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The Influence of Communication, Trust, and Shared Goal Orientation on Students' Teamwork Effectiveness in a Turbulent Environment

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Abstract

In order to create social systems that deal with complex issues with multiple systems and multiple people, cooperation and coordination within and between multiple systems require the integration of social cooperation mechanisms. This paper highlights the influences of communication, trust, and shared goal orientation on the effectiveness of students' teamwork during teamwork training in higher education. A quantitative cross-sectional data explanatory approach was used, and data collected from 111 students through survey questionnaires were analyzed through multiple regression. The study showed that trust and communication positively impacted the effectiveness of teamwork, but goal orientation played a positive but statistically insubstantial role. This suggests that the effectiveness of teamwork chiefly relies on the quality of inter-member communication and the level of trust between the members. In mutual trust and the psychological safety of members, the crucial collaboration elements are confidence and learning. This study highlights the need for integration of emotional and rational components within the interdisciplinary teamwork process. It offers additional value to educators in the design of experiential learning activities. Students are expected to strengthen and build their professional communication, cooperation, and trust systems to work collaboratively in the professional world of social turbulence.

Keywords: Teamwork effectiveness; Communication; Trust; Shared goal orientation; Higher education.

Background of the Study

Change has become a constant for business and higher education over the last several decades. Digital advances, globalization, and, the COVID-19 pandemic, have transformed the how's and the where's of work and social interaction, creating a turbulent environment. This atmosphere of rapid and unpredictable change refers to the 'turbulent environment' as described by Nosike et al (2023). This reality implies that students, and future professionals, must be taught a greater range of competencies that include flexibility, permeability, and cross-discipline cooperativeness. As a result, higher education institutions are beginning to widen the scope of their focus on learning to include the essential soft-skill sets necessary for cohesive cooperation and collaboration. Moreover, the paradigm shift that centers cooperation and collaboration as the dominant operational model in several fields, underscores the necessity for students to master the ability to work collaboratively. Synergy lies at the heart of effective collaboration, and it involves the seamless integration of disparate skills and individual

competencies toward the realization of a common objective. Rodríguez-Gómez et al (2020) confirmed the positive impact on students' collaboration and critical thinking as a result of the active learning task. This, and other findings, serve to remind us that work at the interface of multiple disciplines requires planning and higher order thinking.

Without a team culture of psychological safety, Edmondson (2018) found that members will inhibitor innovation and idea sharing as a self-protection strategy from blame and criticism. Similarly, a systematic review by Hassan et al. (2022) showed that a lack of role clarity and low levels of trust among team members are key factors in declining team effectiveness in the competitive and dynamic higher education environment. Effective communication skills are a key foundation for successful teamwork. Through open communication, team members can convey ideas, clarify misunderstandings, and maintain transparency in decision-making (Doyle & Paton, 2017). Beyond communication, trust also plays a crucial role in creating a sense of psychological safety within a team. According to Bisbey & Salas (2019), a high level of trust



increases member participation and accelerates conflict resolution, allowing the team to focus on achieving collective goals. Trust is not only a result of interpersonal relationships but is also influenced by consistent collaborative experiences and the existence of agreed-upon shared goals. Shared goal orientation is another important element linking communication and trust to teamwork effectiveness. When team members understand and commit to a collective goal, they tend to set aside personal interests and work more cooperatively (Kistruck et al, 2016). Recent research by Liu and Ye (2025) in the *European Journal of Psychology of Education* highlights that group cooperative learning plays a critical role in fostering students' online self-regulated learning (SRL). Their study found that among various group dynamics, socially shared regulation—the process by which peers collectively plan, monitor, and reflect on learning tasks—exerts the most significant positive influence on SRL. This shared regulatory process makes students feel that their tasks are more important, which helps them do better in school. This effect is strengthened when teachers provide support. The results show that having shared goals and working together with common rules help bring team members together and lead to success. This gives strong evidence that aligning goals is very important for good teamwork (Liu & Ye, 2025). Because of these challenges, programs that teach students how to work well together in tricky or uncertain situations are becoming more important in college education. These programs are made to help students work together by using activities that simulate real situations, encourage thinking about what they learn, and involve students in hands-on experiences. Group games, case discussions, and group reflection help people see how real teams work. They learn how to deal with different opinions, trust each other more, and work together toward common goals. This approach aligns with the findings of Budiarto et al. (2024) in *Education and Information Technologies*, who emphasize that experiential learning-based training is effective in enhancing students' communication, adaptability, and cooperation skills in the digital era. In addition to providing practical contributions to students, this research also has academic significance in enriching the literature on teamwork in Indonesian higher education. Most previous research has focused on the context of corporations or business organizations, while empirical studies in educational settings are still relatively limited (Suat Hoon et al, 2025). Through this study, it is hoped that empirical evidence will be found regarding the influence of communication, trust, and shared goal orientation on the effectiveness of student teamwork after participating in teamwork training. These findings can be used as a basis for other higher education institutions to design teamwork competency development programs relevant to the characteristics of today's student generation. Therefore, this study aims to answer a fundamental question: to what extent do communication, trust, and shared goal orientation contribute to the effectiveness of student teamwork in a turbulent environment? The answer to this question is expected to provide not only a theoretical understanding of the relationships between these

variables but also practical recommendations for educators in designing training focused on strengthening interdisciplinary teamwork. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to be a tangible contribution to improving the quality of learning and preparing students to face the dynamic world of work.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Teamwork Effectiveness

