive ways to process information among the GenY team members. “We are definitely more creative when it comes to information procurement which is simply based on the fact that we grew up with internet and we know which keywords to use in order to get the information we need!” RB also emphasized that Generation Y has a good work attitude and is open-minded towards new things. Whether there is a relation between the age and the career-oriented mindset RB rates the general characteristic of Generation Y as more important “I believe that it is rather rooted in the temper of Generation Y that they are more curious and want to know how things work than based on the fact that they still have their career ahead.”

Commitment to Change:

RB has witnessed “Commitment to change” and change related projects in different circumstances. She mentioned that Generation Y or in general younger colleagues are more ambitions in terms of their dedication to their job. Herself, for instance, answers the phone or works for a project even though it’s Saturday or Sunday. She said older colleagues are stricter in that sense and try to avoid taking work home. “I wouldn’t color everyone with the same brush, but most of the colleagues in their forties are quite concerned about their spare time.” On the contrary, she said that it is due to their personal life which includes family and often also children. She also predicted with a smile that she would do the same in the future.

Moreover, RB thinks that especially the conservative insurance branch needs new ways of thinking. Thinking out of the box is, according to her, something Generation Y and also even younger Generations bring into organizations. New approaches which better match the mentality and buying behavior of young consumers are implemented. As a result, those ideas are beneficial for the organization. “We concentrate enhanced on “ropo customer” (research online, purchase offline) which means that customer is enabled to affect some policies online but also get offline support with personal contact to the respective agent when it comes to more specific services.” Even though Generation Y might be more internet-oriented, RB experienced that also young customers prefer personal and social contact to an insurance agent when the service gets too complex. “The customer still prefers to purchase from the human and not from the insurance company!”
Openness to Change:
According to RB, employees from Generation Y as well as employees from older generations create good approaches for projects, but individuals from older generations have recourse to practical ideas they used some years ago. “They make use of their working experience from bygone projects and apply the same ideas, but do not come up with new or innovative approaches.” They are afraid to abandon the familiar and try something entirely new.

RB emphasized that “young people are more likely to try a novelty even if the project comes to nothing in the end.” They are more curious about changing old processes and see if it improves them. This risky way of thinking is nowadays welcome in the insurance sector, which tries to escape the conservative way of thinking and modernize their habits.

A project gets organized through different digital platforms such as video conferences, chat forums and other internal intranet and internet tools. “Young project team members are more creative when it comes to the provision of information. They grew up in times of digitalization and internet. They can deal better with such digital communication tools than their older colleagues.”

Cynicism about Change:
RB mentioned that prior to change projects, employees from older generations are somewhat critically and pessimistically minded. “Older workers often reconsider a plan, see that the regulations are opposed to it and would prefer to stop the new project before it even has started.” Younger team members are not afraid of such regulations. If they are convinced of the ultimate success of a project, they will try to set new regulations and implement the enhancement.

Change Project Teams:
RB was often part of project teams not least because the organization’s policy requires that the internal trainees participate in a broad range of projects. At the time of the interview, RB was the head of an internal project which was brought into being to deal with the increases turnover of young employees. The project can be considered as a change project as it targets the overall reliability of the organization. RB is responsible for the reporting of the project performance to superior executives and also monitors the overall group performance.

The staffing of the project team was also in her responsibility which led to the question how she evaluated the perfect fit for her team. According to RB both, her personal preference and the individual capabilities of the colleagues were decisive for the staffing of her project team. “Their skills were important to me, but I also asked myself if I could imagine collaborating with them!” To increase the motivation to participate in projects, the organization follows a certain guideline. This guideline implies that anyone who wants to climb the career ladder has to be part of bigger projects in different departments of the organization. “If you want to achieve something within the company - you have to expand your ‘job family.’”

Besides that, RB assessed the general working climate in her team as productive and well organized. Discussions are always open, and even though the opinions are often contrary, the team reaches a decision.
4.1.3 Respondent C

Respondent C (RC) is a senior project manager of a leading German consultancy specialized in project management. The business concentrates mainly on the operational support of major projects (<500,000 €) in international corporations. RC is part of this company since February 2015 and has been responsible for many projects during the last three years. The consultancy has been founded in 2003 and is constantly growing regarding turnover, profits and labor. Its growing workforce counts around 150 employees and its growing by 20-25 every year. With the age of 31, RC is also a member of Generation Y, and with his master’s degree in business psychology, his insights are precious for this study.

Readiness for Change:

RC has experienced many project situations, and some of them were also related to change. As an external consultant, he witnessed mainly positive reactions when a change was announced. “There are some cases where we join the project when it is already up and running, but in the best case we are part of it from the start.” RC stressed that the readiness for such projects depends mainly on the type of change and the way it was brought in. “The top-down decision for change is often more difficult to implement than the bottom-up decision! However, the most critical cause is how people get picked up to get them on board.” RC emphasizes that he would put the importance of the right communication even above the mindset of a certain group of people when it comes to the reaction and “Readiness for change”.

Commitment to Change:

Regarding the “Commitment to change” RC mentioned that most of the participants in change projects are on a senior management level. The majority of them is, due to their management position in the organization more committed to the organization itself and also to changes. That is according to RC on the one hand due to the fact, that they want to bring forward business and on the other hand that they initiated the plan for those changes. Nevertheless, he also confirmed that especially in major corporations there is a big difference in the “Commitment to change” comparing the different generations. An example would be officials and employees with a long-time resident in the organization. “Officials often have a negative attitude towards change and do not care about change!” Then again, the younger generation is more ambitious, want to be part of something new, sacrifice their spare time in terms of extra hours and as a result strive towards a successful career. Besides that, RC sees the classification into generations critical as according to him those differences are more based on the time effects. “The differences are more related to the ambitions which a younger person simply has because of his or her career stage!”

Openness to Change:

RC mentioned that there are always some employees of older generations who do not understand or even will not understand newly established processes. As an example, he mentioned the phrase: “I have always done it that way, and I will continue like that.” Regarding “Informationalization”, RC explained that it is obvious that the members of Generation Y are more into digital collaboration platforms and therefore, more actively using them. “Growing up in times of digitalization makes you be receptive to such digital
Handling vast amounts of daily information let them learn more quickly and effectively in comparison to the Baby Boomer generation. RC states that GenYers are more interested in international networking and are globally oriented. “Older people have already seen more in the world and are worse in speaking foreign languages.”

Cynicism about Change:
Based on RC’s experience, there are infrequent situations where an individual got cynical towards him and the implementation of projects. He also pointed out that this is not the rule in consultancy business, but more an exception. “We are not a typical consultancy. Organizations employ us to help them do their work.” RC says that it is not their job to tell the companies how to change, they realize specific plans.

RC sees Generation Y as very self-confident. This goes hand in hand with critical views on instructions and scrutinizing various things.

Change Project Teams:
The objective of RC’s job is to support and monitor significant projects in a diverse range of different organizations. It provides him with a variety of insights into how projects are initialized and realized. As a result, the answer to the question how change project teams are formed was predictable. “It depends on the organization and how mature an organization operates in project management.” RC distinguished between two different options an organization deals with projects. There are either organizations with an advanced project department with full-time employees and certain standards how project teams are formed and implemented or, and that applies for the majority, projects are initiated by someone who shows interest in change and can deal with it, besides the regular work. “In probably 90% of the cases, project teams are mixed based on interest and capacities without any deliberate guidelines.”

When it comes to the age structure of those change teams, RC specified an average age of 46,5 years. “They are mostly between 33 and 60 years old, which is mainly caused by the fact that those projects are represented by the senior management level.” On the contrary, the project consultancy works with fairly young teams with an average age of around 29. “I am 31, and I should be located in the middle.” The internal training of staff in the project management consultancy is based on the idea that the junior consultants learn from the seniors. That implies that a senior is responsible for a major project and takes one or two junior consultants in their mid-twenties in order to teach them. “As soon as the project objectives are set, and the stakeholders are identified, the junior consultants are taking over to finalize the project. However, it really depends on the specific project details!”

4.1.4 Respondent D
Respondent D (RD) is a senior manager of a big international acting insurance company in Germany, who just retired. The organization has more than 20 million customers with a revenue of approximately 32 billion € and employs around 30,000 people. RD was the head of two different departments. He took care of the liability department and the sales department.
In his working life RD experienced some major structural changes. Among other things, there have been changes concerning digitalization and changes in the strategy dealing with customers.

