

# Diversity in (top-) management teams

The influence of team diversity on the level of ambidexterity



Master thesis defence – Strategic Management  
Ir. W. Poppelaars – van de Worp (336587)

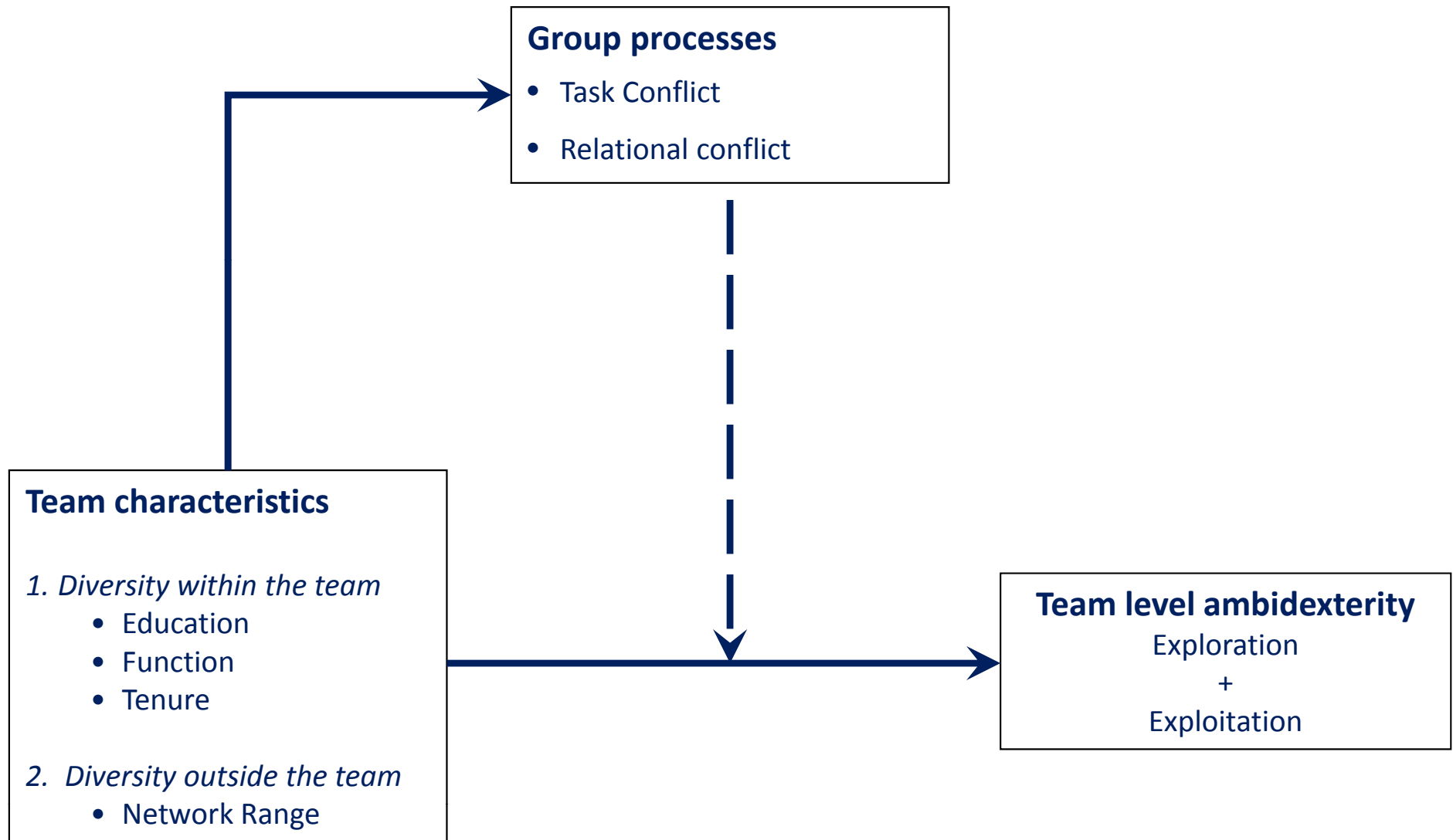
Coach: S. Fourné, MSc  
Co-reader: Dr. I. Bogenrieder  
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# Introduction



- Firms organized around groups -> identify solutions, innovative ideas
- Ambidexterity -> most important driver for firm performance
- Diversity considered as important indicator for team performance
- But especially for radical innovation
- **Is diversity a crucial factor in creating ambidextrous teams?**

# Conceptual model



# Diversity

## Within the team

- Educational orientation, function, tenure

## Outside the team

- Network range: multiple knowledge pools -> access to great variety in knowledge
- And are used to deal with different kinds of knowledge; understanding and communication



# Group processes: conflict

## diversity

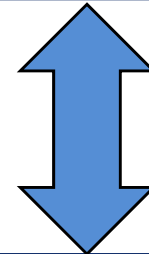
Task related attributes  
...knowledge, skills, function...



