

Special issue Call for Papers

PUTTING PRACTICES FIRST: FURTHERING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS PRACTICE DOMAIN

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We call for papers that will continue to make progress in entrepreneurship as practice research domain by challenging scholars to prioritize and theorize the practices of entrepreneurship in theory development, methodologies, and education.

Special issue information:

This special issue aims to stimulate a concentrated focus on research opportunities in the domain of Entrepreneurship as Practice (EaP) (Thompson et al., 2020). EaP is both a theoretical perspective and a community of like-minded scholars. As a theoretical perspective, EaP utilizes contemporary theories of practice to reconceive the creation of new value, innovation and ventures (Thompson et al., 2022). In this perspective, entrepreneurship occurs through the daily actualization and perpetuation of a nexus of social practices (Teague et al., 2021; Thompson & Byrne, 2020). EaP scholars thus forefront the empirical study of the multiple and heterogenous practices of entrepreneurship and their relations; including, but not limited to, practices of new venture ideation (Nicolai & Thompson, 2023), team formation and conversation (Campbell, 2019b), customer discovery, validation, resourcing (Keating et al., 2013), pitching (Teague et al., 2020), valuation, product innovation, selling (Geiger & Kelly, 2014), business modelling (Thompson & Byrne, 2022), business planning, and business registration (Thompson & Byrne, 2020). In doing so, this research domain examines the complex interplay between social norms, technologies and agencies of multiple people (e.g., entrepreneurs, mentors, clients, investors, families, officials, etc.) and, more recently, non-humans (Cnossen et al., forthcoming) as they interact *within* and *between* practices. Consequently, the term ‘practice’ refers not to a broad distinction from theory, as a category of professional work (e.g., law or medical practice), nor is it meant to train oneself by repeated exercises (as in deliberate practice), but are empirical phenomena enacted by multiple practitioners and situated in specific historical conditions.

Over the past decade, EaP has coalesced into a lively research community that works with practitioners to systematically study the practices of entrepreneurship, including their features, contexts and consequences (see www.entrepreneurshipaspractice.com). The community aims to contribute to entrepreneurship theory, practice and education in innovative ways (Champenois et al., 2020). In doing so, this scholarship augments the dominant ‘entrepreneur’-oriented research by demonstrating the usefulness of understanding entrepreneurship as occurring through collective agency (Ben-Hafaïedh et al., 2024), that is, as different practitioners

interact, create meaning, and make decisions in ordinary, everyday ways. Far from being uninteresting theoretically, everyday practices of entrepreneurship are socially and culturally complex, intricate, and subtle, which warrants close scholarly attention and analysis. EaP continues to shine light on the hidden-in-plain-sight practices of entrepreneurship that are too often abstracted away from or glossed over in entrepreneurship research and education. By prioritizing practices as a unit of analysis, EaP underscores that practices are primary sites of entrepreneurship, i.e., the interactional places where ideas are developed, deals are made, products designed, teams formed, and value created.

Scope of Special Issue

While EaP has welcomed other successful initiatives to stimulate theoretical and practice development (Teague et al., 2021; Thompson et al., 2020), there remains many opportunities to deepen empirical and theoretical insights. Specifically, we see room to further examine entrepreneurship practices that have not yet been subjects of empirical examination. Moreover, there is further room to clarify and critically discuss the boundaries of an EaP perspective, its relevance for other domains of entrepreneurship scholarship, its links to enterprise education and innovative methodologies that include practitioners in all aspects of the research process.

First, there are many entrepreneurship practices that remain hidden-in-plain-sight that have not been examined and theorized in detail, e.g., customer discovery, business model validation, valuation, product/service innovation, etc. As opposed to approaching these phenomena as something to be theorized about from a distance, EaP scholarship uniquely has the opportunity to dive into the overlooked empirical nuances of their collective enactment, that is, how activities, practical knowledge, technologies, tools, and rules and norms combine, in certain times and spaces with real-world consequences. Moreover, as any one entrepreneurship practice is informed and shaping other practices, scholarship could examine how practices relate to one another. Finally, there is further a role for a deeper investigation into entrepreneuring by agents disturbing established practices, that is, how entrepreneurship practices themselves are formed, how they transform established ways doing practices, and how the nexus of practices that combine in order to generate radical or incremental industry change over time (Hui et al., 2017).