**Readiness for Change:**

The organization itself realized, compared to their direct competitors, fairly early that change is also needed in the conventional insurance branch. When digitalization emerged, the need for a more flexible and faster performance grew. This created a competitive advantage among other insurers. ““Readiness for change” is the key question for an organization which wants to change!” Even though the organization seemed to be ready for change, the broad mass was not. “The top management used the term change as a catchword for years, but no one cared!” People received the intention to change as something negative and change initiatives were encountered with an attitude ranging from skepticism to rejection. “As soon as people are asked to leave common paths, they react with uncertainty. Employees are like water - they will find a way to avoid the changes, and if you cannot reach them, they will not change as you want them to change!” One major problem was the lacking support of many executives who did not back up the ideas of the board and the top management. Thus, the skeptical and negative attitude of employees were reinforced by their direct executives, and the change was boycotted. “Sometimes employees even have the backing of their direct executives since they avoid the changes themselves.”

**Commitment to Change:**

According to RD, the general commitment to the organization was proved in 2006 when all the employees prevented the shutdown of the entire organization through a big strike action. However, the “Commitment to change” was lacking for many years. RD mentioned that change initiatives were often rejected by the employees since they did not see the advantages for them. Advantages of the overall organization were not important enough. According to RD, this is related to the size of an organization. “The bigger your organization, the more indifferent is it to a greater number of employees to support changes for the good of the organization!” That might differ in smaller organizations, stated RD. “This attitude is different in smaller organizations with 10 - 40 employees. Individuals have a stronger identification with the organization and are therefore more committed to changes.” The indifference regarding the general economic situation or the standing of the organization derives from the mass of employees and the high profits those major organizations make. Employees do not see the need to support changes because they feel safe and do not think it is worth the effort. “We make so much profit, one or two billion more or less don’t make the difference!” Another alarming fact was revealed in an annual survey among all the employees who were asked to explain the overall strategy of the organization. Neither the employees nor the executives were able to explain the strategy. This issue led to a general rethinking, and the board developed an overall strategy and presented it throughout the entire company. “Clarified aims and objectives of the organization and thereby every single employee had to be confronted with the overall strategy” A subsequent survey displayed that more than 90 % of the employees could identify themselves with the strategy. The board’s intentions for the future-proof of the organization convinced the majority of the organization and created great commitment. “Following change processes could always be connected to the overall strategy
and since everyone internalized the strategy the “Commitment for change” improved greatly!

**Openness to Change:**

Regarding the openness for change, RD mentioned, that older individuals in an organization, experience a feeling of uncertainty when it comes to change initiatives off the beaten tracks. “Young, 25 years old, employees are highly motivated to change things and make things happen. Older generations are just waiting for their retirement.” The longer individuals are employed in an organization, the less open they are for nowadays pace of changes and the more difficult it gets for them to keep the pace. “These days we experience changes within two years, which were made some decades ago within 30 years. The internet and smartphones exorbitantly changed manners and the way to communicate.” In this day and age, employees have to be aware of many software, and the older an individual is, the worse he or she can follow the speed. “You explain new digital procedures to young people, who are new to the organization, only one time and they master it because they grew up with these systems and like the digital world.” RD emphasized that employees around 55 years feel left behind because the merits shifted over the years and experience does not count as much as management procedures. “These employees yearn for their retirement.”

For RD employees from Generation Y are most important for implementing changes. “They aren’t gridlocked in their way of thinking yet.” They are unbiased and creative because they do not know that much about procedures in the organization. However, RD also stressed, that there is a greater number of young people who are inhibited and less open towards others. This is attributable to the change of communication through internet and smartphones.

**Cynicism about Change:**

RD stated that some, often older employees, are skeptical and critical towards changes. “We make so much profit, that it does not matter if it is one or two billion more or less.” However much, the only essential is that the workplace of the individual is safe. Some older employees are very slow and even deconstructive when it comes to changes. They just want to have one’s peace. RD mentioned that these employees say things like: “Everything was better in the old days, nowadays everything is so stressful.” They do not show understanding for the young and motivated individuals. RD says this is often the case in the lower levels of an organization because the caseworkers do have their daily habits and daily work routine. They do more often have a derogatory attitude towards young change managers and do not take them seriously. “On manager level, there has never been such skepticism and cynicism because they can identify with the company and believe in the skills of each employee they hired.”

According to RD, it is a mistake of older generations to compare themselves with younger generations on the basis of their own measure. “Generation Y has a completely different skill set than other generations and can’t be compared to them.”

**Change Project Teams:**

RD stressed that it is important to include employees in a project team who are in charge to implement changes on the operative level. “Individuals from all organizational levels have to be included in project teams.” Many change projects fail because the ones who
draw up a change plan, don’t have an idea of the job the workers from lower level do. However, these workers are the ones who have to implement the changes at a later stage.

“It is of major importance to include younger as well as older employees.” The young employees do not have habits yet. “They are more creative and innovative in their way of finding solution approaches.” However, also older employees are important for such projects. They do have the experience from projects in previous years and can apply their knowledge to get to solid solutions more quickly.

4.1.5 Respondent E

Respondent E (RE) is a just retired employee of a governmental department in Germany and therefore belongs to the Baby Boomer generation. RE worked for 45 years in the same public service organization. He was, among other functions, the head of the staff council. In his working life, RE experienced different change projects, for instance in the field of digitalization.

Readiness for Change:

RE has experienced a more skeptical reaction to change among older employees and a quite optimistic attitude among Generation Y. He also relates the readiness to engage in change projects to factors which are independent of age. “The general interest in a specific change area, e.g. digitalization and technological advancements, has a great impact on the “Readiness for change” of an individual.”

Commitment to Change:

Due to RE’s position in a public service organization and the length of service for the company, the authors decided to ask, if RE observed differences regarding “Commitment to change” of employees in public service organizations and employees in the private sector. RE did not observe any differences, but again indicated the importance of the individual’s interest for certain change areas. “In my opinion, “Commitment to change” is highly dependent on the professional background of an individual regardless the type of an organization.”

Openness to Change:

According to RE, people from Generation Y are generally good in dealing with different media and communication channels as well as analyzing vast amounts of information. “They are digital natives and grew up in a digital world with internet and smartphones.” He says that they are more open to learning new things which goes along with their affection to internationality and their mostly “High educational level”.

Cynicism about Change:

In RE’s opinion, older employees around 60 years have gained in the last decades negative experiences towards change processes. As an example, he experienced for himself that “two or three decades ago microfilming of personnel files was conducted with the utmost effort. Today the project is “dead” and bygone.” Such negative memories lead to a critical and often even cynical attitude of older generations towards new change projects. Another
reason for that is that projects like these are implemented by external consultants who have not fully understood and considered the internal procedures of a public service organization.

**Change Project Teams:**
RE has gained no experiences in how to blend a project team. All information he would have given to the authors would have been personal assumptions.

**4.1.6 Respondent F**
Respondent F (RF) is a professional from the Generation X who started working for a management consultancy two years ago. The consultancy is based in Germany and operates in almost 40 other countries with a total of over 2000 consultants. His background is in classical business administration.

**Readiness for Change:**
RF experienced a high level of uncertainty towards change, no matter what kind of change is going to be implemented. “The emergence of us as consultants always brings a sense of suspense and insecurity.” RF witnessed a certain tendency regarding the attitude employees react to them. He distinguishes between two different groups of people. One group (often younger people) profit from the work of consultants. “We work very closely together with some individuals which allows them to have closer contact with the top management and as a result enables them to position themselves better within the organization.” The other group of people (mostly older long-term employees) do have a different perception of consultants. “They already have a set opinion about how things should work. They also fear not to get another job in that position when it comes to dismissals.” According to RF, readiness to deal with new circumstances among younger employees is better especially when it comes to technological efforts. Younger people are in that sense readier to deal with new technological advancements even though they have not been in regular contact with them. “They have a better technological understanding and do not hesitate to work with those advancements.” RF could not tell whether this is based on generational effects or a matter of the individual attitude towards change. Even though younger people were more likely to have a positive attitude towards change, RF also witnessed the contrary. “I have also met young employees who did not like us to be there.”

