

RESEARCH PAPER

UNDERSTANDING VENTURE KINSHIP IN STARTUPS: A NETNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF VALUE ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

Aleena Joy^{*1}, Vijila Yesudhas², Sravana Konnath³

¹Doctoral Candidate, ²Assistant Professor, ³Associate Professor,

^{1,2} Department of Human Resource Management

St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli

Bharathidasan University, Tamil Nadu (India)

³ Department of Commerce, Central University of Kerala, Kerala (India)

ABSTRACT: *This study explores the venture kinship effect in startups and its crucial role in fostering strong interpersonal bonds. Despite high employee attrition rates, startups demonstrate exceptional innovation due to this effect. By examining the Indian startup "Techgentsia," known for low attrition and high achievement rates, we identify factors contributing to the kinship effect and its impact on founder-team relationships. Drawing from Psychological Contract Theory (PCT) and secondary literature, we introduce the venture kinship effect concept. Using a two-phase research design, the first phase employs thematic analysis and netnography to identify kinship effect elements from employer. The second phase involves interviews with employees of Techgentsia from different periods, revealing outputs from their perspective. Our findings underscore the importance of the kinship effect in startups, providing valuable insights for HR professionals and leaders to foster unity, cohesion, and dedication, crucial for sustainable growth in today's competitive business environment.*

KEYWORDS: *Interpersonal relationships, Kinship, Netnography, Psychological contract, Startups*

PAPER CITATION:

Joy, A., Yeshudas, V., Konnath, S.: "Understanding Venture Kinship in Startups: A Netnographic Analysis of Value Oriented Psychological Contract", International Journal of Informative & Futuristic Research (IJIFR), Vol. (13) (3), November 2025, pp. 326-341

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64672/IJIFR/25.11.13.03.004>

CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

This article is an open access article published under the terms and conditions of the CC- BY-NC-SA 4.0 Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial- ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License. All rights reserved to the author's & publisher.

1. INTRODUCTION

Startups have played an important role in the global economy. Startups' ability to create a high level of wealth and solve social and environmental problems is taking the world to the next lap of development. The startup ecosystem contributes jobs for millions of people. Startups differ from other small- and medium-scale businesses in terms of creativity and innovation. In recent years, many researchers, economists, and industry stakeholders have addressed the importance of startups and their economic impact on societies. The number of startup companies created per year has risen to a new record, which varies across different industries and countries; on average, startup survival has reached no more than five years. These ventures need to survive to generate benefits and one of the main issues related to them is the extension of their lifespan and sustainable growth. India has emerged as the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, enabling jobs for millions of people. In the past five years, the startup ecosystem in India has transitioned from an early-stage ecosystem to the current rapid growth phase (Kumar et al., 2020). However, 2022 is a challenging year for a start-up ecosystem with the end of cheap money, rising interest rates, and a challenging geopolitical environment, the world is seeing slower growth and there is a moderate risk of global recession. The positive aspect of the slowdown has increased appreciation for building sustainable business models. Startups cannot sustain and merely prosper the vision of the entrepreneur(s). One of the challenges faced by startups is finding the right employees to take the entrepreneur's vision forward and make it a reality (Girotra and Kaushik, 2018).

A good employment relationship can pull off a balance between employees and lead stakeholders in organizations. People have a natural struggle to engage in creative and constructive work, and when people have access to decent work, they are more likely to experience individual well-being and contribute to the welfare of their communities (Guichard, 2013). Human resources are the most significant driving force for startups and are often neglected (Verma, 2016). Constant supply of high-quality human capital is important for sustainability and success. This research aims to explore the kinship effect in the context of employee-employer relationships in startups. The attrition rate in startups is very high. However, startups are still able to develop innovative products that are helpful to society. Even if employees are moving out of startups, they help back startups when there is a crisis. This research paper is focusing what is the reason behind this phenomenon and came into a conclusion that that it is because of the affective commitment, trust in the product success, employer attitude, positive and flexible work culture, placing right person for the right job, strong mentoring system, we are proposing the total of these reasons as Kinship effect and it is the basis of employee employer relationships in the startups. This study draws on Psychological Contract Theory to provide a theoretical explanation for the impact of the kinship effect on employee employer relations in startups. Additionally, it seeks to identify the key factors influencing the development of the Kinship Effect named venture kinship effect in startups. By doing so, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how interpersonal dynamics within startups can influence interpersonal relationships and overall organizational success. The research questions focused on this study are as follows:

RQ1: What are the key factors and inputs that lead to the development of the Venture kinship effect within startup organizations?

RQ 2: What specific outputs within Techgentsia contribute to employees' sense of closeness and venture kinship?

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

By considering the above mentioned research questions, this study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- I. To identify the key inputs and outcomes contributing to the development of the venture kinship effect in startups based on a case study of Techgentsia.

- II. To employ netnography as a methodological tool to identify the factors influencing venture kinship effect in interpersonal relations at Techgentsia.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The relationships among the people in startups and their influence on the success rate are understudied. Through this research paper we are introducing a new approach called ‘Kinship Effect approach’ that fuelling the relationships in the startups. The kinship effect helps startups improve their work culture, reduce employee attrition, and contribute to the development of the innovative mindset of the people in the startups. In this theoretical framework, we emphasize the kinship effect and how its development of kinship effect is related to psychological contract theory.