Second, EaP is still a relatively new theoretical framework and, as such, has focused on developing publications that apply or map out its main arguments, assumptions, and methodologies. At a conceptual level, there are further opportunities to clarify how this theoretical perspective is unique from or may overlap with other theoretical frameworks in the field. For example, scholars might compare and contrast EaP with existing behavioural theories such as effectuation, bricolage, and hustle (Fisher, 2012; Fisher et al., 2020). Moreover, there is room to discuss how EaP relates to other process theories, such as Deleuzian process theory (Hjorth, 2014; Hjorth et al., 2015), Actor-Network Theory (Korsgaard, 2011) and posthumanism (Gherardi, 2021). We also welcome a critical perspective to EaP and encourage scholars to adopt feminist practice theories to explore performativity and gender (Butler, 1990) (Butler, 1999), the social practices of masculinity (Connell, 2020), gendered identity (Skeggs, 2013), and structured social inequalities (Fraser, 1995) within entrepreneurial practices. At an empirical level, there are many opportunities for EaP research to contribute to understanding on contemporary discussions in the field, such as the nature, role and limits of knowledge and uncertainty (Campbell, 2021), social and cultural norms (Welter & Baker, 2020), innovative entrepreneurship

(Hermans et al., 2015), and entrepreneurial support organizations and ecosystems (van Erkelens et al., 2023), as well as the social construction and embedded practices of physical environments, social and symbolic spaces, and time (Davis, 2022; Korsgaard et al., 2015).

Third, we see opportunities to put EaP into conversation with other research domains in entrepreneurship to encourage new insights and inspiration. Social and sustainable entrepreneurship research has made gains by highlighting, theorizing and exploring mission-driven entrepreneurship (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017; Santos, 2012). EaP scholars have potential to contribute to these discussions by illuminating and examining the intricacies and relations between practices of entrepreneurship that lead to or prevent blended value creation. Another domain is entrepreneurship as design (Berglund et al., 2020) that may offer a point of mutual interest for scholars interested in how artifacts are made through practices, and recursively shape other entrepreneurship practices. Finally, scholarship on inequality, gender and diversity in entrepreneurship (Balachandra et al., 2019; Campbell, 2024; Packard & Bylund, 2018) may inspire EaP research to delve into the details of practices that produce and explain the persistence of in/equalities.

Fourth, because EaP scholars study the complex details of entrepreneurship practices their findings naturally lend themselves to deepen discussions about enterprise and entrepreneurship education (Campbell, 2019b). It may be that entrepreneurship practices are the key missing ingredient in entrepreneurship education; the specific ‘what’ of entrepreneurial learning that is often left vague and elusive. EaP could highlight, discuss and critique the actual entrepreneurship practices that multiple practitioners (entrepreneurs, clients, suppliers, partners, investors, etc.) enact as they engage in the ordinary work of entrepreneurship. In doing so, EaP can help prepare students with the interactional competencies that are necessary for doing entrepreneurship practices well, while avoiding the problematic issue of course evaluation based on uncertain venture plans or outcomes (Campbell, 2019a). Engagement with practitioners through co-curricular programming and utilisation and reflection on the use of emerging technologies, such as AI, within entrepreneurship practices will provide new opportunities for learning. Moreover, because EaP stresses that practices are a collectively enacted phenomenon, educators may explore innovative pedagogical methods, e.g., practice simulations, flashmobs (Tunstall & Neergaard, 2022), video-based group reflections (Ormiston & Thompson, 2021), mentorship, and practical skills training to allow novices to see, focus on, and enact entrepreneurship practices from the stances of different practitioners (e.g., officials, investors, suppliers, partners, and customers), rather than only assuming the role of the entrepreneur.

Finally, we see room for EaP scholars to contribute to the movement to increase the societal relevance of entrepreneurship research (Chen et al., 2022). EaP research has untapped potential to delve into the ways contemporary shocks in political, health, economic and technological domains shape or disrupt existing practices of entrepreneurship, but also how new nexuses of practices emerge through entrepreneurship to remake the existing order. For example, EaP has the unique opportunity to theorize how existing entrepreneurship practices will change as the result of AI, deepening insights that other entrepreneurship research cannot provide. Moreover, several scholars have noted the alignment between entrepreneurship research and the (real-life) problems that research may solve is only explored post hoc, once the research outcomes are at hand (Sharma & Chen, 2022). Because EaP starts with practices of entrepreneurship, there is great potential to align research concerns with practitioner concerns. Taking practitioner’s practices seriously means that EaP scholars have the mindset and tools to approach problem

formulation as a collaborative process of continuous interaction between researchers and practitioners. Overall, using inclusive methodologies informed by theories of practice, EaP scholars have the ability to move beyond conventional research methods to actively engage with the knowledge, experiences, and views of the communities being researched.