**Commitment to Change:**
The commitment to change is, according to RF, heavily dependent on the size of an organization. In case the support of consultants is needed in smaller organizations, and the reason for that is not self-imposed by the head of the organization, people are more committed to necessary changes in order to help the organization survive or improve. „Individuals’ willingness to work for the common good of an organization is higher when they meet the boss on a regular basis!” That also implies that in bigger organizations the motivation to become involved in change for the common good of the business success is lower. Being committed to change is then rather affected by the intrinsic motivation to benefit personally “If they are part of the change workforce, they benefit personally in terms of self-enrichment.”
Openness to Change:
RF stated that he experienced younger people as more cooperative and flexible regarding collaboration in change projects. “They are willing to reconsider their way of working and as the circumstances require to change their habits.” RF continues: “If there is a situation where a complicated Excel file has to be created to a close deadline, older people will have a problem.” He explained it with Generation Y growing up with this software. Besides that, they are more creative in finding new ways and solving problems. The GenYers know how to help themselves when they need it.

Cynicism about Change:
RF mentioned multiple times that a consultant always has to “win everybody over to one’s side.” If that is not the case, it will come to resistance, also in the form of cynicism. “When they are not on your side, the employees will jump for joy when you make a mistake and will nag at you.” Another situation RF described where it could come to cynicism and resistance is when jobs have to be cut, and people get dismissed. The work with the leftover employees will run into difficulties and skepticism, as well as cynicism will arise.

Change Project Teams:
RF differentiated between the internal and external team building as he experienced both, the formation of teams on the customer side (external) and the side of the consultancy (internal). RF’s consultancy works with an office (European staffing) to centrally monitor the staffing of the projects. Every consultant is assigned to one partner of the consultancy. The partner is responsible for the ideal workload of his or her consultant. RF added that the practice deviates a bit from the theory. “Usually the partner also works in a group, and you work for all of them, so they are all allowed to allocate responsibilities for certain projects.” The external project teams are often segmented in smaller workforces with specific working ranges (e.g. operational and strategic tasks) “But those segments have blurred boundaries - they help each other!” To the question, if project teams are assembled by certain characteristics of the respective member, RF would not impute such an advanced procedure. “However, I assume they consider certain traits and keep them in mind when they assemble the teams!”

4.1.7 Respondent G
Respondent G (RG) is a young employee belonging to Generation Y. He works for a public-law institution where he began as an intern, continued as a student assistant, and now he has a fixed employment contract in personal controlling and has additional responsibility for digital projects. As a student assistant, he made a feasibility study which proved the suitability of the organization. Following the study, RG led the project “implementing digital personal files” in collaboration with another colleague. It took nine months in total.

Readiness for Change:
The readiness for the digitalization of the personal files was, according to RG, differently marked. It was dependent on the respective position of the employee. “The readiness of the IT department to engage in this change project was very high without
exceptions.” However, this preparedness was positively influenced by the close collaboration between the IT department and the project team. “The IT department was already introduced to the project and developed possible solutions already before the actual project kick-off.” Despite the positive perception of the IT department, RG also noticed negative attitudes towards the changes. He stressed that this behavior was not solely based on the age or generation, but rather on anxiety to not be able to work with the new system. “Nevertheless, rather older employees were biased about the advancements and reacted accordingly.”

Commitment to Change:

The collaboration with the IT department created a solid commitment among all employees in this department. “They were aware of the outcome and realized the advantages in an early stage of the project.” As the project entailed extra work during the weekends, the authors asked RG to describe the acceptance for that during the change process. RG noticed that rather young- and middle-aged employees were dedicated to working during the weekend. “Additional work due to the project has rather been perceived as a burden among older employees than young- and middle-aged employees.” Despite the fact that the commitment to those changes has been divers among the employees, they finally all contributed as a team to the project. “Although there has been initial skepticism, everyone participated, and no one actively hampered the project!”

Openness to Change:

RG stressed that there had been skepticism throughout the process. The acceptance of the new software and processes grew over time. It was incrementally implemented. The more the employees worked with the software and got to know it, the less anxious and skeptical they got. “They noticed that it is not as complicated as they thought it was and can even bring personal advantages.” RG said that it took some time to get to this point, especially with the older employees. “The younger individuals were more flexible and familiarized faster with the new procedure.” He emphasized that the younger generation is better in dealing with digital media, but platforms like the Intranet are well known from everybody throughout the organization.

Cynicism about Change:

“Luckily, I did not experience situations where people got cynical, made fun of the project or comparable situations.” RG mentioned that some employees were afraid of the new and as a consequence might be a little bit “pessimistically-minded”. However, in the end also these individuals worked well and helped to implement the project.

Change Project Teams:

“From the beginning on we have been working in a fixed project team of eight people.” RG and his colleague worked closely together with the information technology department (IT). They were in permanent contact with the heads of the software and hardware unit. These unit managers decided each for one more employee from their department to be a specialist in the required field of the project. “It was their decision because my colleague and I did not have the insight and knowledge to decide who is suitable for the job and who is not.” Besides these four specialists from the information technology department (two unit managers
and two specialists), two more professionally qualified colleagues from the human resource department were on the project team. In addition to the internal project team, there has been a collaboration with an external company which provided the software and lead the external scan process of the personal files.

4.1.8 Respondent H

RH is a professional from the Generation X with over four years working experience in different consultancies. The last three years until today he has been working for a midsize strategy advisory firm with a staff of about 100 professionals and partners. They are working with clients in various industries ranging from retail over financial services to oil-, gas- and energy-related organizations. Even though RH has an engineering background, he has been involved in change projects across all industries. His experiences with change and project teams are diverse since he has insights into internal as well as external change teams.

Readiness for Change:

To the question, if Generation Y is compared to former generations readier for change, RH’s answer was distinct. “Following my intuitive answer, I would say that the “Readiness for change” among the members of Generation Y is higher.” Subsequently, RH mentioned, according to his experiences, that there are bigger differences within the same generation than between different ones. “I witnessed resistant employees from Generation Y as well as very motivated employees from former generations.” In addition to that, RH stated that the motivation and “Readiness for change” often decreases with the period of employment. “The motivation for change projects decreases when the period of employment increases.” He denied the question if he sees a tendency which generation is more stress-resistant in change situations. “I do not see a tendency between young and old!”

RH further stressed that the general reaction towards change, apart from the generation, is rather cautious than euphoric. “Change always comes along with additional work to the numerous everyday tasks.” Just a few employees (young and old) act differently. “Besides the general reaction, there are just a few employees who see change as a possibility to embrace the opportunity to signalize their own performance.”

Commitment to Change:

“The commitment to additional change projects is higher in Generation Y than in former generations.” Nevertheless, there is also a higher fluctuation among younger colleagues which is, according to RH, caused by the favorable labor market in these days. “Especially young employees have great opportunities to get a new job immediately.” In case of inconveniences with the current employer or not fully satisfied expectations, the young employees are more likely to look for alternatives. “Change could indeed be one of those reasons to look for alternatives and switch the job.” Contrary to that, RH would still attribute Generation Y higher commitment to change. “The commitment to change is probably higher among Generation Y because they realize promotion prospects through those change initiatives.”
Openness to Change:
RH evaluates the degree to what Generation Y is open to change as very high. This is especially due to the high involvement of technology in change. “Nowadays, novel operating cycles are mainly based on digitalization.” According to RH’s experiences, Generation Y has fewer difficulties with the adaptation to those new circumstances. “The Generation Y grew up in a digital world with the credo - learning by doing - without any instructions. This enables them to become acquainted with new processes because they are more flexible and faster than former generations.”

Cynicism about Change:
Cynicism and a pessimistic perception towards change are, according to RH, a significant problem to successfully implement changes. “In my opinion, it is caused by the high frequency of change processes. One project is following the next which makes it more and more difficult to drum up enthusiasm for every single project.” He also added, that the character of change shifts from something special towards normalcy. The authors questioned if RH would rather assign this attitude to Generation Y or former generations. He answered that he rather assigns it to the older employees. “The rapid sequence of major change projects which affect the entire organization is a fairly new condition for many organizations - for the majority of Generation Y it is normality!”