3.1 What is Kinship?

Kinship constitutes one of the most important arenas for the creative energy of people (Faubion 2001). In sociology kinship refers to how individuals are related to one another by blood, marriage or adoption. In anthropology, kinship is the web of social relationships that forms an important part of the lives of all humans in all societies. Psychological kinship refers to valuing significant others as though they were members of one’s own family (Baily,1988). Kinship is a practical realm of action and an ethical resource. Michael Lambek (2011) “a philosophy” as Robert McKinley (2001: 152) puts it, “concerned with human obligation.” This is precisely because the ethical obligations of kinship tend to already be invested with positive moral associations.

3.2 Venture Kinship Effect

By drawing on definitions of kinship from sociology, anthropology, and psychology, the kinship effect can be understood as a higher-level organizational relationship grounded in mutual respect, ethical responsibility, and valuing one another’s significance.

In startups, where adaptability and flexibility are crucial (Kumar & Gordhan, 2020), this effect is closely tied to psychological contract theory. Employee retention in such environments depends less on formal agreements and more on mutuality the shared, often intangible values that align with higher-level needs in Maslow’s hierarchy. Psychological contract theory thus provides a useful framework for understanding employees’ intentions to stay or leave based on their interpersonal experiences within the organization.

Psychological contracts serve as exchange structures that shape and sustain workplace relationships through reciprocity and mutual benefit (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005). When organizations show genuine care and concern for employees (Cropanzano et al., 2017), employees respond with loyalty, commitment, and positive behavior, reinforcing a virtuous cycle of trust and engagement. Studies by Bordia et al. (2017), Doden et al. (2018),) further highlight that maintaining a positive psychological contract fosters strong employee relationships, enhances motivation, and contributes to a productive and thriving organizational culture.

3.3 The psychological contract theory and its relationship with the Venture kinship effect

The basic concept behind psychological contract theory is the understanding of the beliefs held by employees and their organizations concerning their interrelationships, facilitating successful exchanges (Cropanzano et al.,2017; Golden and Veiga, 2018). A psychological contract refers to the relationship between employees and employers, in terms of unwritten expectations (Rousseau, 1989). It is all about an individual’s beliefs or expectations about the terms of an exchange agreement that exists between them and their organization (Rousseau, 1995). Psychological contracts are classified into transactional and relational contracts, which vary in strength and generality (Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993). A transactional psychological contract indicates obligations that may be considered to be “economic” in nature, largely based on remuneration and other short-term benefits to the employee, which are publicly observable. Relational contracts (RC) involve long-term obligations based on trust and are concerned with personal, socio-emotional, and economic resources.

3.4 Value oriented Psychological Contract

Schwartz (1992, 2003) defined basic human values as cognitive representations of desirable goals that guide behavior across situations, serving as standards for evaluating actions and people. Building on this, Coetzee and Deas (2021) introduced the concept of value-oriented content within the psychological contract, describing ideological currency as a form of mutual commitment where both parties pursue shared values and meaningful causes beyond personal gain. These ideological exchanges reflect the core values and enduring character of an organization, grounded in shared beliefs and collective motivation (Scheel & Mohr, 2013).

Meaningful work, therefore, emerges from value-driven practices—employees asking, “Am I making a difference?” or “Am I using my strengths to add value?”—which align personal purpose with organizational contribution (Bühler & Nikitin, 2020; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2021). Coetzee and Deas (2020) further found that factors like relationships, career growth, work-life balance, rewards, and organizational culture are vital elements shaping employees’ psychological contracts.

This study posits that the kinship effect acts as the driving force behind a value-oriented psychological contract. According to Rousseau (1989), psychological contracts reflect individuals’ beliefs about reciprocal exchange relationships. While relational psychological contracts are rooted in emotional bonds, value-oriented psychological contracts extend reciprocity to shared ideals and value creation within the organization. Together, these contracts form the foundation of the kinship effect, fostering commitment, trust, and collective purpose in organizational settings.

Table 1: Relationship of venture kinship effect to relational and value oriented psychological contract

	Relational Psychological Contract	Value oriented psychological contract	Venture Kinship Effect (Source: authors’ work by referring the you tube videos of the founder)
Nature	Relational psychological contract emphasizes long-term, non-material exchanges and mainly focuses on emotional and open commitments (Rousseau, 2000).	A value-oriented psychological contract refers to an employee’s perception of equity in terms of obligated organizational outcomes in exchange for their obligated inputs. (Deas A and Coetzee M, 2022)	<i>Venture kinship effect emphasizes affective Commitment between the employer and employee and belief in the product success. It is based on mutual trust rather than expectations from each other. It is based on the relationship and not on the balance sheet. (DD Malayalam)</i> https://youtu.be/A3fdaHgv67I
Focus	Emotional and open commitment (Rousseau, D. M. (1995)).	Equity in input and outcome (Deas A and Coetzee M (2022)	<i>Emotional attachment to the organization and positive peer group pressure. Interpersonal relationships with team members. (Manorama News)</i> https://youtu.be/YsgUZ_acFh8
Time period	Long term, specifically not delimited to time, amorphous and open-ended (Millward & Hopkins, 1998).	Long term (Witcher, 2018)	Long term (TKMCE MIRROR) https://youtu.be/7mdkFxnDVks
	Relational elements of the	Value-oriented psychological	The venture kinship effect is based on transparent communication, trust, a strong

