

An Entrepreneurship-as-Practice perspective on family business successors: socializing, bridging, and leading over generations through discursive artefacts

Abstract

Following recent calls to develop the Entrepreneurship-as-Practice perspective, we adopt a practice-based approach to family business to understand processes of next-generation engagement involving multiple individuals over long periods in the family life. Drawing on a culinary family business's published cookbooks theorized as 'discursive artefacts', we examine *how next generations become successors through enactment of family business practices*. This study contributes to family business research on intragenerational interaction and offers new insights into practice theory-building on the emergent Entrepreneurship-as-Practice perspective. Our findings suggest that family business practices – for example, cooking as an everyday practice embedded in family lives - have three dimensions – *socializing, bridging, and leading* – that contribute to understanding the development of the next generation as successors.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship as Practice, becoming, discursive artefact, family business, next generation, succession

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Introduction

“What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand”

- Chinese Philosopher Xunzi (430-245 BC)

Recently, scholars have pointed out that entrepreneurship can benefit from a practice theory-informed approach (Gartner et al. 2016; Teague et al. 2021; Thompson et al. 2022). Entrepreneurship, from this perspective, is viewed as ‘an enactment of practices, entangled within a broader nexus of practice’ (Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner 2020, 250). As the most common form of enterprise worldwide, family businesses are particularly suitable to extend intergenerational aspects of entrepreneurship theories (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020). It is widely accepted that family businesses involve informal, less observed behaviours and interactions between family members in their homes (Aldrich et al. 2021; Aldrich and Cliff 2003; Neubaum 2018). Yet, everyday life at the family business site also involves many ‘unseen patterns’ that are hard to capture (Dyer Jr and Dyer 2009, 218), leaving scholarly knowledge of next-generation becoming successors in the family setting scarce. A practice perspective on entrepreneurship contributes to knowledge about ‘what entrepreneurs “do and say” in specific situations’ (Teague et al. 2021, 576). We focus on the hitherto underexplored practices in the context of the family and their relation to the family business context. This study addresses the gap in understanding what a nexus of practice in a particular context might consist of, it further provides empirical materials to support theorizing of EaP which have been somewhat lacking to date.

Following the Entrepreneurship-as-Practice (EaP) perspective (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020; Gartner et al. 2016; Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner 2020), we take a

practice-based approach to examining the family in family businesses as constructed by daily practices (Schatzki 1996), where mundanity constitutes the participants' meaning, identity, and agency (Nicolini 2011). From this perspective, family is 'not a static entity or stable disposition, but rather an ongoing and dynamic production that is recurrently enacted as actors engage the world in practice' (Feldman and Orlikowski 2011, 1243). Family, rather than being a static social structure, is in a cycle of reproduction and reconstruction through mundane and routine practices, including washing, shopping, and cooking (Morgan 2011b). Family business scholars also emphasize that families are heterogeneous (Aldrich et al. 2021), differing in 'family structures, family functions, family interactions, and family events' (Jaskiewicz and Dyer 2017, 111). Collectively, scholars have pointed out the need to further understand families and their impact on family businesses (Ge and Campopiano 2021; Hamilton 2006; Jaskiewicz and Dyer 2017).

From a practice-based perspective, the next generations develop through immersion in the social practices of the family business (Hamilton 2013), and succession essentially unfolds due to participation in these practices (Haag 2012). Family activities have a strong impact on next-generation, in terms of, for example, transgenerational entrepreneurship (Dou et al., 2020; Jaskiewicz et al., 2015), establishing rules and exchange systems (Daspit et al., 2016), understanding of family business continuity (Konopaski et al., 2015), and acquiring key knowledge (Hamilton, 2011). Research has repeatedly pointed out that successors are involved in family businesses long before they join the business (Cabrera-Suárez, Garcia-Almeida, and De Saa-Perez 2018; Handler 1992; Hatak and Roessl 2015; McMullen and Warnick 2015). Therefore, we propose a perspective shift, from viewing family as a social institution to viewing it as the practices that happen within it (Bourdieu 1996); thus, 'family' is identifiable by the actions that its members engage in (Schatzki 2005).

Theoretically, we examine next-generation development in family life through an EaP perspective, specifically the practice of cooking in the family as an inherent part of succession. We study next-generation becoming successors to include family business socialization prior to the appointment of a successor and initiation of a formal succession process. We adopt the ontological view of ‘becoming’ and a dwelling mode of engagement, constituent for practice philosophy (Tsoukas and Chia 2002; Chia and Holt 2006). This research is, therefore, guided by the question, ‘How do next generations become successors through enactment of family business practices?’ While acknowledging that families are heterogeneous (i.e. each one comprises different practices), we chose cooking as an illustrative example of practices in the family lives (Morgan 1996). In most families, the kitchen is recognized as an important site that shapes personal memory as well as familial identity (Meah and Jackson 2016). Food, as a key product of the cooking practice, is recognized as a central part of human life, forming the earliest memories of intergenerational experiences and communication (Knight, O’Connell, and Brannen 2014; Szatrowski 2014). Research has shown that cooking in adulthood creates nostalgia (Blunt 2003) and connects us to our social past (Lu and Fine 1995). Cooking plays a particularly important role in daily practices (Schatzki 2005).

