



Enhancing the Character and Readability of Mission Statements in IT Startups: Implications for Stakeholder Communication and Sustainable Business Growth

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ABSTRACT

The mission statement connects vision and operations. It supports communication between organizations and stakeholders. Readability of the mission statement is important for business communication. This research examines the characteristics of mission statements. The study analyzes the readability of mission statements from several technology startup companies. The research uses Gunning's Fog Index with data from 18 Thai technology companies listed on the Market for Alternative Investment (MAI). Counting methods are applied in the data collection and analysis process. The statistics used include frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Gunning's Fog Index (GFI). The findings show that most mission statements contain fewer than 250 words and consist of 3 to 4 sentences. The readability level ranges from acceptable to ideal. Most readers rate the mission statements as optimal at 38.89 percent and acceptable at 33.33 percent. These two groups of businesses succeed in interacting with stakeholders to create mutual business value. Only 11.11 percent of the businesses receive ratings in the difficult category and should revise the goal statement. To support long-term growth, technology startups should prepare mission statements that show readiness in terms of customer perspectives, internal operations, financial performance, and learning and development. These findings may be useful for both businesses and stakeholders. The study is relevant to the technology industry and other sectors. The contribution to sustainable development goals remains important for economic growth and cooperation.

KEYWORDS

Mission statement; readability; stakeholder communication; technology startup; stakeholder engagement; sustainable business growth.

INTRODUCTION

The mission statement is a tool for aligning business operations with the company's vision. It also supports communication between organizations and stakeholders (Cochran et al., 2008; Khan et al., 2017; Powers, 2012; Rajasekar, 2013). An organization seeks support from individuals committed to work, such as employees. Investors are interested in providing funds. Business operations often receive acceptance from the community, and customers trust products and services. Communication must be clear, and the audience must understand the message.

Sustainable business growth in IT startups depends on the clarity and coherence of mission statements. These statements serve as central tools for communication with stakeholders, including investors, employees, customers, and partners. A mission statement with strong character and clear language increases understanding and alignment among all parties. It guides internal decisions and shapes external perceptions. This improves transparency and consistency. Startups with readable and purposeful mission statements are more likely to maintain long-term support. Such support strengthens operations and allows gradual and responsible expansion. Over time, consistent communication of purpose helps create conditions for sustained growth in competitive environments (Zahan & Sultana, 2019). Readability is important when a business interacts with stakeholders through a mission statement (Pitt et al., 2010; Sattari et al., 2011). If the audience cannot read or understand the statement, they may not know how to support the organization. Executives must examine and revise the mission statement to ensure clarity. No evidence has been found on the readability level of mission statements from Thai companies. The researcher observed that low readability results in a loss of economic opportunities. This observation is the basis for the research. The issue is relevant to technology businesses expanding investments (Cai & Rattanapun, 2025; Techsauce, 2021). Some of these companies belong to the MAI group, which provides funding for small and medium-sized businesses with paid-up capital of at least 50 million baht after an initial public offering (Stock Exchange of Thailand [SET], 1999). The findings may support further revision of company mission statements as a strategic tool.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the character evaluation of the mission statements of IT startup companies.
2. To address the readability of the mission statements of IT startup companies.
3. To enhance the mission statement for the technology startup companies.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

This study evaluates literature from two perspectives, including mission statement characteristics analysis and readability.

Mission statement characters:

David (2015) stated that a mission statement provides a basis for a company's priorities, work assignments, strategies, and plans. It can serve as a starting point for the organizational

structure and job design. Mission statements are also used in communication with stakeholders (Khan et al., 2017). To be effective, the statement should be suitable for a wide range of target groups. It should avoid highly technical terms and unfamiliar vocabulary (Drohan, 1999, as cited in Godkin et al., 2000). The statement should be inspiring, reconciliatory, and enduring. It should not include financial terms, numbers, percentages, ratios, or objectives (Alawneh, 2015). Campbell et al. (1993, as cited in Hossain, 2004) proposed that a mission statement should consist of four elements. These include the company's strategy, such as distinctive competence and competitive position, and its purpose. Standards and behaviors, including policies and value systems, should also be present, along with company values. David (2015) proposed that a mission statement should include nine elements. These relate to products or services, technology, concern for survival, growth, profitability, philosophy, self-concept, public image, employees, customers, and markets. Bratianu stated that a mission statement should contain general characteristics that reflect the company's vision and core values. It should be understandable, concise, and practical, while stating the company's objectives. It should use clear language and have a meaningful effect on all stakeholders.

