

**Doris Peručić**  
Algebra Bernays University  
10000 Zagreb, Croatia  
doris.perucic@bernays.hr

**Marijana Greblički**  
University of Zagreb  
Faculty of Transport  
and Traffic Sciences  
10000 Zagreb, Croatia  
mgreblicki@fpz.unizg.hr

**Andrej Smodlaka**  
University of Zagreb  
Faculty of Transport  
and Traffic Sciences  
10000 Zagreb, Croatia  
andrej.smodlaka@fpz.unizg.hr

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# KEY FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DIASPORIC WILLINGNESS TO (RE)VISIT THE ANCESTRAL HOMELAND: THE CASE OF THE CROATIAN DIASPORA IN CANADA

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to research the key factors that influence diasporic future travel intentions to (re)visit the motherland. The paper deals with the Croatian diaspora residing in Canada, as a case study.

**Methodology:** The data were collected through an online survey. The chi-squared test (with Fisher's exact test) was used for data analysis.

**Results:** The findings indicate that the characteristics of the Croatian Canadian diaspora do not significantly influence future travel intentions. The motives that play significant roles in determining future travel plans share an emotional dimension and are strongly linked to identity and family. An increased intention to visit the homeland is associated with a more positive perception of most social and tourism attributes. The findings indicate that there is a significant relation between satisfaction with social security and safety, intangible cultural heritage, and the plan to visit Croatia.

**Conclusion:** The study contributes to the literature on diasporic travel behavior and enables tourism policymakers to improve their marketing efforts and attract this market niche, which travels throughout the year.

**Keywords:** Croatian diaspora, motivations, tourism and social development, satisfaction, future travel intentions

## 1. Introduction

Throughout history, people have emigrated in search of a better life, new opportunities, or due to insecurity in their own countries caused by political or armed conflicts, climate change, and other dis-

asters. The United Nations estimates that there are around 281 million migrants in the world, which makes up 3.6% of the global population (IOM UN Migration, 2024). Croatia has a long tradition of migration and is considered a traditional *emigra-*

tion state (Knezović & Grošinić, 2017). According to data from the Central State Office for Croats Abroad, the emigration of Croatian citizens can be divided into several periods: from 1880 until the First World War, from 1918 until the Second World War, at the end of the Second World War, after 1965, and after 1990. Emigration during the 1990s to Western European countries and overseas destinations, such as Canada, the USA, New Zealand, and Australia, was mainly connected to the Homeland War in Croatia and the departure of Croatian citizens from war-torn areas.

It is estimated that 3.2 million Croatian emigrants and their descendants reside abroad, including approximately 250,000 in Canada. The largest concentrations of Croats in Canada are found in the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, and Manitoba (Central State Office for Croats Abroad, 2024). Many emigrants have maintained their national identity, while a significant number, particularly among the younger generations, have successfully assimilated into their new environment, adopting the cultural and social values of the host country.

There are several studies that provide insights into various aspects of diaspora communities in Canada. For example, Singh (2012) explored the political activities of the diaspora and their influence on Canadian foreign policy, with a particular focus on the Indo-Canadian community, Singh and Singh (2014) examined the political engagement and identity of Tamil communities in Canada, Giri (2025) addressed the challenges faced by Nepalese communities in Canada, Kaufmann (2021) and Caxaj and Gill (2017) focused on diasporic homeland identity and integration policy, while Ramachandran and Crus (2020) investigated diaspora engagement in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Some papers have focused on the political activities of the Croatian diaspora in Canada (Winland, 2012), students' attitudes toward studying in Croatia (Sršen et al., 2019), and characteristics and nature of the homecoming journeys (Peručić et al., 2023). There has been a lack of research on diasporic behavior as potential travelers and the factors that may influence their homecoming journeys.

The current study intends to explore the key factors that drive the Croatian diaspora residing in Canada to (re)visit the ancestral homeland, using quantitative methodology. The objectives are to investigate whether characteristics of diasporic travelers such as age, education, gender, and generation may influ-

ence travel intentions, to identify the motives that influence future travel behavior, and to examine the effects of satisfaction with tourism and social development on visitation intentions.

