INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LATEST TECHNOLOGY IN ENGINEERING, MANAGEMENT & APPLIED SCIENCE (IJLTEMAS)

ISSN 2278-2540 | DOI: 10.51583/IJLTEMAS | Volume XV, Issue VI, June 2026

Effective Communication and Startup Performance among Young Entrepreneurs

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2026.150600170

Received: 29 June 2026; Accepted: 04 July 2026; Published: 18 July 2026

ABSTRACT

Effective communication is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in the success and performance of startup ventures. However, many young entrepreneurs encounter communication-related challenges, including unclear information, weak feedback systems, and delays in communication, which can adversely affect employee coordination, decision-making, customer relations, and overall business performance. This study examined the influence of communication clarity, feedback mechanisms, and communication timeliness on startup performance among young entrepreneurs. A quantitative research approach was adopted, and data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess the relationships among the study variables. Model fitness was evaluated using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including Chi-square statistics, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Coefficient of Determination (CD). Three hypotheses were tested to determine the effects of clarity of information, feedback mechanisms, and communication timeliness on startup performance using path coefficients, standard errors, z-values, and p-values. The findings revealed that clarity of information ($\beta = 0.2373$, $p < 0.05$), feedback mechanisms ($\beta = 0.3395$, $p < 0.01$), and communication timeliness ($\beta = 0.2808$, $p < 0.01$) exert positive and statistically significant effects on startup performance. The results suggest that clear communication enhances employee understanding and operational effectiveness, effective feedback mechanisms support continuous improvement and goal alignment, while timely communication facilitates responsiveness and efficient decision-making. The study concludes that effective communication strategies are essential for improving startup performance among young entrepreneurs. It recommends that startup founders prioritize clear information sharing, establish structured feedback systems, and ensure timely communication to enhance business growth, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Effective Communication, Communication Clarity, Feedback Mechanisms, Communication Timeliness, Startup Performance, Young Entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

Startups have become important drivers of innovation, job creation, and economic growth in many countries. Young entrepreneurs are increasingly establishing startup ventures across various sectors, contributing

ISSN 2278-2540 | DOI: 10.51583/IJLTEMAS | Volume XV, Issue VI, June 2026

significantly to economic development. However, the survival and growth of startups often depend on the ability of entrepreneurs to effectively manage resources, coordinate activities, and maintain strong relationships with employees, customers, investors, and other stakeholders. Among the factors that influence startup success, effective communication has emerged as a critical strategic tool for enhancing organizational performance. Communication refers to the process through which information, ideas, and meaning are exchanged among individuals to achieve mutual understanding. In entrepreneurial settings, communication goes beyond the simple transfer of information; it facilitates coordination, promotes collaboration, and aligns individual efforts with organizational goals. According to Verčič (2021), communication serves as a fundamental mechanism through which organizational activities and relationships are established and maintained. Similarly, Men (2020) argues that effective communication reduces uncertainty, enhances trust, and improves employee commitment, thereby contributing to improved organizational outcomes.

For young entrepreneurs, effective communication is particularly important because startups often operate in dynamic and highly competitive environments. Entrepreneurs must communicate their vision clearly to employees, customers, investors, and business partners to gain support and achieve business objectives. Clear communication helps employees understand organizational expectations and responsibilities, leading to higher productivity and improved performance. Furthermore, communication encourages teamwork, knowledge sharing, and innovation, all of which are essential for startup growth and sustainability. Effective communication also depends on the existence of strong feedback mechanisms. Feedback enables entrepreneurs to evaluate performance, identify challenges, and make informed decisions. Through continuous interaction with employees and customers, startups can adapt to changing market conditions and improve service delivery. Ruck (2021) notes that effective feedback promotes collaboration and strengthens organizational relationships, which are essential for achieving business goals.