Bansal (2013) stated that an effective mission statement should be simple, specific, realistic, strategically positioned, relevant to stakeholders, and long-term oriented. According to Cochran, a mission statement can follow a developmental framework with four phases: orientation, communication analysis, applicability analysis, and component analysis. These phases include identifying desired components, drafting the statement, evaluating readability through denotative analysis, and refining the content. The process may involve clear and concise writing, calculating the fog index, and rewriting as needed.

There are multiple perspectives on the nature of mission statements. However, communication through mission statements should consider the efficiency of information delivery. This can be influenced by length. Sentence length is a linguistic factor that affects readability (Kunnur, 2020). There is no fixed format for a mission statement, and its structure may vary across organizations. Components often lack specificity (Hossain, 2004). Some researchers suggest that mission statements with fewer than eight words are more memorable and effective (Bansal, 2013; Djordjevic, 2020). David (2015) recommended a length of fewer than 250 words. Palo Alto Software (2011, as cited in Powers, 2012) stated that three to four sentences are appropriate. David (2020) analyzed 74 mission statements from Fortune 500 companies and found that effective ones averaged around 100 words and were not overstated. Khan (2017) studied 500 companies across Europe, Asia, North America, Australia, and South America, focusing on manufacturing, retail, distribution, and service industries. The service industry had the longest mission statements, with up to 295 words and nine sentences. Retail and distribution showed the shortest, with 93 words and five sentences.

Godkin (2000) examined 300 mission statements from leading U.S. companies and found the shortest to be three words and the longest 484. Sattari (2011) analyzed mission statements from product manufacturers, service companies, and retail/distribution companies. Service

companies had the longest statements at 258 words, while the shortest was three words. Sentence counts ranged from one to ten. Rajasekar (2013) studied 45 financial services firms and found the longest mission statement had 69 words and seven sentences. In the food and beverage sector, the highest count was 125 words and six sentences. In industrial manufacturing, the highest was 157 words and eight sentences. Utilities, power, and telecommunications had a maximum of 30 words and two sentences. The investment sector reached 48 words and four sentences. The metal, mining, oil, and gas sector had the highest at 114 words and eight sentences. Education, healthcare, and transport sectors recorded up to 56 words and six sentences.

For companies with effective mission statements, it is not recommended that the content exceed 250 words or more than three to four sentences. This recommendation may relate to the way readers interpret meaning by analyzing both words and sentence structure. A high word count and long sentences can reduce reading comprehension. This can result in an inaccurate understanding or misinterpretation of the mission statement's message (Sattari et al., 2011; DuBay, 2004; Wray & Janan, 2013). Based on the literature review, no study has examined the mission statements of IT startup companies in Thailand. Therefore, mission statement performance is assessed using word and sentence count. The research assumption is as follows: Hypothesis (H1): The overall mission statement of IT startup companies should contain fewer than 250 words and three to four sentences.

H1: Overall mission statement of IT startup companies is less than 250 words and 3-4 sentences.

Readability

Dale and Chall (1949) and DuBay (2004) suggested that readability depends on the total elements of a text and directly affects understanding, reading speed, and reader interest. Kunnur (2020) noted that the quality of a text is measured by how easily its meaning is understood by a specific group of readers, encouraging continued reading. Richards et al. (1992), as cited in Zamanian and Heydari (2012), stated that readability relates to comprehension. Factors influencing readability include sentence length, grammatical complexity, and the number of unfamiliar words. Klare (1963), as cited in Sattari et al. (2011), defined readability as the 'ease of reading.' Text quality depends on features such as word and sentence structure, legibility, and document layout.

In business, readability is important because it affects how clearly a text conveys its message to readers. Companies depend on stakeholders understanding mission statements and the intended message. Readability is a key factor in communication, and its significance has been recognized across business disciplines. Without clear readability and comprehension, desired outcomes are unlikely (Sattari et al., 2011; Cortés-Sánchez & Rivera, 2019).

Readability measurement tools have evolved over time. Examples include the Flesch Reading Ease Score (FRES) developed in 1942 and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL). Edgar Dale created the Dale-Chall formula in 1948. McLaughlin (1969) introduced the SMOG formula. In 1952, Gunning developed the Fog Index for adult readers (Khan et al., 2017; Bansal, 2013; Pasko

et al., 2020). The Fog Index is widely used in business administration studies, particularly in strategic management, finance, accounting, and marketing, due to its ease of application (Bargate, 2012; Khan et al., 2017; Cheng et al., 2018; DuBay, 2004; Liu & Rowe, 2013; Rajasekar, 2013; Sattari et al., 2011).