Measurement	psychological contract measure the values of the terms of a contract, including promises and obligations; hence, they may be regarded as quantifying the quid pro quo of the contract (Griep & Vantilborgh, 2018; Rousseau, 1995; Thomas et al., 2016).	contracts are based on an organizational culture of engagement, loyalty, mutual respect, trust, and transparency. Departing employees are seen as future brand ambassadors, customers, hiring references, or even boomerangs, that is, potential returning employees (Witcher 2018).	mentoring system, and self-learning. Peer group pressure. (Vijaya Krishna C V) https://youtu.be/Ftuu_Jd_4es (SkillsActz) https://www.youtube.com/live/wyK5o31tvV8?feature=share (Media One TV live) https://youtu.be/guapVXqh4do
Role of employee	The employee is obliged to support the organization and to be loyal and committed to the organization's needs and interests (Scheepers & Shuping, J. 2011).	Employees are seen as future brand ambassadors, customers, hiring references, or even boomerangs, that is, potential returning employees (Witcher 2018).	Employees are the key assets and future ambassadors of startups. (Info park Kerala) https://youtu.be/9oDTBE7L4CQ
Role of employer	Encourage the socio-emotional aspects in the employment relation and focus on employee development in a long-term employment relationship (S. Raeder, 2021).	Employers help employees fulfil their proclaimed employment value proposition (EVP) by enabling shared beliefs about desirable and motivational goals that transcend specific actions and situations (Scheel and Mohr 2013).	Employers act as strong mentors and role models. Believes employees' skills rather than their educational qualifications. (ASAP Kerala official Channel) https://youtu.be/Ucl2cEeXjos
How it benefits employees	Relational psychological contracts provide employees with opportunities for work experience, career development support, upskilling, and	It provides employees with change, flexibility, and the ability to move around. Instead of seeking lifelong employment, they search for roles that align with	<i>The venture kinship effect allows employees to think freely. They are confident in making suggestions and taking decisions. This helps develop an innovative mindset. (K-DISC Official)</i> https://www.youtube.com/live/HSAPmh0nsfA?feature=share

	advancement (Holland and Scullion, 2019; RiseSmart, 2018; Witcher, 2018).	their personal career values and help them achieve their employability objectives. This approach has become the standard for feeling psychologically secure in a job (Coetzee and Schreuder, 2021; RiseSmart, 2018; Witcher, 2018).	
--	--	--	--

In the context of startups, the dynamics of psychological contracts between employers and employees take on a distinct character compared with other organizational settings. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced because of the distinctive work culture prevalent in start-ups. While existing theoretical frameworks addressing human aspects of startups are limited, it is clear that the triumph of startups is intricately tied to their work culture and the quality of human relations within them. This study aims to illuminate how the kinship effect, rooted in work culture and human relations, significantly shapes the success of startups.

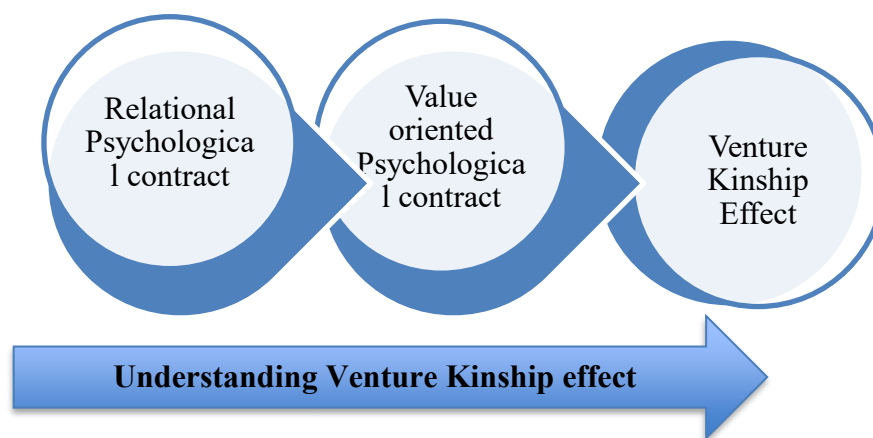


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the development of the Venture kinship effect

(Source: Authors' work)

The venture kinship effect draws from the relational and value-oriented dimensions of psychological contract theory, which highlights the importance of reciprocal relationships in shaping organizational success. Unlike traditional employer-employee dynamics grounded in duty, the venture kinship effect centers on mutual trust, shared belief, and commitment to a common vision. Within the startup ecosystem, it represents a socio-psychological bond among team members, driven by unspoken expectations of trust, respect, and shared purpose. These implicit psychological contracts foster a sense of belonging and reinforce collaboration, engagement, and motivation. Ultimately, the venture kinship effect encapsulates the exchange of support, shared values, and emotional investment that strengthens teamwork and fuels the growth and success of startups.