Another important aspect of communication is timeliness. In startup environments where decisions often need to be made quickly, delayed communication can result in missed opportunities and operational inefficiencies. Timely communication ensures that relevant information reaches stakeholders when needed, enabling effective coordination and prompt decision-making. Kim (2022) emphasizes that organizations that communicate information promptly are better positioned to respond to environmental changes and maintain competitive advantage. The growing importance of communication became more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many businesses relied heavily on digital communication channels to maintain operations. Organizations that adopted transparent, timely, and empathetic communication practices were better able to sustain employee engagement and organizational performance during periods of uncertainty (Ruck & Men, 2021). These experiences reinforced the strategic value of communication in achieving organizational resilience and long-term success. Despite the recognized importance of communication, many startups continue to experience challenges related to unclear information, inadequate feedback systems, and communication delays. Such challenges often result in misunderstandings, reduced employee commitment, poor customer relations, and lower organizational performance. Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of communication in organizations, limited empirical evidence exists on how specific communication strategies influence startup performance among young entrepreneurs.

Therefore, this study examines the influence of effective communication strategies on startup performance among young entrepreneurs. Specifically, the study focuses on clarity of information, feedback mechanisms, and communication timeliness as key dimensions of effective communication. By investigating their effects on startup performance, the study seeks to provide insights that can help young entrepreneurs develop communication practices that enhance business growth, competitiveness, and sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective Communication Strategies

Effective communication strategies refer to the planned approaches used by entrepreneurs and organizations to ensure that information is communicated clearly, accurately, and timely to relevant stakeholders. Communication serves as a critical mechanism through which ideas, goals, and expectations are shared and understood within an

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organization (Men, 2020). In startup environments, effective communication is particularly important because young entrepreneurs often operate with limited resources and rely heavily on teamwork, innovation, and collaboration to achieve business objectives. Effective communication strategies help reduce misunderstandings, improve coordination, and facilitate decision-making processes.

Communication effectiveness is influenced by several factors, including message clarity, feedback mechanisms, communication channels, and timeliness of information dissemination. According to Verčič (2021), communication is not merely the transmission of information but a strategic process that shapes organizational culture, employee behavior, and business outcomes. Startups that adopt effective communication strategies are better positioned to build strong relationships with employees, customers, investors, and business partners. Furthermore, clear and consistent communication enhances trust and commitment among stakeholders, contributing to improved organizational performance. Understanding how communication strategies influence startup performance is therefore essential for young entrepreneurs seeking sustainable business growth.

Effective Communication Strategies and Entrepreneurial Behaviour

Effective communication strategies significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior by shaping decision-making, leadership effectiveness, innovation, and stakeholder engagement. Entrepreneurs who communicate clearly are more capable of articulating their vision, motivating employees, and building productive relationships with customers and investors (Kim & Rhee, 2020). Communication also facilitates knowledge sharing and collaboration, enabling startups to respond effectively to changing market conditions.

Positive communication practices encourage employee participation, creativity, and commitment, which are essential for startup success. Conversely, poor communication may lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and reduced productivity. In many developing economies, startups struggle due to inadequate communication structures that hinder coordination and organizational learning. Research suggests that entrepreneurs who prioritize communication are more likely to achieve business growth, customer satisfaction, and competitive advantage (Ruck & Men, 2021). Therefore, effective communication serves as a behavioral driver that supports entrepreneurial success and organizational sustainability.

Clarity of Information

Clarity of information refers to the extent to which messages are understandable, accurate, and free from ambiguity. Clear communication enables employees and stakeholders to comprehend organizational goals, expectations, and responsibilities effectively (Men & Yue, 2021). In startup ventures, where employees often perform multiple roles, clarity of information is essential for ensuring coordinated efforts and minimizing operational errors.

Young entrepreneurs who communicate information clearly enhance employee confidence and improve task execution. Clear information reduces uncertainty and facilitates better decision-making, leading to higher productivity and organizational effectiveness. Studies indicate that organizations characterized by transparent communication experience greater employee engagement and improved performance outcomes (Kim, 2022). Consequently, clarity of information is considered a critical dimension of effective communication strategy.

Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback mechanisms refer to the structured processes through which information is exchanged between entrepreneurs, employees, customers, and other stakeholders. Effective feedback allows organizations to evaluate performance, identify challenges, and implement necessary improvements (Ruck & Men, 2021). In startup settings, feedback promotes learning and innovation by enabling entrepreneurs to adapt quickly to environmental changes.