The analysis used the chi-squared test (with Fisher's exact test) to address the following research questions:

1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the intention to visit Croatia in the future and the sociodemographic characteristics of diasporic travelers?
2. Which motives play a significant role in determining future homecoming journeys?
3. Is a higher intention to visit the homeland associated with satisfaction with attributes related to social development, tourism infrastructure, safety and security, cultural heritage, and other aspects of destination attractiveness?
4. What do respondents perceive as missing for the further development of diaspora tourism in Croatia?

This paper offers new empirical insights into the field of diaspora tourism, with a particular focus on the Canadian context, which remains relatively underexplored compared to other Croatian diaspora communities, such as those in Australia. By focusing on the specific sociocultural and migratory features of the Croatian Canadian community, this research enhances understanding of the factors influencing diasporic travel decisions. The paper first provides a review of the relevant literature on diasporic travel behavior, followed by a presentation of the methodological approach used to assess the factors influencing diasporic travelers' willingness to (re)visit their homeland. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of travel behavior of the Croatian-Canadian diaspora. Finally, directions for future research are proposed.

## 2. Current research

Diaspora travel motivations to the homeland are among the most discussed topics. Members of the diaspora (re)visit the country of origin for various reasons ranging from visiting homeland, relatives and friends, attending national and religious events, participating in educational programs, searching for their "roots", to taking holidays for medical purposes. For example, the key motives for the Indian diaspora in South Africa for visiting the homeland were vacation and visiting friends and

relatives (Du Preez & Govender, 2020). For Chinese residing in overseas countries the main factors that determined the ancestral homeland journeys were nostalgia, transnationalism, cultural (re)connectivity and hybrid self-identity (re)constructions (Zhu et al., 2021). Important motives for the Croatian diaspora in Australia to (re)visit the motherland were visiting homeland, family and friends, often combined with attending important family events, searching for the roots, having a beachside holiday and visiting tourist attractions (Peručić et al., 2022), while for the Macedonian diaspora in Australia, these motives include visiting friends and family and having a holiday often associated with “roots tourism” (Ben-Moshe et al., 2012). For members of the Timorese diaspora residing in Portugal, Indonesia, and Australia the dominant reason for visiting the homeland was to visit family and friends. The second most important motive for visiting the homeland for diaspora members residing in Indonesia and Australia was to attend important family events, while holidays were an extremely important motive for the Timorese diaspora residing in Australia, but less significant for those living in Indonesia and Portugal (Wong et al., 2017). For the Croatian-Canadian community the primary reasons for travelling to the homeland were associated with visiting family and friends, visiting the homeland, and having a beachside holiday (Peručić et al., 2023). According to Mathijssen and Mathijssen (2020), frequent diasporic motives to visit the homeland for medical reasons were time availability, communication, dissatisfaction with the current system, healthcare insurance status, and healthcare quality. Otoo et al. (2021) pointed out that diasporic motivations contributed to destination evaluations; evaluations of the homeland are strongly associated with diasporic tourist satisfaction and satisfaction influences future travel intentions.

Several studies have focused on the connection between diaspora and their motherland and the diasporic experience with the homeland. All researchers argue that homeland attachment and tourist satisfaction determine travel intentions and experience. According to Abu (2022), the relationship between the homeland and the diaspora significantly influences the formation of their national and social identity. Immigrants' connection with the homeland also influences the length and frequency of diaspora tourism trips (Huang et al., 2013) and homeland attachment is positively related to their travel intentions (Otoo et al., 2021). Proyrungroj (2022) explored how the first- and second-generation Thai diaspora tourists differ in

their sense of ancestral homeland attachment. The findings showed that the first generation of the Thai diaspora residing in Western countries (the U.S., Australia, Germany, Sweden, and France) had a higher level of attachment to the homeland than the second generation and their connection grew with each visit to the motherland. Peručić et al. (2024) examined the profile of Croatian diaspora members in Australia who showed more interest in traveling to the homeland in the future across generations. They pointed out that diaspora members who feel more at home in their country of origin express greater interest in undertaking diasporic travel in the future. Huang et al. (2013) found that second-generation immigrants in the U.S. who felt a sense of belonging to both America and their ancestral homeland took the highest number of trips to their country of origin. Connections with the homeland and host societies also influence the experience of diaspora tourists (Huang et al., 2015). According to Huang and King (2002), the level of diasporic integration into the host society and the preservation of their “original” culture significantly determine the mode of travel, motives, and experience of the homeland. Proyrungroj (2022) observed that diaspora tourism experience helped migrants feel more connected to the country. Adding emotional value with a conative image of the destinations would have a positive effect on the arrival of diaspora tourists to the homeland (Fu et al., 2025).