Empirically, we conduct an exploratory single case study (De Massis and Kotlar 2014; Stake 1995) examining the next-generation of a three-generation immigrant family business via three cookbooks. Following theoretical sampling (Eisenhardt 1989), our case is a culinary business where the practice of cooking crosses the boundary between family and business life. Additionally, the next-generation family members in our case were not initially intended to be successors of the family business. This highlights the unintentional influence cooking had on them. Following previous examples of examining autobiographies in EaP research (e.g., reviewed in Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020), we dive deep into the narratives of the family’s cooking practices (Gartner 2007; Larty and Hamilton 2011), which we theorise as

‘discursive artefacts’. Through inductively evaluating these accounts of cooking together and their discursive manifestation in the textual material, we illustrate how the next-generation family members understand their engagement in cooking as a daily practice both in the family business as well as in their family life. In particular, we found that cooking enacts the dimensions of *socializing*, *bridging*, and *leading* in the next-generation becoming successors.

Through this research, we make several contributions. First, following the EaP perspective, we link daily practices in families – in this case, cooking – to next-generation becoming successors in the family business context. We contribute to the family business literature by providing more nuanced insights into the influences of family practices. Our research shifts perspective, from viewing the family as a well-defined institution to viewing it as its everyday practices, extending prior studies’ examination of families in family business settings (e.g. Aldrich et al. 2021; Ge and Campopiano 2021). Furthermore, by applying a practice lens to next-generation engagement in family businesses, we shed new light on succession beyond the planning paradigm by capturing how practices in family settings during upbringing serve as informal and indirect successor training (Haag 2012).

Second, our research extends the family business field methodologically by demonstrating an underexplored way to examine family-related topics using published life stories. We join in the discussion about using archival and secondary data in family business research, arguing that this type of data overcomes the difficulties of researching family life (Neubaum 2018) and of accessing longitudinal data (Dyer Jr and Dyer 2009) through investigating published life stories (Ge, De Massis, and Kotlar 2021).

Finally, our findings advance the discussion of suitable empirical materials for practice-based theoretical development in entrepreneurship research (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020; Feldman and Orlikowski 2011). Our theorization of ‘discursive artefacts’

provides a theoretical vehicle for the study of practices captured in the cookbooks which represent practice in the past, the present, and the future, as well as providing further understanding of materiality in practices (Nicolini 2012; Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012).

Theoretical background

Entrepreneurship as Practice

The significance of the practice turn in contemporary theory and social sciences is well established (Teague et al. 2021; Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner 2020). The practice perspective sees the social world as comprised of nexuses of practices and material arrangements (Schatzki 2005; Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Von Savigny 2001), ‘populated by diverse social practices which are carried by agents’ (Reckwitz 2002, 256). A central task in understanding any organization, therefore, is identifying ‘the actions that compose it’ (Schatzki 2005, 476). Practices consist of organized sets of human actions, which link to form wider connections and constellations. Social practice theory is not a unified field, but it has been argued that it offers promise for studying entrepreneurship (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020; Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner 2020) and family business (Nordqvist and Melin 2010).

A significant body of research engaging with an EaP perspective has been established and has demonstrated that it is enriching entrepreneurship research. A call for papers for a special issue of *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* argued convincingly that the contemporary practice perspective emerging in the entrepreneurship research literature would strengthen the domain (Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner 2020). EaP scholars describe the practice as forming a bundle of ways and doings (Gartner et al. 2016). Through a rigorous systematic literature review, Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau (2020) established that the practice approach would help entrepreneurship researchers better understand complex social

phenomena. This is echoed by Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner (2020), who move to a view of entrepreneurship as ‘an enactment of practices, entangled within a broader nexus of practice’ (250). This view shifts researchers’ focus from the individual or the organization to the (re)production and transformation of everyday practice. It also encourages a re-think of the nature of language in entrepreneurship research. With the “practice turn”, the meaning of language, spoken or written, is derived from ‘material connections and references to entanglements among practices in question’ (Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner 2020, 251).

Collectively, existing research provides a solid foundation for applying a practice perspective to entrepreneurship studies. However, this stream of research is in its nascent stages, and often views entrepreneurs as individuals rather than in a complex nexus. Family business, therefore, provides an ideal setting for advancing the social connectedness of EaP by bringing in multiple generations (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020). This aligns with Schatzki’s (2005) proposal that, for practice research, social arenas are ‘collective’ in embracing multiple people and ‘social’ in being common to those people. Therefore, our study regards families as the ‘social arenas of action that are pervaded by a space of meaning in whose terms people live, interact, and coexist intelligibly’ (Schatzki 2005, 470).

Family in family business research

Early studies on family business emphasized how the interplay between family and business systems produces idiosyncratic resources, which differentiates family and non-family businesses (Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma 1999; Zellweger et al. 2018). It has found that families influence their businesses in various ways, including the social relationship (Zellweger et al. 2018), socio-emotional wealth (Gomez-Mejia et al. 2011), succession (Daspit et al. 2016), goal complications (De Massis, Kotlar, et al. 2016), business performance (Gersick and Feliu 2014), and learning (Brinkerink 2018; Hamilton 2011).

Building on that resource-based view, family involvement has been viewed as ‘family capital’ (defined as ‘total owning-family resources composed of human, social, and financial capital’ [Danes et al. 2009, 199]) or ‘familiness’ (defined as a ‘unique bundle of resources a particular firm has because of the systems interaction between the family, its individual members and the business’ [Pearson, Carr, and Shaw 2008, 11]).