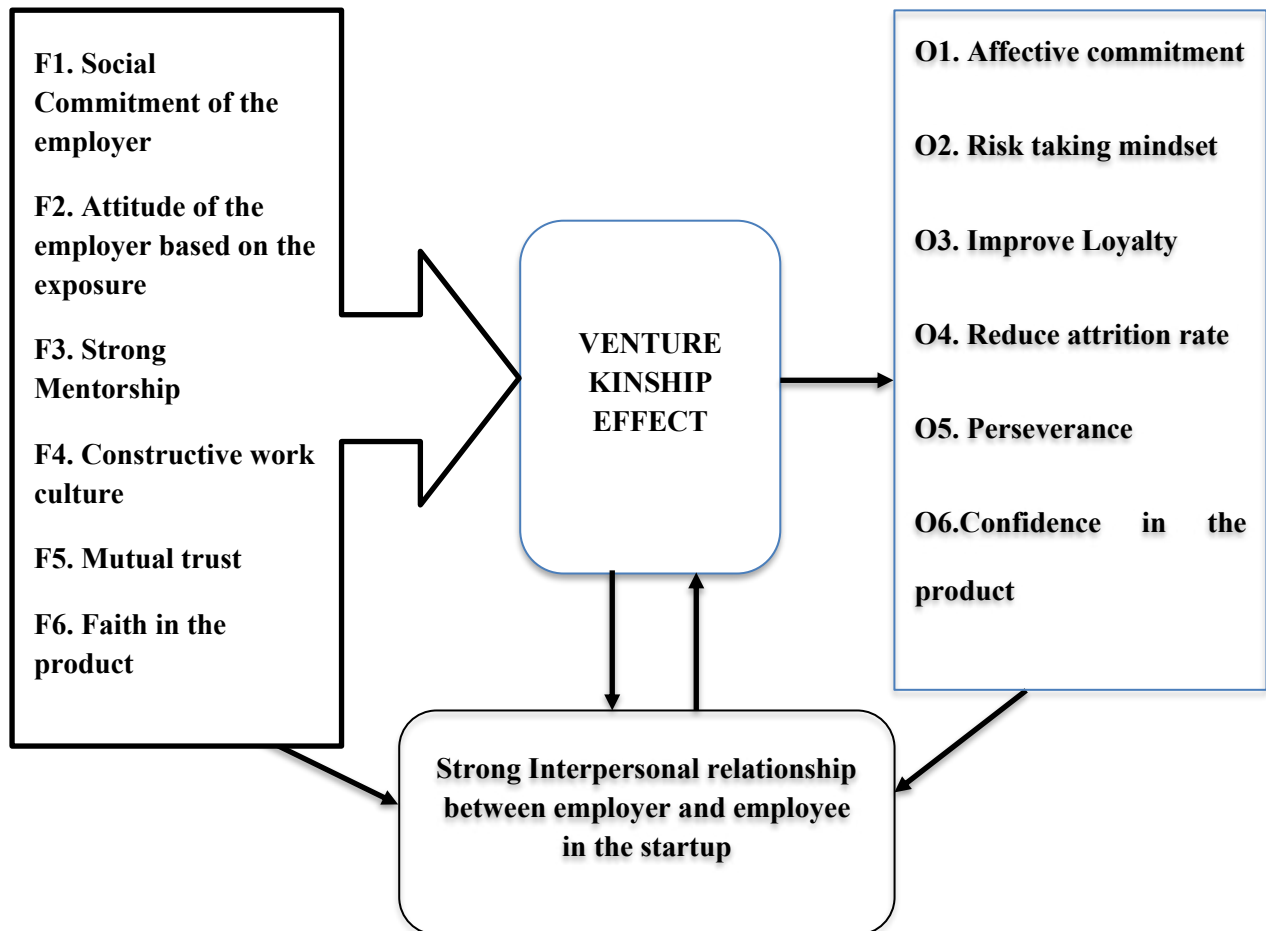
Factors influencing kinship effect**Inputs (From employer side)****Outputs (Impact on the employees)**

Figure 2: Theoretical framework of Input -Outcome of Venture kinship effect and its influence on employee employer relationships in the Startups
 (Source: authors' work)

3.5 Reasons for selecting Techgentsia - The company thrives on the identification of the Venture Kinship Effect

The venture kinship effect in startups fosters strong interpersonal relationships that drive innovation and success. To explore the factors influencing this effect, we examined Techgentsia Software Technologies Private Limited, a Kerala-based startup specializing in real-time communication, technology consulting, and business process services. Since its founding in 2009, Techgentsia has emphasized research, human ingenuity, and collaboration in developing advanced multiparty video conferencing solutions.

During the 2020 pandemic, the company gained national recognition by winning the "Innovation Challenge for Development of Video Conferencing Solution" organized by India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. Its product, VCONSOL, later branded as BharatVC became India's official video conferencing platform. The Kerala government also adopted it as its state-level solution. Building on this success, Techgentsia's speech-to-speech translation system won the Bhashini Grand Innovation Challenge (2024), further establishing its reputation for purpose-driven innovation.

Techgentsia's philosophy using technology to improve humanity is deeply rooted in the belief that innovation thrives through human potential, shared purpose, and ethical commitment. Insights drawn

from interviews with founder Mr. Joy Sebastian and his team revealed a unique work culture characterized by mutual respect, trust, and dedication hallmarks of the kinship effect. The company's remarkably low attrition rate, compared to typical startups, underscores how this kinship-oriented culture strengthens interpersonal bonds, enhances commitment, and fuels sustained organizational success.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Phase one - Netnography

Qualitative research utilizes scientific frameworks, such as phenomenology, narrative, action research, grounded theory, case studies, content analysis, historical studies, and ethnography (Hancock et al., 2016). A contemporary methodology known as netnography (Kozinets, 2020) was employed during phase one to gather data within the employer context. The study centred on Techgentsia, a former startup renowned for creating Bharath VC, the official video conferencing application for the central government of India. Notably, Techgentsia has an exceptionally low attrition rate over a prolonged duration.

Netnography is a new theory-building methodology that focuses on the study of online traces and various semiotic elements – texts, videos, and images – that people and organizations produce and share online (Kozinets, 2020). Discetti and Anderson (2023) introduced this methodology. They argue that while netnography is an increasingly established research methodology, it is still new to the HRD field, despite its potential to represent and support theorization of emerging configurations of digital systems and forms of data in relation to HRD in a way that is approachable, innovative, and expedient (Paulus and Lester, 2022; Pink, 2022).