Gibson (1985), as cited in Kunnur (2020), recommends the Fog Index for measuring readability of mission statements. This index determines reading difficulty based on sentence and word length (Kunnur, 2020). This study calculated the Fog Index using these variables and the following formula.

Grade Level = 0.4 (average sentence length + difficult words) (DuBay, 2004).

Average sentence length is considered a significant linguistic variable affecting readability. It is calculated by dividing the total number of words in a text by the total number of sentences (Kunnur, 2020). Word length relates to the number of syllables per word and can be measured by dividing the total number of syllables by the total number of words, as well as by calculating the percentage of words with more than two syllables per 100 words (Kunnur, 2020).

Godkin (2000) studied 300 corporate mission statements from leading American companies, using the Flesch Reading Ease Score (FRES) and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKG) to assess readability, and found most statements were lengthy and difficult to comprehend. Pitt, Sattari, and Bevelander (2010) examined FT 100 mission statements by comparing FRES and FKG methods, finding that the SMOG and Gunning Fog Index (GFI) yielded similar results. Sattari, Pitt, and Caruana (2011) analyzed 43 product manufacturer mission statements using FRES and FKG and concluded these statements were ineffective in communicating with stakeholders. Rajasekar (2013) applied GFI to mission statements across industries such as food and beverage, financial services, investments, utilities, and natural resources, noting a medium readability level.

Khan et al. (2017) investigated 500 mission statements from Europe, Asia, North America, Oceania, and South America, grouped into retail, distribution, service, and manufacturing sectors, using FRES and FKG. The study concluded that stakeholders generally struggled to read and understand the statements. Asian companies exhibited higher readability compared to other continents, whereas North American companies had the lowest readability, suggesting mission statements in North America may be excessively long and complex, impairing clear communication.

Cheng et al., (2018), using GFI, found that managers manipulate financial report readability by obscuring information when profits decline, making reports more difficult to understand. Cortés-Sánchez, Rivera, and Carbonell (2022) examined 248 university mission statements from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America using GFI. The study revealed low reading comprehension levels despite higher university rankings (Jongdo & Keun, 2021).

The GFI was also used to compare readability, keywords, and orientation in mission statements from the top 100 Korean and top 100 US corporations, revealing minor differences in readability. De Alwis and Ramanadhan (2018) evaluated mission statements of publicly traded companies on the Colombo Stock Exchange, finding very low readability levels. They recommended revising mission statements to reduce sentence length and multisyllabic vocabulary. Ahmed et al. (2021) reported that bank mission statements had higher readability compared to SMOG, FKGL, ARI, GFI, and CLI measures.

The literature shows that readability varies across companies and indicates mission statement effectiveness. However, IT startup companies in Thailand have not been studied. This research assesses performance by measuring reading comprehension levels. The following hypothesis is proposed: Hypothesis (H2): Overall readability levels of IT startup companies fall within the acceptable to ideal range.

H2: Overall, the readability level of IT startup companies is at the acceptable-ideal level.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population for this study consisted of 20 companies listed on the Thai Stock Exchange (MAI) within the technology industry group. Among these, 18 companies had publicly available mission statements. Ten respondents from these companies participated as stakeholders in semi-structured interviews. Data analysis included content analysis and statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, alongside readability assessment using the Gunning Fog Index. This index is commonly employed to evaluate the quality of reports and communication (Khan et al., 2017). The Fog Index calculation follows the method described by Gunning (1952), as cited in DuBay (2004) and Li (2008).

Grade Level = $0.4 \times (\text{words per sentence} + \text{percent of complex words})$

Words per sentence represent the average sentence length. Sentence length was measured by counting the number of words in each sentence. The percentage of complex or difficult words was calculated as the number of words with more than two syllables per 100 words. This approach follows the method of Gunning (1952), as cited in DuBay (2004) and Lo et al., (2017) (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

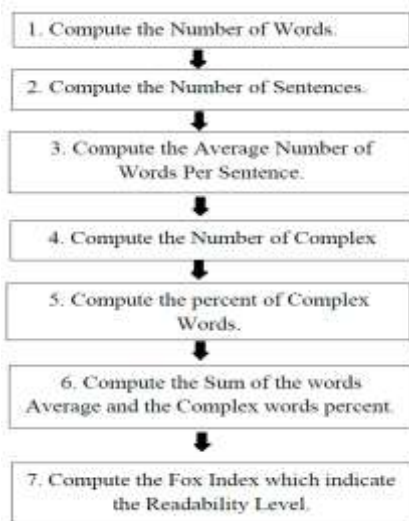
Table 1.

The definition of the Fog Index.