However, the resource-based view examines the family from an economic perspective, sometimes overlooking important family attributes that are built over time and some of which are not directly related to the business (Dyer Jr and Dyer 2009). Due to the interweaving nature of the family and business dual system, some practices within families might seemingly have little to do with business in the short term, but have the potential to spill over to business behaviours in the long term. For example, telling ancestors’ stories to youngsters might eventually lead to the transmission of transgenerational entrepreneurship (Jaskiewicz, Combs, and Rau 2015), and positive/negative intergenerational relationships might ultimately lead to various types of successor commitments (Sharma and Irving 2005). In addition, the family is treated as a stable unit, with the underlying structures, functions, interactions, and events left unseen (Jaskiewicz and Dyer 2017). An outdated conceptualization of family in family business research sacrifices the potential depth of understanding in family business research (Aldrich et al. 2021).

Collectively, these studies provide resounding support for the idea that the concept of family needs to be further examined (Neubaum 2018). There has been discussion around re-evaluating the family in family business research (Jaskiewicz and Dyer 2017); however, there is no conclusive explanation of what we mean by ‘family’ that not only explains family embeddedness in a family business, but also its ongoing impact (Aldrich and Cliff 2003). To guide our investigation and re-theorize the family in family business research, we turn to the theoretical lens developed by sociological research on family practice (Morgan 2011a).

When adopting a practice lens, a family should not be assumed to be a stable unit, but a site where important day-to-day living happens (Feldman and Orlikowski 2011). Thus, family is understood by the activities carried out by members, especially those activities that are embedded and taken for granted within the family (Morgan 2011a; Warde 2005). Therefore, the family should be considered a fluid entity, formed by ongoing social practices, within which meaning is constantly reconstructed by people's actions and social materiality (Schatzki 2000). Looking at practices in families advances our understanding of families by emphasizing the “doing” of families, within which communication is seen as part of the whole practice (Schatzki 1996); for example, transgenerational entrepreneurship that happens through close observation and hands-on practices (Hamilton 2011).

Moreover, by adopting a practice lens, the family becomes the site for members' engagement in practices which have an ongoing effect that spans time (across generations) and space (across different sites) (Schatzki 2009). This is inherently intergenerational, emphasizing the process of continuous changes rather than following the life cycle of a particular family member (Hamilton 2013).

Next-generation becoming successors in family business

Succession is a defining feature of family business (Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma 1999), the fundamental question for the study of family business (Steier, Chrisman, and Chua 2004), and a vital challenge for family businesses (Daspit et al. 2016).

Therefore, next-generation engagement – particularly mentoring relationships between incumbents and the next generation – has received increasing attention (De Massis, Sieger, et al. 2016; Distelberg and Schwarz 2015). This involves knowledge management and construction (Cabrera-Suárez, Garcia-Almeida, and De Saa-Perez 2018), social exchanges (Daspit et al. 2016), and managerial role switches (Handler 1990). Murphy and Lambrechts

(2015) found in their research that helping out in a family business affects career choices and forms important capabilities for the next generation. However, most of the literature on succession focuses on business practices, leaving practices in the family site largely unexamined (Ge and Campopiano 2021).

It could be argued that a practice-based understanding is particularly significant for the study of next-generation becoming successors in family businesses, where the practice of entrepreneurship is so inextricably linked with practices in families (Hamilton 2013). A practice theory approach supports the assumption that ‘the maintenance of practices, and thus the persistence and transformation of social life, [depends on]...the transfer of shared embodied know-how’ (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Von Savigny 2001, 12). Despite the practice-based perspective not yet being widely adopted in investigating next-generation in family business, it is worth noting that scholars found that sharing stories, which can be perceived as a practice, has an important impact on family dreams (Lansberg 1999), transgenerational entrepreneurship (Jaskiewicz, Combs, and Rau 2015), innovation (Kammerlander et al. 2015), and business continuity (Konopaski, Jack, and Hamilton 2015). In particular, Haag (2012) investigated succession in a multigenerational family business in Sweden and revealed that family business succession is enacted through daily encounters between participants, which is more complex than simply carefully planning – rather, this is ‘an ongoing practice’ (186).

Following prior investigations of EaP, family in family business, and next-generation becoming successors, we propose to investigate the impact of one particular, mundane practice in a family – cooking – on next-generation by asking, ‘How next generations become successors through enactment of family business practices.’

Methodology

Research design and case selection

We conducted an exploratory case study (De Massis and Kotlar 2014) to analyse our case through rich empirical accounts of cooking written in three cookbooks. Our research provides a new way to study next-generation through a practice theory lens. Informed by the nature of qualitative research, we use social actors' meaning-making artefacts to understand and analyse their behaviours and purpose (Fletcher, De Massis, and Nordqvist 2016).

