

# Conflicts at the University of Lubumbashi and its Effects on Scientific Production

Kalonji Mulumba Nathan<sup>1</sup>, Ngoy Twite Hugo<sup>2</sup>, Lwaji Kayembe Eric<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Lubumbashi, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences  
Building administratif, Route Kassapa, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Email: [nathan2512kalonji@gmail.com](mailto:nathan2512kalonji@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>University of Lubumbashi, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences  
Building administratif, Route Kassapa, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Email: [hugotwie4\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:hugotwie4[at]gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>University of Lubumbashi, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences  
Building administratif, Route Kassapa, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Email: [lwajieric9\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:lwajieric9[at]gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *This article has two main parts. On the one hand, it determines the types and influences of the antagonistic interactions of informal organizations on which the doctoral students of the University of Lubumbashi rely for their scientific outputs. Generational conflicts, ideological conflicts or opinions have been described, predicted and explained. On the other hand, it develops appropriate strategies and sets up psychological mechanisms that can lead to the management of the phenomenon of conflicts. Mediation, negotiation, confrontation and political or tribal influence constitute the strategies for resolving the various conflicts listed above.*

**Keywords:** Conflict, management, psychological mechanism, influence, scientific

## 1. Introduction

Within the university community of Lubumbashi, there are informal organizations made on the basis of tribes, socio-cultural associations of political ideologies, etc. the objectives of these associations are diverse, one envisages mutual aid, the other facilitations and favoritism in research, the others still play spying on information in order to position themselves within the university.

This divergence of informal small groups generates conflicts within the university community, this generates competitions to the point that it disorients the institutional objectives of the university, given that the objective of each is to find influential identities to evolve in these research.

By seeking to know the influence that conflicts have on scientific research at the University of Lubumbashi and the strategies adopted to combat this phenomenon.

Using the XLSTAT 2015 software, this article uses the qualitative method supported by factorial analysis of multiple correspondences to determine the causes, types and influence of conflicts on the production of knowledge at the University of Lubumbashi. In addition, there are the strategies to be put in place to counter these conflicts. Using non-random quota sampling techniques and polling, 5 faculties out of 14 are drawn, that is to say, the faculties of Social, Political and Administrative Sciences, Law and that of Psychology and Educational Sciences. With the target population of scientific and academic staff from the University of Lubumbashi, after saturation, we surveyed 96 researchers.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Fields of research investigation

Located in the South-East of the DRC in the Haut-Katanga province, the University of Lubumbashi was created in 1956. First under the name of the Official University of Congo UOC, then the National University of Zaire UNAZA Lubumbashi campus and finally University of Lubumbashi UNILU (Kahola TO, 2015)[4].

The first of the best universities in the Congo, the University of Lubumbashi is currently the second university after that of Bukavu (Jacques F., 2015)[3]. Member of the University Agency for La Francophonie, UNILU is in partnership with the Free University of Brussels, universities of Mons, Geneva, Oxford, etc. (AUF, 2018)[1].

It organizes the following faculties and schools: political and administrative sciences, letters and human sciences, psychology and educational sciences, economics and management, law, polytechnics, human and animal medicine, criminology, tourism and hospitality, sciences, architecture, higher school of industrial engineers, pharmacy (AUF, 2018). It receives students from Cameroon, Congo Brazza, Gabon, Rwanda and Burundi.

### 2.2. Sampling techniques

Targeted population researchers from the University of Lubumbashi. Our sample was drawn using quota and sample survey techniques (Rao J.N.K. and Wayne A.F., 2017)[9]. The quota technique consisted in drawing the faculties of Social Political and Administrative Sciences, of Law and that of Psychology and Educational Sciences on the basis of

the following criteria: the oldest faculties and the organization of institutional scientific chairs.

The sample survey technique consisted of determining the numbers of respondents in each faculty. After saturation, we surveyed 48 researchers in the Faculty of Social, Political and Administrative Sciences, 26 in the Faculty of Law and 26 in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. This leads to a sample size of 96 respondents.

### 2.3. Methods, techniques of data collection and description of the sample

By means of the quota technique, on the basis of the first criterion "seniority" the faculties of Letters and Human Sciences, Social Political and Administrative Sciences, Law, Economics and Management, Polytechnic, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Psychology and Science of Education have been drawn. By contributing to the second criterion, 3 faculties are drawn, namely the faculties of Social Political and Administrative Sciences, of Law and that of Psychology and Educational Sciences.

