

COMMUNION- COMMUNICATION: AN ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION APPROACH FOR HUMAN AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

International, regional and national authorities are willing to integrate communication, environment in development policies; a lack of psychosocial dynamism exists however, and many gaps persist in the practical implementation of these efforts, not only because of the conflict of rationalities between an individual/community and government/donors, which would either slow down or even block territorial development. Communication plays an important role here, as it is an inescapable means of linking the involved protagonists. It is therefore necessary to look for a communicative alternative to improve awareness, leading to human and territorial development, based on the concept of communion in communication, given that the idea of "fihavanana" is already an existing cultural substratum among the Malagasy. Hence the question: "How can communion-based communication (communion-communication) improve human and territorial development? The objective consists in identifying the important variables of communion-based communication for the goals. Therefore, comes the following hypothesis: communion-based communication improves information and interpersonal communication, thereafter, ensuring better human and territorial development. A survey was carried out among three groups of 99 people in the Ambohidratrimo district, specifically in Ambohidratrimo town itself and one of its Rural Commune: Mahitsy. It was supplemented through participant observation to gather nuances of responses. The results of the statistical tests, that were carried out, revealed that communion-based communication is not put into practices, although it is strongly desired. It has the potential to balance communication, creating an environment of authentic interactions, harmonious relationships and enhanced social cohesion, conducive to human and territorial development.

Keywords: Fihavanana, rationality, behavior change, sensitization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations acknowledges the pivotal role of communication in disseminating information, cultivating knowledge, and enhancing awareness for both human and territorial development. Recognizing the deficiencies within their communication for development framework, the organization has formulated the "Communication Strategy 2021," accompanied by a comprehensive guide aiming at fulfilling the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This strategy prioritizes normative and thematic communications (UNDG, 2022). In Africa, the African Union Commission, through its Directorate of Information and Communication, has recalibrated its communication policies to bolster their efficacy, with a strategic emphasis on education,

environmental sustainability, and development (AU, 2019). Similarly, Madagascar has instituted a communication policy grounded in democratic principles, integrating it within a broader framework for sustainable development and environmental stewardship. The “Stratégie Nationale de l'Information et de la Communication Environnementale pour le Développement Durable” (MEDD, 2019) aspires to heighten awareness and educate Malagasy citizens on environmental concerns in alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

These contexts collectively reflect a widespread ambition to intertwine communication and environmental considerations within development policies. However, they are frequently undermined by the recurring inefficacy of awareness-raising initiatives, largely due to the omission of psychosocial dynamics, which results in transient engagement. Extensive research has demonstrated that such dynamics are often impeded by conflicts of rationality among stakeholders: individual versus community, government versus donors (Assogba, 1993). To address these conflicts, the establishment of mutual understanding through effective communication is paramount.

It is therefore appropriate to seek an alternative communicative approach for enhanced awareness leading to human and territorial development. This time, the approach emphasizes the concept of “communication-communion” for two reasons: firstly, both communion and communication share a common etymological origin; secondly, the concept of “fihavanana” is deeply ingrained in Malagasy culture. Thus, the central inquiry is: “How can communication-communion enhance human and territorial development?” The objective is to identify key variables in communication-communion that can drive more effective development, premised on the hypothesis that communication-communion enhances information dissemination and interpersonal communication, thereby fostering improved human and territorial development.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Study Area, Surveyed Population, and Studied Variables

The study was conducted in two communes (Ambohidratrimo and Mahitsy) within a single district (Ambohidratrimo). A total of 99 individuals, divided into three groups, were surveyed: the Akany Avoko Group (AA) composed of 24 individuals (9 men and 15 women), the Itafa Association Group (IT) with 65 women, and the Diverse Group (Div) with 10 individuals (6 men and 4 women) (*See Table-1*).