## conflict

### Task conflict

- Oriented at task
- Communication, discussion ideas
- Productive/ beneficial



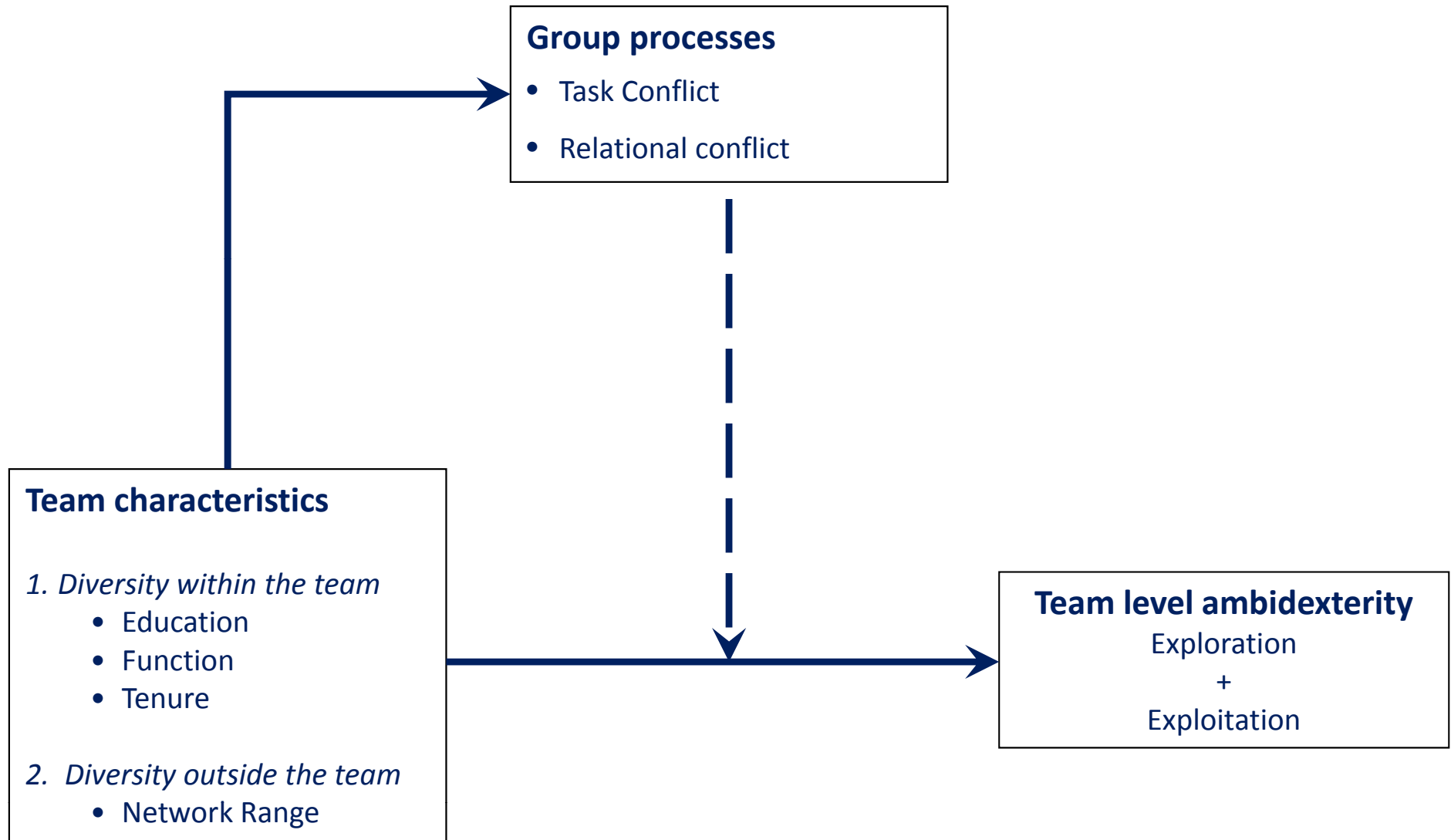
### Relational conflict

- Emotional, social cognitive processes
- Frustration, anger, fear, discomfort
- Disfunctional, energy consuming