4.2 Data collection used by Netnography

This study employed netnography, which utilizes three data types: (1) archival and naturalistic data from social media platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn, and Facebook (Discetti & Anderson, 2023); (2) interactive data from synchronous and asynchronous communications such as video calls and online interviews; and (3) researcher-generated data through immersive engagement and reflexive field notes (Kozinets, 2010). For employer data collection, we conducted video-call interviews via VCONSOL, Techgentsia's proprietary platform, and analyzed YouTube interviews featuring Mr. Joy Sebastian, the company's founder, who provided insights into work culture and employee relations. Techgentsia gained national recognition in 2021 after winning the Prime Minister's Award for India's best video conferencing application. A YouTube search of "Joy Sebastian Techgentsia" produced 73 videos, primarily from 2020–2021, reflecting the company's rise following its innovation award. Applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, we identified 15 relevant videos that focused on organizational culture, leadership, and employee dynamics.

4.3 Data analysis in Netnography

Similar to other qualitative research methods, netnography requires strong analytical skills in coding, translating, and interpreting large, unstructured datasets (Discetti & Anderson, 2023). To derive meaningful qualitative insights, raw data must be carefully filtered, formatted, and organized before analysis. Using qualitative coding protocols, data are broken down and labeled to identify key concepts, which are then refined into second-order analytical codes through constant comparison and pattern recognition (Anderson, 2017). As outlined by Gambetti and Kozinets (2020), netnographic data analysis involves coding, noting, comparing, generalizing, and theorizing, while Discetti and Anderson

(2023) emphasize the need for abductive and intuitive reasoning to assemble, evaluate, and refine emerging themes. Accordingly, this study employed a thematic analysis approach integrated with netnography to explore and interpret the factors underlying the venture kinship effect in startups.

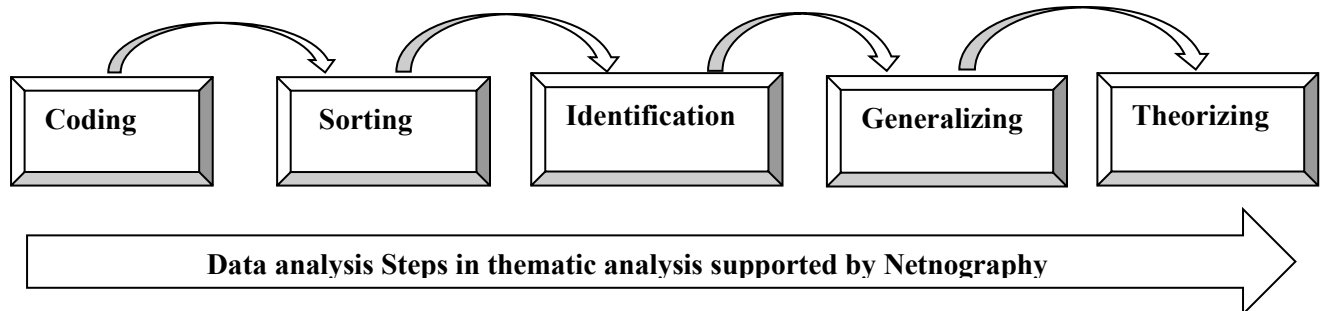


Figure 3 : Data analysis Steps in thematic analysis supported by Netnography

(Source: Authors' work)

The data analysis process is as follows:

- **Coding:** it means transcription of voice data into different codes. This makes data gathering simple and categorized.
- **Sorting:** This step includes sorting the data into major themes. This helped in the final analysis and theoretical outputs. Data are now noted in various formats, mostly digital, in the case of netnography.
- **Identification:** It includes identify and developing the concepts
- **Generalizing:** After drawing concepts from the data, the researcher tries to ascertain its wider applicability within the community. Further, they could compare it with other communities.
- **Theorizing:** After validating the data for community practices, the researcher may develop a theoretical framework specific to the community based on its characteristics.

Based on this model, data from YouTube videos were transcribed for further analysis. The transcription helped in obtaining the voice data in a readable form and paved the way for further analysis of quotations and other relevant information collected from the founder interview videos. This allowed easier data management and also gave the opportunity for multiple readings, using the data for coding and analysis, and sorting the data into major themes.

This helped in the final analysis and theoretical outputs. The transcribed data were read thoroughly and organized according to the discussion themes, with a focus on answering the objectives of the study. The most relevant quotes were used to support discussions around the themes. A systematic process of qualitative data analysis was conducted for this purpose. The selection of specific data, separation and segregation of data, and sorting of raw data have helped in the development of concepts (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The use of the coding process and sorting and identification of relevant themes are important and indispensable aspects of qualitative research (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

4.4 Data collection and analysis in Phase Two

Thematic analysis was conducted on the data acquired through in-depth employee interviews. The sample consisted of nine employees selected from various stages of the company timeline. This approach enabled a comprehensive exploration of employee perspectives across the different stages of their relationships with the employer and startup.

5.Data Interpretation and Analysis based on Netnography

5.1 Data Collection and Interpretation (Phase 1)

Techgentsia has received an award in 2020. Most interviews were conducted in 2020 and 2021. On April 3rd, 2023 the researcher analysed the videos uploaded on YouTube. On April 13th, by using a video conferencing call using a V console, the researcher talked and cross-checked the information that the founder shared through the YouTube videos in the 2020-21 period. To determine the outcome of the kinship effect, the researcher conducted personal interviews and collected data directly from

nine employees of the company that represented the different periods of the company on April 19, 2023. After the visit, the researcher was convinced that the collected information was reliable. Data are a key source of credibility for all types of research. Therefore, in a short period of 22 days, the researcher was able to collect and cross-check the reliable factors that lead to the kinship effect in this qualitative research. The video data considered to identify the input elements from the employer side were as follows

Table 2: The following table gives an integrated picture of the content of the videos uploaded