### 3. Methodology

The data were collected through an online survey from January to March 2022. The questionnaire was distributed via social networks to the members of the Croatian diaspora in Canada, the Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce, and the Canadian Croatian Folklore Federation. Convenience sampling was used to collect data. The sample encompassed 230 respondents. The questionnaire consisted of questions regarding sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, national identity, motives and travel characteristics, satisfaction with Croatian tourism, social attributes, and future travel intentions.

The questionnaire was created using the Google Forms platform. Once the surveys were completed, the data were imported into SPSS (version 26.0, SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) for the purposes of tabulation and detailed analysis. Automated edit checks were performed to identify any inconsistencies or errors in the responses. Custom tabulation

queries were then developed to generate tables for both the report and further in-depth analysis.

Statistical methods (the chi-squared test with Fisher's exact test) were used to explore the impact of various factors on planning a visit to the ancestral country. Data analysis was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant deviations between different independent variables related to gender, age, education, occupation, migration history, travel motives, perception of the quality of tourism facilities and social development, activities during trips in Croatia, and the respondents' intentions to visit Croatia in the future.

#### 4. Results

The research results provided the basic sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, as well as descriptive information about their homeland journeys. The majority of study participants were between the ages of 36 and 55 (63%), followed by those between 18 and 35 (24%). Most respondents were female (64%), employed (88%), and had higher

or university-level education (69%). Twenty-eight percent of the respondents were born in Croatia, while 72% were born in Canada. Regarding their place of residence in Canada, 78% of respondents lived in Ontario, 12% in Alberta, and 10% in other parts of the country. The largest group of respondents emigrated to Canada between 1986 and 1995 (36%), followed by those who emigrated between 1966 and 1975 (27%) (Peručić et al., 2023).

About 98% of respondents have visited Croatia at least once. In terms of length of stay, more than half of the respondents spent an average of up to one month in Croatia. The findings indicate that the respondents are motivated to undertake diasporic travel in the future. More than 80% of the respondents are definitely planning to visit Croatia again (Peručić et al., 2023).

Table 1 presents the results of a Pearson chi-square test analyzing the relationship between various demographic characteristics of the Croatian diaspora in Canada and their intention to (re)visit Croatia in the future.

**Table 1** Future travel intentions of the respondents to (re)visit Croatia depending on their characteristics

Pearson chi-square test		Are you planning to visit Croatia in the future
Gender	chi-square	.122
	df	3
	Sig.	.989
Age	chi-square	16.715
	df	15
	Sig.	.336
Where do you live in Canada	chi-square	11.880
	df	15
	Sig.	.688
Occupation	chi-square	20.418
	df	15
	Sig.	.156
Education	chi-square	6.140
	df	9
	Sig.	.726
Generation of diaspora	chi-square	12.417
	df	21
	Sig.	.928
Period of emigration	chi-square	13.320
	df	18
	Sig.	.772

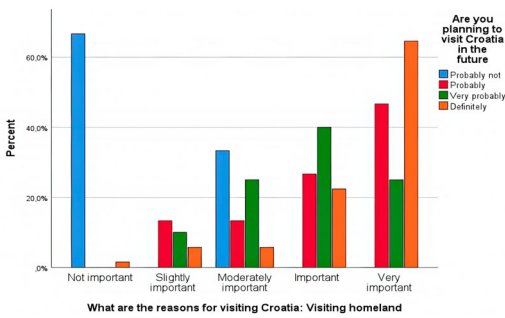
Source: Authors' analysis

The analysis of the significance level showed that none of the demographic characteristics had a statistically significant relationship with the respondents' intention to visit Croatia in the future. All p-values are well above the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that characteristics such as gender, age, occupation, education, or generation of diaspora do not significantly influence travel intentions. The findings suggest that other factors such as emotional attachment, cultural identity or satisfaction with tourism and social development might play a more important role.