Grade Level	Scale	Readability Level
18 up	18.00 Up to	Unreadable
14-18	14.00-17.99	Difficult
12-14	12.01-13.99	Ideal
10-12	10.00-12.00	Acceptable
8-10	8.00-9.99	Easy
Less 8	Less than 8	Very easy to read

Figure 1.

The framework for determining the readability level of a mission statement.



The Strategic Mission Communication (SMC) Framework

To explore the interplay between mission statement design, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable growth in IT startups, we propose the Strategic Mission Communication (SMC) Framework. This integrative model draws on Strategic Communication Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and the Balanced Scorecard to provide a multidimensional understanding of how mission statements can shape both internal coherence and external legitimacy.

The first layer of the framework focuses on mission statement construction, emphasizing three key attributes: character, clarity, and readability. Drawing from strategic communication literature, "character" refers to the tone, emotional appeal, and rhetorical strategies used to project an organization's identity. "Clarity" involves the explicit articulation of the startup's core purpose and values, which is vital for internal alignment and sense-making. "Readability" is assessed using tools like the Flesch Reading Ease score or Gunning Fog Index, which have been validated in business communication studies. These textual features are particularly critical for IT startups, where technical complexity must be translated into accessible narratives for a diverse set of stakeholders. (Cornelissen, 2017; Drucker, 1973; DuBay, 2004; Pearce & David, 1987)

The second layer concerns stakeholder communication, where the mission statement acts as a strategic message aimed at shaping perceptions and relationships. Stakeholder Theory suggests that organizations must actively consider and engage with various interest groups, from employees to investors. Strategic Communication Theory further emphasizes that communication is not merely informational but performative—it constructs organizational identity and fosters legitimacy. The mission statement serves as a foundational narrative that encodes the startup's values and ambitions, and its effectiveness depends on how well stakeholders decode and interpret this message. Therefore, stakeholder perception and feedback should be integrated into a continuous refinement process (Freeman, 2010; Hallahan et al., 2007; Mitchell et al., 1997)

The Balanced Scorecard approach, highlights how mission communication contributes to strategic outcomes such as employee engagement, customer trust, and long-term growth. For startups, the mission statement is not just a static declaration but a strategic tool for aligning operational activities with vision. When effectively crafted and communicated, mission statements enhance internal cohesion and external legitimacy, both of which are vital for navigating the uncertainty and rapid evolution characteristic of early-stage technology firms (Kaplan & Norton, 1996).

IT startups operate in fast-changing environments, and their mission statements must evolve accordingly. This reflexive process of stakeholder engagement, interpretation, and message refinement ensures that mission communication remains relevant and responsive over time, contributing to the sustainability of the business.

Enhancement of Technology Startup for Sustainable Businesses Growth

The purpose of this research is to identify methods for improving mission statements and readiness to enhance the performance of technology startups. The study adhered to ethical standards, and thus formal ethics approval was not required. Data collection was conducted anonymously to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality throughout the process. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that withdrawal could occur at any time without consequence. Verbal consent was obtained from all participants. This approach was appropriate because the study posed no risk to participants, and the data collected did not involve sensitive personal information requiring written consent. Since all data were anonymous, the collection of personally identifiable information was unnecessary. Verbal consent sufficiently informed participants about the study's purpose, their role, and their rights, including voluntary participation. In this context, verbal consent proved more practical and effective, avoiding disruptions caused by additional documentation, especially as participants were not required to sign any forms. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and were clearly informed about their rights to make an informed decision regarding participation. Ethical standards were observed throughout the research process.

For this study, the researcher selected one stakeholder from each of ten technology companies listed on the Thai Stock Exchange (MAI). Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, with questions including: (1) How do you assess the performance of technology startups? (2) What factors determine the success of a technology startup? (3) How has implementing the mission statement and readiness affected financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth perspectives of company performance? (4) What difficulties arose when establishing a mission statement and improving readability to enhance technology startup performance?

Data analysis followed an interactive method involving data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions to summarize the findings. The balanced scorecard framework was used to analyze company vision in relation to technology business performance.

This framework evaluates four dimensions: (1) financial perspective, (2) customer perspective, (3) internal processes perspective, and (4) learning and growth perspective.

Conceptual Framework:

This research study employs two conceptual models. To test Hypothesis 1, the relationship between independent variables—namely, word count and sentence count—and the dependent variable, mission statement efficacy in stakeholder communication, was examined. Figure 2 illustrates the research model.

Figure 2.

Conceptual research framework and the characteristics of a mission statement.