Using theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1967), we selected Sweet Mandarin as our case due to its unusual relevance to our research aims and wealth of data access (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). First, Sweet Mandarin is a culinary business, which provides a stronger linkage between cooking as a practice and both the family and business systems. Hence, there is significant synergy between the researched phenomenon, the business case, and the data used for the research. Second, the case is different from traditional family businesses, where a business is passed on from generation to generation. Sweet Mandarin is a new business using three generations of recipes. Against their parents' will, the next generation quit their white-collar jobs (in law, accounting, and engineering) to pursue their family legacy in the culinary business. This case, therefore, has a strong emphasis on the cooking practice's unintentional influence on the next generation. Finally, the secondary data (in the form of accounts of cooking practices written in the cookbooks) provides a detailed and longitudinal record of the family members' accounts of cooking together that spans more than thirty years – from the next generation's childhood to eight years after they set up their family business. Next-generation engagement starts from birth if primary socialization is considered and continues through the life cycle of families, of which a researcher can only observe a fraction in real time (Haag 2012). This type of data is often hard to acquire and provides interesting insights into family dynamics (Neubaum 2018). Furthermore, entrepreneurship is not confined in time and

space to standard work hours and business facilities, meaning that practice researchers need innovative methods to capture both detailed practices and wider nets of practice-arrangement bundles (Cyron 2022). The unique practice of cooking and the features of cookbooks allow great insight into the family business next generation from a very young age.

Case description

In 2004, three sisters – Helen, Lisa, and Janet Tse – started Sweet Mandarin in Manchester, United Kingdom (UK). However, the Tse family’s culinary business roots date back to 1959, when their grandmother, Lily, started her Chinese restaurant in Liverpool, UK, as an immigrant from Hong Kong, China. As a typical immigrant family, Lily (grandmother, first generation) and Mabel (mother, second generation) are a Chinese restaurant and a takeaway owner, respectively. With the intention of the family integrating into UK society, Mabel raised four children who entered respected white-collar trades: Lisa was an accountant for a multinational firm in London; Helen was a law graduate from Cambridge and a partner in a law firm; Janet was an engineer; and James is an IT specialist. To Mabel’s surprise, Lisa, Helen, and Janet decided to quit their jobs to start their own restaurant business in 2004.

In 2009, Sweet Mandarin gained national fame as the winner of Best Chinese Restaurant on Gordon Ramsay’s popular show, *The F Word*. Subsequently, the sisters won £50,000 on the show *Dragon’s Den* in 2012 and launched their own range of Chinese sauces. In 2013, they were invited to join Prime Minister David Cameron on a visit to China and even exported their sauces to China. Between 2014 and 2016, the sisters wrote a collection of three cookbooks, pairing accounts of cooking together as a family along with the recipes. The cookbooks are prestigious in their own right: one was nominated for the Gourmand Awards (akin to the Oscars for cookbooks), while the other two were New York Times Bestsellers.

Data collection and use of stories

To gain an in-depth understanding of the influence of cooking (and related practices) on next-generation, we focused our coding on the cookbooks. These recipes include detailed instructions, and paired family stories with each of the recipes, which are treated as collections of narratives of daily family life (see Figure 1). As a result, we collected 544 pages of stories, pictures, and recipes (see Table 1). These accounts provide detailed insight into the three sisters' reflections on their engagement in the cooking practice.

Insert Figure 1 & Table 1 about here

In their review, Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau (2020) highlighted the need to embrace creative methodologies that facilitate the study of EaP, and scholars adopting a practice-theory lens have reported the need to adopt a narrative approach (Brown and Thompson 2013; De La Ville and Mounoud 2010). It is widely recognized that narrative analysis allows researchers to gain insights into the everyday aspects of entrepreneurship (which are (co-)constructed through language) from the different perspectives of the individuals investigated (Gartner 2007; Nordqvist et al. 2009; Steyaert 1997).

This stream of research also points to the need to examine the narratives (Gartner 2007) via various resources – through conversations; written in corporate histories, annual reports, or biographies; and presented on websites (Hjorth and Steyaert 2004) – which allows us to look at reality as socially constructed and as a process (Dawson and Hjorth 2012). Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner (2020) further argued that ‘discursive-material practices carry meaning and intentionality onto the scene of action and provide participants with ways of influencing each other and the situation’ (250), viewing language (as a form of narrative and discourse) as a way of acting upon or intervening in practices.

This coincides with family business research that acknowledges how language and narratives help to create connections between the family and business systems and between generations (Hamilton, Cruz, and Jack 2017), make sense of succession processes (Dalpiaz, Tracey, and Phillips 2014), and explore underlying themes, like the role of gender (Hamilton 2006). Despite the increasing popularity of examining narratives in entrepreneurship studies (Larty and Hamilton 2011; Vaara, Sonenshein, and Boje 2016), there is a lack of research on family narratives in the context of family businesses (Hamilton, Cruz, and Jack 2017).

Following Ge, De Massis, and Kotlar (2021), we regard the cookbooks as collections of the next generation's life stories. Therefore, our units of analysis are the accounts of cooking written in the cookbooks. We treat these accounts as a distinctive source that represents retrospective sense-giving to past events, containing rich context 'for the study of subjectivity, meaning, motivation and individual agency' (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 2012, 76). These books give detailed accounts of the intersection between the next generation's family life and their cooking practice, representing 'storylike constructions containing description, interpretation, emotion, expectations, and related material' (Harvey 1995, 3).

Therefore, our observations are not of the family cooking together per se, but of their accounts of cooking together written in the cookbooks. We are interested in researching the family practices by examining their discursive manifestation in the textual material. This suggests an inductive coding process rather than an observation of the creation of the textual material itself, as one of the discussions that focuses on applying practice theory lies in the methodology used (Gherardi 2012).

Data analysis

To ensure a systematic and rigorous approach to data analysis, we took inspiration from Gioia et al. (2013) and organized the data into first-order concepts through open coding, synthesized it into second-order themes, and eventually abstracted it into aggregate dimensions.