Based on the purpose of travel, homeland trips were primarily motivated by visiting the homeland, visiting family and friends, enjoying a beachside

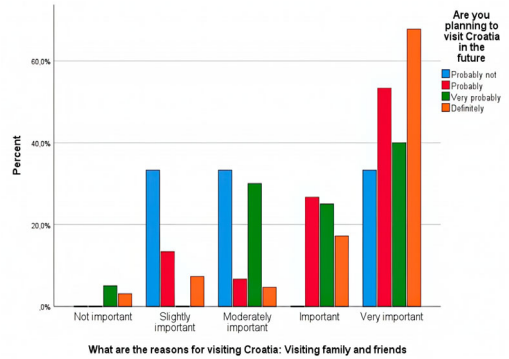
holiday, nostalgia or homesickness, sightseeing or visiting tourist attractions, attending important family events, and searching for family roots. Regarding respondents' intention to visit Croatia in the future, statistically significant differences were identified for three motives: "visiting family and friends" ( $p = 0.004$ ), "visiting the homeland" ( $p = 0.000$ ), and "attending important family events, birthdays, family reunions, etc." ( $p = 0.006$ ). These values, determined by the chi-square test ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicate that these travel motives play a significant role in shaping respondents' future travel plans. All three motives are strongly influenced by emotional attachment to the homeland, family and cultural roots. The strength of these motives increases with a higher likelihood of visiting Croatia.

**Figure 1** Importance of the motive "visiting homeland" in relation to future travel intentions



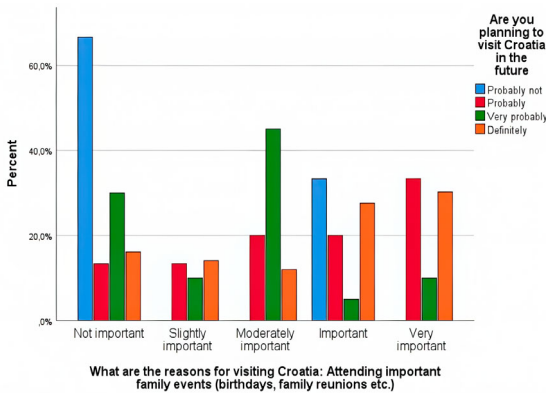
Source: Authors' analysis

**Figure 2** Importance of the motive "visiting family and friends" in relation to future travel intentions



Source: Authors' analysis

**Figure 3** Importance of the motive "attending important family events (birthdays, family reunions, etc.)" in relation to future travel intentions



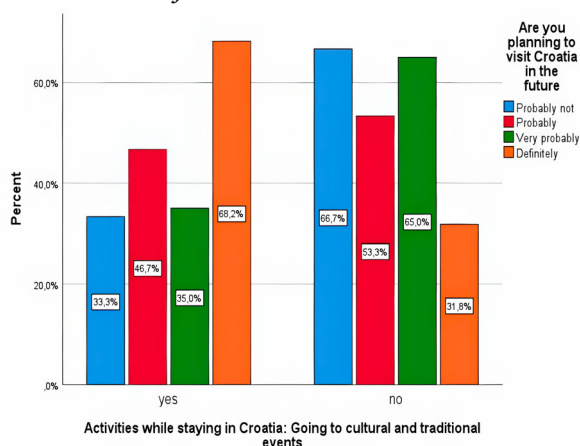
Source: Authors' analysis

Respondents who intend to “definitely” visit Croatia (87% important and very important) place the highest importance on the motive “visiting homeland” (Figure 1). The motive “visiting family and friends” was stated as an “important” or “very important” reason by 84.9% of respondents who will “definitely” visit Croatia in the future (Figure 2). The motive “attending important family events” is a “very important” or “important” reason for homecoming journeys for 57.8% of the respondents who will definitely visit Croatia (Figure 3). These motives are anticipated to remain consistently significant for diaspora members, particularly those who maintain a strong emotional connection to their homeland, have familial ties in Croatia, and travel there regularly for personal reasons. Other motives appear to have a limited impact on their homecoming inten-

tions. The findings suggest that emotionally driven campaigns emphasizing connections to the homeland, traditional and family values, as well as cultural and religious events, may prove to be effective.