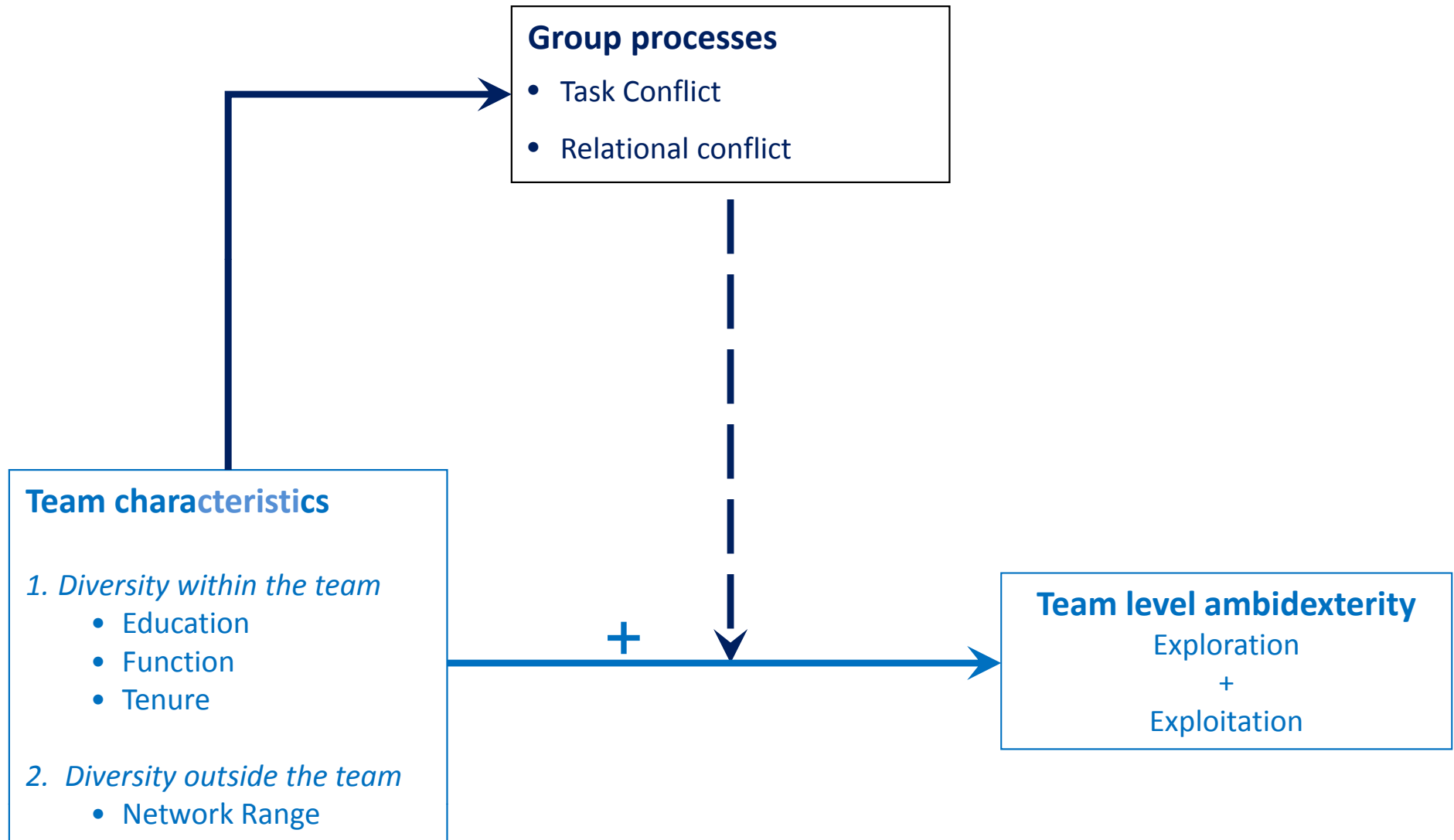
Relational oriented attributes  
... gender, age, culture...