The sample survey technique was carried out with researchers from the University of Lubumbashi in their respective faculties. Twelve (12) questions including eight (8) open and four (4) closed. One (1) closed question helped determine the existence of conflicts within the university community of Lubumbashi. Six (6) questions including three (3) open and three (3) closed consisted in highlighting the types of conflicts within the university community of Lubumbashi. Two (2) open questions determined the influence of conflicts on the production of knowledge within the university community of Lubumbashi. And three (3) questions for the development of conflict resolution strategies within the university community of Lubumbashi.

We have granted interviews to the ten (7) Professors responsible for research during the month of April 2020. For reasons of confidentiality, we reserve the right to identify them.

The breakdown by sex gives us a sample of 22.90% of female respondents and 77.08% of male respondents. And by faculty we have 50% of the researchers are from Political and Administrative Social Sciences, 27% of the researchers are from Law and 23% of the researchers are from Psychology and Educational Sciences.

### 2.4. Qualitative method

Using the XLSTAT 2016 software, Multiple Correspondence Factor Analysis (AFCM) made it possible to obtain factorial designs on which the proximities between the modalities of the variables of the researchers' responses and the observations were visually noticed. The 7 qualitative variables are broken down into 14 disjunctive tables with more than 15 columns for questions made up of more than 2 categories for each of the variables. Whenever a modality  $m$  of the  $j$ th variable corresponds to an individual  $i$ , we assign 1

to  $Z_j(i, m)$ . The other values of  $Z_j$  are zero. The 14 disjunctive tables are then concatenated into a complete disjunctive table from which the coordinates of the categories of the qualitative variables are calculated, as well as the coordinates of the observations in a representation space. optimal for the inertia criterion. It therefore does not depend solely on the association between the variables (Nenadic and Greenacre, 2007 in (Kanke MS., 2019)). Only the adjusted inertias have been considered in the context of this article.

### 2.5. Data processing and analysis

The data from surveys based on questionnaires (open and closed) were encoded in a Microsoft Excel 2013 file. This Excel file includes 3 spreadsheets, one of which respectively for the different variables (types of conflicts, influence of conflicts on production and conflict resolution strategies within the university community of Lubumbashi). For example, a Microsoft Excel 2013 spreadsheet had only one question. Each Excel 2013 sheet consists of three (3) columns. Each variable is the column denomination of each Excel 2013 sheet (Kanke MS., 2019)[5].

After reiterating the structural check, the data entry verification and the editing of the Microsoft Excel 2013 file, the latter was taken over by the XLSTAT 2016 software. The Excel 2013 data analysis file is purified. used to create the standard tables of the XLSAT software. This last procedure should go through the following steps: the concatenation of all the Excel 2013 sheets dealing with the same question into a single sheet. Exporting data to XLSAT software. Description of the sample. Recoding of variables to simplify the analysis. And the preparation and output of tables, plans and graphs required for data analysis.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Types of conflicts within the university community of Lubumbashi

The factorial plan (see Figure 1) explains 83% of the standard variable of conflicts within the scientific community of the University of Lubumbashi. With as two factorial plans explaining the conflict phenomenon at the law faculty of the same university.