In terms of activities during trips in Croatia, respondents stated that the most preferred activities were visiting family and friends, attending cultural and traditional events, city sightseeing, dining at restaurants, visiting historical buildings, museums, national parks, and protected natural areas, swimming, attending family events, and shopping. The only activity with a statistically significant association with future travel intentions is “attending cultural and traditional events” ( $p = 0.008$ ) (the value of the chi-square test is  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Figure 4** Importance of the activity “going to cultural and traditional events” during the trip to Croatia in relation to future travel intentions



Source: Authors' analysis

For the respondents who indicated they will “definitely” visit Croatia (68.2%), cultural and traditional events are very important and may be a key factor in their decision to visit their homeland. A higher intention to travel is associated with greater interest in cultural and traditional experiences in Croatia. Other activities do not play a crucial role in the decision to visit Croatia. However, cultural and traditional events should be further emphasized in promotional campaigns, as their emotional value influences the final decision to visit the homeland.

Regarding satisfaction with Croatian social and tourism development, attributes related to the

standard of living, tourism infrastructure, safety, investment opportunities, cultural heritage, and other aspects were evaluated. Diasporic travelers who positively evaluate their homeland are likely to be satisfied with their visit (Otoo et al., 2021). According to respondents' answers, the most highly rated attributes were tourist accommodation facilities, cultural/traditional events, gastronomy (variety and quality), and the uniqueness of the destination (natural resource attractions, historical heritage, and cultural identity). Respondents expressed lower levels of satisfaction with political development, investment opportunities, health tourism, and ecological awareness (Table 2).

**Table 2 Assessment of social and tourism development attributes of Croatia in relation to future travel intentions**

Pearson chi-square tests		Are you planning to visit Croatia in the future?
Economic development	chi-square	7.385
	df	15
	Sig.	.946
Political development	chi-square	12.001
	df	15
	Sig.	.679
Tourism development	chi-square	14.726
	df	15
	Sig.	.471
<b>Social security and safety</b>	chi-square	27.367
	df	15
	Sig.	.026 <sup>*</sup>
Standard of living	chi-square	11.537
	df	15
	Sig.	.714
Ecological awareness	chi-square	16.322
	df	15
	Sig.	.361
Investments opportunities	chi-square	7.806
	df	15
	Sig.	.931
Uniqueness of the destination (natural resource attraction, historical heritage, and cultural identity)	chi-square	11.477
	df	12
	Sig.	.489
<b>Intangible cultural heritage (oral traditions, local knowledge, traditional skills, etc.)</b>	chi-square	22.115
	df	12
	Sig.	.036 <sup>*</sup>
Tourist accommodation facilities	chi-square	11.863
	df	12
	Sig.	.457
Gastronomic offer (variety and quality)	chi-square	9.325
	df	15
	Sig.	.860
Recreational facilities	chi-square	20.553
	df	15
	Sig.	.152
Nightlife	chi-square	20.663
	df	15
	Sig.	.148
Cultural/Traditional events	chi-square	13.587
	df	12
	Sig.	.328
Value for money	chi-square	4.687
	df	15
	Sig.	.994

Pearson chi-square tests		Are you planning to visit Croatia in the future?
Cleanliness and maintenance of beaches and tourist attractions	chi-square	12.458
	df	15
	Sig.	.644
Shopping opportunities	chi-square	13.609
	df	15
	Sig.	.555
Traffic infrastructure (quality of roads, transport, etc.)	chi-square	20.476
	df	15
	Sig.	.154
Nautical tourism infrastructure	chi-square	7.346
	df	15
	Sig.	.947
Health tourism infrastructure	chi-square	12.270
	df	15
	Sig.	.658
Tranquility, rhythm of life	chi-square	14.451
	df	12
	Sig.	.273

\* Note: The chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level.

