

CHORAL

RESEARCH PROJECT (max. 5 pages)

APPLICATION FORM TO REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR JOINTLY SUPERVISED DOCTORAL THESIS

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The use of gamification tools to enhance tourist participation, cultural heritage valorisation and sustainable tourism practices in European destinations.

SUPERVISORS

From recruiting University	First name	LAST NAME	University	Department
Supervisor	Elodie	Manthé	Université Savoie Mont-Blanc	IREGE
HDR or equiv.				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
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Co-Supervisor	Sara	Catalàn	Zaragossa University	Facultad de Economía y Empresa.
HDR or equiv.				
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5 main KEYWORDS

Gamification, digital tools, cultural heritage, perceived value, tourist contribution

ABSTRACT (250 words max.)

Cultural tourism destinations are faced with mass tourism and tourism practices that can alter both the quality of the tourism experience and the cultural and heritage sites themselves. The gamification of certain tours, activities and destination websites could contribute to a better understanding of these destinations, better engagement of tourists and more effective tourism.

This research aims to better understand the adoption of gamification during a touristic experience and especially its attitudinal and behavioral outputs. If previous researches were oriented towards the acceptance of such solutions and the effect of gamification on consumer's engagement and purchase intention, in this research we propose to study gamification as a part of a whole touristic experience through the Expectation Confirmation Theory lens.

The main objective is to better understand the mechanisms by which gamification solutions influence tourists to adopt responsible behaviors within the destination they are visiting. In the context of cultural destinations, the challenge is to find levers that both enhance the value of heritage and guide tourist behavior towards greater respect, cleanliness and heritage preservation. In addition, this research aims to establish whether gamifying a destination can create a stronger bonds with tourists, leading to favorable attitudinal and behavioral consequences for the destination.

Research aims and methodology

The aims of the research is to enrich the tourism literature and practices by identifying behavioral and attitudinal outputs for tourists using gamification in a context of cultural tourism.

We propose a mixed-approach between Customer Engagement Value (CEV) Theory and Motivational affordances - Psychological outcomes - Behavioural outcomes framework to be able to both analyze whether individuals engage with the gamification solutions and/or the destination and how gamification impacts individuals' behavior within the destination.

Based on this background, this research will also be anchored in the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980) by examining tourists' expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation of beliefs, and satisfaction in relation to the tourist gamified experience provided by the destination. In the context of this study, expectations refer to tourists' anticipated outcomes or benefits associated with gamified cultural activities during their travel. These expectations may include personal satisfaction, a

meaningful travel experience, or a positive impact on the local patrimony. Pre-travel expectations form the basis against which tourists evaluate the effectiveness and overall experience of the travel experience offered by the destination.

In this framework, tourist gamification participation intention and sustainable respectful behavioral outputs can be analyzed through the lens of ECT. Understanding these relationships can provide valuable insights for destinations seeking to enhance their visitors' sustainable efforts and promote sustainable tourism practices that foster strong connections between tourists and the destination.

A qualitative research will be conducted and experiments will be carried out.

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

From a scientific point of view, the interest of this approach lies in its ability to go beyond traditional measures of user engagement towards an application or a website. The gamification of an experience/activity should be seen as a mean of engaging tourist users not only with the tool, but above all with the destination that deploys it.

In addition, adopting an ECT approach will enable to apprehend how gamification is perceived by tourists, not as a one-off use in the service of cultural discovery, but as an integral part of a tourist experience that can strengthen attachment to a destination, the desire to contribute to it and safeguard its cultural and environmental heritage.

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

The approach is in full agreement with the objectives of the CHORAL program, falling under the theme of Enhancement and dissemination of cultural and natural heritage, with direct reference to tourism and valorisation, education, communication, heritage management, digitisation/digital tools, storytelling, institutions and heritage.

The two supervisors show a great complementarity in their expertises and skills to ensure both a high quality supervision, theoretical foundations for the research project and relevant methodological inputs.

Dr. Elodie Manthé is Associate Professor at University of Savoie Mont-Blanc in the Business Department. She published research results in WOS indexed journals - such as Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice, Journal of Financial Business and Accounting and Current Issues in Tourism - and extensively communicated in international Conference regarding individuals' participation/ ways to being involved in various contexts such as startups financing (through crowdfunding), creative projects (through crowdsourcing), charitable causes (through check-out-charity) and lately destinations in a tourism marketing context.

Complementary, Sara Catalàn is Associate Professor in the Department of Marketing and Market Research of the University of Zaragoza. Her main interests are centered around the concept of gamification and its different applications in clients, workers and students. Her works have been published in international scientific journals, such as Journal of Business Research, Online Information Review, Journal of Product and Brand Management and Computers & Education, and have been presented in important discussion forums such as EMAC, AEMARK or ACEDE.

Output plan including publication and dissemination activities

The following outputs are taken into consideration:

1. According to an individual research plan, the PhD student will have to elaborate three scientific reports:
 - a) A literature review regarding the evolution of tourists' cultural practices and destinations gamified offering;
 - b) A qualitative research exploring tourists' perceptions of gamified touristic activities considering various context, adopting the Expectation Confirmation approach.
 - c) A quantitative research, eventually through experiments regarding the outputs of tourists gamified participation in the conservation, improvement and valorization of cultural heritage.
2. Publications and conferences
 - a) At least two articles published in journals indexed in international databases and/or in WOS, individually or as first author within a research team;
 - b) At least three participations with scientific communications at international conferences In all the articles and presentations at the conferences, topics from the proposed research topic will be addressed.
3. PhD thesis.

Estimated schedule

Output	Due date
Scientific reports (SR)	
Literature review	May 2025
SR 2 – theoretical model	December 2025
SR 3 – firsss analyses	May 2026
Articles	



CHORAL, CULTURAL HERITAGE OUTREACH IN ROMANCE LANGUAGES

Article 1	Sept.-Oct. 2025
Article 2	Mars-Avril 2026
Article 3	December 2026 - January 2027
International Conferences (IC)	
IC1	September 2025
IC2	June 2026
IC3	June 2026
PhD thesis	September 2027

