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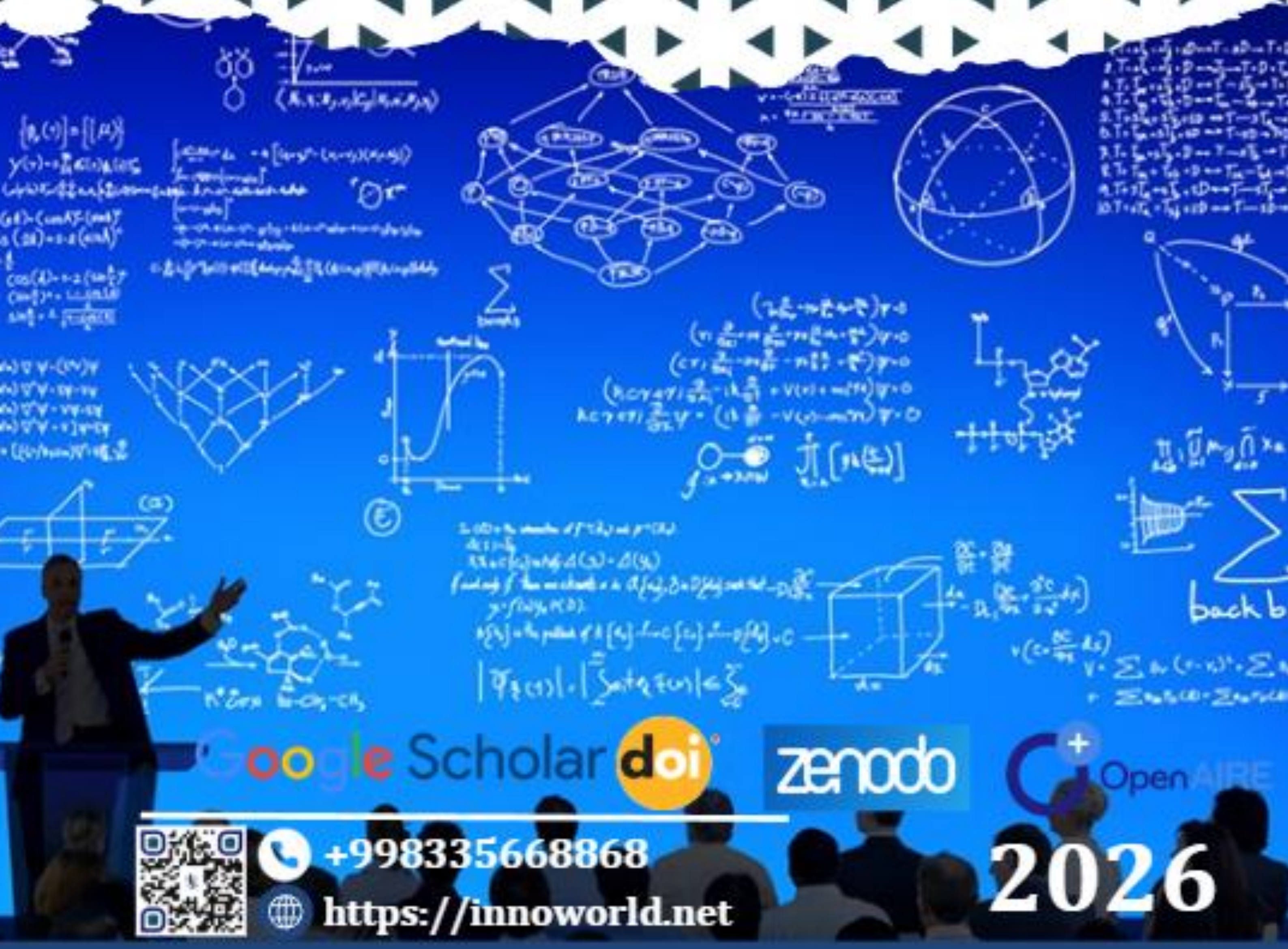
ZAMONAVIY ILM-FAN VA TA'LIM: MUAMMO VA YECHIMLAR

ILMIY-AMALIY KONFERENSIYA



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« ZAMONAVIY ILM-FAN VA TA’LIM: MUAMMO VA YECHIMLAR » NOMLI ILMIY, MASOFAVIY, ONLAYN KONFERENSIYASI

O‘ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI PREZIDENTINING 2020 YIL 2-MART KUNGI «ILM, MA'RIFAT VA RAQAMLI IQTISODIYOTNI RIVOJLANTIRISH YILI»DA AMALGA OSHIRISHGA OID DAVLAT DASTURI TO‘G‘RISIDA»GI FARMONIDA KO‘ZDA TUTILGAN VAZIFALARNI IJROSINI TA'MINLASH MAQSADIDA «INNOVATIVE WORLD» MCHJ TOMONIDAN TA'SIS ETILGAN «ORIENTAL JOURNAL ACADEMIC AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL (OJAMR)» ILMIY-USLUBIY JURNALINING (O‘ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI PREZIDENTI ADMINISTRATSIYASI HUZURIDAGI AXBOROT VA OMMAVIY KOMMUNIKASIYALARNI RIVOJLANTIRISH AGENTLIGINING 138572-SONLI GUVOHNOMA HAMDA ISSN 3030-3079) “ZAMONAVIY ILM-FAN VA TA’LIM: MUAMMO VA YECHIMLAR” NOMLI ILMIY, MASOFAVIY RESPUBLIKA ILMIY-AMALIY ONLINE KONFERENSIYASINI E’LON QILADI.