Source: Authors' analysis

Two assessments, “social security and safety” (Sig. = 0.026) and “intangible cultural heritage (oral traditions, local knowledge, traditional skills, etc.)” (Sig. = 0.036), showed a statistically significant relationship with respondents' intention to visit Croatia in the future (the chi-square test value  $p < 0.05$ ). Other factors, such as economic development, political development, tourist accommodation facilities, gastronomic offer, nightlife, traffic infrastructure, etc., do not have a statistically significant impact on visit planning (most p-values are greater than 0.05).

Respondents (N = 225) rated various attributes of Croatia on a scale from “very poor” to “very good”. They were grouped according to their expressed intention to visit into: “Probably not”, “Probably”, “Very probably”, “Definitely”. Satisfaction with the social and tourism attributes of Croatia in relation to respondents' future travel intentions varies depending on their stated intention to visit the homeland. The findings show that respondents who stated they would “definitely” visit Croatia have significantly more positive opinions on almost all aspects of destination attractiveness. “Very good” ratings increase with a stronger intention to visit, especially for the following attributes: uniqueness of the destination (60.6% of respondents who will “definitely” visit Croatia), cultural/traditional events (55.3%), cleanliness and maintenance of tourist at-

tractions (47.3%), variety and quality of the gastronomic offer (47.3%), tourism development (42.6%), and security and safety (37.8%).

The attribute “intangible cultural heritage” received the highest rating from the respondents who will definitely visit Croatia (75% rated it as good or very good), while 67.6% of those who will definitely visit Croatia rated “social security and safety” as good or very good. The findings indicate that there is a significant connection between satisfaction with social security and safety and intangible cultural heritage, and the planning of a visit to Croatia. These two attributes have a significant impact on return visits.

Croatia is recognized as a tourist destination, especially among members of the diaspora who are planning a visit the country. Tourism development, social security and safety, and cultural heritage, especially intangible cultural heritage, are Croatia's main strengths. Positive destination evaluation and satisfaction increase the diaspora's future travel intentions. Croatia's image, built on culture, safety, and tourism facilities, is crucial for attracting the diaspora, while lesser-known aspects require stronger communication and greater investment in promotion.

The most commonly identified needs for the development of diaspora tourism among respond-

ents who definitely plan to visit Croatia (“agree” and “strongly agree” responses) include better air transport connections (67.1%), attractive programs specifically designed for the diaspora (65.6%), improved cooperation with Croatian institutions

(57.7%), greater awareness of cultural and historical heritage (55.8%), strengthened cooperation with diaspora communities (59.4%), and enhanced online promotion (54.8%).

**Table 3 Respondents’ assessment of what is lacking for the development of diaspora tourism in relation to the future travel intentions**

		Are you planning to visit Croatia in the future										p
		Probably not		Probably		Very probably		Definitely		Total		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Greater awareness of Croatian intangible heritage	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	7	3.6%	8	3.5%	.023
	Disagree	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	2	10.0%	38	19.8%	41	17.8%	
	Undecided	0	0.0%	2	13.3%	4	20.0%	36	18.8%	42	18.3%	
	Agree	1	33.3%	6	40.0%	11	55.0%	76	39.6%	94	40.9%	
	Strongly agree	0	0.0%	4	26.7%	3	15.0%	24	12.5%	31	13.5%	
	Can't say	2	66.7%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	11	5.7%	14	6.1%	
	Total	3	100.0%	15	100.0%	20	100.0%	192	100.0%	230	100.0%	
Greater awareness of cultural and historical heritage	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	3.1%	6	2.6%	.001
	Disagree	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	2	10.0%	44	22.9%	47	20.4%	
	Undecided	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	3	15.0%	28	14.6%	32	13.9%	
	Agree	1	33.3%	8	53.3%	11	55.0%	75	39.1%	95	41.3%	
	Strongly agree	0	0.0%	4	26.7%	4	20.0%	32	16.7%	40	17.4%	
	Can't say	2	66.7%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	7	3.6%	10	4.3%	
	Total	3	100.0%	15	100.0%	20	100.0%	192	100.0%	230	100.0%	
Better perception of Croatia as a tourist destination	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	10.0%	18	9.4%	20	8.7%	.154
	Disagree	0	0.0%	3	20.0%	4	20.0%	59	30.7%	66	28.7%	
	Undecided	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	5	25.0%	31	16.1%	37	16.1%	
	Agree	1	33.3%	5	33.3%	6	30.0%	55	28.6%	67	29.1%	
	Strongly agree	1	33.3%	5	33.3%	3	15.0%	23	12.0%	32	13.9%	
	Can't say	1	33.3%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	6	3.1%	8	3.5%	
	Total	3	100.0%	15	100.0%	20	100.0%	192	100.0%	230	100.0%	