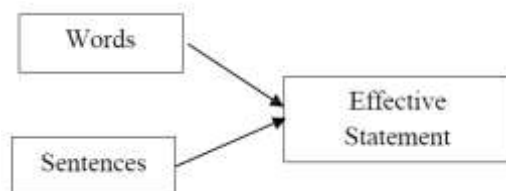
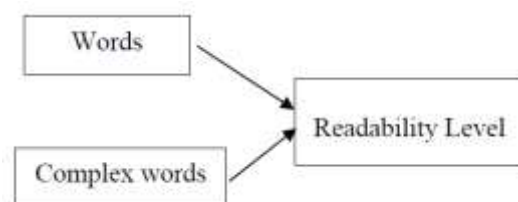


Figure 3.

Conceptual Framework of Readability Level.



In order to test Hypothesis 2, the relationship between independent variables such as words and complex words and dependent variables such as readability level were examined. Figure 3 depicts a model of the research.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The characteristics of mission statements in the sample are as follows. The number of sentences per mission statement are shown in Table 2. The average length of mission statements was 72.28 words, with the longest containing 119 words and the shortest 7 words. Five companies (27.78%) had mission statements exceeding 100 words. Statements ranging from 50 to 100 words accounted for nine companies (50%), while those under 50 words represented four companies (22.22%) (see Table 3). Regarding sentence count, the technology group had an average of 3.28 sentences per mission statement. One company's statement contained six sentences (5.56%), four sentences appeared in eight companies' statements (44.44%), and three sentences were found in three companies' statements (16.67%).

The second issue concerned the number of words per mission statement. Technology companies had an average of 72.28 words per statement. The longest mission statement contained 119 words, while the shortest had 7 words. Five companies (27.78%) had mission statements exceeding 100 words. Nine companies (50%) had statements between 50 and 100 words, and four companies (22.22%) had statements with fewer than 50 words (see Table 3).

Table 2.*The number of sentences per mission statement.*

No.	Corporates	Sentences	Total	Percent
3	BE8	2		
10	NETBAY	2		
11	PLANET	2		
13	SECURE	2		
17	TPS	2		
18	VCOM	2	6	33.33
1	APP	3		
5	COMAN	3		
8	IIG	3	3	16.67
2	BBIK	4		
2	BBIK	4		
6	DITTO	4		
7	ICN	4		
9	IRCP	4		
14	SCT	4		
15	SIMAT	4		
16	SPVI	4	8	44.44
12	PROEN	6	1	5.56
			18	100
		Mean	3.28	
		Sd.	1.1	

Sources: Researcher's Calculations

The results of this study support Hypothesis 1, indicating that mission statements of IT startup enterprises contain fewer than 250 words and consist of 3 to 4 sentences. Consequently, these mission statements were deemed effective. These findings contrast with prior research on product manufacturers, service companies, and distribution firms. For example, Sattari, Pitt, and Caruana (2011) reported that among 106 service companies, the longest mission statement contained 258 words, while the shortest had only 3 words; sentence counts ranged from 1 to 10. Similarly, Forest (2020) found that 74 mission statements, representing 66.66% of the sample, included more than 10 difficult words, with 3 corporations accounting for 16.67% of the total. The overall percentage of complex terms in the current study was 7.78%. Using the Fog Index formula on the 18 companies, the overall score was 11.62 (see Table 4), with scores ranging from a low of 6 to a high of 15.26.

Table 3.*Number of words per mission statement.*

	No.	Corporates	Words	Total	Percent
less than 50 words	1	APP	7		
	3	BE8	20		
	10	NETBAY	37	4	22.22
	11	PLANET	40		
between 51-100 words	13	SECURE	51		
	18	VCOM	51		
	17	TPS	52		
	8	IIG	66		
	2	BBIK	72		
	5	COMAN	76		
	12	PROEN	90		
	7	ICN	91	9	50
	15	SIMAT	98		
more than 101 words	14	SCT	102		
	9	IRCP	103		
	16	SPVI	111		
	6	DITTO	115	5	27.78
	4	BVG	119		
				18	100
			Mean	72.28	
			Sd.	32.75	

Sources: Researcher's Calculations

Researcher Calculations on Readability Level: The Fog Index applied to the mission statements of Fortune 500 corporations has proven effective, with an average word count near 100, which is not excessive. Calculation of the Fog Index requires identifying complex words, which are then expressed as a percentage of the total word count. The analysis found that three corporations (16.67%) contained fewer than five complex words, while twelve corporations included between five and ten complex words.