Change Project Teams:
RH could not say much about the constellation of project teams, but he was pointing out some positive and some negative attributes of Generation Y, which are vital for change teams or have a negative influence on them. “The curiosity, their critical mindset and their affinity to any kind of technology can be evaluated as very important for change. However, their missing steadiness regarding job switching behavior can also be evaluated as a critical attitude for change.”

4.2 Second Interview Phase
4.2.1 Respondent I - Q
The objective of the second interview phase was to extend the empirical findings of the first interview phase with general perceptions regarding the distinct characteristics of Generation Y. The respondents I to Q were employees from all three generations without any specific knowledge of change (Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers). The authors have purposely chosen three representatives from each generation to ensure equal distribution. Background information about the respondents are not presented as the background does not matter for the purpose of the second interview phase.
During the interview, the interviewers illustrated each of the ten defined characteristics of Generation Y in the form of a statement to the interviewee (e.g. the members of Generation Y show high flexibility). Then the respondent was asked to assess the statement as positive, neutral or negative depending on whether he/she agrees or disagrees with that statement. In case the interviewee could not understand the statement, the interviewer interfered and explained the respective statement more detailed to the interviewee.
The interviewees were asked to evaluate the characteristics (statements) based on their personal experiences with members of Generation Y.

The following graph visualizes the results of the second interview phase. The different sections of the bars represent the answers of all respondents and display whether they agreed, disagreed or were indecisive about those characteristics (statements).

Figure 4. Results of the Second Interview Phase
5. Analysis

The following section will present the theoretical development of this study and finally leads to the theoretical development matrix which builds the center of the analysis model (Figure 2). The two underlying theoretical parts, attitudinal constructs and the characteristics of Generation Y are interrelated. Following, the empirical data collected from the different interviews will be compared, discussed and also put into relation with the theoretical framework and the Theoretical Development Matrix (Table 1).

5.1 Readiness for Change

“Readiness for change” is a crucial success factor of change. As already emphasized by Lewin (1947) in the course of his three-step change model, the preparation process (unfreezing) is even more critical for a successful change implementation than the actual change. Also, Schein (1979) stressed that an insufficient unfreezing process often leads to the failure of change which then increases the resistance towards change among recipients. Resistance to change is a broadly acknowledged reaction towards change in the change literature (Oreg et al., 2018; Latta, 2015; Oreg et al., 2011; Choi, 2011). Furthermore, the majority of the respondents of the first interview phase supported the literature in that respect. RA stated that change processes often fail because of a missing concept for change, unclear communication of aims and objectives and a lack of declarations to the affected employees. RC mentioned that the state of readiness and therefore the degree of resistance to change is also closely related to the procedure of how change recipients get picked up. He further highlights that communication is a crucial issue in change and that communication is used to prevail resistance and create readiness for change.

RD evaluated readiness as the key question which an organization has to solve before initiating change. He experienced two different states of readiness, namely organizations’ readiness and the employees’ readiness. Both, have to be willing to change. This is also in line with Vakola’s understanding (2014). She further distinguished between individual and organizational “Readiness for change”. An individual who is ready for change exhibits proactive and positive attitude towards change, which equals willingness to support change and confidence in succeeding in change. Vakola (2014) further argues that this attitude depends on the perceived benefits of change and if those outweigh the anticipated risks. This has been supported by RA, RE and RF who share the view that perceived benefits of change determine whether the change recipient is willing to change or not. As everyone perceives change in a different way, this can result in positive or negative attitude towards change (Vakola, 2014; Oreg et al., 2011). RB, RE, RF and RH have notably experienced those positive perceptions among members of Generation Y when it comes to change rather than among previous generations. The divergences regarding “Readiness for change” between Generation Y and previous generations can have various reasons. RE and RF described older employees as being more skeptical and reserved when it comes to change. RE believes that it is, on the one hand, related to their open attitude towards new things, but on the other hand, is
dependent on everyone’s interests in the specific area of change. RF takes a similar opinion, but he relates skepticism of older employees to their established opinion about how things work. This opinion might also be influenced by his position as a consultant. Consultants are usually external experts with the objective to support the organization in critical strategic issues. Older employees are set in their working routines and, therefore, react with skepticism and rejection when changes occur. RB is of the opinion that it is based on their curiosity, critical mindset and the fact that they still have their career ahead of them. This motivates them to be more proactive in additional projects, especially change projects. She also imputed Generation Y to be more open-minded towards new situations which also makes them more open towards change.

Furthermore, the ability to process a significant amount of information makes them more suitable for changing working environments. This also receives support in the literature. Schulenburg (2016) describes Generation Y as a group of individuals with a wide variety of information and the ability to process information within a short period. This attribute is mainly caused by the fact that Generation Y grew up with the development of the internet and the availability of computers and smartphones. Those devices enabled them to intuitively deal with a high volume of information (Stenger, 2014; Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014). Also, the authors’ second interview phase supports the characteristic among the majority of GenYers. Seven of nine respondents attributed a great ability to deal with a high volume of information to Generation Y (Figure 4). Furthermore, this supports them to better process and understand complex strategic processes. Table 1 shows that better information processing and better understanding has a positive impact on “Readiness for change” as it decreases skepticism and supports optimism towards change.

RF and RH experienced Generation Y to be readier for change as they perceive those change projects as an excellent opportunity to prove themselves. Change projects, as backed up by RF and RH, allow them to do that since change projects are usually high priority projects that the top management has a great interest in. The high intention to reach leading positions in an organization bears witness to characteristics such as a strong “Achievement Orientation” and a high “Level of Education”. The literature also attributes both characteristics to Generation Y (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014; Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2010; Schulenburg, 2016). The empirical findings of the second interview phase reinforced the characteristic of a high “Level of Education” (8 positive; 1 neutral) but the results for “Achievement Orientation” weren’t as distinct (4 positive; 2 neutral; 3 negative) (Figure 4).

The literature further characterizes Generation Y as highly freedom-oriented which most likely relates to the fact that they grew up in times of the European liberalization and open borders. Everyone was free to move anywhere (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014). The development of the “Freedom Orientation” leads to high demand for leisure time and a good work-life balance. RB emphasized an opposing view. She stressed that Generation Y (including herself) are more likely to take work home and work extra hours to get work done. At the same time, her older colleagues constantly try to avoid that which leads to the impression that work-life balance is more important for older generations. The second interview phase revealed that the majority (six of nine) described Generation Y as freedom-oriented (Figure 4). Table 1 defined “Freedom Orientation” and the high interest of a good work-life balance as an obstacle to “Readiness for change” as it could reduce the willingness to work more in additional change projects. RF and RH experienced both, young as well as
old employees who were ready to work extra hours for change projects. They also met young and old employees who rejected change and the additional work as it would have been a constraint in their work-life balance. Both respondents especially emphasized that the perceived benefits an individual see in the involvement in change projects are the decisive factor for their willingness to actively participate.

5.2 Commitment to Change

The literature consistently agrees upon the fact that commitment is crucial for the successful development of an organization (Mercurio, 2015; Alvino, 2014; Morrow, 2011). Owoyemi et al. (2011) see commitment not only as a relation concept but also as a tool to generate and activate human energy and mind. Mercurio (2015) stresses that committed talents are central to ensure an organization’s competitive advantage. Morrow (2011) highlights that factors such as the modern environment, economic uncertainty, fast changes, globalization and the increasing competition on the markets drive the importance of committed employees even more.

The need for committed employees also plays a significant role in change. Herscovitch & Meyer (2002) defined “Commitment to change” as “a force (mindset) that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for a successful implementation of a change initiative” (p. 475). Conner (1993) described commitment as “the glue” to provide a vital dedication to employees and the organizations change objectives. The empirical findings of this study revealed that all respondents see commitment as crucial for successful change implementations. However, they stressed many factors which act contrary to commitment. RA noticed that the structure of the organization he was employed at, has changed rapidly within the last 15 years. An example would be the top management which used to be relatively consistent and is nowadays replaced every two to three years. According to RA, this, on the one hand, is related to the tough economic situation the organization faces and, on the other hand, caused by the lack of commitment to the organization among the top managers. RC has another opinion about that, according to him, commitment to the organization and change projects is higher in top management positions, as they have the big picture and initiate changes from top to bottom. However, both emphasize that commitment differs based on the size of an organization. The bigger the organization, the more indifferent is the success of the organization for the individual employee. RF also shares that view.