Regular feedback enhances employee motivation, strengthens relationships, and improves organizational responsiveness. It also supports customer satisfaction by providing insights into customer needs and expectations. Verčič (2021) notes that organizations that encourage two-way communication are more likely to achieve higher

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levels of collaboration and operational efficiency. Therefore, effective feedback mechanisms contribute significantly to startup performance and growth.

Communication Timeliness

Communication timeliness refers to the prompt delivery of relevant information to stakeholders when it is needed. Timely communication is particularly important in startup environments where rapid decision-making and adaptability are necessary for survival and growth. Delays in communication can result in missed opportunities, operational inefficiencies, and reduced stakeholder confidence (Kim, 2022).

Young entrepreneurs who provide timely information improve coordination among team members and enhance organizational responsiveness. Timely communication also helps employees remain informed about organizational changes, performance expectations, and strategic priorities. Research has shown that organizations that communicate promptly are better able to manage uncertainty and maintain stakeholder trust (Men, 2020). Consequently, communication timeliness is an important determinant of startup performance.

Startup Performance

Startup performance refers to the extent to which a startup achieves its operational and strategic objectives. Performance is commonly measured through indicators such as sales growth, customer satisfaction, profitability, innovation, market expansion, and business sustainability (Verčič & Špoljarić, 2020). For young entrepreneurs, startup performance reflects the ability to effectively utilize resources and respond to market opportunities.

Recent studies suggest that communication quality significantly influences both financial and non-financial performance outcomes. Effective communication improves employee productivity, customer relationships, innovation capability, and organizational adaptability (Men & Yue, 2021). As startups operate in highly competitive and uncertain environments, communication strategies become essential tools for enhancing business performance and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) was developed by George Homans (1958) and later expanded by Peter Blau (1964). The theory posits that relationships are built on reciprocal exchanges in which individuals respond positively to perceived benefits received from others. In entrepreneurial settings, communication serves as a valuable resource that facilitates trust, cooperation, and commitment among startup founders, employees, customers, investors, and other stakeholders. Effective communication creates an environment where stakeholders feel valued and informed, encouraging them to reciprocate through loyalty, collaboration, and support (Kim & Rhee, 2020).

Despite its relevance, the theory has several limitations. Critics argue that SET assumes individuals behave rationally and calculate costs and benefits before responding, whereas entrepreneurial relationships are often influenced by emotions, values, and social factors. Furthermore, not all stakeholder actions are based on reciprocity, as some may be motivated by intrinsic commitment or shared entrepreneurial vision.

In the context of this study, Social Exchange Theory explains how communication clarity, feedback mechanisms, and communication timeliness influence startup performance. When young entrepreneurs communicate clearly, encourage feedback, and provide timely information, employees and stakeholders are more likely to respond positively through increased engagement, commitment, innovation, and support. Consequently, effective communication strengthens relationships that contribute to improved startup performance.

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Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) was propounded by Birger Wernerfelt (1984) and further developed by Jay Barney (1991). The theory argues that organizations achieve sustained competitive advantage through resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). Beyond physical and financial resources, RBV recognizes intangible assets such as knowledge, managerial competence, and communication capability as critical determinants of organizational success.

For startups, effective communication represents a strategic capability that enables entrepreneurs to coordinate activities, share knowledge, build stakeholder relationships, and make informed decisions. Verčič and Špoljarić (2020) note that organizations with well-developed communication systems are better able to adapt to environmental changes, improve operational efficiency, and achieve superior performance outcomes.

Although RBV has been widely adopted, it has been criticized for paying insufficient attention to external environmental factors such as competition, technological change, and market conditions. Additionally, measuring intangible resources such as communication capability can be challenging due to their abstract nature.