Table-1: Sampling composition

		MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	
Groups				Numbers	%
AA	Numbers	9	15	24	24,2
	%	37,5	62,5	100	
IT	Numbers		65	65	65,6
	%		100	100	
DIV	Numbers	6	4	10	10,1
	%	60	40	100	
TOTAL				99	100

Legend: AA=Akany Avoko IT=Itafa DIV=Divers

These three groups differ in numerous aspects. The “Akany Avoko” group consists of the leaders and employees of the same association, who enjoy a certain level of social and economic stability. The women of the “Itafa” association are farmers with very limited education and uncertain resources. Finally, the members of the “Diverse” group come from various sectors of development and education, holding administrative or leadership positions, with stable incomes and a higher standard of living compared to the other two groups.

A questionnaire was developed, leading to the definition of 17 variables (*See Table-2*). Additionally, this questionnaire includes other information such as the group of origin, gender, and age.

Table-2: Coding of variables and used tools

Variables groups	Variables	Code	used tools
Communication-Communion	Relationship between communion and <i>fihavanana</i>	C1	Multiple Correspondence Analysis
	Desire for communion in communication	C2	
	Needs for listening	C3	
	Putting oneself into others' shoes	C4	
	Importance of diversity	C5	
	Trust	C6	

	Expressing one's own ideas	C7	Discriminant Factor Analysis
	Respect	C8	
	Violence	C9	Benchmarking
	Communion of mind and heart	C10	
	Communion in everyday life	C11	
Necessity of Communion	Relationship between communion and communication for development	R1	Correlation Analysis
	Face-to-face communication for communion	R2	Prioritization/Scheduling
	Communion in top-down and down-top communication	R3	Prospective Analysis
	Perception of communion in couple communication	R4	
Socialization	Up-bringing for communion in communication	D1	
	Living example in education and development	D2	

2.2. Methods

2.2.1. Overall assessment of perceptions related to communication-communion

The 5-point Likert model was used, with participant observation to capture the nuances of the responses. The following scores were assigned:

TT = Total Disagreement (1); N = Disagreement (2); O = Neutral (3); E = Agreement (4), and Y = Total Agreement (5)

Furthermore, a very simplified descriptive analysis was conducted to provide overall assessments of the responses based on the scores obtained for each variable. Mean values and standard deviations are presented. Intervals have also been defined as follow:

Totally Disagree = [1.00 - 1.80] Disagree = [1.81 - 2.60] Neutral = [2.61 - 3.40]
Agree = [3.41 - 4.20] Totally Agree = [4.21 - 5.00]

2.2.2. Profile of each class according to their perception of communion-communication

Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was used to form the classes. The resulting class was then utilized in Discriminant Factor Analysis (DFA) to determine the correlations among all the studied variables. Variables with a p-value greater than 0.2 (α error risk) were eliminated. A sorting of the variables was subsequently performed, and the ranking functions obtained from DFA were exploited.

The resulting stochastic matrices allowed for the creation of radar charts corresponding to benchmarking by class. The maximum value for each variable corresponds to the reference value.

2.2.3. Scheduling

Scheduling allowed for the prioritization of variables according to their order of importance. It was used to rank the variables related to people's perceptions of communication-communion. The correlation matrix was utilized by removing the lower diagonal portion. Next, the variables above the diagonal with absolute values exceeding the significance threshold were analyzed and replaced with "X," referring to the significance threshold value of 0.195. The minimum number of occurrences per line following "X" constitutes the starting basis for ranking the variables to be retained in the scheduling.

2.2.4. Influence-Dominance Effect

The variables used are those employed in the scheduling process. The strategic rectangle was exploited to identify the dominant and influential variables inherent to communication-communion. It is calculated according to the values of X and Y using the formula:

$$X = L/P$$

$$Y = L*P$$

L = Sum of the absolute values of the variables in the rows of the correlation matrix

P = Sum of the absolute values of the variables in the columns of the correlation matrix

To aggregate the influential variables ($X > 1$), the values of X were first sorted in descending order. Subsequently, the values of Y were also sorted in descending order. The highest values from these sorted lists were then consolidated to identify the most dominant and influential variables.