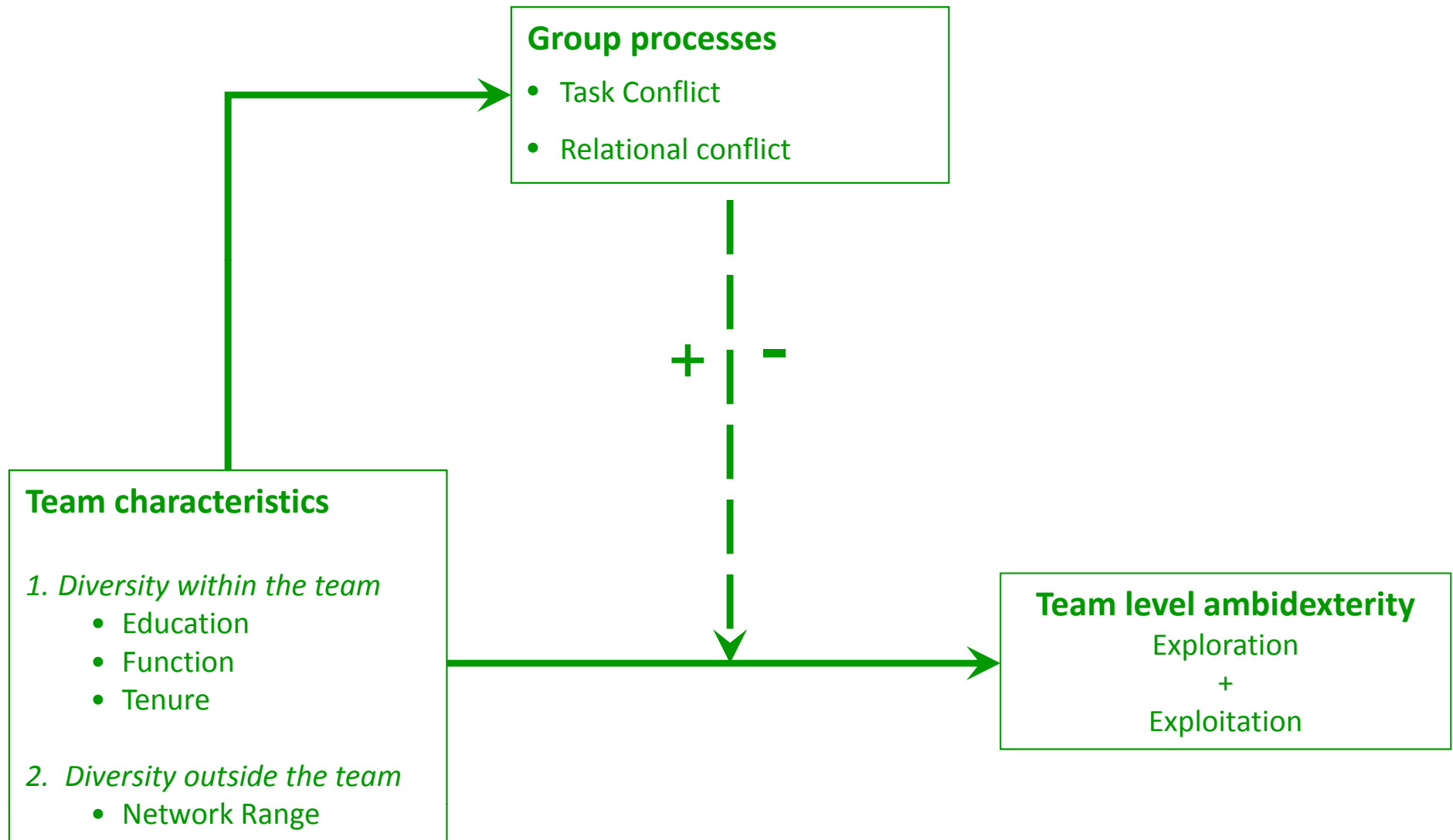
# Hypotheses



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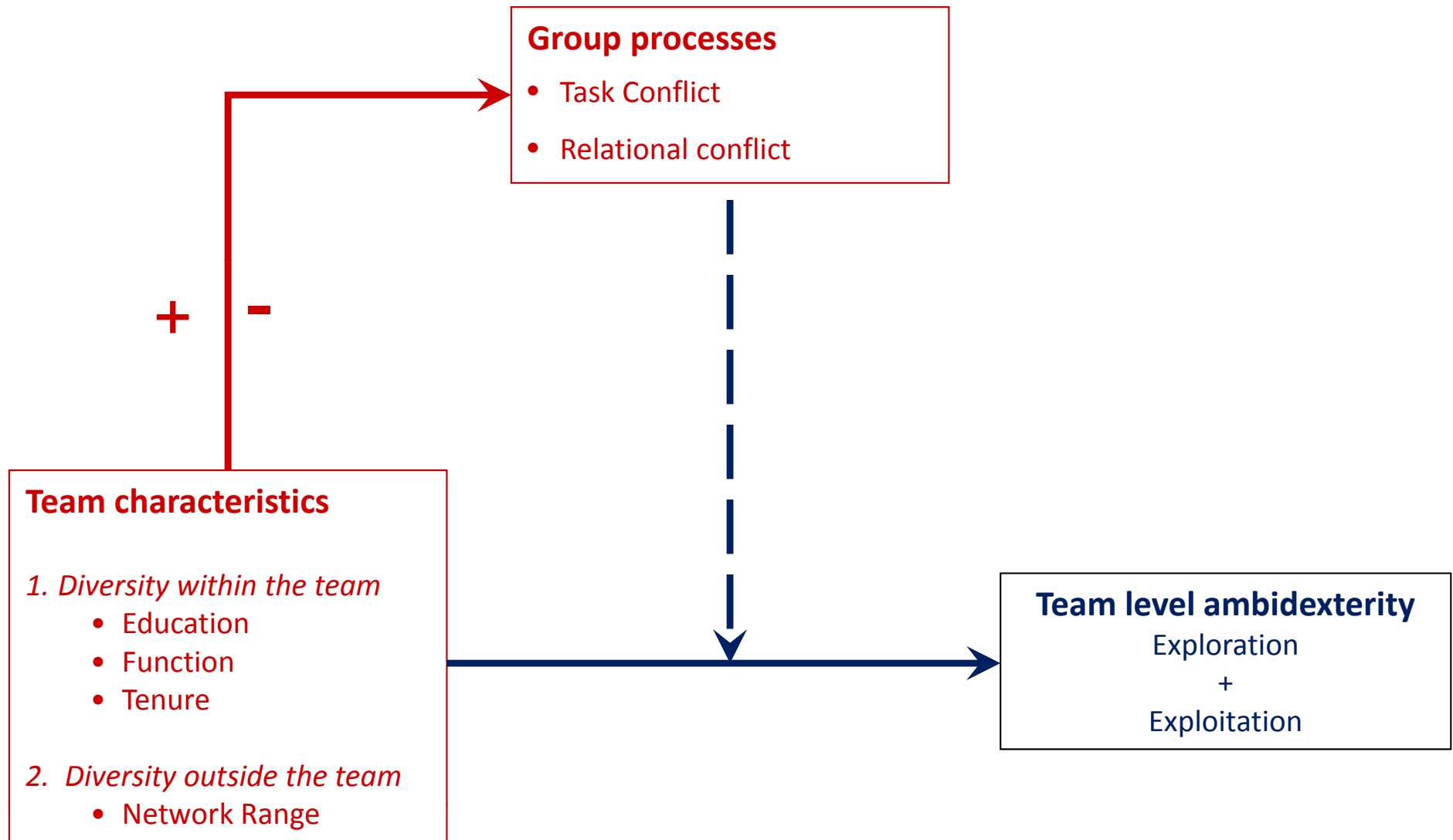