The preliminary theorization started by open-coding the stories in the cookbooks. This resulted in many different first-order concepts that gave the initial understanding of the importance of the cooking practice to the next generation. For example, cooking was regarded as a family duty when the next-generation family members were young, as this practice resulted in a form of obligation to work at a young age – in contrast to peers, who could play after school. We coded independently and exchanged our coding to cross-check our accuracy of coding themes. For example, in our first-order concepts, we followed suggestions to understand the context particularities (historical, social, and cultural) of the case (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 2012). As a result, we coded for ‘learning about Chinese traditions’. We also specifically looked for insights related to the next generation’s becoming successors, as well as how they participated in the cooking practice. For example, for first-order concepts like ‘cooking is part of personal life’, we coded for emotions that occurred repeatedly, which provided initial ideas for coding. We specifically coded in verbs and actions to reflect the ethos of the practice-based perspective.

Upon scrutinizing the first-order concepts, we identified several recurring themes, which then allowed us to progress to the second-order themes. Cooking in the family provided the channel for the next generation to learn about their origins in terms of both social conventions and traditions. As a result, these formed the theme of ‘learning about culture’. After the second-order themes were coded, we performed several rounds of discussing and re-reading the EaP literature as well as the family business literature. Eventually, we aggregated

dimensions that advance the theorization of the themes to understand next-generation becoming successors through the cooking practice.

Findings

Through our unit of analysis – the stories of the cooking practice – we observe the change in the next generation’s participation and thus their enabled becoming. We find three dynamics through the stories: cooking as *socializing*, cooking as *bridging*, and cooking as *leading* (see Figure 2).

Insert Figure 2 about here

In the following sections, we discuss each developmental dynamic using quotations and demonstrate how the next generation enact in the cooking practice, which crosses the boundary between the family and the business (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Cooking as socializing

We have termed the first role of cooking practice in next-generation becoming successors - *socializing*. This is when the next generation engage in daily cooking and the bundle of associated practices – mixing family life with cooking, marking family times, learning about culture, and learning life lessons. This shows the inclusiveness (and invisibility, Haag 2012) of cooking practice in a family where all members (including the next generation) are involved in the family business through cooking, which is part of the daily practice that they do together due to being members of the family.

Mixing family life with cooking

As cooking is an integral part of family and business life, the next generation are involved in the practice from an early age. As a result, cooking is a theme of life for the next generation. When recalling their childhood, Helen and Lisa described that, ‘Like our parents and their parents, [cooking] was a way of life and we simply didn’t know any different. All I knew was that we lived over the shop, ate from the shop and worked in the shop’ (Tse and Tse 2014, 27). Cooking became so embedded in their life that during difficult times, ‘all our worries and frustrations seemed to evaporate when we grabbed a “chicken and mushroom pie” Chinese-style’ (Tse 2015, 56). As part of their life, the next generation were also told stories of the past by the previous generations in the form of food and cooking. Through numerous memorable moments of the past, ranging from the difficult immigration journey to being isolated in the British community, the Tse family’s stories are interwoven with food and cooking. This makes cooking inseparable from any mention of the family life of previous generations.

Marking family time

Due to the interweaving of cooking with family life, cooking also bookmarked family times for the next generation. There are many memories of the family spending time together making food: ‘I [Helen/Lisa] remember making these with my mum when I was growing up – laughing about the big feast we would be enjoying the next day – such sweet memories’ (Tse and Tse 2016, 157). The kitchen is a unique site for the next generation, where they spent a lot of time together socializing:

If Dad’s at home he’s always in the kitchen. It’s his favourite place. We’ve always spent a lot of time there, cooking, eating and talking. Everything in our family revolved around food. Dad works very long hours, slogging hard at the woks, often hidden in billowing smoke, but these spare ribs are an easy dish

because once they're being steamed he's hands free. With this dish, he's relaxed, and it reminds me of those good times with my dad. (Tse and Tse 2016, 34)

Days of the week are not just remembered as in-school times, but in terms of what's cooked in the kitchen: 'As a child I always remember Tuesday being soup day. My mum would fill a big, silver saucepan (industrial sized) with over 50 spare ribs to make the ultimate stock, which was rich with flavour' (Tse and Tse 2014, 27). Food goes beyond fulfilling essential needs, comprising a 'delicious' memory.

Learning about culture

As British-born Chinese, the next generation are embedded in both social worlds: a Chinese one at home and a British one outside the home. Food acts as a channel for them to have a glimpse of their Chinese traditions as well as Chinese social conventions – for example, noodles are never to be cut short, and rice should never be wasted.