2.2.5. Prospectives

To project the perception of the studied populations over the next 10 years for each class, the correlation matrix obtained from DFA, and the class averages were used to generate a stochastic matrix. The value for the initial year was based on the relative reference value for each class. A prospective analysis was conducted by utilizing the most dominant and influential variables derived from the strategic rectangle. For subsequent years, the following formulae was applied:

$$\text{Year } n = \{\text{PRODUCTMAT ((stochastic correlation matrix) * (class values from the previous year } n-1))\}$$

3. RESULTS

3.1. Global Assessment of Perceptions Related to Communication-Communion

Table-3 highlights the following evaluations:

- 11 out of 17 variables directly related to the “communication-communion” group (C1, C2, C4, C6, C7, C9, C10), the “necessity of communion” group (R2, R3, R4), and the variables in “education” group (D2) received unanimous responses from the participants (Y: strongly agree). Since, there was no hesitation regarding the importance of these three groups of variables, they were thus excluded from further data processing.
- Only the variables C3, C5, C8, C11 from the “communication-communion” group, R1 from the “necessity of communion” group, and D1 from the “education” group were subject to variability in responses. Therefore, these variables will be included in the data analysis.
- Additionally, the absence of “Strongly Disagree” (TT) responses was noted.

Table-3: Overview of the evaluations

Numbers (Nbrs) of variables: 17; Numbers (Nbrs) of observations: 99														
	Variables	Responses								M	SD	OE		
		TT		N		O		E					Y	
		Nbrs	%	Nb	%	Nbrs	%	Nbrs	%				Nbrs	%
Communication-communion	C1									99	100	5	0	Y
	C2									99	100	5	0	Y
	C3							13	13,1	86	86,9	4,87	0,34	Y
	C4									99	100	5	0	Y
	C5					14	14	83	84	2	2,0	3,88	0,39	E
	C6									99	100	5	0	Y
	C7									99	100	5	0	Y
	C8							2	2,0	97	98,0	4,98	0,14	Y
	C9									99	100	5	0	Y
	C10									99	100	5	0	Y
	C11			12	12,1	87	87,9					2,88	0,33	O
Necessity of communion	R1							7	7,1	92	92,9	4,93	0,26	Y
	R2									99	100	5	0	Y
	R3									99	100	5	0	Y
	R4									99	100	5	0	Y
Socialization/sensitization	D1			15	15,2	84	84,8					2,85	0,36	O
	D2									99	100	5	0	Y

Notes

TT = Total disagreement (1)
N = disagree (2)

Total disagreement = [1,00 – 1,80]
Disagree = [1,81 – 2,60]

M: Mean
SD: Standard Deviation

O = neutral (3)
 E = Agree (4), and
 Y = Total agreement (5)

Neutral = 2,61 – 3,40]
 Agree = [3,41 – 4,20]
 Total agreement = [4,21 -5,00]

OE: Overall Evaluation

3.2. Benchmarking of the perceptions of people towards Communion-based Communication

Three classes were identified: Class 1 comprising those resistant to the concept of communication-communion, Class 2 supporting the concept, and Class 3 having mixed views.

- Class 1: The “resistants” are composed of two groups:
 - The Akany Avoko association (AA), representing 33% of the respondents (8/24) and
 - DIV group, accounting for 70% (7/10) (See Figure-1),
- Class 2 (See Figure-2): The supporters of the concept include:
 - The AA association (4/24), representing 16%,
 - IT (4/66), representing 6%, and
 - DIV (2/10), representing 20%.
- Class 3 comprises those with mixed views on the concept (See Figure-3).