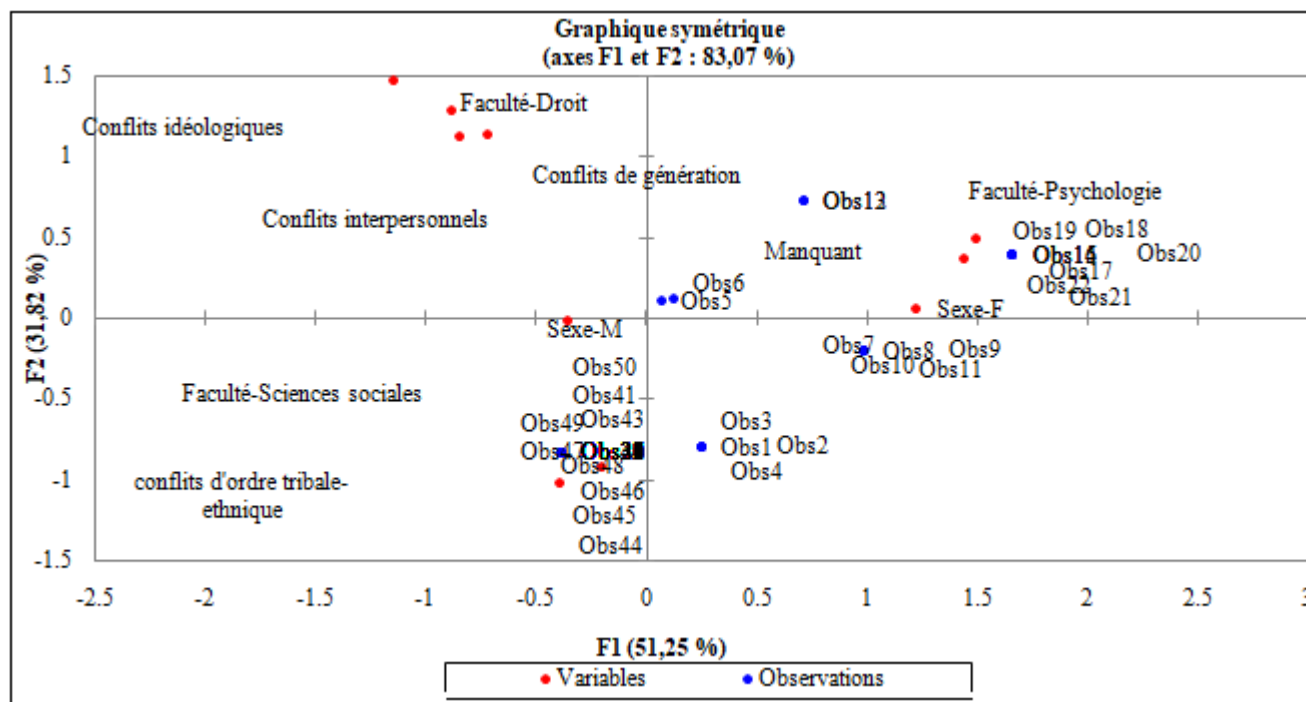


Figure 1: Types of conflicts within the university community of Lubumbashi

### 3.1.1. Faculty of Law

The causes of interpersonal conflicts in law school are manifold. These are the issues of human nature. The presence of a member of the jury in the thesis examination of a researcher, the latter considers that if his mention was not better it is because of the negative influence of one of the members of the jury whom he claims to be still dissatisfied with his scientific development.

Researchers develop conflicting attitudes towards Professors for influencing a mediocre rating when examining his comprehensive dissertation. Then the spirit of pride, jealousy, etc. generate interpersonal conflicts between scientists leading to the lack of sharing of scientific information and documents. Self-esteem caused by social and intellectual inequalities breeds interpersonal conflict in law school creating depression, anxiety, guilt, withdrawal into oneself, etc.

Generational conflicts at law school are seen through reactions of scientific immaturity that exist to a low preponderance. These conflicts arise from the superiority complexes of Professors who obtained their PhDs at an advanced age and believe that young researchers should not obtain their doctoral degrees and that they should reach the required age.

Conflicts of opinion or ideological conflicts are common in law school. The currents that oppose the protagonists are those that fall within the legal theories led by certain professors, the latter strongly supporting their schools or doctrine to the point of influencing researchers not to choose those who oppose them as supervisors. This is notably the case of a researcher who rallies behind a professor who supports the idea that Congolese constitutional law is not inclusive and that it should undergo modification.

### 3.1.2. Faculty of Psychology of Educational Sciences

Conflicts of opinion are driven by the arrival of new information and communication technology, which also comes with teaching professors in foreign universities. This phenomenon creates two ideological currents in the faculty of psychology. That of young teachers trained abroad mastering computer science and that of local teachers. Ideologically opposed professors sitting on researcher framing committees create clashes that mutually refute points of view. The other researchers refuse to join ideological currents on the pretext of being initiated into the occult sciences.

### 3.1.3. Faculty of Social, Political and Administrative Sciences

Conflicts in the Faculty of Social Sciences are tribal. The supervision of research is oriented along a tribal stream or regional to the point that doctoral students are moving towards supervisors from their tribes or regions. The tribes are in competition for scientific production. Observation made among the professors who produced mainly the masters or doctors belonging to their tribes. Professors who are members of a given tribe who find themselves in the supervisory committees of researchers from other tribes engage in practices that limit the good performance of these doctoral students. The Faculty of Social Sciences is witnessing a real scientific-tribal confrontation caused by the presence of scientific-tribal currents.

### 3.2. Impact of conflicts on the production of knowledge in the scientific community of the University of Lubumbashi

The factorial plan (see Figure 2) explains 70% with two factorial axes the phenomenon "influence of conflicts on scientific production" at the University of Lubumbashi sampled in three faculties, we quote: Faculty of Law, Social Sciences and Psychology.