Within the context of this study, the Resource-Based View provides a useful framework for understanding communication as a strategic resource that enhances startup performance. Specifically, communication clarity, feedback mechanisms, and communication timeliness are viewed as valuable communication capabilities that enable young entrepreneurs to improve coordination, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and respond effectively to business challenges. As these capabilities become embedded within startup operations, they contribute to sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative research design to investigate the influence of effective communication strategies on startup performance among young entrepreneurs. The descriptive approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection and analysis of data relating to communication practices and business performance within startup organizations in a real-world setting. The quantitative nature of the study facilitated the measurement of relationships among communication clarity, feedback mechanisms, communication timeliness, and startup performance. This approach provided an objective basis for identifying patterns and determining how communication strategies contribute to business growth, operational efficiency, and sustainability among startup ventures.

The study population comprised young entrepreneurs, startup founders, managers, and employees of startup businesses operating in Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria. Ikeja is one of the major commercial and technological hubs in Lagos State, hosting a growing number of startups across sectors such as technology, digital services, e-commerce, consulting, and creative industries. Recent startup directories indicate that over 70 active startup firms operate within the area. These individuals were considered appropriate respondents because they are directly involved in organizational communication and business operations, thereby providing valuable insights into communication practices and startup performance.

The sample size for the study consisted of 140 respondents drawn from the identified startup firms in Ikeja. Two respondents, comprising founders, managers, or key employees, were selected from each startup to ensure adequate representation. Given the specialized nature of the study and the need to obtain information from respondents with relevant knowledge of communication processes, purposive sampling was employed to select startup firms and key respondents. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain reliable information from participants directly involved in entrepreneurial and managerial activities.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire containing closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire was designed to measure communication clarity, feedback mechanisms, communication timeliness, and startup performance. To ensure validity, the instrument was reviewed by experts in entrepreneurship, management, and communication studies

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for clarity, relevance, and content adequacy. Reliability was established through a pilot study and Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, with all constructs meeting the acceptable reliability threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

The data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and response patterns.

Inferential analysis was conducted using SEM to examine the relationships among communication clarity, feedback mechanisms, communication timeliness, and startup performance. Model fitness was assessed using established goodness-of-fit indices, while hypothesis testing was conducted using path coefficients, standard errors, z-values, and p-values.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the research and their participation was entirely voluntary. Informed consent was obtained before questionnaire administration, while confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. Participants were assured that information provided would be used solely for academic purposes.

These procedures ensured that the study generated reliable, valid, and ethical findings capable of explaining the influence of effective communication strategies on startup performance among young entrepreneurs.

RESULTS

Goodness of Fit Tests

Table 1 **Equation-level goodness of fit**

Table 4.3.1 Goodness of Fit tests

Fit Statistic	Value	Description
Likelihood Ratio		
chi²_ms(0)	0	Model vs. saturated
p > chi²	.	
chi²_bs(7)	402.18	Baseline vs. saturated
p > chi²	0	
Population Error		
RMSEA	0.078	Root mean squared error of approximation
90% CI (Lower Bound)	0	
90% CI (Upper Bound)	0.19	
p-close	0.93	Probability RMSEA ≤ 0.05
Information Criteria		
AIC	1171.34	Akaike’s Information Criterion
BIC	12127.76	Bayesian Information Criterion
Baseline Comparison		
CFI	0.916	Comparative Fit Index
TLI	0.942	Tucker-Lewis Index

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Size of Residuals		
SRMR	0.097	Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual
CD	0.902	Coefficient of Determination

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The study used equation level, Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), Wald and Likelihood ratio tests to test for goodness of fit. Because there are various goodness-of-fit indices, it is not easy to determine which index to use for an evaluation since each evaluates different aspects of the model fit. The literature recommends the chi-square statistic and degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as absolute fit indices; comparative normed fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis' index (TLI) as incremental fit indices;
The results of the goodness of fit statistics indicate that the computed value of the Chi-square statistic for the model versus saturated is zero. This means that the model is the same as the saturated model and thus, a good fit. The calculated Chi-square for baseline versus saturated and its associated p-value are 402.18 ($p < 0.01$), which indicates a significant difference between the baseline and the saturated. The implication is that the model is a good fit to the data. The results of the root mean square error (RMSE) are within the benchmark range, thus indicating a good fit The same argument applies to the standardised mean square residual (SRMSR). The computed values of the comparative fit index, Tucker-Lewis's index, and the coefficient of determination (CFI, TLI, and CD) are reasonably high, thus indicating a good fit. All the goodness-of-fit statistics indicate that the structural equation model is a good fit to the data (See Table 1).