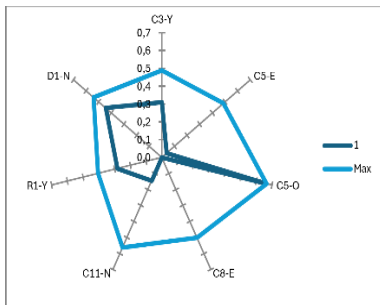


Figure-1 : Benchmarking Class 1

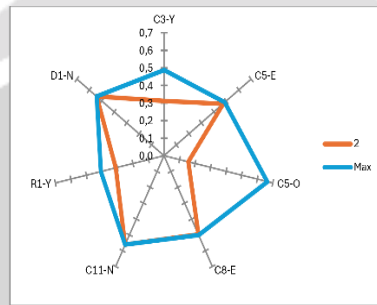


Figure-2 : Benchmarking Class 2

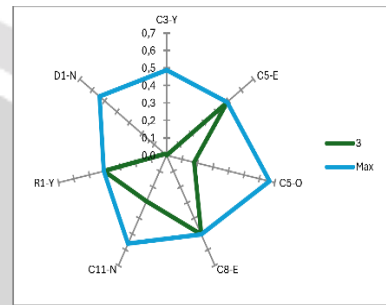


Figure-3 : Benchmarking Class 3

3.3. Scheduling

From the DFA and the correlation of variables, the ranking of variable importance was established.

Figure-4 shows that the variable “need for listening” (C3-Y) is the first to be considered among all variables, as it shapes the overall data structure and is most associated with communion. It is followed by the “importance of diversity” (C5-E and C5-O) and “communion in daily life” (C11-N). The variables “respect” (C8-E), “linking communion in exchanges for development” (R1-Y), and “existence of education on communication-communion” (D1-N) are also highlighted.

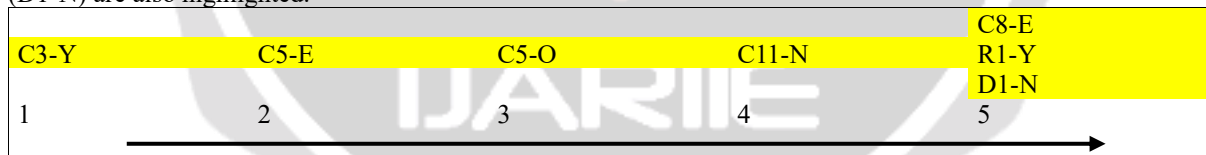


Figure-4: Priority ranking of Key Variables in Communication-Communion

Legends

- C3-Y: Need for listening
- C5-E: Positive trend in Diversity
- C5-O: Neutral trend in Diversity
- C11-N: Everyday life Communion
- C8-E: Need for respect
- D1-N: Sensitization to communion-based communication

3.4. Influence-Dominance from the strategic rectangle

From the correlation matrix, the variables “importance of diversity” (C5-E) and the “need for listening” (C3-Y) are identified as both influential and dominant. Conversely, the variable “importance of mutual respect” (C8-E) is merely influential (See Table-14).

Table-4: Influence and dominance of Communion-based Communication elements

Variables	X=L/P	Y=L*P
C5-E	1,58	5,13
C3-Y	3,41	3,41

C8-E	1,00	1,00
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Legend

C5-E: Positive trend in Diversity C3-Y: Need for listening C8-E: Need of respect

3.5. Prospectives on the trends in Communion-based Communication for human and territorial development

The sparklines from the prospective analysis (See Figure 5) of the 3 classes show diverse trends:

- For Class 1 (C1): The variable C3-Y is unstable but tends to improve over time. The 3 variables C5-E, C8-E, and C11 are initially very weak but also tend to improve in the long term. Conversely, the variables C5-O, R1-Y, and D1-N show a downward trend over time.
- For Class 2 (C2): The variables C3-Y, C5-E, and R1 regress over time. The variables C11-N and D1-N, which are currently in a strong position, tend to be unsteady but could improve in the future. The variables C5-O and C8-E tend to show growth.
- For Class 3 (C3): The variables C3-Y, C5-E, and R1-Y show a long-term decline. For the variables C5-O, C8-E, C11-N, and D1-N, growth is expected in the long term.