In the faculty of psychology conflicts of opinion hardly exist and therefore there is no impact that they result on the production of knowledge.

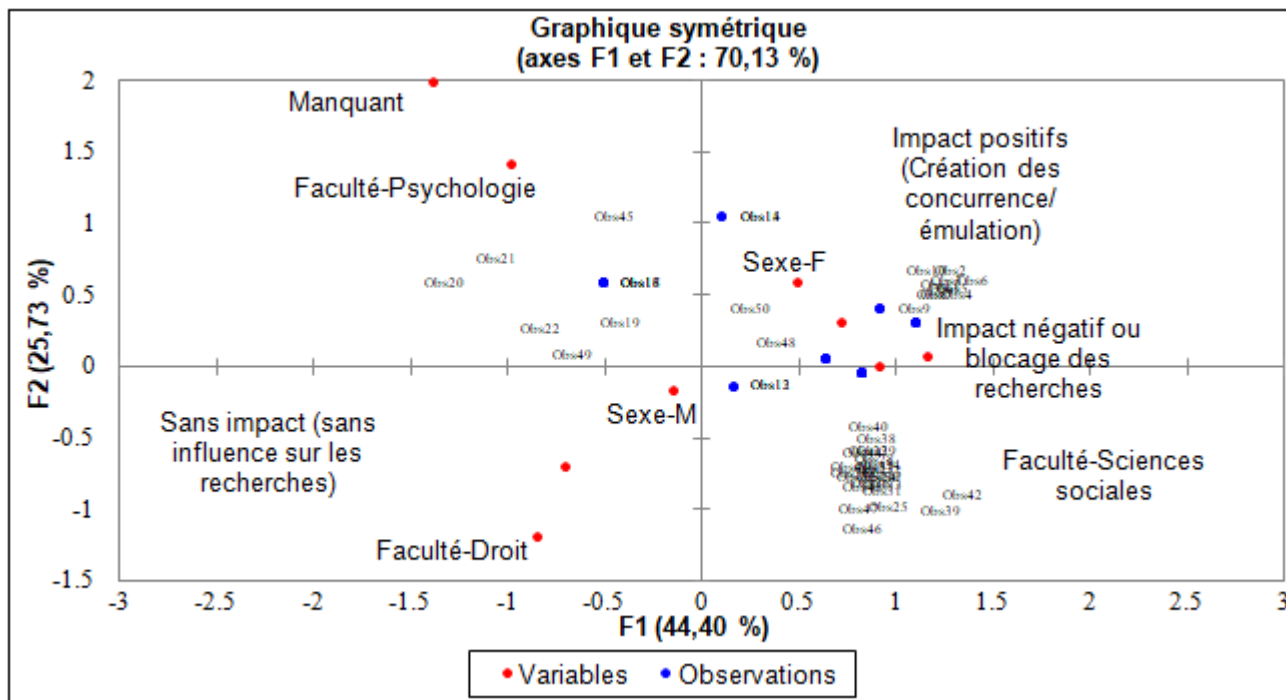


Figure 2: Impact of conflicts on the production of knowledge in the scientific community of the University of Lubumbashi

**3.2.1. Faculty of Law**

The presence of conflicting (pretentious) professors supervising doctoral students and giving arbitrary and tailor-made ratings hinders scientific production, and discourages doctoral students from producing good quality work. This practice lowers the quality and quantity of scientific productions at the Faculty of Law.

Generational conflicts have a negative influence on scientific production in terms of quantity and quality. Young researchers seeking scientific supervision are rejected by the professors, asking to reach the required seniority. For some professors, the age or seniority of doctoral students is a determining factor in validating the quality of research projects. This causes demotivation and abandonment of research by young people.

Conflicts of opinion or ideological conflicts also negatively influence scientific production in quantity and quality. Doctrinal researchers ensure that research conducted by contradictory doctrines is wrongly rejected. The observations made about them are not scientifically founded. The purposes of his observations are to discourage researchers

from further study. This practice handicaps good scientific production.

**3.2.2. Faculty of Social, Political and Administrative Sciences**

At the Faculty of Social Sciences, tribal conflicts have a negative impact on production. The tribal scientific groups constituting the scientific-tribal streams have negative influences on the quality of the production of scientific work because it is in favor of the tribes that this work is validated. In this case, scientific works are evaluated with tribal levity thus increasing the numbers of scientific outputs regardless of quality.

**3.3. Conflict resolution strategy in the scientific community of the University of Lubumbashi**

The factorial plan (see Figure 3) presents at 75% the strategies or mechanisms of conflict resolution namely: peaceful resolution, confrontations by political influence and social affinities.