# Hypotheses





# Hypotheses



# Research



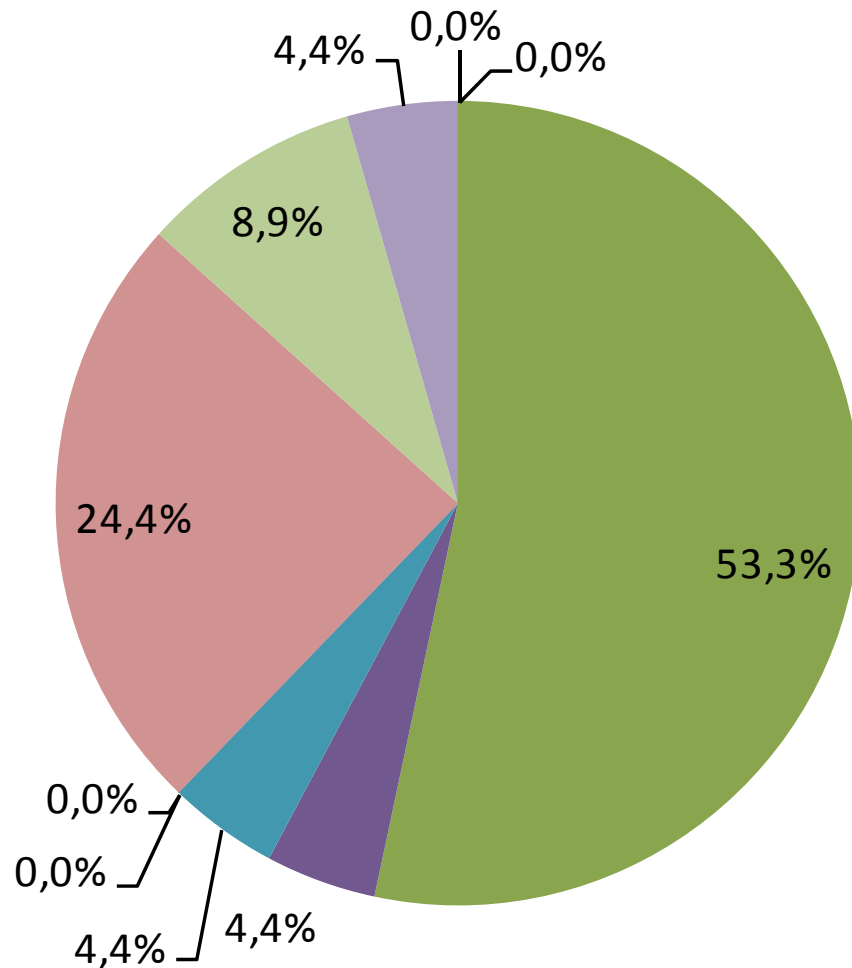
## Method

- Internet-based survey, approximately 10-15 minutes
- Targeted teams: business unit management and/ or top management teams

## Data set

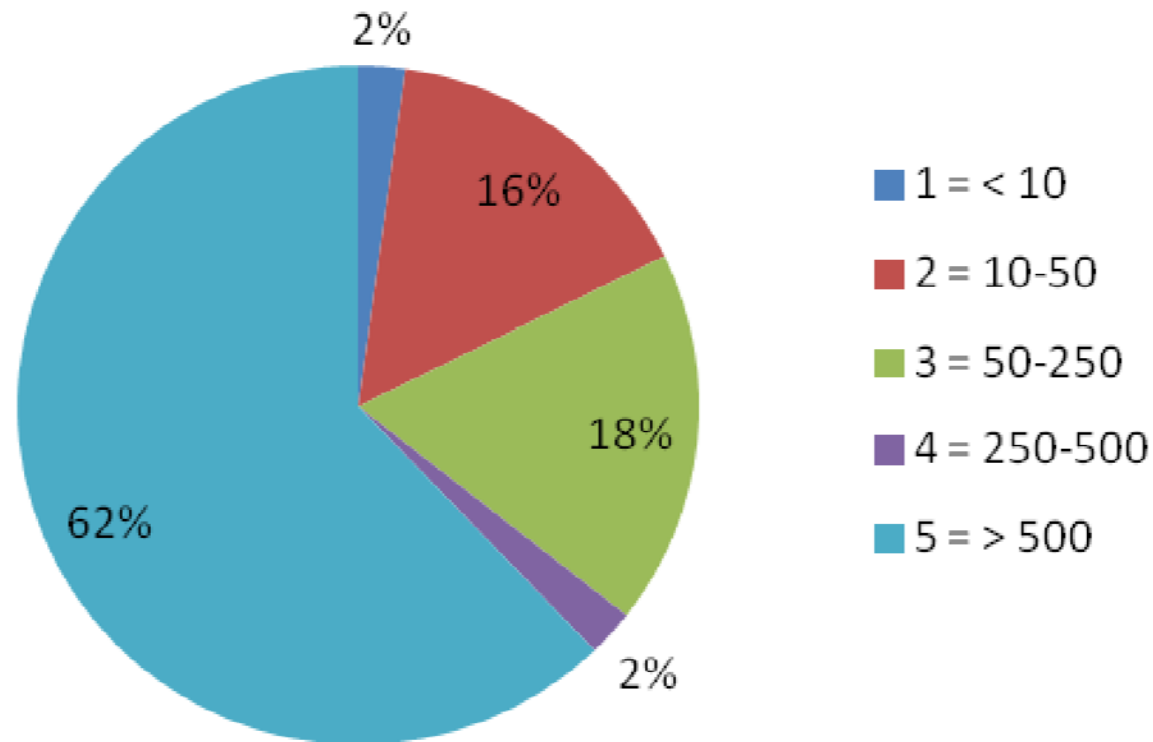
- 73 completed surveys -> response rate 43%
- Data sample: 45 teams, 286 team members
- Average team size: 6.3 members