It is worth noting that the three classes converge on the evolution of two variables: C8-E, with a positive trend, and R1-Y, with a negative trend.

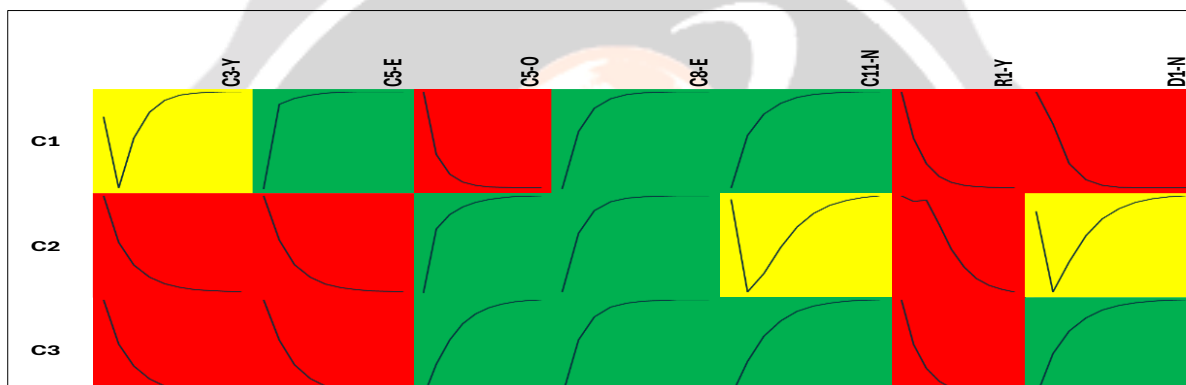


Figure 5: Prospective Analysis of the 3 classes of variables over 10 years

Legend

C3-Y: Need for listening C5-E: Importance of diversity with positive trend
 C5-O: Importance of diversity with neutral trend C8-E: Need of respect
 C11-N: Everyday life communion R1-Y: Linking communion in communication for development
 D1-N: Existence of sensitization for Communion in Communication

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Overall Positive Acknowledgment of the Variables

The variables that were unanimously accepted as “positive” indicate a general trend of favorable evaluations (See Table-3), underscoring the significant importance attributed to communion-based communication. This is obvious concerning the living example between lovers (R4), which illustrates the possibility of making communion a reality. The connection between communion and “fihavanana” (C1) is acknowledged, and there is a desire to link this communion with “communication in daily life” (C2). To achieve this, certain conditions must be met: “knowing how to put oneself in others’ shoes” (C4), the presence of “mutual trust” (C6), “freedom of expression” (C7), “unity of heart and mind” (C10), the “necessity of face-to-face interaction” (R2), the “rejection of all forms of violence” (C9), and “top-down/bottom-up communication” (R3). Finally, the “living and concrete example” (D2) remains the preferred means of educating about this communication-communion.

Levinas’ “necessity of face-to-face interaction” seen in (R2) (Levinas, 1961) aligns with the “theory of interpersonal communication proximity” put forward by Altman and Taylor, according to which physical proximity influences relationships and can reflect the nature of the relationship between two individuals (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Furthermore, there exists within each person an innate desire to connect with others: the theory of “social affiliation” emphasizes that individuals seek to establish and maintain positive relationships to fulfill social needs (Aronson et al., 2015). Additionally, the theory of “social learning” asserts that individuals learn

through observation and imitation, hence the significance of social models in shaping communicative behavior (Bandura, 1980).

These unanimously accepted variables highlight the recognition that beyond conventional social interactions, there emerges a desire to reach a transcendent level of communication, where exchanges involve the individual's deep essence, including their feelings and altruistic aspirations through communion, and "fihavanana" in relationships (Kneitz, 2014). This underscores the pursuit of a deeper form of communication, surpassing the mere transmission of messages or information, with the aim of establishing emotional and empathetic connections during interactions. Regardless of social classes, these unanimous responses from people of diverse backgrounds indicate that this aspiration for deeper communication stems from a common substrate intrinsic to every human being.