For Chinese, 'love' is not a common word in speech; rather, it is expressed through behaviour. When connecting with family members, people show love through affective behaviours and the willingness to take responsibility. Dishes are no longer simply the outcome of cooking or means of living, but expressions of affection and care:

The secret ingredient was the sesame seed: "Just because they are small, don't underestimate these", she'd [Lily] lecture, waving her fat finger at us. These sesame seeds can save lives – they are rich in minerals...like zinc, iron, calcium and potassium – so be generous. Your mum needs an extra dose. (Tse and Tse 2016, 62)

Learning life lessons

Despite the previous generations being less educated due to social conditions, they used their most familiar practice – cooking – to teach their children important life lessons. When faced with behaviour issues, the parents and grandmother made sure that it was clear what behaviour was good or bad:

On a cold winter's morning, Mum used to get up before dawn to make this for us. We were not good at waking up and tried to sleep for as long as we could – so much so that one night we wore our school uniforms (ties included) to bed so we could just get up and go. When Mum found out – quite obvious as we looked so disheveled – she shook her head and taught us we couldn't take shortcuts in life: anything worthwhile would take time and patience. She used this dish as an example. The custard was smooth and sweet, perfect every time. One day, while we were eating, she demonstrated how it would be if made in haste – and it was bubbly, rough and unappetizing. Mum ended up eating that version and it really hit home. After that day, we tried our best to get up in time to dress properly rather than rushing. (Tse and Tse 2016, 156)

From these four themes, it emerged that cooking acted as a socialization tool for the next generation with/within their family. Cooking was important for their development, as (1) it is where the know-how is embedded, and (2) it carries emotional weight, allowing the next generation to be involved and part of the family through the practice.

Cooking as bridging

Cooking works as a *bridge* to pass on knowledge of family members and the business, enabling the next generation to form their understanding of both the family and the business. For the Tse family, as cooking plays a major role in their family life, the connections between different generations and businesses are expressed through cooking.

Connecting family to business

Cooking and particular dishes mark the past through stories from previous generations to the start of the family's entrepreneurial journey. The more complicated family stories about immigration and the difficulties of work are linked to cooking. This forms another important sign of the interrelatedness between the Tse sisters' family life and cooking business, as demonstrated by the following extract:

Our mum, Mabel, remarked that she lost her childhood innocence when she arrived in England in 1959. Her mum, Lily, had left her and her brother Arthur in Hong Kong for three years while Lily carved out her business in the UK. When Lily brought Mabel, aged 9, and Arthur, aged 12, to England, Mabel hated the country immediately, and she hated Lily for bringing her there. Mabel missed the sunshine, her friends, the food and most of all her grandma who had become like a surrogate mum. Mabel arrived on a dark winter afternoon and remembers shivering in the street while Lily unloaded the bags. Residents came out of their houses and, standing on the doorsteps with their arms folded, they tutted and whispered to one another: "First one Chinese, now two more. It is a bloody infestation! What is the world coming to? Did we fight a war for this?" Mum had no experience of racism, and, young as she was, she understood the sentiment as surely as if her new neighbours had punched her in the face. However, it was through this dish that the animosity between mother and daughter melted away. As the chicken was stir-fried and the rice wine was added, mum was instantly transported back to Hong Kong and she picked up her chopsticks with relish. This was her comfort food. (Tse and Tse 2014, 78)

Cooking, in part, allows the next generation to come to know their family members from the past. Instead of having nicknames for people, cookbooks include recipes that are ‘signature dishes’ associated with family members’ characters and entrepreneurial behaviours:

This dish is dedicated to my great grandfather, Leung, who manufactured soy sauce and whose favourite fish was salmon. Although I never met this formidable man, it was his endeavours that inspired me to launch our sauce business and keep the family dream alive. We make this dish every year in memory of my great-grandfather during the spring Qingming festival, when we head to the burial ground with incense, paper money and food offerings to appease our hungry ancestors and give them currency in the afterlife. (Tse and Tse 2014, 111)

Precious moments that form the family members’ iconic memories are also preserved and passed on in the form of stories about cooking. Cooking plays a vital role in preserving these memories, as it carries the stories through time and generations. For example, in describing their parents’ proposal, the Tse sisters position the signature dish, Fillet Steak in Black Pepper sauce, as the ‘winning move’:

Our mum met Eric, our dad, back in the 1970s. When she saw him at the airport for the first time with his shaggy hair and thick black glasses it was love at first sight. However, Eric had to go on proposing for weeks afterwards before she could take him seriously. It was only when Eric made this dish for Mum – the Fillet Steak in Black Pepper sauce, using the choicest steak he could afford, that she said yes. (Tse and Tse 2014, 104)

Learning about the business

It is clear that in a family that works in the culinary business, knowledge of the business is inevitably passed on through cooking. For example, Helen and Lisa recall shopping for ingredients not just for dinner, but also on many occasions for their business. During these grocery trips, they gained an understanding of good and bad ingredients for cooking: ‘When we used to go to the Chinese supermarket with our grandmother, she always used to tell us to pick the dark red peppers, not the light red ones, as they contained more vitamins and goodness’ (Tse 2015, 107). Moreover, the family was never physically far away from the business, further interweaving the two. Sharing their lives with the business required the sisters to ‘work in the family takeaway and...[they] could cook the entire menu aged 11’ (Tse and Tse 2014, 54).

Cooking as leading

The next generation begin to lead the cooking practices as well as their family business, which occurs due to their life stage as well as their ability to influence the business and innovate. In doing so, they continue the family legacy in the trade and introduce personal features to the practice of cooking in their family business.

Continuing the family legacy

For Helen and Lisa, cooking has been, and is, part of their family life, interwoven with business. Cooking is embedded in the hardship, history, prosperity, and rebirth of their family as well as its business. They are convinced that simply continuing to cook is not enough – a business is required. They want to re-establish the family business and leave their white-collar professions, much against their parents’ wishes. Yet, for them [Lisa, Helen, and Janet], ‘It was up to my sisters and me to re-establish my grandmother’s dream’ (Tse and Tse 2014, 6). The urge to continue this family journey of “10,000 miles” rests on their shoulders: ‘We vow to continue the family culinary journey through the...restaurant, cookery school and range of...sauces’ (Tse and Tse 2014, preface).