One alarming result of decreasing commitment among employees is an increasing fluctuation. RB herself is involved in a change project which aims to investigate reasons for the high fluctuation especially among younger employees working in the sales department. That could have various reasons. The literature holds the view that Generation Y is featured with a high level of “Flexibility” (Schirmer et al., 2014). This implies mainly positive effects on change since a changing environment requires “Flexibility” to adapt to it quickly. However, Table 1 displays a negative influence of “Flexibility” when it comes to “Commitment to change”. A flexible employee might also be more willing to change his or her workplace in case something contradicts his or her expectations. This would have a negative influence on the accomplishment of change initiatives. RH also confirmed that he blames the favorable labor market for a higher fluctuation among Generation Y. However, he
believes that Generation Y is still more committed to change than former generations. The promotion prospects caused by change projects outweigh the tendency to leave the organization. Another distinct characteristic of Generation Y which might causes a shrinking commitment is their strong “Self-confidence” which emerged from various facts. Röttig (2011) is of the opinion that the strong “Self-confidence” is caused by their optimistic mindset. Generation Y was courted by their parents, advertisement on the consumer market and their employers which boosted their optimistic attitude. Hurrelmann & Albrecht (2014) stress that this attitude brings along high expectations in terms of salary, individual treatment, supervision and enjoyment of work. Unfulfilled expectations could lead to higher fluctuation and would also have negative influences on the “Commitment to change”.

A high “Commitment to change” is also affected by the sufficiency of internal communication (Marchalina & Ahmad, 2017). Adequate communication is especially expected from the executives in change. Michaelis et al. (2010) see leadership practice as crucial to enhance “Commitment to change”. This has also been confirmed by the majority of respondents of the first interview phase. The organization RD was part of had to face a strategic dilemma which negatively influenced the “Commitment to change”. An annual survey revealed that the majority of the organization could not recall the overall strategy. As a result, the top management developed an overall strategy and presented aims and objectives of the organization throughout all layers. According to RD, that created a great commitment throughout the organization, because people understood and supported the intentions of the top management. Following change processes received great commitment as they were justified to serve the overall goal. Also, characteristics of Generation Y such as a “High level of education”, “Achievement Orientation”, “Critical mindset” and “Globality” would favor the “Commitment to change” as they enable Generation Y to see the big picture of an organization and make them aware of the necessity of change (Figure 4 & 6).

5.3 Openness to Change

Choi (2011) and McCartt & Rohrbaugh (1995) explored openness as an underlying trait of “Flexibility”. Digman (1990) stated that “Flexibility” in dealing with new situations could be seen as a major key factor in personality structure. In the literature about generations characteristics, Schirmer et al. (2014) and Hurrelmann & Albrecht (2014) found that a high level of “Flexibility” is a personality trait of members of Generation Y. Half of the respondents of the first interview phase referred to “Flexibility” during their interview. RA mentioned that he sees a tendency towards higher “Flexibility” in Generation Y and especially mentioned the field of technical innovations. RF thinks that the members of Generation Y are more flexible in dealing with change processes as well, and so do RG and RH. However, this opinion cannot be generalized. RA stated he had met numerous employees of previous generations who were just as fit and flexible as younger colleagues. In the second interview phase, eight of nine respondents agreed upon the fact that Generation Y is shaped by a high level of “Flexibility”; only one respondent was indecisive about this characteristic (Figure 4). The aforesaid approves of the proposed positive link between the attitudinal constructs and Generation Y characteristic of a high level of “Flexibility” being existent.
Furthermore, Robbins (2005) defined openness to experience as an individual having a range of interests and a fascination with novelty. In opposite to this trait, an individual might also feel more comfortable in the familiar (Choi, 2011). Four of eight interviewees of the first phase responded to Robbin’s definition. RB emphasized that Generation Y is more likely to try a novelty, even if the project may lead to no successful result. RC mentioned that employees of former generations aren’t interested in the new procedure because they have handled processes in the same way all their working life. RD supports this statement and describes older individuals as feeling uncertain when it comes to changes in familiar processes. Also, RE says that members of Generation Y are more open towards new things.

These statements go hand in hand with characteristics of Generation Y found in the literature. “Globality” is defined as being more open towards things one is not entirely familiar with. This definition is supported by the statement of RC who sees members of Generation Y as interested in international networking and globally oriented. All nine respondents of the second interview phase (Figure 4) agreed upon the global orientation of Generation Y which accords this trait high credibility.

Being open towards learning new things is also supported by the high “Educational level” of Generation Y. Individuals with a high “Educational level” are willing to have a challenging job. They see learning new things as an opportunity for their personal development (Schulenburg, 2016). Eight of nine respondents of the second interview phase confirmed a high “Educational level” of Generation Y; only one interviewee was indecisive about this characteristic (Figure 4).

Besides the aforesaid, open people are characterized as creative, curious, and artistically sensitive (Choi, 2011). RB explained that employees from all generations are valuable for creating approaches, but employees from previous generations do not come up with new or innovative approaches. Generation Y is curious about changing old processes and see opportunities to improve themselves. RD mentioned that Generation Y is unbiased and creative because they do not know much about the procedures of an organization. In addition, RF experienced that the members of Generation Y are creative in finding new ways and solving problems.

Moreover, the literature describes the members of Generation Y as critical thinkers. Van Rooi (2011) defines their critical thinking as seeing things from different perspectives and describes them as free to think in different and new ways. This personality trait of Generation Y is confirmed by RB in the statement mentioned above and by the respondents of the second interview phase. Seven of nine interviewees agreed with the statement that members of Generation Y are critical thinkers (Figure 4).

Devos et al. (2007) defined openness to change differently than the other authors. They perceive it as the willingness to support change and positively affect potential consequences of the change. RC supports this definition with his statement that there will always be some employees of former generations who do not understand or are not willing to understand newly established processes. RD also shared his experiences concerning willingness. He mentioned that the Generation Y is highly motivated to change and make things happen while previous generations are only waiting for their retirement. When RF got on to willingness, he said that he experienced younger people as being cooperative in change projects and willing to reconsider their way of working. This attitude is being supported by the personality trait of strong “Self-confidence”. Members of Generation Y are optimistic and
see their working life as a chance where everything is possible (Röttig, 2011). Consequently, Generation Y is willing to support changes and positively affect the potential consequences. The second interview phase showed that the interviewees responded to this characteristic in different ways. Four respondents agreed on Generation Y having strong “Self-confidence”, four were indecisive, and one respondent disagreed upon this trait.

The last huge field which influences “Openness to change” is the information environment (Ertürk, 2008). Employees who are well-informed about a change process are likely to be open to it. Furthermore, it was found that the quality of the received information has an impact on the “Openness to change”.

“Informationalization” is one of the major characteristics of Generation Y found in the literature. It describes the importance of information and the flow of information (Schulenburg, 2016). Stenger (2014) and Hurrelmann & Albrecht (2014) emphasize that the members of Generation Y can deal with a high volume of information at the same time (multitasking). Every respondent of the first interview phase referred to “Informationalization”. RA supported the statement of Ertürk (2008). He mentioned that it is easier for employees to see the advantages of a change process when they have sufficient information on it. Concerning Generation Y, useful information and communication are even more important than for members of other generations. RB mentioned that such change projects are organized with the help of different digital platforms. Young individuals are creative when it comes to the provision of information, and they know how to deal with such digital communication tools. Also, RC said that Generation Y has a close connection to digital collaboration platforms. RD, RE, RF, RG and RH share this view and think that members of Generation Y know how to quickly handle digital procedures because they grew up with these platforms and software. RH emphasized that Generation Y is usually open to change because there has been a high involvement of technology and digitalization in change processes within the last years. However, RD also mentioned that the increased communication on the internet might also lead to a higher number of young people who are less open towards others.

The responses to the second interview phase showed that seven interviewees agreed upon “Informationalization” being a trait of Generation Y (Figure 4). Only two respondents were indecisive about this characteristic in relation to members of Generation Y (Figure 4). Another trait which can be applied to this field is “Community orientation” (Aronson et al., 2011). Social interactions within groups, as well as the variety of forms of social communities, are very important to Generation Y (Schulenburg, 2016). The members of Generation Y think in networks which creates the possibility for teamwork and a steady exchange of information (Breuer, 2011). Five respondents of the second interview phase agreed upon “Community orientation” being a trait of Generation Y, two disagreed, and two were indecisive.