Undoubtedly, the concept of communion-based communication does not coincide with a view of communication in which "reciprocity" and "interdependence" are constantly conditioned by notions of costs and rewards (Kelley, 1959), nor with social interaction that is perpetually governed by "rationality" to maximize rewards and minimize costs (Homans, 1958), nor with the search of distinctive social identity maintained through self-presentation strategies in the theater of everyday life (Goffman, 2016).

However, other thinkers support the concept of "communion-communication" through their ideas related to the pursuit of deep and authentic communication: the "I-Thou" relationship facilitates an authentic connection and direct communication between individuals (Buber & Kaufmann, 1970), and gradually leads to the realization of unity (Tillich, 2008), mutual understanding, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts (Rosenberg & Chopra, 2015).

4.2. The analyzed variables

4.2.1. The non-existence of communication-communion in daily life

The necessity of integrating communion into communication and relationships for better development (R1) is acknowledged. Although the importance of communication-communion is unanimously recognized, its presence in daily life (C11), despite being generally evaluated as neutral (*see Table-3*), is hesitant and tends to lean toward the negative. Communion, expressed through "fihavanana," exists within families, certain groups, or associations with a common goal or ideal (Sandron, 2008). However, beyond these limited circles, "fihavanana" is obscured by self-interest driven by personal rationalities. Consequently, "communion-communication" remains largely at the level of an ideal.

4.2.2. Sensitization to "Communion-Communication" and Mutual Respect

The deficit in education (D1) regarding "Communion-Communication" (*see Table-3*) is widely acknowledged. Formal education on this type of communication appears either completely absent or stifled by a social culture that devalues this approach. Nevertheless, there is an awareness of a kind of universal connection (Njara, 1992) among human beings, as well as between humans and their environment. Intuitively and informally, individuals understand and recognize the importance of communion - "fihavanana" - as a "generator of connection, social cohesion, and hospitality" (Picard-Ravololonirina, 2014). Hence, comes the necessity of mutual respect (C8), which is crucial as it serves as a cornerstone for positive human interactions (Maxwell, 2005). However, despite this sensitivity to human connection, the survey results indicate that most people become less respectful and less sensitive when the relationship or connection extends to a broader dimension. This variable also ranks fifth in the hierarchy.

4.2.3. Lack of Listening in "Communion-Communication"

The variable "Needs for listening" (C3) is both influential and dominant (*see Table-4*). According to the "Theory of Nonverbal Communication," nonverbal elements play a crucial role in mutual understanding (Mehrabian, 1971); even silence and the absence of communication convey messages that imply a fundamental underlying attitude: listening. Listening enables the grasping of the subtle hidden nuances of communication (Watzlawick, 1995) and facilitates the creation of a deeper connection (Maxwell, 2010). Active listening, which is highly essential (Murphy, 2020), promotes empathetic understanding and the recognition of the other's feelings within "Communion-Communication." Conversely, it often involves emotional receptivity (Rogers, 1995; Rogers, 2001). Listening develops over time and through education.

4.2.4. Importance and Necessity of Difference/Diversity

The concept of diversity (C5) lies between two extreme viewpoints: "communion-communication" goes beyond all forms of difference while also it requires diversity, as complementarity is a source of harmony. This is why, it appears twice in the hierarchy (*see Table-4*): on one hand, it is associated with a tendency towards "agreement", which is influential and dominant, and on the other hand, it exhibits a "neutral" tendency. This concept is crucial in the field of communication because cultural, linguistic, social, and personal variations influence how messages

are sent, received, and interpreted (Hofstede, 1984). The acceptance of diversity facilitates better mutual understanding and promotes more effective and respectful exchanges. Furthermore, recognizing these diversities enriches interactions by bringing other perspectives and fostering more inclusive and adaptable communication (Hall et al., 1984).