YouTube Channel	YouTube Link	Sub themes	Main themes (Factors/Inputs)
1.Infopark Kerala	https://youtu.be/9oDTBE7L4CQ		
2.Cue Studio	https://youtu.be/Qdip1bA7DCM	Previous work experiences and CSR activities	Social Commitment (F1)
3.Manorama News	https://youtu.be/YsgUZ_acFh8	Positive peer group pressure, Interpersonal relationship with the team members. Belief in the product	Constructive Work culture (F4) Faith in the Product (F6)
4.Mediaone TV Live	https://youtu.be/guapVXqh4do	Speciality of Mentorship in the firm. People oriented work culture	Strong Mentorship (F3) Constructive work culture(F4)
5.DD Malayalam	https://youtu.be/A3fdaHgv67I	Childhood experiences, belief in people's skills rather than qualifications.	Attitude of employer based on exposure(F2)
6.Forbes India (Startup Circle)	https://youtu.be/IVGXr1OEXdI	Support and guidance from family he received	Attitude of employer based on exposure(F2)
7.K-DISC Official	https://www.youtube.com/live/HSAPmh0nsfA?feature=share	Developing an innovative mindset in employees	Constructive work culture(F4)
8.Sansad TV	https://youtu.be/IZy-cCYyeYo	Importance of Innovation, explaining his vision for future India.	Faith in the Product(F6)
9.ASAP Kerala official Channel	https://youtu.be/Ucl2cEeXjos	Importance of risk-taking behaviour in entrepreneurship	Attitude of employer based on exposure(F2)

		ip, Friendship during college life influenced his mentorship in future	
10.Radio Neythal 107.8	https://youtu.be/lw1Tk7gi_GE	Social activities the employer conducted as team	Social commitment (F1)
11.Vijayakrishna C V	https://youtu.be/Ftuu_Jd_4es	Experience on team support during struggling time. CSR activities especially during flood time 2018 in Kerala	Mutual Trust (F5) Social Commitment(F1)
12.TKMCE Mirror	https://youtu.be/7mdkFxnDVks	Vision of the founder, role of rural recruitment, Interpersonal relationships,	Attitude of employer based on exposure(F2), Mutual Trust (F5)
13.SkillsActz	https://www.youtube.com/live/wyK5o31tvV8?feature=share	Belief in the product, The experience and benefits the first batch received influencing the retention and the work culture	Faith in the Product(F6) Constructive work culture(F4)
14.Jeevan News Malayalam	https://youtu.be/nLOvdNXVgAw - https://youtu.be/8v1Dz3jAv9g	Relationship with team, work culture in his organisation, Participative decision-making process, Importance of skill development.	Constructive work culture(F4) Mutual Trust (F5)
15.JPM College Beats	https://www.youtube.com/live/pxUAatUICufc?feature=share	Interpersonal relationships, know your industry to get the job	Mutual Trust (F5) Constructive work culture(F4)

Phase 1: Netnography helps in noting observations faster, simpler, and easier to archive and edit later (Ahuja et al., 2018). In this study, thematic analysis, supported by netnography, was used for analysis and interpretation. After identifying relevant videos for the study, the content was coded using thematic analysis. After reading the identified videos several times and devising sub-themes, the identified sub-themes were revisited several times, clarified, and grouped into main themes. This resulted in different themes that defined the dimensions of the factors affecting the kinship effect from the employer.

5. DATA COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION (PHASE-2)

Phase 2-related to identify the outcome of the kinship effect, and thematic analysis was conducted for the content collected through personal interviews with the employees. We selected nine employees from different periods in the company. Finally, the identified themes were audited, which provided some suggestions in the interpretation phases

The following are the main themes identified as outputs of the kinship effect in the interpersonal relationship in startups based on the thematic analysis. The data from the employees' side collected, interpreted, and identified the outputs.

Table 3: Identifying Main theme (outputs) of Kinship effect from the personal interviews of the selected employees

Participants	Designation	Joining year	Sub themes	Main Themes(outputs)
P1	Project Manager	2013-joined 2017-rejoined	Family oriented work culture, strong mentoring,	O3-Improve loyalty O4- reduce attrition rate
P2	Asst Manager	2010	Work culture is important, Transparency in communication, Giving more importance to the attitude of the candidate than qualifications during recruitment	O3-Improve loyalty O4- reduce attrition rate
P3	COO	2009	Decision making through debate, brain storming, confidence in self as well as in team, employer always enhance the self-worth of the employees	O2-Risk taking mindset O5-Perseverance O6-Confidence in the product
P4	Team Leader	2012	Recognising each employee's effort in the company. So, no ego between the employees. Passion towards the product leads to self-learning.	O5-Perseverance O6-Confidence in the product O4-Reduce attrition rate
P5	Developer	2018	College like atmosphere, employer trying to increase the quality of the worker during long term, attracted the CSR activities of the company	O1- Affective commitment, O4-Reduce attrition rate O5-Perseverance
P6	Developer	2018	Having positive towards work	O3-Improve

			pressure due to the passion towards the product, How the team overcame the crisis were share with the new comers that influencing the attitude of the new employees.	loyalty O5-Perseverance O6-Confidence in the product
P7	Project Manager	2017	Positive criticism by the employer. Focusing on mistakes not to the persons. Career growth assured	O1- Affective commitment O2-Risk taking mindset
P8	Java Developer	2022	Enhancing skill development, Campus like atmosphere, Strong mentorship,	O3-Improve loyalty O4-Reduce attrition rate
P9	CTO	2009	Family atmosphere, strong interpersonal relations that influencing the innovative thought process, even if the paths are different all are focusing towards the one goal. Freedom of expression is there.	O4-Reduce attrition rate O2-Risk taking mindset