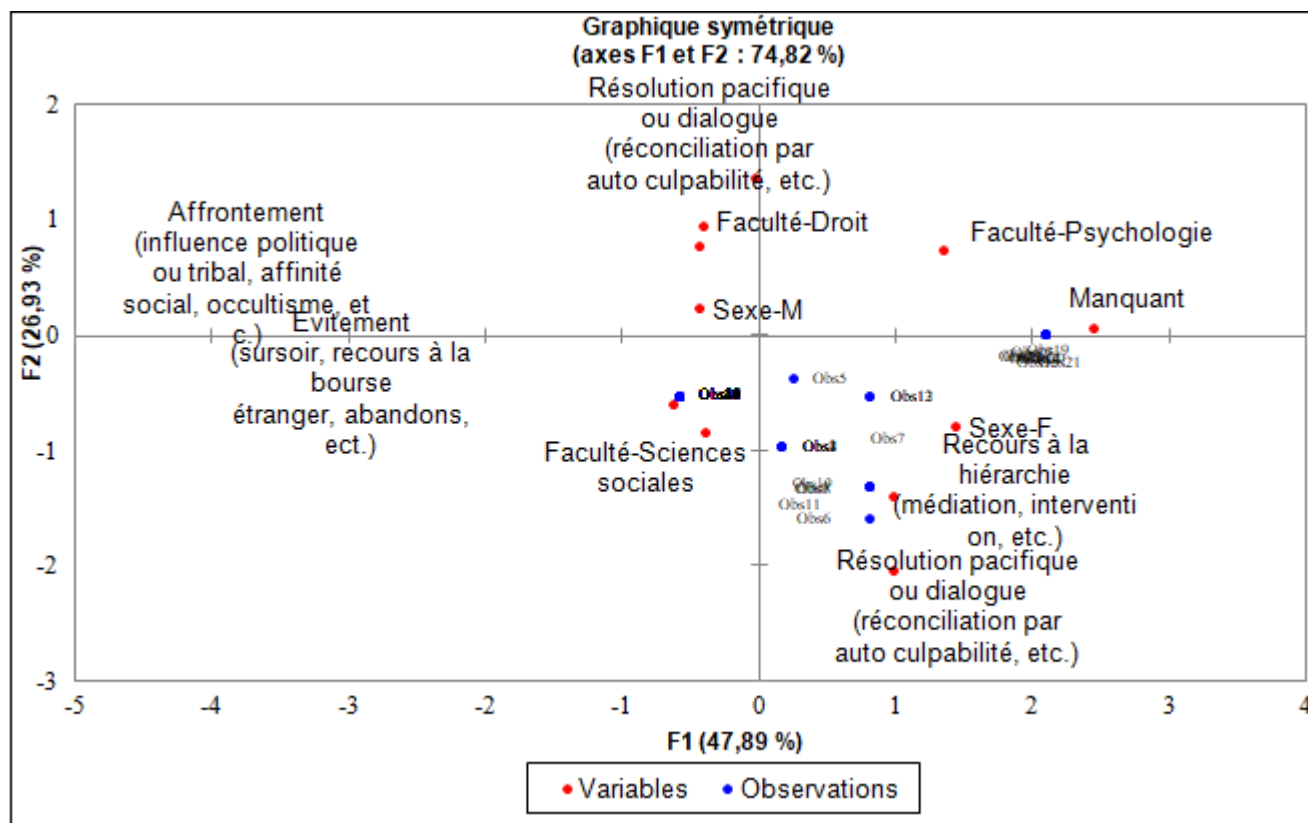


Figure 3: Conflict resolution strategy in the scientific community of the University of Lubumbashi

In the event of conflicts to be resolved between researchers or between researchers and supervisors. They seek mediation from the academic authorities or members of the management committee of the University of Lubumbashi. By choosing research promoters from universities elsewhere, the local professors who are members of the jury postpone the work of the doctoral students, accusing them of usurpation. These problems are solved by seeking mediation by doctoral students from members of the management committee of the University of Lubumbashi.

In the offices of the juries, doctoral research is subject to subjective assessments with the intention of harming the researchers. While the deans and some of the members of the juries appreciate the quality of the work. With the help of the deans, conflicts are resolved through mediation by members of the management committee of the University of Lubumbashi.