4.2.5. From real experience to the ideal with the three profiles

The three classes are significant in that they provide different profiles which allow for the understanding of variations in the perception of the importance attributed to the variables. Only Class1 (those who are resistant towards the concept of “communion-communication”) has just one variable close to the ideal. However, if C5-E and C5-O are combined into C5 (importance of diversity), it would be the only common variable approaching the ideal for all three classes. This indicates an almost universal recognition of its importance and impact in communication. Class2 (favorable to the concept) has four variables close to the ideal (D1, C5, C8, C11), while Class 3 (those with mixed views regarding the concept) has three variables (R1, C5, C8) trending to the ideal. Variable C8, common to these two classes (C2 and C3), pertains to the necessity of respect in “communion-communication.” Indeed, participant observations have revealed that this concern for respect is closely linked to the acceptance of diversity; a difference that is risen above by the principle of “unity is strength”. This is particularly evident among members of IT group, who predominantly fit the profile of the Class 3. It should be noted that members of IT group are farmers with limited education and training. This is likely the reason why variable D1 (the necessity of sensitization to “communion-communication”) is far from the ideal.

4.2.6. Priority considerations, Present and Future

The issue of prioritization (*see Figure 5*) gains full significance with the prospective analysis (*see Figure 6*) over a ten-year period. The variable “necessity for listening” (C3) holds the top position in the hierarchy: it is responsible for the primary segmentation of observation and should be closely monitored as it shows an unsteady/negative trend over time, especially given its influential-dominant nature. The “importance of diversity” (C5) should also be a focal point as it can trend either positively or negatively; that is why it occupies the second and third positions in the hierarchy. Since “communion-communication in daily life” (C11) is recognized as necessary and trends more positively, it is ranked only in the fourth position. Two variables show a similar trend across all three groups: the necessity of respect (C8) with a positive trend, and the integration of communion into communication for development (R1) with a negative trend. Consequently, C8 (which is influential) is ranked last (fifth) in the hierarchy. However, this variable R1 will be reinforced along with C8. The variable “existence of sensitization/education in communion-communication” (D1) has been recognized as almost missing. It is the only variable that varies across the three classes (negative, unstable, positive), and its fifth position in the hierarchy is justified by the fact that it depends on other factors that precede and condition it.

In summary, the variables “necessity for listening” (C3) and “importance of diversity” (C5) influence all the variables, and each of these variables is perceived as important, collectively strengthening “communion-communication.” However, the context, space, and time would affect this communication, especially since the “communicator” is a human being and not a machine.

4.2.7. Communication-Communion as a Catalyst

From this research, lived communion-communication should be a powerful catalyst for restoring and enriching interpersonal and community communications by fostering understanding, empathy, and the building of authentic relationships. It thus contributes to creating healthy and fulfilling relational environments. Its establishment requires the presence of several favorable conditions, identified during the survey, such as active listening, mutual respect, active participation, coherence, the creation of an inclusive environment, and the promotion of continuous learning/education.

The complexity of human relationships (Morin, 2004) necessitates a communion that rises above differences to engage in the Buberian “I-Thou” relationship, in order to establish a unity that is a communion of people (Leroy, 2005), a deep communion between individuals (Panikkar & Panikkar, 1999), and to create a spiritual connection according to the “theory of spiritual communion” based on the principles of openness, authenticity, and overcoming barriers (Chrétien, 1992; Tillich, 2008).

The survey revealed a daily reality that has drifted away from the concept of communion in communication trending towards individualism. However, it has also emerged that the same individuals revert to communion in situations of extreme necessity. The IT group specifically, whose members are mostly within class 3, is favorable towards communication and discussions. Nevertheless, the participant observation showed a certain reluctance when there is perceived inequality, such as superiority-inferiority, distance, or arrogance. Conversely, simplicity and openness allow messages to flow freely through discussions. Therefore, communication as information benefits from the incorporation of communion into communication, leading to a more effective reception and interpretation of messages by overcoming conflicts of interest with a holistic and less utilitarian perspective.