5.4 Cynicism about Change

According to Cole et al. (2006), cynicism can be understood as an evaluative judgment from an individual’s employment experience. Albrecht (2008), Cindy et al. (2007) and Berneth (2007) share this view and found that cynicism arises when the staff involved has made negative experiences in the past. These definitions are supported by statements from the
respondents of the first interview phase. RA stressed that there will always be employees who experienced negative experiences with change projects in the past and behave cynically. He also expected more experienced employees to have a lower acceptance of external consultants because they might already have witnessed failed change projects in the past. RE agrees with the statement. He told the authors that employees around the age of 60 might have gained negative experiences towards change processes in the past and memorize them so severely that they support a cynical attitude towards new change projects. RH’s approach is a different one but leads to the same result on involved employees. In his opinion, “Cynicism about change” comes from the high frequency of change processes. That makes it more difficult to win the staff over for every single project.

The literature also defines cynicism as a pessimistic view on change efforts being successful (Albrecht, 2008; Cindy et al., 2007; Berneth, 2007). RB supported this definition with her own experience. She noticed that long-established employees are often afraid of regulations which are opposed to a project plan. They reconsider it and preferably would stop the project before it has even started. RF mentioned that the pessimistic view on change projects results from job cutbacks. Many individuals have heard about change projects ending in redundancy for employees. The employees are afraid of getting laid off. RG shares this view and thinks that the pessimistic mind of some employees stems from the anxiety of the new and unknown, whereas RC has a different perspective on this topic. He thinks critical and scrutinizing views on instructions come from “Self-confidence” of employees which may lead to cynicism. He experienced Generation Y as having a distinct “Self-confidence”. This goes hand in hand with Pendergast (2010) who determined strong “Self-confidence” as a characteristic of Generation Y. On the contrary, Röttig (2011) stated that strong “Self-confidence” makes individuals optimistic and having a “everything is possible mentality”. This definition of “Self-confidence” would counteract cynicism. The respondents of the second interview phase had differing opinions on strong “Self-confidence” being a characteristic of Generation Y. Four interviewees agreed, four were indecisive about it, and one respondent disagreed upon this characteristic.

Furthermore, Albrecht (2008), Cindy et al. (2007), and Berneth (2007) found that cynical employees blame the individuals who are responsible for changes as being unmotivated and incompetent. Five out of eight respondents of the first interview phase took a stand on this issue. RA emphasized that external consultants sometimes not be accepted in the workforce because they often are very young and treat all companies they are working with in the same way. That is the reason why they are not taken seriously. RE shares this opinion. However, RC experienced very few situations where someone behaved cynically towards him, but he also stated that this is somewhat unusual in consultancy business. Furthermore, RD mentioned that employees from previous generations often don’t feel sympathetic towards motivated young individuals. RF experienced similar occurrences. Even if a consultant makes only a minor mistake, the employees will jump for joy and criticize him sharply. That leads to change managers having to win every single employee over to one’s side. It is easier to convince the workforce of the change plan when being a highly educated manager with a high level of knowledge (Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2010). It will let anxiety disappear and eliminate cynicism. RH stated that organizational changes are normal for Generation Y. They learned that these are necessary to stay competitive. It means they are
likely to accept change managers. Eight out of nine respondents of the second interviews agreed on a “High educational level” of Generation Y. Only one interviewee was indecisive.

The Generation Y characteristic of “Globality” has the same impact on attitude. It is defined as being open-minded and tolerant. They see the diversity of individuals and working in heterogeneous teams as a fruitful source of inspiration and new ideas. Applied to change projects and attitude towards change managers, it means that Generation Y is open and tolerant towards the unfamiliar and does not become cynical. All nine respondents of the second interview phase agreed on Generation Y being globally oriented.

As the last point, Oreg et al. (2018) and Brown & Cregan (2008) found that involvement and participation can lower cynicism. RD emphasized that he has never experienced cynicism on the management level. That is the case because the managers can identify themselves with the company. They know what’s best for the company in the long run and they are involved in the change processes from the very beginning.

5.5 Change Project Teams

Change project teams build the general approach of how organizations deal with change processes. This is simply caused by the fact that change is something which is often not implemented in the operational procedure of a specific department but instead concerns the entire organization (Kaune, 2010; Lauer, 2014). To ensure the success of a change project, it is important to control the team building, progress and the monitoring of results (Pläge, 2011). The literature also agrees upon the importance to consider certain aspects when it comes to the team composition. Czichos (2014) states that it is essential to have a project manager, functional experts and representatives of the affected divisions in the change team to assure different insights and ideal input.

The respondents to this study were also asked to discuss how change teams are usually compounded, based on their experiences. RA, RB, RC and RD confirmed that a diverse change team is essential to achieve successful changes. RA, who was himself head of the works council, supports the view that it is advisable to involve employee representatives in change. Employees are usually the ones who suffer from changes the most, which makes them worth protecting. RG was conducting a digitalization project in a set project team with eight participants. They built the team, consisting of him and another colleague in a leading position, four members of the information technology department (IT) responsible for hard- and software and two professionally qualified colleagues from the HR department. Thus, the team was well balanced between specialists from the technological point of view, two leading and monitoring positions and the HR department to take care of the employee perspective. This in line with Belbin (2010) who points out the importance of a well-balanced set of characteristics and capabilities in change project teams.

The accordance of theory and practice was not shared among the respondents. RA stressed that project teams are usually put together according to the personal preferences of the deciding manager, even though there is an actual tool to evaluate everyone's abilities to set up the most efficient team. RB, RC, and RF confirmed this discrepancy between theoretical approach and the actual execution of team collocation.
The respondents were also asked to discuss whether the age of the change team members plays a significant role or not. Four respondents were able to discuss the age structure of change teams further. Even though the answers were distinct from each other, the bottom line again was the wide range of capabilities and characteristics to ensure diversity. RD emphasizes that individuals from all organizational levels should be involved in change project teams since change strategies are usually developed from the top management but those are not the ones who carry out the changes at a later stage. Furthermore, he suggests having a good combination of younger (Generation Y) and older (Generation X and Baby Boomer) employees. This is because young employees are free from habits, are more creative and innovative, and perform in a solution-oriented way, whereas older employees contribute with their experience in recent change projects and usually adopt a more rational perspective.

The organization RB is involved in even has a particular way to ensure diversity in project teams to some extent. In order to reach a certain career level, it is required to participate in projects throughout every department. Besides that, the trainees are also required to participate in a certain number of projects. It generates motivation to participate in projects and, furthermore, creates diverse teams in terms of age and field of expertise.

RC allowed for another insight into the age structure of change project teams. As an external senior project manager, he works with a variety of different organizations and thus experienced change teams in different settings. According to him, the average age in change teams among his clients is 46,5 years which implies that the responsible change recipients are in the age of 33 up to 60. He explained that this was due to the high priority change projects usually have in organizations. These projects are usually conducted by the senior management who are generally of advanced age. On the contrary, he and his colleagues have an average age of about 29 years which entails that most of them are members of Generation Y. One reason for that could be the high demand of “Flexibility” in consultancies. That does not only relate to geographical terms of constantly changing locations, but also regarding adaptation to new clients. The theory confirms that Generation Y is more flexible than former generations (Schirmer et al. 2014; Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014). This trait makes them more suitable for constantly changing environments and therefore able to better deal with the work of consultants and in project-based jobs. Other characteristics like a “Critical mindset”, “High level of education”, “Informationalization” and “Globality” could also be seen as beneficial for the job as a consultant. Figure 4 shows that those characteristics are well-developed among Generation Y. RH also imputes Generation Y to be more curious, critical (thinking out of the box) and more affine towards technology which supports the theory here. The affinity towards technological advancements among Generation Y also favors new opportunities to work in diverse teams. Working in teams that are located in different countries, probably speak different languages and work in different time zones, can be managed in virtual teams without any problem. Characteristics like “Flexibility”, “High Level of Education” and “Globality” facilitate Generation Y to quickly adapt to those new opportunities and implement them in their work life in a beneficial way.
5.6 Summary

The authors’ analytical approach consists of three consecutive levels of development. The first level contains the combination of two independent theories, namely “Attitudinal constructs of change” and “Characteristics of Generation Y”. On the one hand, the “Attitudinal constructs of change” are comprised of four attitudes, “Readiness for change”, “Commitment to change”, “Openness to change” and “Cynicism about change”. The literature perceives those as having major influences on employees’ general attitude towards change and consequently on the implementation of changes. On the other hand, the authors selected ten “Characteristics of Generation Y”: “Informationalization”, “Achievement-orientation”, “High level of education”, “Community-orientation”, “High level of flexibility”, “Low power distance”, “Strong self-confidence”, “Freedom-orientation”, “Critical attitude” and “Globality”. These characteristics are mentioned in the literature most frequently and were selected by the authors purposely among more than 50 different traits. Combining these theories in the “Theoretical Development Matrix” (Table 1), the authors found distinct relations between many characteristics and attitudes; yet three out of ten characteristics were ascertained as having no clear effects on attitude towards change. These were “Community-orientation”, “Low power distance” and “Freedom-orientation”, which have an impact on only one attitudinal construct each.