Potential research questions

This special issue encourages studies addressing, but not limited to, the following questions.

Examining the hidden-in-plain-sight practices of entrepreneurship

- How do practitioners address the many practical challenges of customer discovery, business model validation, valuation, product/service innovation, etc.?
- How do different actors, such as clients, investors, suppliers, partners, employees, etc., participate in these practices?
- When is a particular practice enacted with expertise, according to those different actors present in its enactment?
- How are certain practices interconnected with other practices? How do different actors create stable links between practices? What consequences does this have for their performance and outcomes?
- How do certain practices or nexuses of practices vary according to their desired outcomes? How does this vary due to cultural context?

Expanding the domain of EaP

- How does EaP overlap with effectuation, bricolage, and hustle, and how can these approaches benefit from adopting a practice perspective?
- How can process theories, Actor-Network Theory, and posthumanism expand or challenge our understanding of EaP?
- How is gender embedded and performed within entrepreneurial practices? How do gendered practices of entrepreneurship propel or impede inequalities in economic distribution, cultural recognition, race, class?
- How is embodiment and aesthetics involved in different entrepreneurship practices?
- What is the nature, role and limits of knowledge and uncertainty and social and cultural norms of nexus of practices related to innovative entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial support organizations, and entrepreneurial ecosystems?

EaP & other research domains

- How do practices of social and sustainable entrepreneurship lead to or prevent blended value creation? How are certain entrepreneurship practices enacted different when desired outcomes are blended value creation?
- What practices underlie the design and construction of entrepreneurial artifacts? How do these artifacts shape other practices of entrepreneurship?
- What nexuses of practices produce or prevent social equality, economic distribution and fair and equitable redistribution?

EaP & entrepreneurship education

- How can an EaP approach stimulate new pedagogies that go beyond established pedagogies of entrepreneurship education?
- How can the everyday practices of entrepreneurship be introduced into entrepreneurship curricula?
- How can entrepreneurship education adopt a relational perspective and better consider the practices and perspectives of multiple actors?
- How can educators incorporate the use and reflection about emerging technologies, such as AI, within education about entrepreneurship practices?

EaP & relevance

- Why and how can EaP scholars design and execute studies of entrepreneurship practices that includes practitioners' concerns and their participation?
- What practice theory-informed methodologies can be used for an inclusive approach to research design, including research problem formulation and justification, research questions, methods and findings?
- What challenges exist with inclusive research methodologies that can (not) be addressed using practice theory?
- How can inclusive studies of entrepreneurship practices make a difference?

Paper Development Workshop

We plan to offer a Paper Development Workshop for authors. Participants in the workshop will have the opportunity to discuss the integration of EaP perspectives and methods to study entrepreneurial phenomena in their own research. The workshop will be offered on April 8th, 2025 at Jönköping International Business School, the day prior to the [10th Entrepreneurship as Practice Conference](#). Participation in the Paper Development Workshop will not influence the chances of acceptance for publication, and participation in the EaP Conference is advised but not required. Submissions to the PDW can be full length papers, or short papers covering the main aspects of the article for review. Submissions should be emailed to the Associate Editor Dr. Neil Aaron Thompson at n.a.thompson@vu.nl.

Important Dates

- Submission period for short papers to the Paper Development Workshop – 15 December 2024 to 1 March 2025
- Notification of acceptance for the Paper Development Workshop – Decisions and notifications will be made on a rolling basis from 15 December 2024. The final date of notification will be 7 March 2025
- Paper Development Workshop – 8 April 2025, Jönköping International Business School
- Submission period on a rolling basis for full papers to the Special Issue - Opens on 15 April 2025, Closes 15 April 2026.

Manuscript submission information:

The [Journal of Business Venturing Insights](#)' submission system will be open for submissions to our Special Issue from **15 April 2025**. When submitting your manuscript to [Editorial Manager](#), please select the article type "[VSI: Entrepreneurship as Practice](#)". Please submit your manuscript before **15 April 2026**.

Submissions will be reviewed according to the journal's policies. Once your manuscript is accepted, it will go into production, and will be simultaneously published in the current regular issue and pulled into the online Special Issue. Articles from this Special Issue will appear in different regular issues of the journal, though they will be clearly marked and branded as Special Issue articles. Please ensure you read the Guide for Authors before writing your manuscript. The Guide for Authors and link to submit your manuscript is available on the Journal's homepage at: [Journal of Business Venturing Insights | ScienceDirect.com by Elsevier](#)

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