Structural Equation Model Results

Table 2 presents the results of the structural equation model examining the effects of effective communication dimensions on organizational performance.

Structural Equation Model Results

Path	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	z-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	
Clarity of Information → Organizational Performance	0.2373	0.0965	2.46	0.024	0.1442 – 0.3303	
Feedback Mechanisms → Organizational Performance	0.3395	0.065	5.22	0	0.2121 – 0.4668	
Communication Timeliness → Organizational Performance	0.2808	0.0515	5.45	0	0.1797 – 0.3818	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results indicate that all three dimensions of effective communication exert positive and statistically significant effects on organizational performance. Specifically, clarity of information positively influences organizational performance ($\beta = 0.2373$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that employees perform more effectively when organizational messages are clear, understandable, and free from ambiguity. Feedback mechanisms demonstrate the strongest effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.3395$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the importance of two-way communication in enhancing employee alignment, learning, and task execution. Similarly, communication timeliness significantly improves organizational performance ($\beta = 0.2808$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that the prompt dissemination of information facilitates effective decision-making and operational efficiency. Hence, the findings support the proposition that effective communication constitutes a critical organizational capability that enhances performance outcomes through improved understanding, coordination, and employee engagement.

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DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings reveal that effective communication significantly contributes to organizational performance through its dimensions of information clarity, feedback mechanisms, and communication timeliness. The positive effect of clarity of information corroborates prior studies that identify transparent and unambiguous communication as a prerequisite for employee understanding, coordination, and productivity (Men et al., 2020; Jiang & Men, 2023). Clear communication reduces uncertainty and enables employees to align their actions with organizational objectives, thereby improving performance outcomes.

The study further found that feedback mechanisms exert the strongest influence on organizational performance. This finding is consistent with contemporary literature emphasizing feedback as a key driver of employee learning, engagement, and continuous improvement (Anseel et al., 2021; Boudrias et al., 2022). Effective feedback systems facilitate knowledge exchange, reduce performance gaps, and strengthen employee commitment, ultimately contributing to organizational effectiveness.

Similarly, communication timeliness was found to positively influence organizational performance. This result aligns with previous studies suggesting that timely communication enhances organizational responsiveness, coordination, and decision-making efficiency (Leonardi, 2021; Ruck & Men, 2021). In increasingly dynamic work environments, prompt access to relevant information enables employees to execute tasks efficiently and respond effectively to operational demands.

Collectively, these findings reinforce the growing body of literature that positions communication as a strategic organizational resource. The results suggest that organizations seeking sustainable performance improvements should adopt integrated communication practices that emphasize message clarity, structured feedback systems, and timely information dissemination. Such practices strengthen employee engagement, improve coordination, and enhance overall organizational effectiveness in competitive business environments.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of effective communication on organizational performance, focusing on clarity of information, feedback mechanisms, and communication timeliness. The findings revealed that all three dimensions of communication significantly enhance organizational performance. Specifically, clarity of information was found to improve employees' understanding of organizational goals, expectations, and responsibilities, thereby facilitating effective task execution and reducing workplace ambiguity.

The study also established that feedback mechanisms have a significant positive effect on organizational performance. Effective feedback systems enable organizations to align employee behavior with organizational expectations, promote continuous learning, and strengthen employee engagement. The findings suggest that organizations that encourage two-way communication are better positioned to improve productivity and operational effectiveness.

Furthermore, communication timeliness was found to positively influence organizational performance. The prompt dissemination of information enhances coordination, supports informed decision-making, and enables employees to respond effectively to organizational demands. Timely communication therefore contributes to improved efficiency and organizational responsiveness.

The study concludes that clarity of information, effective feedback mechanisms, and timely communication are essential communication practices that drive organizational performance. Organizations seeking to improve performance should prioritize transparent information sharing, establish structured feedback processes, and ensure the timely flow of information across all levels of the organization. These communication practices will strengthen employee engagement, improve coordination, and contribute to sustained organizational success.

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