Table 4.*Percent of complex words and complex words, Fog Index.*

% Complex words		Corporates			Percent	Fog Index
Less than 5	2.94	3	SCT			11.38
	4.08	4	SIMAT			11.43
	4.54	3	IIG	3	16.67	10.62
Between 5-10	5	1	BE8			6
	5.22	6	DITTO			13.59
	6.19	6	ICN			11.58
	6.3	7	SPVI			13.62
	6.58	5	COMAN			12.76
	7.69	4	TPS			13.48
	7.84	4	SECURE			13.33
	7.84	4	VCOM			13.33
	8.4	10	BVG			15.26
	8.11	3	NETBAY			10.64
	8.74	9	IRCP	12	66.66	13.79
	8.89	8	PROEN			9.56
More than 10	12.5	9	BBIK			8.2
	14.29	1	APP			6.65
	15	6	PLANET	3	16.67	14
				18	100	
Mean	7.7	4.44			Mean	11.62
Sd.	3.2	2.7			Sd.	2.54

Table 5 presents readability measurements for the mission statements of the 18 sampled companies. Two companies (11.11%) scored above 14 on the Fog Index, indicating a difficult readability level. Seven companies (38.89%) scored between 12 and 14, suggesting an ideal readability level. Five companies (27.78%) scored between 10 and 12, indicating an acceptable level of readability. Two companies (11.11%) scored between 8 and 10, classified as easy to read. Another two companies (11.11%) scored below 8, reflecting very easy readability. The overall average Fog Index for technology companies was 11.62, which is considered ideal and indicates a generally good level of readability.

Table 5.*Readability Level.*

Grade Level	No	Corporates	Fog Index	%	Readability Level
18 up	0	none		0	Unreadable
14-18	2	PLANET	14	11.11	Difficult
		BVG	15.26		
12–14	7	COMAN	12.76	38.89	Ideal
		SECURE	13.33		
		VCOM	13.33		
		TPS	13.48		
		DITTO	13.59		
		SPVI	13.62		
		IRCP	13.79		
10–12	5	IIG	10.62	27.78	Acceptable
		NETBA	10.64		
		SCT	11.38		
		SIMAT	11.43		
		ICN	11.58		
8–10	2	BBIK	8.2	11.11	Easy
		PROEN	9.56		
Less 8	2	BE8	6	11.11	Very easy
		APP	6.65		
	18	Mean	11.62	100	
		Sd.	2.54		

Sources: Researcher's Calculations

The findings of this study support hypothesis H2, indicating that the overall readability level of IT startup companies ranges from acceptable to ideal. A Fog Index score of 14 or higher indicates the need to revise mission statements by shortening sentence length and reducing the use of multisyllabic words. Such revisions would enhance mission statement effectiveness, in contrast to findings by Jongdo and Keun (2021). Their study examined readability, keywords, and orientation of mission statements from the top 100 Korean and top 100 U.S. corporations using the Gunning Fog Index, finding minimal differences between the two countries. This result aligns with Cortes (2019), who analyzed 248 university mission statements from Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America using the Gunning Fog Index. The study concluded that although reading comprehension levels were low, the universities maintained higher rankings.

Table 6 presents stakeholder perspectives on the role of mission statements and organizational readiness in enhancing the performance of technology startup businesses. The table summarizes qualitative data collected from companies listed on the Thai Stock Exchange (MAI).

Table 6.

Mission statement and readiness to enhance technology startup business performance from stakeholder perspectives.

Factors & Improving performance	Based on Balanced Scorecard	Mission Statement and readability Improvement technology businesses performance
Improve Development: - Managing expenses ROI, - project financing and saleable reporting - Increase profit and income.	Financial Perspective	Improve Development: - A single financial metric for product planning and management - Linkable to profitability indicators such as Operating Income, EBIT, EBITDA - Scalable across projects, product lines, business units, and corporations.
Enhancing Customer Experience - Chatbot solution - Personalization tools - Customer feedback	Customer Perspective	Strengthen Customer Interactions Key Customer -Accelerate New Features and Workflows
1) Operational efficiency & Supporting Productivity - Automation - Collaboration software - Application on Time management 2) Managing Costs - Virtual structure, invisible offices - Outsources, Freelance platforms - Open-source software	Internal Processes Perspective	Improve Market Assessment Improve Concept Development and Prioritization Improve Product Life Cycle Management
Driving Growth - tools of Digital marketing - E-commerce solutions: - Data Analytics	Learning and Growth Perspective	Increase Capacity for Enabling Technology Improve Project Management Expertise Improve Cross Discipline Teamwork

The summary from stakeholder interviews indicates agreement that mission statements and readiness contribute to improving technology startup performance across four dimensions:

