Spotlight
by CeFEO

How everyday family activities can shape future family business leaders?

The role of everyday family practices in shaping family business successors

BINGBING GE · ELEANOR HAMILTON · KAJSA HAAG

Published on October 17, 2023 *https://doi.org/10.68623/spotlight.2024.8y5*

Family businesses are unique because of the intricate blend of business operations with family life. One of the most significant challenges these businesses face is ensuring the smooth transition of leadership from one generation to the next. However, how family dynamics and daily practices impact the development of the next generation as successors remains underexplored. This article highlights the findings of a recent study that employs an *Entrepreneurship-as-Practice* perspective to analyze how seemingly mundane family practices, like cooking, shape the next generation's journey to becoming successors in family businesses.

WHAT WE STUDIED

The research in focus uses a case study of a culinary family business and its three cookbooks as "discursive artefacts" to explore the socialization of the next generation into the family business. The authors, Ge, Hamilton, and Haag, delve into the daily practices within the family, particularly cooking, to demonstrate how these practices serve as a vehicle for transmitting entrepreneurial knowledge and shaping the next generation's identity as family business successors. The study offers a novel approach by viewing everyday family activities through a practice-based lens, contributing to the broader family business literature by refocusing attention on the family as the core of successor development.

FINDINGS

The study identifies three critical dimensions—*socializing*, *bridging*, and *leading***—that describe how everyday family practices facilitate the next generation's development into family business successors.

Socializing

From a young age, the next generation engages in daily family practices, such as cooking, that blend family life with business operations. These activities are rich with cultural, emotional, and entrepreneurial lessons. For instance, cooking together not only nourishes family bonds but also imparts crucial life lessons. The family kitchen becomes a site for cultural transmission and moral teachings, embedding the next generation into the fabric of the family's traditions and values.

Bridging

Cooking also acts as a bridge between the family and the business. Through these daily practices, the next generation learns not only about their family's history but also about the business's operational nuances. In the case study, the Tse sisters gradually develop a deep understanding of their family's culinary business by participating in cooking from a young age. This hands-on engagement serves as an informal, ongoing apprenticeship, preparing them for future leadership roles without a formal succession plan in place.

Leading

As the next generation matures, they begin to take on leadership roles in the family business, often blending tradition with innovation. For example, the Tse sisters modernized their family's culinary traditions by introducing new recipes and healthier cooking methods, while simultaneously preserving their heritage through iconic family dishes. This phase also involves stepping into public roles, gaining recognition through media appearances, and achieving broader business success.

TAKEAWAYS

For family business owners, this study underscores the importance of involving the next generation in everyday family and business activities from an early age. Simple, mundane practices—like cooking together—can foster a sense of belonging, instill core business values, and gradually prepare potential successors for leadership roles. Family businesses should focus on creating environments where the next generation can naturally absorb business knowledge through informal, everyday interactions rather than relying solely on structured succession planning.

Family businesses should consider integrating the next generation into daily operations earlier and more naturally, leveraging everyday family activities as informal training grounds. By doing so, they can create a seamless, organic path for succession that is deeply rooted in the family's traditions and business culture.

CONCLUSION

The research illustrates that succession in family businesses is not solely the result of formal planning; instead, it often emerges from the everyday practices that take place within the family. In the case of the culinary business studied, cooking was a central practice that allowed the next generation to naturally transition into leadership roles. The study calls for a broader understanding of how family dynamics contribute to business continuity, urging future research to explore other family practices that may play a role in shaping business successors.

Spotlight by CeFEO, How everyday family activities can shape future family business leaders? The role of everyday family practices in shaping family business successors. Downloaded on 13 November 2026 from https://doi.org/10.68623/spotlight.2024.8y5

CEFEO AUTHORS



Kajsa Haag

Associate Professor

Jönköping International Business School

kajsa.haag@ju.se

PUBLISHED IN



Ge, B., Hamilton, E., & Haag, K. (2024). An Entrepreneurship-as-practice perspective of next-generation becoming family businesses successors: The role of discursive artefacts. Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 36(3–4), 489–515 (open access).

https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2023.2265324

Spotlight is an online magazine that translates research from the Centre for Family Entrepreneurship and Ownership (CeFEO) at Jönköping International Business School, Jönköping University, into accessible insights for family business owners, practitioners, and policymakers.

Spotlight is supported by the WIFU Foundation. This partnership advances dialogue and education in responsible family entrepreneurship and ownership.

JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY
Jönköping International Business School

CeFEO
Centre for Family Entrepreneurship and Ownership

WIFU FOUNDATION