(Source: Author's Work)

6. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

- I. **Phase one:** The factors identified as the inputs can contribute to the kinship effect, which is the phenomenon in which individuals within an organization feel a sense of kinship or strong interpersonal connections with their colleagues and the organization as a whole. Social Commitment (F1): When an organization engages in social commitment and CSR activities, it signals to employees that the company cares about societal well-being. This shared sense of purpose and commitment can foster a feeling of oneness among employees, as they work together towards a common goal beyond the workplace. Attitude of Employer Based on Exposure (F2): When an employer values skills and experience over mere qualifications, employees are likely to feel seen and appreciated for their unique contributions. This understanding of an individual's background can lead to stronger interpersonal connections and a sense of kinship. Strong Mentorship (F3) fosters a personal connection between the employer, senior team members, and mentees. As individuals receive guidance, support, and advice from mentors, they may feel a sense of gratitude and connection to the organization, enhancing the kinship effect. Constructive Work Culture (F4): encourages positive peer pressure, and interpersonal relationships can lead to a more tightly knit team. Employees who support and uplift each other are more likely to develop strong interpersonal bonds, leading to a sense of kinship in the workplace. Mutual Trust (F5) is the foundational element of interpersonal relationships. When teams trust each other, they collaborate more effectively and feel a sense of kinship. Mutual trust built through shared experiences and challenges can enhance these relationships. Faith in Product (F6): When employees believe in the product or service they contribute to, it can create a sense of unity and shared pride. This shared belief can lead to employees feeling a sense of kinship with their colleagues, all working together to achieve common success.
- II. **Phase Two:** By analysing the output derived from the thematic analysis of employees' personal interviews, it is evident that the organization's focus on fostering a sense of kinship and strong interpersonal relationships among its employees has yielded several positive outcomes. Employees' experiences and perceptions collectively reflect the workplace environment that promotes engagement, commitment, and personal growth. The organization's deliberate efforts to cultivate a

kinship effect, characterized by an environment of mutual trust, transparent communication, and a people-centric approach, have yielded significant benefits across various dimensions. This kinship effect is observed through shared values and experiences, and contributes to a sense of unity and purpose among employees. The data reveal that employees who perceive family oriented work culture and strong mentorship are more likely to exhibit improved loyalty and a reduced attrition rate. Emphasis on work culture, attitude-driven recruitment, and positive criticism lead to affective commitment from employees. Furthermore, an atmosphere resembling that of a college campus coupled with a focus on skill development and mentorship results in improved loyalty and reduced attrition. An organization's emphasis on risk-taking and a shared sense of perseverance are associated with certain roles. Employees in decision-making roles indicate a risk-taking mindset, whereas team members and developers underscore the importance of perseverance and deep-seated confidence in the product. Collectively, these observations emphasize the role of interpersonal relationships, shared values, and a strong sense of belonging in driving employee satisfaction, engagement, and commitment. The kinship effect, evident from the data, shows how a workplace environment that nurtures a sense of unity and a shared purpose can positively impact employees' attitudes, behaviours, and overall organizational outcomes. Overall, these factors contribute to a positive work environment in which employees feel a strong sense of connection with their colleagues and the organization. This kinship effect leads to improved teamwork, communication, and collaboration, ultimately enhancing employees' satisfaction and performance.

7. CONCLUSION

While this analysis offers valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The data from personal interviews may reflect subjective perceptions, and the study did not consider external influences such as market conditions or industry trends. Moreover, focusing on a single organization limits the broader applicability of the findings. Future research could examine how various factors interact to shape the venture kinship effect across different organizational contexts, industries, and cultures. Studies exploring the impact of mentorship programs, team-building strategies, and cultural variations could provide deeper understanding, while further research could assess the reliability and construct validity of the factors identified.

Despite these limitations, netnography proved advantageous in overcoming time constraints by leveraging enduring YouTube data to cross-verify findings and track consistent behavioral patterns. Across two analytical phases, six core factors were identified: social responsibility (F1), valuing skills and experiences (F2), strong mentorship (F3), constructive work culture (F4), mutual trust (F5), and faith in the product (F6). Together, these foster a culture of oneness, engagement, and commitment. Thematic analysis further confirmed that shared values, transparent communication, and a family-oriented environment enhanced loyalty, reduced attrition, and strengthened employee commitment. Emphasis on risk-taking and perseverance unified the team in facing challenges. Overall, the findings highlight that cultivating kinship within organizations—through trust, shared purpose, and supportive relationships—promotes commitment, collaboration, and resilience essential for long-term success.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Mr. Joy Sebastian, CEO of Techgentsia Software Technologies Pvt. Ltd., for his valuable insights and cooperation throughout this study. Special thanks are also extended to the Techgentsia team members who participated in interviews and shared their experiences, contributing meaningfully to the understanding of the venture kinship effect. The authors acknowledge the support of Bharathidasan University for providing academic and research guidance. Appreciation is also extended to Mr. Rony Varghese, Coordinator of Kerala Startup Mission who offered technical and reference assistance during the data collection and analysis phases.