The next level of analysis was the interview phase one. The authors conducted interviews with eight employees who have experienced change projects during their professional lives. The criteria for selection of respondents were organizational background, position within the organization, involvement in change processes and age (Table 2). The focus of the interviews was set on the attitude of employees towards change to validate the theory of attitudinal constructs; thus, the first constant of the “Theoretical Development Matrix” (Table 1) that was designed by the authors. Over the course of the interviews, the respondents confirmed that each of the attitudinal constructs, in a way, influences employees’ perspective of change.

The last level of analysis was interview phase two, which concentrated on the ten major characteristics of Generation Y and was conducted with three interviewees of each generation (Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers) to ensure equal distribution. To see if the first findings of the combination of two independent theories were valid, the authors decided to consider all ten characteristics in the second interview phase. The results of the second interview phase (Figure 4) show that the traits “Achievement-orientation” (4 positive; 3 negative; 2 neutral) and “Strong self-confidence” (4 positive; 1 negative; 4 neutral) were not confirmed by the majority of respondents. Furthermore, interview phase two supported the authors’ assumption of the combination of theories in their matrix (Table 1), that three out of ten characteristics do not have a clear impact on attitude towards change. The second phase of interviews showed that “Community-orientation” (5 positive; 2 negative; 2 neutral), “Low power distance” (5 positive; 2 negative; 2 neutral) and “Freedom-orientation” (6 positive; 1 negative; 2 neutral) are not as distinctive as the other traits, which have been evaluated positively at least seven times from nine respondents in total. “Informationalization”, “High level of education”, “High level of flexibility”, “Critical Thinking” and “Globality” are the remaining characteristics of the ten original ones after the
authors’ evaluation. These characteristics are well-marked on members of Generation Y and, therefore, approved at every consecutive level of this study. Furthermore, these five characteristics of Generation Y are evaluated as having an influence on the attitudinal constructs from a theoretical as well as from a practical perspective which implies some implications for the collocation of change teams as displayed in Figure 5 and further elaborated in section 6.2.

*Figure 5. Own Conceptual Model*
6. Conclusion, Practical Implications, Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

In this chapter, the authors will present their drawn conclusions of this thesis and provide final answers to the research question. Practical implications for change managers and project team leaders will be offered to show the practical relevance of this study. Finally, the authors will remark some limitations to this study and suggest recommendations for future researchers to develop this field of research further.

6.1 Conclusion

In the introductory chapter of this study, it was stated that organizational change is an inevitable status of today’s fast-changing business environment. Organizations in all sectors have to be quick on their feet to keep the pace of change. In other words, change has become common business practice for many organizations. Nevertheless, organizational changes often fail which, in many cases, is the result of a poor integration of employees in the implementation process of change. Employees and their attitude towards change are of special focus not only in the change literature but also in this underlying study. Besides that, this study focuses on the specific characteristics of Generation Y and aims to reveal if distinct characteristics have an influence on the attitude towards change. The isolated areas, attitude towards change and the characteristics of Generation Y, have been studied sufficiently but the interrelation between this generation and the attitude towards change has not been researched before. Which is why this study having its origin in the following research question:

*Are there relations between distinct characteristics of Generation Y and their attitude towards change and does this result in new approaches for practical implementations?*

This study sought to scrutinize typical characteristics of Generation Y and to find out whether they influence their attitude (“Readiness for Change”, “Commitment to Change”, “Openness to Change” and “Cynicism about Change”) towards change projects. The findings revealed that Generation Y exhibits specific characteristics which have a positive impact on their attitude towards change. However, from the initial ten analyzed characteristics, only five could be clearly assigned to Generation Y and to a positive impact on the attitude towards change. Those characteristics are “Informationalization”, “High level of education”, “High level of flexibility”, “Critical Thinking” and “Globality”. The remaining characteristics “Achievement-orientation”, “Community-orientation”, “Low power distance”, “Freedom-orientation”, “Strong self-confidence” were eliminated because of mainly two reasons. Firstly, they could not be utterly assigned to Generation Y as representative characteristics, and secondly, some of them had no influence (o) or negative influence (-) on the attitude towards change (Table 1 and 2). Even though the first five characteristics rather affect the attitude positively, the findings reveal that a “High level of flexibility” also imputes Generation Y to be volatile which results in increasing job hopping and decreasing planning security for organizations. Consequently, the commitment to change can also be negatively
influenced by flexibility. However, the authors identified that positive effects related to a “High level of flexibility” prevail the negative effects. Therefore, flexibility is one of the five selected characteristics.

In addition to that, the study also revealed some general findings which could not be associated with one specific characteristic or attitudinal construct, yet are interesting to take a look at. Among all respondents, Generation Y was described as being more affine to any kind of technology than the former generations. As this aspect was constantly raised during the empirical investigations, the authors believe it is worth mentioning. They conclude that the affinity to technology and the attitude towards change are closely interrelated. The attitude towards change is dependent on the changes being made and in how far those affect the individual personally. Almost every change project is related to technological advancements which makes adaptation easier for those who are already familiar with them. As Generation Y grew up in a fast-changing working environment where information technologies are indispensable, they definitely have a competitive advantage compared to former generations. To conclude, in times where change is not an emerging phase in organizations’ life cycles anymore but rather a constant process, the selected characteristics enable Generation Y to cope better with organizational change.

6.2 Practical Implications

Besides enhancing existing knowledge about the attitude towards change and the interrelation with specific characteristics the study aims to expose how this can be useful to collocate successful change project teams. As revealed above, some distinct characteristics of Generation Y make them more suitable to handle changes in their working environment. This raises the question if that makes them better team members for change projects. It would not be adequate to answer this question with a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’, but this study suggests some practical implications for the collocation of change project teams.

➢ By assessing the five different characteristics (Figure 5) among potential change recipients, change teams could be collocated more efficiently.
➢ More specific focus on the diversity of change teams related to age could extend the scope of change.
➢ Special support for Generation Y to encourage active participation in change.
➢ Involvement of Generation Y in managerial and strategic change decisions could be beneficial in order to create novel change solutions.
➢ The impartiality and creativity of Generation Y open up new ways of coping with change.

The majority of respondents experienced ambition for change projects among Generation Y but also stated that the responsibility for organizational change is usually to be taken by the senior or top management. This is reasonable due to their experience in the organization, but the authors believe that it would be advantageous to incorporate Generation Y even more in the organizational change context.
6.3 Limitations

The following section aims to show the authors’ awareness of limitations to this underlying study. One limitation is caused by the qualitative approach the authors chose. This approach reduces the possibility to statistically generalize the results of this thesis as the number of respondents is relatively small. Additionally, the specific classifications of the different generations are not distributed worldwide but rather in the western world. Even though one could apply different generations to other populations, the results for the distinct characteristics would probably not match. Another limitation is caused by different opinions of who is regarded as being part of Generation Y and who belongs to the previous respectively following generation. The authors decided to set the period from 1981 to 1997 which represents the average range of the current literature. This definition was communicated to the respondents prior to the interviews. However, it is possible that some of the respondents answered based on their predetermined understanding of Generation Y.