- 1) Financial perspective: Focuses on how the company appears to financial stakeholders by managing expenses, return on investment (ROI), project financing, scalable reporting, and increasing profit and income.
- 2) Customer perspective: Concerns about identifying customers and understanding their expectations. Long-term success depends on expanding market share, increasing revenue, and attracting new customers. Providing excellent customer service is essential for gaining a competitive advantage and building loyalty. Startups can enhance customer service and communication by adopting specialized technologies, such as chatbot solutions and personalization tools, and by accelerating new features and processes to improve the customer experience.
- 3) Internal processes: Aim to satisfy financial, stakeholder, and customer needs through (1) improving operational efficiency by automating repetitive tasks and promoting better time management via automation, collaboration tools, and time management applications; and (2) managing costs through virtual structures, invisible offices, outsourcing, freelance platforms, and open-source software.
- 4) Learning and growth: Involves increasing capacity by enabling technology adoption, enhancing project management skills, fostering cross-disciplinary teamwork, and driving growth through digital marketing tools, e-commerce solutions, data analytics, and business intelligence.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study offer valuable insights into the structure, readability, and strategic utility of mission statements among technology startups in Thailand. These results show that mission statements in this sector tend to be concise and structured, and their readability must fall within acceptable to ideal ranges, thereby contributing to effective stakeholder communication.

Readability scores, as measured by the Gunning Fog Index, ranged from 6 to 15.26, with an average of 11.62. This score reflects a level that is generally considered acceptable to ideal for business communication. Only two companies (11.11%) exceeded the score of 14, indicating difficult readability, while the majority (66.67%) fell between 10 and 14, confirming that most mission statements are accessible to a broad audience. In terms of word complexity, three companies (16.67%) had fewer than 5% complex words, while twelve companies (66.66%) had between 5–10%, further contributing to the overall readability. These findings contrast with previous studies (Jongdo & Keun, 2021; Cortes, 2019) that highlighted more substantial readability challenges in larger or more established firms across various countries. It is possible that startups, being younger and more agile, are more attuned to contemporary communication norms emphasizing simplicity and clarity.

The mission statement functions as a primary tool for communication with stakeholders. Use of difficult and complex words can cause confusion and reduce comprehension (Cheng et al., 2018). Readability is an important factor in evaluating the quality of a mission statement and

is widely recognized in business contexts. Without clear readability and understanding among target stakeholders, intended outcomes are unlikely (Khan et al., 2017; Li, 2008). Readability also supports confidence in the stock market and attracts investors (Khan et al., 2017).

The average length of the mission statements analyzed was 72.28 words, with a range from 7 to 119 words. Notably, 50% of the statements fell within the 50–100-word range, aligning with prior literature that recommends mission statements be neither too brief to lose meaning nor too lengthy to obscure clarity. This moderate length indicates a conscious effort by these companies to balance conciseness with comprehensiveness. In terms of sentence structure, the average mission statement comprised 3.28 sentences. This falls well within the range found in global corporate samples. The relatively consistent structure among the Thai IT startups suggests a standardized communication approach aimed at delivering focused messaging to stakeholders (Sattari et al., 2011).

Words and sentence structure influence communication, as readers interpret meaning through these elements. A high word count and long sentences impair comprehension, leading to inaccuracies or misunderstandings of the mission statement (Sattari et al., 2011; DuBay, 2004; Wray & Janan, 2013). Previous research has not examined these aspects in technology companies. In the case of Thai technology companies, mission statements showed effectiveness in word and sentence use and good readability. This indicates quality communication that benefits companies and stakeholders across sectors.

Stakeholder interviews, analyzed through the Balanced Scorecard framework, provided rich qualitative insight that complemented the quantitative findings, highlighting the strategic importance of mission statements across four key dimensions: financial, customer, internal processes, and learning and growth. From a financial perspective, stakeholders emphasized that clear, concise mission statements enhance financial planning and scalability by communicating strategic priorities and supporting metrics such as ROI. In terms of customer engagement, effective mission statements were linked to improved communication and personalization, often facilitated through technologies like chatbots and automated workflows. Regarding internal processes, mission statements were seen as foundational in driving operational efficiency and guiding cost management strategies, including the use of outsourcing, virtual work environments, and automation tools. Finally, under the learning and growth perspective, stakeholders noted that mission statements play a critical role in building organizational capacity, strengthening project management, and encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration. Collectively, these perspectives demonstrate that mission statements are not merely aspirational texts but practical strategic tools that shape decision-making, foster innovation, and enhance performance in dynamic startup environments.