Teamwork effectiveness describes the extent to which team members can work together to achieve common goals through good coordination, communication, and synergy (Younus et al, 2019). Team effectiveness is not only assessed by the final result, but also by how the collaboration process occurs. Effective teams have open communication, clear role divisions, and a high level of trust among members (Paul et al, 2016). In the context of higher education, teamwork effectiveness is a crucial part of developing students' collaborative competencies needed in the modern workplace.

Effective teamwork is rooted in open communication and mutual respect. Communication facilitates the exchange of ideas, task clarification, and constructive conflict resolution. According to Gross et al (2016), effective communication can build mutual trust and strengthen teamwork. When each member feels valued and heard, they are more likely to actively contribute to achieving shared goals. In academic contexts, effective team communication is essential for developing students' critical and reflective thinking skills (Mugabekazi et al, 2025). Shared goal orientation, defined as the degree to which team members understand and commit to common objectives, is another critical factor. When all members share a unified vision, teams are more likely to coordinate strategies, minimize conflict, and enhance collective motivation (Pearce, 2024). In group learning environments, Bransen et al (2022) demonstrated that socially shared regulation significantly improves students' self-regulated learning. These findings indicate that effective teamwork promotes shared values and collective responsibility for learning outcomes.

Overall, teamwork effectiveness is a dynamic process encompassing cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. It not only fosters strong team performance but also strengthens individual competencies such as leadership, empathy, and responsibility. In higher education, developing teamwork effectiveness means preparing students to become adaptive professionals capable of collaborating, communicating effectively, and contributing to collective success in an increasingly complex work environment.

Communication and Teamwork Effectiveness

Communication is the foundation of effective teamwork. Through communication, team members share information, clarify tasks, and align on goals (Van der Hoek et al, 2005). Open communication helps prevent misunderstandings and expedites decision-making. Within student teams, good communication also fosters a sense of togetherness and involvement in achieving shared goals.

Effective communication creates trust and a sense of security among team members. When team members freely express their opinions without fear of repercussions, the work environment becomes more productive. Edmondson (2018) calls this psychological safety—a state in which members feel free to speak openly. Conversely, closed communication can lead to conflict, emotional distance, and decreased teamwork motivation.

Besides conveying messages, communication also maintains coordination between team members. Salas et al. (2018) explain that good communication allows team members to provide feedback and support to one another. In group activities, the ability to listen and respond politely significantly impacts smooth collaboration. When all members feel valued, they are more enthusiastic about contributing.

In the digital age, team communication doesn't always happen face-to-face. Online interactions often pose challenges such as misinterpretation or lack of rapport. Therefore, students need to master clear and empathetic digital communication. Uddin et al (2025) emphasized that experiential learning can help improve collaborative communication skills. Thus, effective communication has been shown to strengthen collaboration and increase teamwork effectiveness.

H1: Communication has a positive effect on teamwork effectiveness.

Trust and Teamwork Effectiveness

Trust leads to a cohesive and effective team. When team members have confidence in each other, they can communicate ideas and perspectives more freely and without concern (Edmondson, 2018). The more secure members feel, the more likely they are to share. Teams develop more positive relations more rapidly when there is trust. 187 Also, trust allows teams to function more seamlessly. Costa et al (2018) explain that trust decreases discord and increases the members' attachment to the team's vision. When there is teamwork, members share unreservedly and support each other in the performance tasks. Trust increases the ease and efficiency of cooperation. Trust also increases motivation and fosters a sense of duty. 187 In a team, the people on the team generate role value and the levels of commitment to the group's work increases, especially when work is collaborative (Dirks, 1999). Trust is an important social factor, but it is also a performance motivator. In group-based learning, trust is the key to smooth, efficient collaboration. Momen et al (2025) explained that collaborative tasks could promote interpersonal trust within the group. Boosting trust results in a more comfortable and productive work atmosphere. Trust positively impacts effectiveness and cohesion of the team.

H2: Trust has a positive effect on teamwork effectiveness.