Another limitation is the result of a more fundamental discussion about the phenomenon of the classification into generations. Some studies in the literature do not support the idea of generational distinction. The majority of those who disagree with generational effects claim that differences are mainly caused by age effects. The authors were aware of the debate but support the idea of generational distinctions and therefore conducted this study based on the prevailing supportive literature.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

There are numerous isolated studies about the attitude towards change and generational studies but besides the underlying study research on interrelations between them is scarce. Therefore, the authors of this study recommend further research on generational effects in conjunction with other managerial implications. Change is only one economic phenomenon where specific knowledge about generational differences could be sufficient. Also, general management theory could be enhanced by studies about generations. The authors further suggest conducting long-term studies with a quantitative approach to achieve statistically generalizable results on a larger range of respondents. This would also contribute to the question whether generational effects exist or if most of the differences are based on age effects.

Furthermore, the authors recommend conducting research related to the attitude towards change in corporations compared to small organizations. Some of the respondents mentioned that they experienced different attitude towards change depending on the size of the organization that the change was conducted in. The authors were not able to consider this in the scope of this study but would recommend further research on the topic.

Further research could also be conducted with future generations. The Generation Z already starts to emerge on the market, and it is most likely that they also exhibit distinct characteristics that are interesting to evaluate regarding their influence on economic areas. It could also be valuable to investigate a possible downside of growing up in a technologically driven world. A lack of interpersonal skills is already noticeable among the latest generations, and that might have a critical impact on conventional economic approaches.
7. References


Appendices
Appendix A: First Interview Guide

The first interview phase was held with eight respondents with a different set of expertise in change projects. The presented interview guide severed as a guideline for the interviewers to conduct semi-structured interviews. The guide will be presented in English further below.

I. Bereitschaft zur Veränderung
1. Wie würden Sie die Bereitschaft & Motivation für Veränderungsprojekte in den Altersgruppen 21 – 37 Jahren und über 37 Jahren einschätzen?
   a. Sehen Sie Unterschiede zwischen diesen beiden Altersgruppen?
2. Welche Altersgruppe (siehe oben) würden Sie im Veränderungsprozess als stressresistenter bewerten?
   a. Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.
3. Wie würden Sie die generelle Reaktion gegenüber Veränderungsprojekten in den genannten Altersgruppen beschreiben?
   a. Eher positiv/euphorisch oder negativ/zurückhaltend?

II. Leistungsbereitschaft/Engagement bei Veränderung
1. Wie würden Sie in beiden Altersgruppen das Engagement für zusätzlich Projekte bewerten, die nicht den arbeitsvertraglich festgelegten Aufgaben entsprechen?
2. Wie ist die Fluktuation in diesen beiden Altersgruppen?
3. Basierend auf Ihren Erfahrungen, welche Altersgruppe würden Sie mehr Leistungsbereitschaft in Veränderungsprojekten zuschreiben und warum?

III. Offenheit gegenüber Veränderung
1. Gibt es ein höheres Maß an Flexibilität bei der Anpassung an neue Arbeitsabläufe in einer der beiden Altersgruppen?
   a. Worin äußert sich dies?
2. Welche Rolle spielen Kreativität und innovative Lösungsansätze in Veränderungsprozessen?
3. Erfahren Sie ein höheres Bedürfnis nach interaktiver Zusammenarbeit und stetigem Informationsaustausch bei jüngeren Kollegen?

IV. Zynismus gegenüber Veränderung
1. Sehen Sie eine pessimistische Grundhaltung gegenüber der erfolgreichen Umsetzung von Veränderungsmaßnahmen als grundsätzliches Problem an?
2. Wenn ja, welcher Altersgruppe würden Sie diese Eigenschaft eher zuschreiben?
3. Haben Sie folgende Verhaltensweisen schon beobachten können?
   a. Zweifel an der erfolgreichen Umsetzung aufgrund von negativen Erfahrungen.
   b. Abwertendes und kritisches Verhalten gegenüber der unternehmerischen Wertvorstellungen.
   c. Beschreiben Sie die Situation
V. **Change Projekt Teams**
1. Welche Rolle spielt Ihrer Erfahrung nach die Altersverteilung in Teams bei Veränderungsprojekten?
2. Was sind die essentiellen Grundlagen für die Zusammensetzung von Change Teams?
3. Gibt es diesbezüglich Vorgaben oder Erfahrungswerte wie diese Teams bestmöglich zusammengesetzt sind?

**English:**

I. **Readiness for Change**
1. How would you evaluate the readiness & motivation for change projects in the age groups 21 – 37 years and above 37 years?
   a. Do you see regarding readiness & motivation any differences between those age groups?
2. Which age group would you assess as more stress-resistant?
   a. Justify your answer.
3. How would you describe the general reaction towards Change projects in those age groups?
   a. Rather positive/euphoric or negative/reserved?

II. **Commitment to Change**
1. How would you evaluate the commitment for additional projects (not predetermined in the labor agreement) among the members of those two age groups?
2. How is the Fluctuation in both age groups?
3. Based on your experiences, which age group would you attribute more commitment in Change processes and why?

III. **Openness to Change**
1. Do you recognize a higher level of flexibility in one age group when it comes to the adaptation to new work practices?
   a. How is it affected?
2. Which role do creativity and innovative problem-solving approaches play in Change processes?
3. Do you realize a higher demand for interactive collaboration and continuous exchange of information at younger colleagues?

IV. **Cynicism about Change**
1. Would you consider pessimistic attitude towards the successful implementation of Change project as a major problem?
2. If yes, which age group would you rather assign this attitude to?
3. Have you observed the following behaviors towards Change?
   a. Disbelief in the success of change due to bad experiences.
b. Derogatory and skeptical behavior against the organizational values.
c. Describe the situation

V. Change Project Teams
1. Which role does the age structure play in the collocation of change teams?
2. What are the essential principles in order to collocate a successful change team?
3. Are there any standards or empirical values how to collocate?

Appendix B: Second Interview Guide

The second interview phase was held with nine respondents three from each considered Generation (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y). The presented interview guide served to capture the perception of the respondents regarding the selected characteristics of the Generation Y. An English translation of each characteristic is displayed beneath each characteristic. The statement below each characteristic only helped the interviewers to further explain the characteristic to the interviewee in case of misunderstanding. Therefore, a translation into English seemed unnecessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informationalisierung</th>
<th>positiv</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>negativ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Die Generation Y ist sehr affirm im Umgang mit großen Mengen von Informationen, d.h. der Beschaffung und der Verarbeitung dieser.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leistungsorientierung</th>
<th>positiv</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>negativ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitglieder der Generation Y sind leistungsorientiert. Weg vom Arbeiten des Geldes wegen, hin zum Arbeiten zur Selbstverwirklichung.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ausbildungsniveau</th>
<th>positiv</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>negativ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GenYer haben ein hohes Ausbildungsniveau.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gemeinschaftsorientierung</th>
<th>positiv</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>negativ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soziale Gemeinschaften und ständige Interaktion ist für die Generation Y von großer Bedeutung. Sie schaffen Orientierung und Sicherheit in sozialen Gruppen (Denken in Netzwerken).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexibilität</th>
<th>positiv</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>negativ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitglieder der Generation Y sind sehr flexibel.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenschaft</td>
<td>Bewertung</td>
<td>Bewertung</td>
<td>Bewertung</td>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Machtdistanz</strong></td>
<td>positiv</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>negativ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Low power distance)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GenYer fühlen sich wohl in Arbeitsgruppen mit geringer Machtdistanz und flachen Hierarchien.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selbstbewusstsein</strong></td>
<td>positiv</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>negativ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Self-confidence)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitglieder der Generation Y sind sehr selbstbewusst.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freiheitsorientierung</strong></td>
<td>positiv</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>negativ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Freedom orientation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Generation Y hat ein ausgeprägtes Freiheitsbedürfnis und strebt nach Work-Life-Balance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skepsis</strong></td>
<td>positiv</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>negativ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Critical Thinking)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitglieder der Generation Y haben ein Verlangen nach Nachvollziehbarkeit und hinterfragen kritisch.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Globalität</strong></td>
<td>positiv</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>negativ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Globality)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Generation Y ist offen für neue Dinge und denkt in internationalen Maßstäben.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>