To promote sustainable growth in technology startups, mission statements focused on readability were developed and implemented. Communication among stakeholders, management, and employees ensures alignment across corporate, business, and functional strategies. This alignment improves business performance in four dimensions: (1) financial

perspective, including return on investment, project financing, scalable reporting, and profit and sales growth; (2) internal processes, enhancing operational productivity and reducing costs through virtual offices, invisible structures, and open-source software; (3) customer perspective, emphasizing exceptional service, personalization tools, and customer relationship management via new features and processes; and (4) learning and growth, supporting long-term development through green technology, cross-disciplinary collaboration, knowledge sharing, data analytics, and business intelligence. These factors contribute to the long-term viability of technology startups.

The study highlights that readable, well-structured mission statements function as strategic assets, especially for startups aiming to build credibility, align internal operations, and effectively engage stakeholders. By maintaining a moderate length and ensuring readability, these companies promote greater transparency, accessibility, and trust in their communications. From a managerial perspective, it is essential for startups to regularly review and refine their mission statements to ensure clarity, align their content with measurable strategic outcomes—particularly through frameworks like the Balanced Scorecard—and balance language simplicity with strategic depth. Overall, the findings confirm that Thai IT startups are successfully developing mission statements that meet both structural and readability criteria. Through concise, focused language and alignment with stakeholder expectations, these startups are using mission statements as practical tools to enhance strategic communication, guide performance, and support sustainable growth.

CONCLUSION

To communicate effectively, mission statements should ideally contain fewer than 250 words and consist of three to four sentences—a structure that balances clarity, conciseness, and strategic depth. At this length, readability is generally considered optimal, facilitating better comprehension among diverse stakeholder groups. This study found that the mission statements of Thai technology startups largely adhered to these guidelines, with the average length being approximately 72 words and most statements falling within the recommended sentence range. The overall readability, as measured by the Gunning Fog Index, ranged from acceptable to ideal, indicating that these companies are successfully crafting messages that are not only accessible but also strategically meaningful.

Beyond structural and linguistic considerations, the study underscores the functional role of mission statements in supporting organizational readiness and sustainable growth. Through analysis of stakeholder perspectives using the Balanced Scorecard framework, the research identified four critical dimensions where mission statements contribute to performance enhancement. First, from a financial perspective, concise mission statements help align strategic priorities with financial planning, ROI measurement, and business scalability. Second, under the customer perspective, effective mission statements facilitate improved engagement by articulating value propositions clearly and supporting technologies that enhance the customer

experience. Third, from an internal process perspective, mission statements serve as guiding tools for operational efficiency and cost management, particularly through modern practices such as automation, outsourcing, and remote work structures. Finally, in the area of learning and development, mission statements were seen to promote organizational capacity-building, encourage cross-functional collaboration, and support continuous innovation through digital tools and project management competencies.

Overall, the findings affirm that well-crafted mission statements are more than formal declarations—they are strategic instruments that drive clarity, cohesion, and performance across the enterprise. For technology startups operating in dynamic and competitive environments, the integration of readable, purpose-driven mission statements into broader strategic planning processes can significantly enhance their ability to scale sustainably, attract investment, and foster stakeholder trust. This study contributes to the growing body of research advocating for mission statement effectiveness as a core component of organizational strategy, particularly in emerging market contexts such as Thailand.

Further Research

Future research may strengthen evidence and support the development of high-quality mission statements. First, mission statements should be evaluated for development and improvement, focusing on qualities such as inspiration, reconciliation, and durability. Second, readability assessments can incorporate additional measures, including the Flesch Reading Ease Score (FRES), Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKG), and SMOG Index. This approach would clarify results and capture stakeholder perspectives. Further investigation could explore variables such as comprehension, gender, education, and employment status. Third, readability should be assessed in other business areas, including marketing communications and financial reporting aimed at external stakeholders. Internal communications related to human resource management and production also warrant examination, as these interactions influence overall business success.

Contribution

This research advances the study of readability in mission statements within management teams, organizations, and partnerships as components of strategic management. It emphasizes the use of the Gunning Fog Index and the practical application of vision to achieve consistent outcomes. The findings support leaders in effectively communicating the organization's vision to executives and employees at all levels. The research benefits technology firms by promoting the development of clear, transparent, and precise vision statements. Additionally, it supports the startup technology sector by fostering a well-defined industry orientation aligned with future business trends, consumer expectations, and government policies. The study also acknowledges the relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in enhancing educational quality, economic growth, and strategic partnerships.

Necessary information issues

This manuscript is original, has not been published before, and is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere.

The manuscript has been read and approved by all named authors. I further confirm that the order of authors listed above has been approved by all of us.

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