Shared Goal Orientation and Teamwork Effectiveness

Having competing objectives causes every team member to pull in different directions. When there are no clear objectives, members work in unison, but they do not complement each other, and most likely, team achieve goals

collectively. When team members work in unison, and complement each other, alignment most likely achieve goals collaboratively. When team members goals complements most likely influences working as a team, team spirit, and satisfaction. team members senses of responsibility. They most likely work collaboratively. They give each other the bearing once of encouragement to the goals. Working towards goals as a team, communicates and facilitates goals in a more efficient manner. Each member contributes, while simultaneously gaining personal satisfaction. Socially, teamwork is more effective. When team activities lack clear objectives, cohesion is no longer a byproduct. The more activities entail objectives, the more members focus. Socially, activities are more effective to the group. When they activities lose focus cohesion and cooperation are no longer guaranteed. Shared activities assist team members while working objectives cohesively and smoothly to enhance their integration and interconnectedness.

H3: Shared goal orientation has a positive effect on teamwork effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research uses a quantitative explanatory approach. The goal is to determine the influence of communication, trust, and shared goal orientation on the effectiveness of student teamwork. This approach was chosen because it allows for empirical testing of relationships between variables using statistical analysis.

Populasi dan Sampel

The study population was all students who participated in teamwork training. A sample of 111 respondents was selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the training activities. This number meets the minimum criteria for regression analysis, which requires a sample size greater than 5–10 times the number of independent variables (Hair et al., 2019).

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

This study involved four variables:

X_1 = Communication

X_2 = Trust

X_3 = Shared Goal Orientation

Y = Teamwork Effectiveness

Each variable was measured using four indicators on a Likert scale of 1–5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The relationship model between variables is as follows:
 $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire administered during the teamwork training for 111 students at Jatiluhur Polytechnic in Purwakarta. The questionnaire was developed based on indicators adapted from previous studies on teamwork and collaboration. The communication items were adapted from Van der Hoek et al. (2005) and Gross et al. (2016), the trust items from Edmondson (2018) and Costa et al. (2018), the shared goal

orientation items from Han et al. (2018) and Wang et al. (2024), and the teamwork effectiveness items from Younus et al. (2019) and Paul et al. (2016). Each participant completed the questionnaire individually after participating in the teamwork training session.

Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26 with the following steps:

1. Descriptive Test

To describe data trends through minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation values.

The results showed the highest mean value for the shared goal orientation variable (M = 17.76), followed by trust (M = 16.86), team effectiveness (M = 16.85), and communication (M = 13.31). This indicates that respondents have a high perception of all aspects of teamwork.

2. Classical Assumption Test

Includes tests for normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. All test results indicate that the data is normally distributed, free from multicollinearity (Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10), and free from heteroscedasticity (Sig. > 0.05).

3. Multiple Linear Regression Test

Regression analysis was used to examine the simultaneous and partial effects between variables.

The R value = 0.677 indicates a strong correlation between the three independent variables and teamwork effectiveness. The R² value = 0.458 means that 45.8% of the variation in teamwork effectiveness can be explained by communication, trust, and shared goal orientation. The remaining 54.2% is influenced by other factors outside the model.

4. F Test (Simultaneous)

The F value = 30.106 with a Sig. = 0.000 (<0.05) indicates that all independent variables together have a significant effect on teamwork effectiveness.

5. t Test (Partial)

Based on the Coefficients table, the results are as follows: Communication (X₁): t = 2.392, Sig. = 0.019 → significant effect.

Trust (X₂): t = 3.371, Sig. = 0.001 → significant effect.

Shared goal orientation (X₃): t = 1.935, Sig. = 0.056 → has a positive but not significant effect at α = 0.05.

6. Regression Equation

Based on the SPSS results, the model obtained is:

$$Y = 2.866 + 0.300X_1 + 0.374X_2 + 0.207X_3$$

This means that every increase in communication, trust, and shared goal orientation will positively increase the effectiveness of teamwork.

Analysis Summary

The results of the regression test indicate that communication and trust significantly influence the effectiveness of student teamwork, while shared goal orientation has a positive but

insignificant effect. These findings partially support the proposed hypothesis (H₁ and H₂ are accepted, H₃ is partially rejected).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis was conducted to understand the general distribution of responses from 111 participants. As shown in Table 1, all variables have relatively high mean scores, ranging from 13.31 to 17.76. These values indicate that participants generally perceive positive teamwork dynamics during the training activity.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Communication	111	7.00	15.00	13.31	1.90
Trust	111	12.00	20.00	16.86	2.19
Shared Goal Orientation	111	12.00	20.00	17.76	2.20
Teamwork Effectiveness	111	11.00	20.00	16.85	2.39

The variable with the highest mean was shared goal orientation (M = 17.76), showing that students strongly recognized the importance of pursuing collective goals. Meanwhile, communication (M = 13.31) had the lowest mean, implying that some students still faced challenges in expressing opinions or maintaining consistent information sharing. Overall, the small standard deviations indicate relatively homogeneous perceptions across respondents.