## Main activity of the company

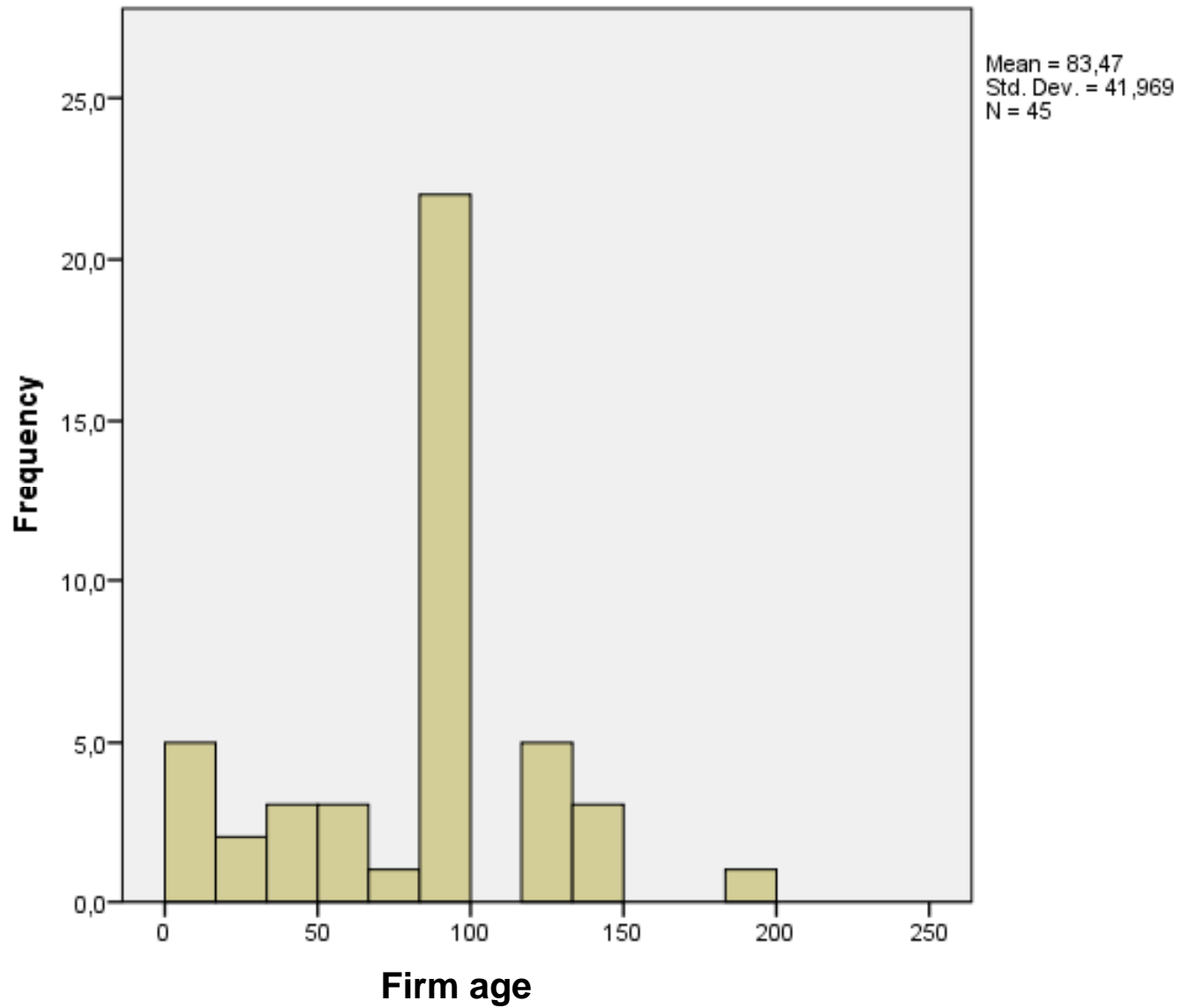


- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Mining, oil and gas extraction
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, communication, utilities
- Wholesale trade
- Finance, insurance and real estate
- Services (business to business)
- Services (business to consumer)
- Public administration, NGO, etc