KONFERENSIYA TO’PLAMI ZENODO, OPEN AIRE, OPEN ACCESS VA INTERNET ARCHIVE BAZALARIDA INDEKSLANADI. KONFERENSIYA TO’PLAMIGA DOI RAQAMI BERILADI.

KONFERENSIYA TO’PLAMIGA QUYIDAGI YO‘NALISHLAR BO‘YICHA MAQOLALAR QABUL QILADI:

1. ANIQ FANLAR
2. TABIIY FANLAR
3. TEXNIKA FANLARI
4. PEDAGOGIKA FANLARI
5. IJTIMOIY-GUMANITAR FANLAR
6. TIBBIYOT FANLARI
7. IQTISOD FANLARI
8. QISHLOQ XO’JALIGI FANLARI

ESLATMA! KONFERENSIYA MATERIALLARI TO‘PLAMIGA KIRITILGAN MAQOLALARDAGI RAQAMLAR, MA’LUMOTLAR HAQQONIYLIGIGA VA KELTIRILGAN IQTIBOSLAR TO‘G‘RILIGIGA MUALLIFLAR SHAXSAN JAVOBGARDIRLAR.

DEFERRED BRANDING AND CREDIBILITY-LED TRUST FORMATION IN EARLY-STAGE IT STARTUPS

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Annotation. Conventional accounts treat branding as central to building a sustainable venture. Drawing on twelve interviews with founders and investors in Uzbekistan's IT sector, this thesis shows that early-stage ventures commonly defer branding as premature and instead form trust through product performance, founder credibility, and market validation. Credibility, not brand, is the operative early resource; brand emerges later as its accumulated outcome. The finding reframes branding as an outcome of integrated product and resource decisions rather than an early communication activity.

Keywords: brand building; trust; credibility; early-stage startups; founder signalling.

Introduction and problem statement. Branding is often assumed to be a central task of venture building. Yet early-stage startups in emerging markets rarely have the resources to invest in a brand, and consumer trust in digital services is still forming. This raises a practical problem: if these ventures cannot rely on brand spending, how do they establish the trust required to acquire customers and attract capital?

Purpose. The study reconstructs how early-stage IT startups in an emerging economy establish trust before a brand exists, and what this implies for how founders and ecosystem programmes allocate scarce effort.

Method. Twelve semi-structured interviews with seven founders and five investors of IT startups in Uzbekistan were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. Participants are identified by codes and ventures by generic descriptors to preserve confidentiality.

Findings. Across both groups, branding was commonly treated as premature at the early stage. One founder stated plainly that "brand is not important for early-stage startups" and that scarce funds should first solve the core problem (F-3), and another observed that "early-stage startups do not have branding", which is built later if the venture succeeds (F-7). Investors largely agreed, advising founders not to put too much effort into branding because, if a venture goes to market properly, the brand develops alongside it (I-3). Instead of branding, trust was formed through three mechanisms. The first was product performance and transparency: founders attributed credibility to constant attention to customer feedback (F-2) and to transparent data practices and a consistent user experience (F-4). The second was founder credibility: one investor stated that "the most important signal of a trustworthy brand is the credibility of the founders behind it" (I-1), while others judged authenticity by the founder's personal relevance to the problem (I-2) and by the consistency between stated goals and actions (I-5). The third was market validation: investors treated the ability to attract real users without capital as a positive signal (I-2).

Importantly, this consensus was not complete. One investor regarded brand identity as "increasingly important, even at early stages" (I-1), arguing that a clear narrative signals professionalism. The presence of this minority position indicates that brand deferral is a prevailing strategic choice in this ecosystem rather than a universal rule. Taken together, the evidence shows that credibility – co-produced by product, founder and market traction – is the operative early resource, and that brand is largely its later, accumulated outcome.

Conclusion. In resource-constrained, emerging-market settings, branding behaves less like an early input and more like an outcome of integrated product, stakeholder and resource decisions. For founders, the practical priority is to build verifiable credibility through product performance and execution rather than through promotion. For ecosystem programmes, support that helps ventures demonstrate genuine traction is likely to do more for their prospects than support for early branding. Future work could examine how and when deferred brand-building is best activated as ventures scale.

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