4.2.8. “Communion-Communication” and development

For human development, integrating communion into communication/relationships is highly beneficial. The spirit of communion would strengthen interpersonal relationships through deep and authentic connections between individuals. Cognitive dissonances will be overcome (Tavris & Aronson, 2008), paving the way for mutual understanding and respect. This leads to more stable and harmonious relationships, which are essential for personal well-being and growth. Furthermore, when communication is based on the spirit of communion, or “*fiHAVANANA*”, individuals demonstrate mutual support that is crucial for emotional and psychological development. Additionally, this type of communication facilitates constructive conflict resolution through dialogue and the search for mutually beneficial solutions. As a result, tensions are reduced, and a climate of trust and cooperation is established. Finally, by fostering listening and the exchange of perspectives, communion-communication enhances understanding of cultural and personal differences. Both individuals and communities benefit from broader horizons and increased open-mindedness.

On the side of territorial development, different antagonistic conceptions of rationality, particularly in economic and social choices (Sen, 2002) between individuals/communities and governments/donors, could slow down or even block territorial development (Assogba, 1993). Conflicts arise from divergent goals and priorities. They create an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion, and lead to communicative distortions (Habermas, 1985b). The consequences are inevitable: public and private decisions will be affected (Sandel, 2011); barriers to cooperation and constructive dialogue are erected; and value dissonances are revealed. To overcome these obstacles, it is crucial to promote a different type of communication capable of transforming conflicts into opportunities for growth and understanding (Gergen, 2009).

By extension, integrating communion into communication strengthens community bonds and social cohesion. Social interactions based on respect and mutual understanding encourage development and strengthen professional and territorial communities (Wenger, 2005). A cohesive community is more resilient and capable of working together to achieve common goals. Furthermore, “*communion-communication*,” which promotes inclusive and participatory dialogue, overcomes conflicts of interest and stimulates citizen engagement in local decision-making processes. This results in more transparent and democratic governance (Pateman, 2016), where the needs and aspirations of the population are better addressed. Territories that value “*communion-communication*” tend to develop strong collaborative networks among various economic actors; to facilitate partnerships, innovation, and inclusive economic development, benefiting the entire community (Porter, 2003). Lastly, “*Communion-Communication*” between local authorities and citizens allows for a better identification of the population's needs and for the adaptation of public services accordingly (Habermas, 1985a; Ostrom, 2015); it leads to the establishment of fairer social policies and a higher quality of life for all residents.

5. CONCLUSION

The tested variables, the interest expressed by the respondents, and the confirmatory or refutative theories that supported the research leads to the conclusion that the initial hypothesis: “*communion-communication enhances informational communication and interpersonal communication, thereby ensuring better human and territorial development*”, has been substantiated. It contributes to human development by fostering authentic and harmonious relationships, as well as to territorial development by strengthening social cohesion, citizen commitment, and economic collaboration. *Communion-Communication* is not a technique or a system but a vision that nurtures a way of life. In the Malagasy context, it is based on “*fiHAVANANA*”, as such not distorted by political (Ravaloson, 2002) or economic (Wallner, 2016) influences. As such, it provides shared foundational values: equality and reciprocity.

Initiation to this *Communion-Communication* begins with individual awareness leading to community change (Freire, Paulo, 2000). However, some advocate the opposite approach, starting from group awareness leading to individual change (Lewin, 1947). The effectiveness largely depends on the context and specific objectives of the situation. A hybrid approach, such as that of the Catholic Church promoting this communication-*communion* by combining both strategies, is often the most effective. This integrative strategy fosters both individual innovation and group cohesion, thus creating an environment conducive to sustainable behavioral change and more effective territorial development (Kotter and Cohen, 2012). *Communion* can create authentic communication for development, just as authentic communication can foster *communion* (Palmer and Wholeness, 2004). Continuing Escobar's reflection (Escobar, 2012) on exploring how communication-*communion* can integrate and value local and traditional knowledge in territorial development processes would be an interesting new avenue.

6. REFERENCES

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