This research did not receive any specific grant or financial support from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

11. REFERENCES

- [1] Acs, Z. J. (2010). High-Impact entrepreneurship. In Z. J. Acs & D. B. Audretsch (Eds.), *Handbook of Entrepreneurship Research* (pp. 165-182). Springer.
- [2] Burns, P. (2018). *New Venture Creation: A Framework for Entrepreneurial Start-Ups* (2nd ed.). Palgrave.
- [3] Carsten, J. (2019). The stuff of kinship. In S. Bamford (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook for the Anthropology of Kinship* (pp. 133-150). Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*. Sage Publications.
- [5] Deas A and Coetzee M (2022) A value-oriented psychological contract: Generational differences amidst a global pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 921184. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.921184.
- [6] Dirks, K. T., & Ferrin, D. L. (2002). Trust in leadership: Meta-analytic findings and implications for research and practice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 611–628.
- [7] Ejermo, O., & Xiao, J. (2014). Entrepreneurship and survival over the business cycle: How do new technology-based firms differ? *Small Business Economics*, 43(2), 411-426.
- [8] Faubion, J. (Ed.). (2001). *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Enquiries*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- [9] Fortes, M. (1969). *Kinship and the Social Order*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- [10] Galloway, L., Marks, A., & Chillas, S. (2014). The use of internships to foster employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship in the IT sector. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 21(4), 653–667.
- [11] Girotra, R., & Kaushik, T. (2018). Recruiting challenges of e-commerce startups in India. *Journal of Organization and Human Behaviour*, 7(2/3), 47-54.
- [12] Griep, Y., & Vantilborgh, T. (2018). Let's get cynical about this! Recursive relationships between psychological contract breach and counterproductive work behaviour. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 91(2), 421–429.
- [13] Holt, S., & Marques, J. (2012). Empathy in Leadership: Appropriate or Misplaced? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 105, 95-105.
- [14] Isenberg, D. J. (2016). Applying the ecosystem metaphor to entrepreneurship: Uses and abuses. *The Antitrust Bulletin*, 61(4), 564-573.
- [15] John R. Turner, Rose Baker, and Frank Kellner (2020). Theoretical Literature Review: Tracing the Life Cycle of a Theory and Its Verified and Falsified Statements. *Human Resource Development Review*, 17(1), 34–61.
- [16] Klein, H. J., Molloy, J. C., & Brinsfield, C. T. (2012). Reconceptualizing workplace commitment to redress a stretched construct: Revisiting assumptions and removing confounds. *Academy of Management Review*, 37, 130–151.
- [17] Kock, N., Mayfield, M., Mayfield, J., Sexton, S., & De La Garza, L. M. (2019). Empathetic Leadership: How Leader Emotional Support and Understanding Influences Follower Performance. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 26(2), 217–236.
- [18] Kozinets, R. (2010). *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online*. Sage.
- [19] Kozinets, R. (2020). *Netnography. The essential guide to qualitative social media research*. Sage.
- [20] Kozinets, R., & Paulus, T. (2022). *Doing qualitative research in a digital world*. SAGE.
- [21] Lederman, D., Messina, J., Pienknagura, S., & Rigolini, J. (2014). El emprendimiento en América Latina. Muchas empresas y poca innovación. Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento/Banco Mundial.
- [22] Lynham, S. A. (2002a). The general method of theory-building research in applied disciplines. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 4, 221-241. doi:10.1177/1523422302043002

- [23] Millward, L. J., & Hopkins, L. J. (1998). Psychological contracts, organizational and job commitment. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28(16), 1530–1556.
- [24] Mukul, K., & Saini, G. K. (2020). Talent acquisition in startups in India: The role of social capital. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 13(5), 1235-1261.
- [25] Paulus, T., & Lester, J. N. (2022). *Doing qualitative research in a digital world*. SAGE.
- [26] Pink, S. (2022). Methods for researching automated futures. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 28(7), 747–753. doi:10.1177/10778004221096845
- [27] Raeder, S., Coetzee, M., & Deas, A. (2021). Redefining the Psychological Contract in the Digital Era. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-63864-1_8
- [28] RiseSmart. (2018). The employee relationship economy: Boomeranging and frequent new beginnings propel a shift in human capital management. RiseSmart White Paper: RiseSmart Inc.
- [29] Rousseau, D. M., Sitkin, S. B., Burt, R. S., & Camerer, C. (1998). Not so different after all: A cross-discipline view of trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 393–405.
- [30] Scheel, T., & Mohr, G. (2013). The third dimension: Value-oriented contents in psychological contracts. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 22(4), 390–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2012.665229>
- [31] Scheepers, C., & Shuping, J. (2011). The effect of human resource practices on psychological contracts at an iron ore mining company in South Africa. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur*, 9(1), Art. #302. doi:10.4102/sajhrm.v9i1.302
- [32] Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theory and empirical tests in 20 countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 25, 1-65.
- [33] Schwartz, S. H. (2003). A proposal for measuring value orientations across nations. *ESS Questionnaire Development Report (Chapter 7)*. Retrieved from <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>
- [34] Seo, Y. W., & Lee, Y. H. (2019). Effects of internal and external factors on business performance of startups in South Korea: The engine of new market dynamics. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 11, 184797901882423. doi:10.1177/1847979018824231
- [35] Thomas, D. C., Ravlin, E. C., Liao, Y., Morrell, D. L., & Au, K. (2016). Collectivist values, exchange ideology and psychological contract preference. *Management International Review*, 56(2), 255–281.
- [36] Witcher, L. (2018). Successful companies will be those that embrace the new employee economy. Retrieved from <https://www.tlnt.com/successful-companies-will-be-those-that-embrace-the-new-employee-economy/>
- [37] World Economic Forum. (2019). Beyond borders: Digitizing entrepreneurship for impact. Retrieved from www.weforum.org/whitepapers/a-global-standard-for-lifelong-learning-and-worker-engagement-to-support-advanced-manufacturing