Making personal marks

Helen and Lisa also made changes to existing practices and modified their ways of cooking. For example, recognizing the health benefits, they suggest pan-frying or steaming dumplings rather than cooking their grandmother's deep-fried version. They also create new recipes and add personal touches to cooking:

I [Helen] love learning about new foods and never grow tired of fusing ingredients from different cuisines, so when I got back to Sweet Mandarin I started experimenting with this new flavour. I discovered that truffle goes wonderfully with king prawns and lobster, hence the invention of this dish, which makes a wonderful, indulgent treat for a special occasion. (Tse 2015, 98)

They are also keen to achieve external recognition. In contrast to the previous generations, who kept their heads down and were satisfied with a solid customer base, Helen and Lisa always seek external recognition, maintaining a high profile. This is clearly shown in their participation in various programmes and management of different social media accounts. As a result, the family culinary business achieved national and even international recognition that was never achieved by the previous generations.

Discussion

Cooking has been previously used as an example when discussing practice theory by Schatzki (2005) and by Hui, Schatzki, and Shove (2016). In our research, we found that cooking – as a mundane, everyday practice that happens in the culinary family business – has *socializing*, *bridging*, and *leading* effects on the next generation becoming successors. In the following sections, we discuss our contributions in light of this finding for family business as well as for EaP research.

Cooking and next-generation becoming successors

First, we enrich family embeddedness research (Aldrich et al. 2021; Aldrich and Cliff 2003) by introducing the practice-based perspective and examining everyday practices in family business. From this perspective, families are not static entities but are characterized by fluidity through the practices carried out by the family (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Von Savigny 2001). We therefore argue that to advance the understanding of how family impacts business, family business research needs to consider family practices (Morgan 2011a) beyond the conventional boundaries of the family and business systems. Through our examination of cooking as an example of a common practice in families, we found that family practices can have important implications for next-generation development in *socializing*, *bridging*, and *leading*. Namely, the transfer of unintended and indirect succession learning takes place when families cook together. The family here becomes a site where many practices happen, allowing reconsideration of what forms a family (Aldrich et al. 2021). Through investigating the next generation's accounts of their shared cooking practice, we observed and explained the dimension of their development that is related to their involvement in cooking. Instead of looking at the business-related variables, such as goals and strategies, our research points to the informal practices in families that have enduring effects on the next generation as a potential vehicle for intergenerational development.

In addition, we add to the discussion around the methodological diversity of family business research, especially that of qualitative research. We advance the field by demonstrating the use of cookbooks as sources of secondary data. Through this unique data set, we gain access to narratives of a 30-year of the next generation's life, which has been argued as particularly difficult for transgenerational family business research (Neubaum 2018). Families and family businesses are known to produce autobiographical texts, which are found to be useful for legitimation (e.g., Dalpiaz, Tracey, and Phillips 2014) and legacy (Sasaki,

Ravasi, and Micelotta 2019). As a result, our research exemplifies and advances the use of secondary data for the research of generational-related topics.

Entrepreneurship as Practice

Building on the existing EaP research, we respond to calls for diverse methodologies to be employed to study entrepreneurship as a collective activity, undertaken by multiple people and involving multiple sites of entrepreneurship-related practices (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020). In this study, we use the interwoven sites of family and business to generate insights into aspects of family business revealed in an examination of the ‘nexus’ of practice (Hui, Schatzki, and Shove 2016) between and across generations. The practice lens is particularly suitable to grapple with family business topics that, to a large extent, are informal and unplanned due to its ability to connect mundane, micro activities with business outcomes (Nordqvist and Melin 2010). The development of the next generation and the impact on their entrepreneurship-related practice can contribute to central topics in the family business literature, including transgenerational entrepreneurship, succession, entrepreneurial learning, and entrepreneurial legacy.

Discursive artefacts

Finally, we contribute to the development of the concept of ‘discursive artefacts’ in practice-based research. We agree with scholars stressing that a ‘full account of an organization must also consider its material arrangements, the ways humans, artefacts, organisms, and things are ordered in it’ (Schatzki 2005, 478), as well as that entrepreneurship is a phenomenon which is discursive and rich in stories (Dawson and Hjorth 2012; Gartner 2007; Hamilton 2013). Our findings unpacked the meaning and (un)intentionality of the ‘Discursive-material practices’ (Thompson, Verduijn, and Gartner 2020 250).

Specifically, we found that the discursive artefacts regarding the cooking practice in a family business have extended meanings (namely, developing the next generation) beyond the purpose of the practice itself (namely, providing food and livelihood). Traditionally, practices are often observed as they happen, and are thus normally studied through ethnographical research with extensive (and, oftentimes, longitudinal) fieldwork (Langley and Abdallah 2011). However, the power of narratives and stories is rigorously unleashed in data that is an interplay of various mediums – oral, textual, and visual (Boje 2008).

