

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Empowering Entrepreneurs for Cultural and Social Sustainability

SUPERVISORS

	First name	LAST NAME	University	Research Unit
Supervisor	Muriel	FADAIRO	USMB	IREGE Research Institute of Management and Economics
<i>Full Professor of Management</i>				
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<i>In collaboration with</i>	Aur�lie	GAUCHET	USMB	LIP/PC2S Inter-University Psychology Laboratory. Personality, Cognition, Social Change
<i>Full Professor of Psychology</i>				

Fields of study

The PhD involves the following fields: **Entrepreneurship and Business Management** (SME management, Entrepreneurial behavior and innovation, Responsible business and human resource management). **Psychology** (Cognitive-behavioral approaches, Stress management, resilience, and emotional regulation). **Cultural Heritage and Social Sciences** (Intangible cultural heritage and identity narratives, Heritage management). **Interdisciplinary and Applied Areas** (Applied economics, regarding the impact of entrepreneurship on local economies; Cross-cultural and transnational studies).

Requirements (academic background, languages...) needed to apply for this research topic

1. Academic Background - Master's degree (or equivalent) in one of the following fields: Entrepreneurship, Business Administration, or Management, or Applied Economics (econometrics), or Interdisciplinary degrees combining social sciences, economics, and cultural studies. **Strong academic record**, including research experience (e.g., thesis, publications, or projects) demonstrating analytical and methodological skills.

2. Research Skills - Competence in quantitative methods: survey design, statistical and econometric analyses (STATA, R, or equivalent). **Additional competence in qualitative methods:** interviews, focus groups, thematic analysis, coding software (NVivo, ATLAS.ti, or equivalent) is highly desirable. Experience in interdisciplinary research is desirable.

3. Languages - English: Fluent (reading, writing, speaking) for scientific communication, publications, and conferences. **French and/or Spanish:** Good working knowledge is strongly recommended for fieldwork in both countries, interviews, and local collaborations.

4. Other Requirements - Motivation to work in an international and interdisciplinary context. Interest in **entrepreneurship, mental health, and cultural heritage**. Ability to **travel and conduct fieldwork** in France and Spain. Strong communication and teamwork skills for collaboration with academic supervisors and partner organizations.

5 main KEYWORDS

Entrepreneurship, Mental Health, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Resilience, Identity Narratives.

ABSTRACT (250 words max.)

Entrepreneurs, particularly those engaged in cultural, creative, and artisanal activities, are not only economic actors but also **custodians of intangible cultural heritage and identity narratives**. Through their practices, they transmit traditions, skills, and collective memories that shape social cohesion and reinforce cultural identities. However, they face a global environment of **chronic uncertainty** - geopolitical instability, ecological transitions, and the disruptive impact of artificial intelligence - that heightens stress, anxiety, and burnout. These challenges endanger both their personal well-being and the **continuity of the cultural values they embody**.

The project bridges psychology and entrepreneurship research, fields that rarely intersect, by integrating **cognitive-behavioral approaches** with **cultural heritage and identity narratives in entrepreneurs**. The PhD explores resilience, emotional regulation, and stress management as key mechanisms to design **evidence-based, context-sensitive interventions** supporting entrepreneurs in a context of **multiple disruptions**.

By focusing on the intersection between **entrepreneurship and intangible cultural heritage**, this PhD contributes to a deeper understanding of how safeguarding entrepreneurs' well-being is essential not only for economic performance but also for the **preservation and renewal of cultural identities and collective memory** in contemporary societies.

Research aims and methodology

The doctoral project aims to:

1. **Investigate the psychological well-being of entrepreneurs**, with a focus on stress, anxiety, and burnout in contexts of chronic uncertainty.
2. **Examine the role of entrepreneurs as custodians of intangible cultural heritage**, particularly how their work contributes to the transmission of identity narratives, traditions, and collective memory.
3. **Identify mechanisms that enhance resilience and emotional regulation**, linking cognitive-behavioral approaches to practical strategies for sustaining mental health in entrepreneurial contexts.
4. **Develop evidence-based, context-sensitive interventions** that can support entrepreneurs' well-being while reinforcing the sustainability of cultural and creative activities.
5. **Bridge interdisciplinary research** between psychology and entrepreneurship to address both human and economic dimensions of entrepreneurship.

The project will be **grounded on a quantitative approach**, but will also integrate and **qualitative analyses** to capture dimensions of entrepreneurs' experiences - **Quantitative studies**: Surveys assessing mental health, stress, and resilience among entrepreneurs and SME managers in France and Spain. Standardized psychometric instruments (e.g., scales for anxiety, burnout, emotional regulation, resilience). Statistical analysis to identify correlations between psychological factors, entrepreneurial practices, and engagement with intangible cultural heritage. **Qualitative studies**: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with entrepreneurs in cultural, creative, and artisanal sectors. Exploration of identity narratives, cultural practices, and personal strategies for coping with uncertainty. Thematic analysis to identify patterns in resilience, stress management, and the role of entrepreneurship in cultural preservation. **Intervention design and evaluation**: Development of context-sensitive, evidence-based interventions to support mental health and resilience. Pilot testing of interventions with selected participants, followed by assessment of effectiveness and adaptability. **Comparative and interdisciplinary analysis**: Cross-country comparison

to capture cultural, economic, and institutional differences. Integration of findings across disciplines to produce comprehensive recommendations for supporting entrepreneurial well-being and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