Doctoral students, using their political positions, dissuade supervisors in favor of the favorable development of their doctoral research. Strangely, the professors who supervise doctoral research, leaders of political parties or police-religious movements give themselves to the favoritism of obtaining doctorates from members of its movements. What makes doctoral students are recruited into political parties or police-religious movements.

Confrontations by political influence, researchers with political functions prefer to resort to settling scores to put an end to the conflicts that oppose them either by messages of aggression, intimidation, or by peddling of influence. Social relations constitute a means of recourse for most researchers who want to support their thesis or master's

work. This is based on cohabitation between researchers. To this is added the presence of family members in the faculty which influences a social attraction of those who are close to him in order to initiate the research process.

#### 4. Discussion

Using the descriptive approach, the author manages to describe the functional frameworks of different organizations in a conflict situation. By distinguishing the non-violent approach from other approaches, it defines the general rules within organizations and offers negotiation through pivot techniques and time management to resolve conflicts (Yvan P., 2009)[11]. The latter generally describes conflicts in organizations while this article deals with conflicts within scientific organizations with specific objectives using a qualitative methodology.

Starting from the assumption that material and financial interests are at the root of the phenomenon of conflicts. And using the descriptive approach Bryn Williams [10] has found that conflicts emerging in scientific circles negatively influence the goals of academic institutions in Africa (Williams B., 2008). On the other hand, this article leads almost to the same results as Bryn Williams. However, only the (qualitative) Methodology and the study environment (University of Lubumbashi) constitute the difference between the two studies.

By describing the phenomenon of conflict in academia, ToyiMirefu[7] demonstrated the effectiveness of negotiation as a strategy in conflict resolution at the University of Bukavu (Mirefu T., 2018). Although this article addresses the issue of conflicts in academia, it limits itself to

describing the causes, but it also notes the consequences that these conflicts have on scientific production at the University of Lubumbashi. Note also that the (qualitative) methodology and the study environment (University of Lubumbashi) differentiate these two studies.

For his part, Covey has used descriptive approaches for determining and managing and resolving the causes of conflicts from scientists working as a team at Laval University, the author found that its causes are relational aspects. He suggests adopting a constructive attitude (Covey S., 2016)[2]. On the other hand, this article uses the qualitative method leading not only to the description of conflicts but also to the determination of their impacts on the production of knowledge at the University of Lubumbashi.

Using the analytical method, the author compared universities in Africa to those elsewhere. Based on good practices in conflict resolution applied in world-renowned universities, theoretical models emerge that allow African universities to increase their scientific output. And proposes to resort to communication and collaboration (Philippe A., 2007)[8]. Although having the (qualitative) methodology and the study environment (University of Lubumbashi) different from the previous one, this article leads to the same results as Philippe AltBach. But, reconciliation, negotiation, facilitation, etc. are communicational foundations constituting the originality of the results of this article.

## 5. Conclusion

This article investigated the impact of conflict on scientific production at the University of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The qualitative method using multiple correspondence factor analysis identified the underlying factors of conflict, types of conflict as well as their influences and strategies.

In the scientific community of the University of Lubumbashi, interpersonal conflicts are of a human nature. They externalize themselves through the negative sanctions of the results of doctoral research, this by professors showing jealousy and hatred towards the scientific development of doctoral students. Generational conflicts are linked to the superiority complexes of senior PhD graduate teachers. These reactions are extra punitive wanting to slow down young doctoral students. Conflicts of opinion or ideological conflicts are manifested by the presence of scientific currents influencing the research climate in the sense that the adherence of doctoral students to one or the other current raises aggressiveness. Tribal conflicts arise when professors sisters want to propel the doctoral students belonging to his tribe. In their respects, mitigating the required scientific rigor and objectivity. In contrast, those without tribal backing compete against their privileged colleagues. Scientific supervision and production are characterized by regionalism to the point of creating tribal scientific groups.

At the University of Lubumbashi, conflicts have negative impacts on scientific production which are characterized by complacency in the directions and ratings of scientific work. Showing itself in the production of large-scale scientific

work but of bad qualities. The discouragement of young doctoral students in scientific production. From the above, some young researchers plan to pursue their doctoral studies abroad.

In the event of conflicts to be resolved between researchers or between researchers and supervisors at the University of Lubumbashi. The latter seek mediation by the academic authorities and members of the management committee. Professors who supervise doctoral research and doctoral students who are political actors respectively use their political positions to scientifically favor researchers who are members of their movements and dissuade their supervisors in favor of the favorable development of their doctoral research. The presence of family members among the professors is also a major strategy for conflict resolution and for easily passing research.

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