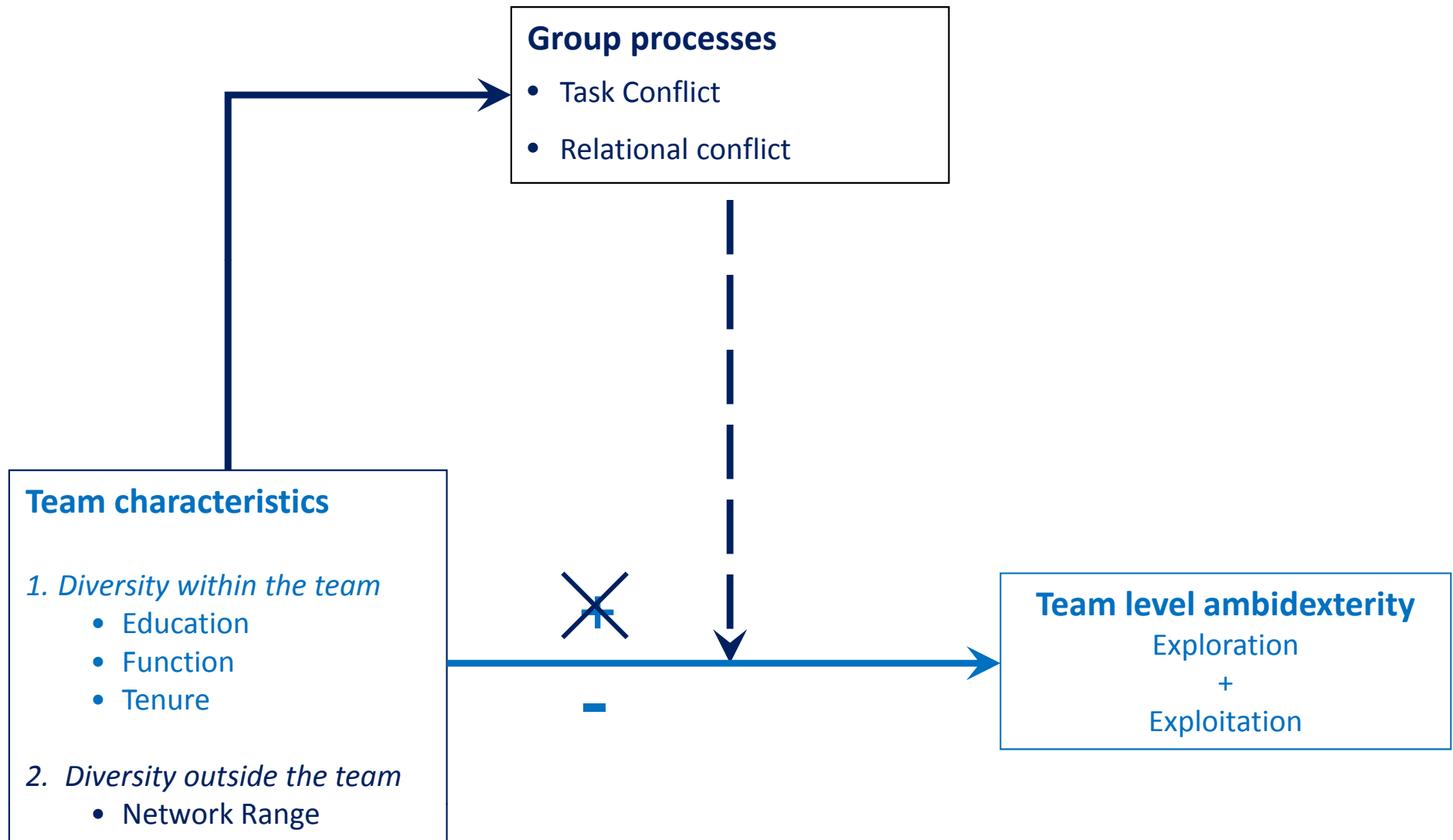
## Number of employees in company



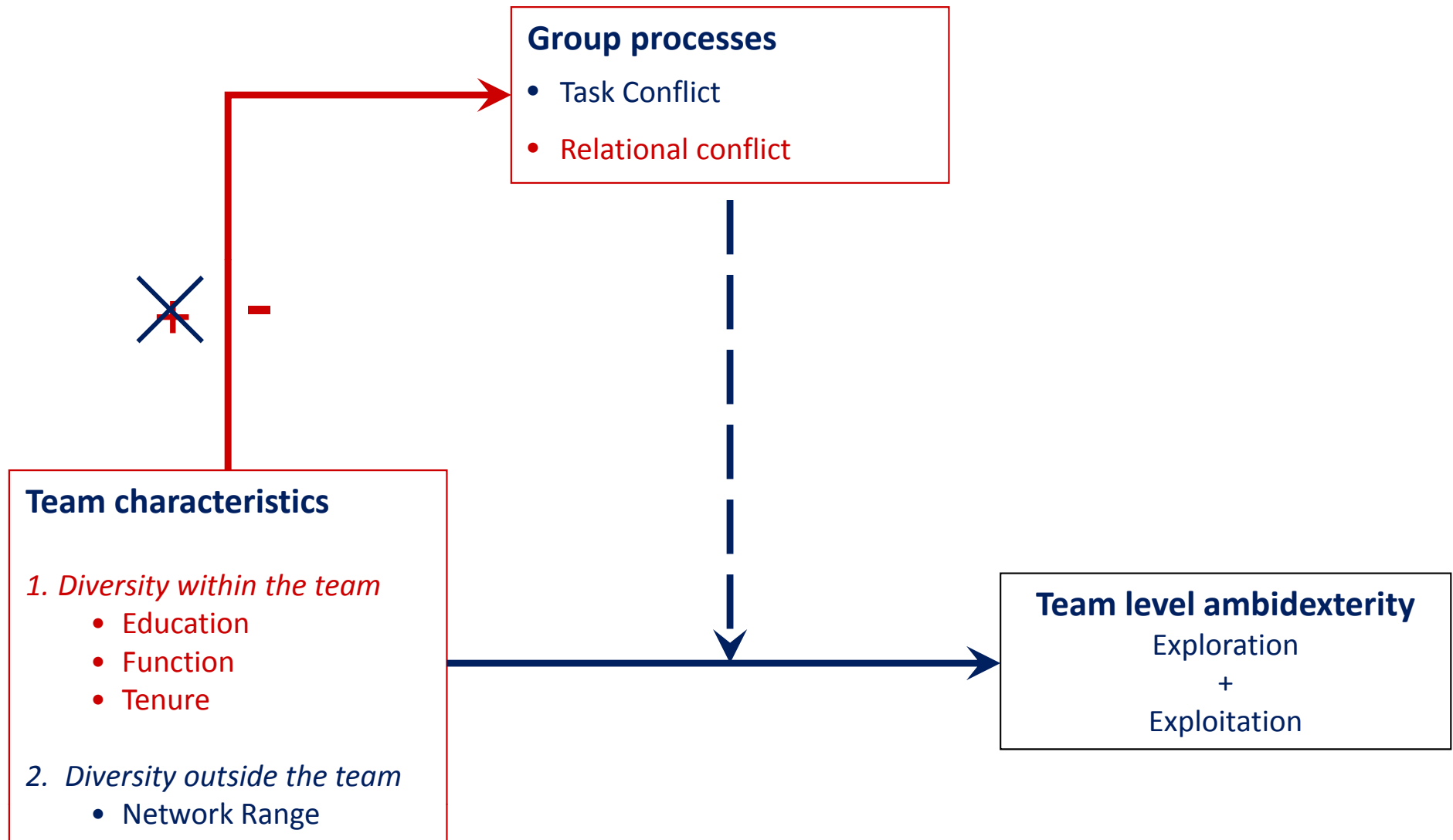
# Research, data set



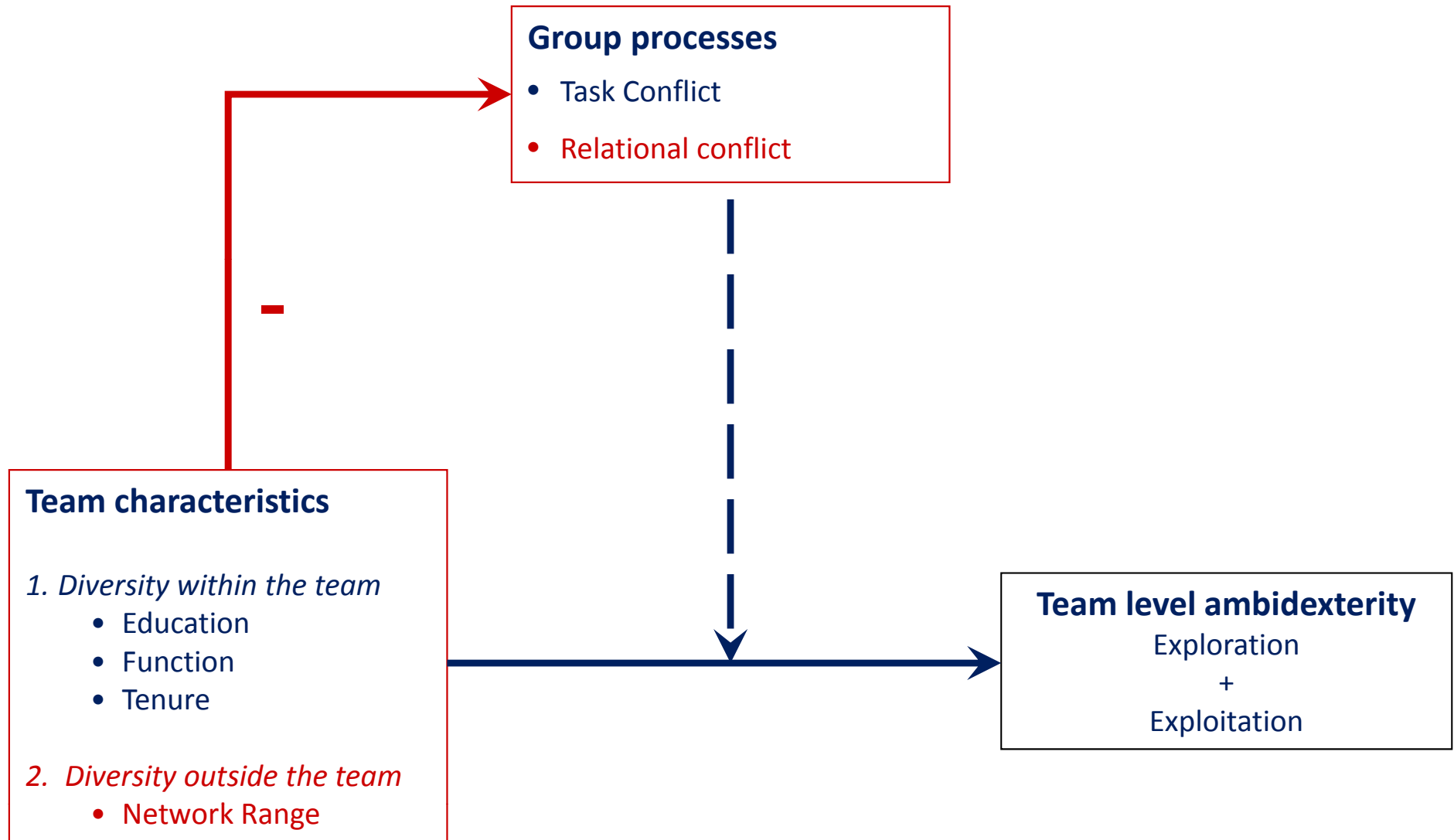
# Results



# Results



# Results





# Conclusions



1. A negative relation between diversity and ambidexterity instead of positive
2. A negative relation between diversity within the team and relational conflict instead of positive
3. Diversity outside the team is negatively related to relational conflict
4. No significant moderating effect of conflict
5. Task conflict and diversity outside the team: weak results

# Discussion



1. Ambidexterity is difficult
2. The relation between diversity and ambidexterity is not linear
3. A higher level of diversity increases communication problems, etc.
4. Diversity outside the team -> network models too simple
5. 'Conflict' -> definition or other group processes as well?

# Practical implications



1. Diversity plays a role,
2. However, increasing diversity endlessly is not wise
3. Better to focus on group process and information exchange in diverse teams -> take your time for this!
4. Awareness about diversity and consciousness about the backdrops helps
5. Ambidexterity is difficult! Be aware and organize your team process around this.



Thank you very much