Relevance and added-value of the proposed research in relation to the current state of knowledge

This doctoral project addresses a critical gap by investigating **how entrepreneurs' mental health intersects with their role as custodians of intangible cultural heritage**. Entrepreneurs in cultural, creative, and artisanal sectors do more than create economic value: they transmit traditions, preserve community identities, and contribute to collective memory. By linking mental health and resilience with these broader cultural functions, the PhD project provides a **novel perspective on the sustainability of entrepreneurial practices and heritage preservation**.

The added value of the project lies in several dimensions: **Interdisciplinary integration**: Combines psychological sciences (cognitive-behavioral approaches) with entrepreneurship research, applied economics, and cultural heritage studies, fields that rarely converge. **Practical relevance**: Generates **evidence-based interventions** to enhance entrepreneurs' resilience, emotional regulation, and stress management, supporting both well-being and the continuity of cultural practices. **International comparative perspective**: The cotutelle framework (France–Spain) allows examination of cross-cultural differences in entrepreneurship, mental health, and heritage engagement. **Contribution to theory and practice**: Advances understanding of the **human dimension of entrepreneurship** while providing actionable insights for policy makers, business support organizations, and cultural institutions.

Interdisciplinary nature of the research together with the alignment with the CHORAL programme and complementarity expertise of the teams

The cotutelle PhD project embodies a highly **interdisciplinary approach**, integrating **entrepreneurship research, psychology, and cultural heritage studies**. While entrepreneurship traditionally focuses on economic performance and innovation, the project emphasizes the **human and psychological dimensions** of entrepreneurial activity, particularly stress, anxiety, and resilience, which are critical for sustaining the work of entrepreneurs in safeguarding **intangible heritage** and fostering its **continuity and resilience** in contemporary society.

The **complementarity of the supervision teams' expertise** ensures a robust interdisciplinary framework with a full professor of psychology and two full professors of management interested in entrepreneurship as part of the **intangible cultural heritage**.

Together, this interdisciplinary collaboration enables the doctoral project to generate **novel insights and practical interventions**, enhancing the **resilience of entrepreneurs** while supporting the **preservation and transmission of cultural heritage**, fully in line with CHORAL programme priorities.

Output plan including publication and dissemination activities

The PhD project is designed to generate a combination of **scientific, applied, and public-facing outputs** to maximize academic impact, policy relevance, and societal benefit.

1. **Academic Publications** - **Peer-reviewed journal articles** in interdisciplinary journals covering: Entrepreneurship and SME management (e.g., *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Small Business Economics*). Psychology and mental health (e.g., *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *Frontiers in Psychology*). Cultural heritage and intangible heritage studies (e.g., *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*). **Conference presentations** at international conferences in entrepreneurship, applied psychology, and cultural heritage (e.g., EURAM, Academy of Management, ICOMOS/ICOM conferences). **Doctoral thesis** submitted under the cotutelle agreement, contributing an integrated interdisciplinary perspective on entrepreneurship, mental health, and heritage preservation.
2. **Applied and Policy-Oriented Outputs** - **Evidence-based guidelines and toolkits** for entrepreneurs to manage stress, enhance resilience, and maintain well-being while sustaining cultural practices. **Policy briefs** for local governments, cultural institutions, and business support organizations highlighting interventions that strengthen mental health in entrepreneurial contexts.
3. **Public Engagement and Dissemination** - **Workshops and seminars** with entrepreneurs and SME networks in France and Spain. **Outreach through digital media** (blogs, webinars, social media posts) to share insights with broader audiences. **Collaborations with socioeconomic partners** to translate research findings into actionable strategies for sustaining intangible cultural heritage.
4. **Expected Timeline** - The expected timeline is presented in Table 1.

Estimated schedule

Table 1

Year	Activities	Expected Outputs
Year 1	- Literature review: entrepreneurship, mental health, intangible cultural heritage - Development of research instruments (surveys, interview guides) – Ethical approvals and administrative setup for cotutelle – Initial networking with entrepreneurs and cultural organizations	- Literature review report – Research protocols and ethics approvals – First conference abstract submission
Year 2	- Quantitative data collection: surveys of entrepreneurs and SME managers in France and Spain – Qualitative data collection: interviews and focus groups - Preliminary data analysis - Development of evidence-based interventions	- Database of quantitative and qualitative responses – Interim analysis report - Draft intervention prototypes – Conference presentation(s)
Year 3	- Pilot testing and evaluation of interventions - Final data analysis and cross-country comparison - Thesis writing and submission (cotutelle) - Dissemination: journal articles, policy briefs, workshops, public engagement	- PhD thesis (France & Spain) – Peer-reviewed publications - Policy briefs and outreach materials – Final seminar/workshop presentations