As a result, we identified the cookbooks as a form of discursive artefacts of cooking practice in family business. We found that there are two types of artefacts when ‘speaking of’ practices: artefacts *in practice* (e.g. recipes, ingredients, and cookery), defined as ‘devises’ or ‘resources’ (Shove 2016, 156); and discursive artefacts *of practice*. We define *discursive artefacts* as recorded/written stories of mundane family practices (e.g., cooking/eating/shopping) produced by the family and deployed in different forms of media, e.g., autobiographies and biographies, letters, diaries, and video recordings. Simply, they are recordings of practices. Through our analysis, we found that these discursive artefacts are a part of the interwoven bundle of practice of the family, business, and cooking. They are captured and communicated as meaningful practices to intervene and act upon the social world in several ways. These discursive practices are purposeful in their intention to intermingle various artefacts (e.g. cookbooks and YouTube videos) with human actions within the family and the business.

Practice theorists would agree that activity is embodied and that nexuses of practices are mediated by artefacts and objects, but what is less clear is the nature of that embodiment (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Von Savigny 2001). Following Vaara and Whittington (2012), our research findings support that these discursive artefacts are more than intermediaries of human action because their agency extends beyond the practices they describe. Our study

shows how discursive artefacts are particularly powerful for the next generation becoming successors through *socializing*, *bridging*, and *leading*. As a result, discursive artefacts stand alone as a distinctive form of practice within the bundle of interwoven activities organized around shared understandings of cooking practice in the family business. They are nostalgic in tone and refer within and across generations and move between cultures, resonating with the ‘teleoaffective structure’ (Schatzki 2002, 80) of the practice of cooking for the next-generation.

Practical implications

Through this research, we identified several practical implications for family business owners to take into consideration for next-generation. First and foremost, we found that family life serves as a great early socialization site where the next generation develops and engages with the family businesses. As a result, we suggest that there is a clear advantage for family members to practice together and to involve the potential successors in the family business from an early age. By being part of the family business, the next generation might become more willing and committed successors. Specifically, the involvement of the next generation should not be viewed as restricted to business activities or the business site. Practices that happen in family sites are also important for next-generation development.

Limitations and future research directions

First, our research uses cooking as an illustrative example of a practice through which the next generation develops. However, we need to emphasize that we acknowledge the heterogeneity of families; specifically, from a practice-based perspective, families are composed of different practices. While cooking exemplifies our research and allows in-depth illustration of the theorization through a practice-based perspective, we acknowledge that there is a limitation in the practices that are covered by our research. We encourage scholars to conduct further research to unpack other practices in family businesses, especially those performed in family sites.

Second, we used a single case study of a culinary business, which is particularly suitable for the exploratory nature of this study and the theoretical sampling of the case. We see boundaries to the applicability of our findings. To advance this line of thought and further develop the EaP theorization, we encourage more in-depth case research to further unfold these complexities with examples linking cooking or other types of family practices to entrepreneurial outcomes.

Lastly, despite out of the scope of our research, we encourage future research to further develop the concept of *discursive artefacts*, especially in the different ways they (may) influence practices. We propose that their effects could ripple beyond connecting the constellations of cooking and culture with other practices, developing their own agency (Vaara and Whittington 2012). We have seen in other research where cookbooks are discursive artefacts that can embody cooking know-how and family (hi)stories, but can also go beyond family business to influence broader audiences (Ge, De Massis, and Kotlar 2021). According to practice philosophy, actors and agencies are products of their practices (Orlikowski 2010). These discursive artefacts are therefore not just a representation of the cooking practice but an active, ongoing practice of the family business. Discursive activities of this nature are commonly found in family business alongside other objects that intervene within the business (e.g. in identity creation and communication, branding, and customer satisfaction [Konopaski, Jack, and Hamilton 2015]). Therefore, these discursive artefacts deserve a nuanced analysis of their place in the creation, maintenance, and transformation of social life. We encourage future research to further develop the construct of ‘discursive artefacts’ by unpacking how ‘Material objects, or the nonhuman, affect the production of practices’ (Teague et al. 2021, 571).

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Data details

Title	Authors	Main contents of the stories	Pages
Sweet Mandarin Cookbook	Tse and Tse 2014	Stories behind cooking the family recipes, folk tales and family tales of traditional Chinese recipes, and stories of recipes taught in their cooking school. With photo demonstrations of dishes and cooking together in practices.	192
Dim Sum: Small Bites Made Easy	Tse and Tse 2015	Stories of Tse family's dim sum recipes and traditional Chinese recipes. Records of the Tse sisters' effort to learn Dim Sum from a Dim Sum master. With photo demonstrations of dishes and cooking together in practices.	160
A Chinese Street Food Odyssey	Tse and Tse 2016	Stories of Tse sisters' trip of China and learning Chinese street food recipes. These stories are also linked with family lives regarding the cooking and dining of dishes. With photo demonstrations of dishes and cooking together in practices.	192
Total			544

Table 2: Next-generation development through cooking practice

	Cooking as socializing (with family members)	Cooking as bridging (with family business)	Cooking as leading (the family business)
Definition	Cooking as socializing means that the next generations engage with cooking practice daily and understand it as a mundane practice as part of the family life.	Cooking as bridging means that the next generation engage in cooking practice from a family business perspective, understanding it as part of the family business.	Cooking as leading means that the next generation leads cooking practice as successors and the family business.
Sub-themes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mixing life with cooking Marking family times Learning about culture Learning life lessons 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting family members to business Learning about family members Learning about the business 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing the family legacy Making personal marks

Figure 1: A sample from the cookbook, illustrating the pairing of recipes and stories

Figure 2: Data structure