Model Summary

The regression model analysis (Table 2) reveals that the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.677, while the R Square (R²) is 0.458. This means that 45.8% of the variance in teamwork effectiveness can be explained by the three predictors—communication, trust, and shared goal orientation—while 54.2% is influenced by other factors such as leadership style, motivation, or team diversity.

Table 2. Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.677	0.458	0.443	1.781

These values indicate a moderately strong relationship between the independent variables and teamwork effectiveness, suggesting that interpersonal and motivational aspects jointly contribute to effective teamwork behavior among students.

ANOVA Test

The ANOVA results (Table 3) show that the overall model is significant with an F-value of 30.106 and p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.05). This confirms that communication, trust, and shared goal orientation simultaneously have a significant effect on teamwork effectiveness. Therefore, the regression model is appropriate for further interpretation.

Table 3. ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	286.719	3	95.573	30.106	0.000
Residual	339.678	107	3.175		
Total	626.396	110			



Coefficients

Table 4. Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.866	1.507	—	1.902	0.060
Communication	0.300	0.125	0.239	2.392	0.019
Trust	0.374	0.111	0.343	3.371	0.001
Shared Goal Orientation	0.207	0.107	0.191	1.935	0.056

Based on the regression coefficients, the following model can be formed:

$$\text{Teamwork Effectiveness} = 2.866 + 0.300 (\text{Communication}) + 0.374 (\text{Trust}) + 0.207 (\text{Shared Goal Orientation})$$

The equation shows that all independent variables have positive coefficients, meaning that higher levels of communication, trust, and shared goal orientation are associated with higher teamwork effectiveness. Among these, trust ($\beta = 0.343$, $p = 0.001$) is the strongest predictor.

DISCUSSION

The study results show that communication and trust greatly enhance teamwork effectiveness while having a shared goal slightly increases it. However, this increase does not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.056$). This is similar to Gross et al. (2016) and Edmondson (2018) where they state that performance hinges greatly on communication and trust. This is because communication enables the free flow of information, sharpens the clarity of roles, and treats ambiguities. Understanding increases when members attentively listen to one another during active discussions, and teamwork coordination improves significantly. Most importantly, trust is the very foundation of teamwork. Confident delegation of tasks is a characteristic of highly trusting teams and unwavering commitment to a joint outcome is readily maintained. As Costa et al. (2018) point out, trust aids building psychological safety, which fosters initiative and contribution of members to the team absent of punitive judgment. Of most interest in this study is a lack of motivation to collaborate and positively team construct in students. This is in contrast with the shared goal orientation that is felt to be positive, if only marginally so. This complements Han et al. (2018) and Wang et al. (2024) where goal alignment does not work in isolation and is futile without open communication and trust. This points to students having shared objectives which suggests differences in coordination and motivation at the team.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated how communication, trust, and shared goal orientation impact the effectiveness of teamwork among 111 students in teamwork training. Based on the result of the regression analysis, it can be inferred that 45.8% of variance in teamwork effectiveness can be explained with the integration of the subjects within the model. This illustrates a moderately grounded relationship with interpersonal variance. This relationship becomes stronger, when trust and communication are considered, and integrated within the model. However, shared goal orientation tends to have a positive effect, yet is not statistically significant. This means

that collective goals are not driving factors in the attainment of effective collaboration. Instead, communication and trust are the most critical driving facilitators of effective collaboration. Teams characterized by trust and open communication not only attain a higher degree of performance but also achieve coordination and interdependence in their goals. The results of this study demonstrate that the effectiveness of collaboration is a multidimensional relationship combining rational (goal alignment) and emotional (communication and trust) factors. During the educational training of teamwork skills, emotionally safe collaboration also needs to be included to improve the synergy. These interpersonal factors are fundamental to synergy in collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Numerous actionable suggestions can be drawn from the findings.

1. Prioritize training for communication competencies. It is recommended that educators include student projects that integrate structured reflection and feedback to shape collaborative discussions and active listening classes to promote dialogue among students.
2. Promote confidence in teams. Facilitators can plan activities where students can interdepend and assist one another to meet committee goals to foster cross-mentoring and shared decision-making.
3. Clarify and strengthen unified targets. Although goal orientation was not a particularly powerful predictor, the alignment of motivational rallying to personal goals should be encouraged, in connection with goal tracking and reviews.
4. Incorporate action learning. Students can work with real-world teamwork case studies to develop their competencies in practical teamwork and improve their individual confidence for better group synergy.

It is for these reasons that teamwork skills for students in higher education needs focuses to be developed in anticipation of the multifaceted and fluid nature of workplace collaborations.

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