		Are you planning to visit Croatia in the future										p
		Probably not		Probably		Very probably		Definitely		Total		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Better cooperation between Croatia and Croatian communities in the diaspora	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	3.1%	6	2.6%	.172
	Disagree	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	3	15.0%	19	9.9%	23	10.0%	
	Undecided	1	33.3%	1	6.7%	6	30.0%	33	17.2%	41	17.8%	
	Agree	0	0.0%	4	26.7%	4	20.0%	60	31.3%	68	29.6%	
	Strongly agree	0	0.0%	8	53.3%	5	25.0%	54	28.1%	67	29.1%	
	Can't say	2	66.7%	1	6.7%	2	10.0%	20	10.4%	25	10.9%	
	Total	3	100.0%	15	100.0%	20	100.0%	192	100.0%	230	100.0%	
Better cooperation between state, educational, and cultural institutions with Croatian communities in the diaspora	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	5.0%	3	1.6%	4	1.7%	.383
	Disagree	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	2	10.0%	16	8.3%	19	8.3%	
	Undecided	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	5	25.0%	35	18.2%	41	17.8%	
	Agree	1	33.3%	4	26.7%	3	15.0%	56	29.2%	64	27.8%	
	Strongly agree	0	0.0%	8	53.3%	5	25.0%	55	28.6%	68	29.6%	
	Can't say	2	66.7%	1	6.7%	4	20.0%	27	14.1%	34	14.8%	
	Total	3	100.0%	15	100.0%	20	100.0%	192	100.0%	230	100.0%	
Attractive tourist programs for the diaspora (e.g. cultural and artistic programs, programs tailored to different groups such as students, seniors, etc.)	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	5.0%	3	1.6%	4	1.7%	.548
	Disagree	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	2	10.0%	20	10.4%	23	10.0%	
	Undecided	0	0.0%	3	20.0%	6	30.0%	31	16.1%	40	17.4%	
	Agree	2	66.7%	3	20.0%	4	20.0%	72	37.5%	81	35.2%	
	Strongly agree	0	0.0%	6	40.0%	5	25.0%	54	28.1%	65	28.3%	
	Can't say	1	33.3%	2	13.3%	2	10.0%	12	6.3%	17	7.4%	
	Total	3	100.0%	15	100.0%	20	100.0%	192	100.0%	230	100.0%	
Better online promotion of Croatia as a tourist destination (on social media, YouTube, etc.)	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	5.0%	10	5.2%	11	4.8%	.317
	Disagree	0	0.0%	2	13.3%	4	20.0%	32	16.7%	38	16.5%	
	Undecided	1	33.3%	2	13.3%	5	25.0%	32	16.7%	40	17.4%	
	Agree	1	33.3%	4	26.7%	0	0.0%	59	30.7%	64	27.8%	
	Strongly agree	0	0.0%	5	33.3%	9	45.0%	46	24.0%	60	26.1%	
	Can't say	1	33.3%	2	13.3%	1	5.0%	13	6.8%	17	7.4%	
	Total	3	100.0%	15	100.0%	20	100.0%	192	100.0%	230	100.0%	

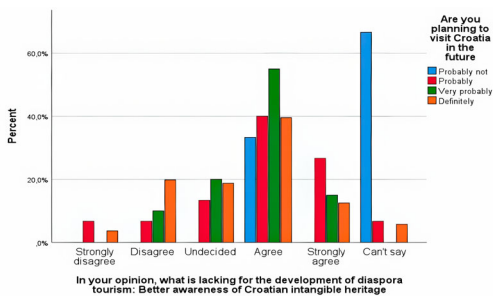
		Are you planning to visit Croatia in the future										p
		Probably not		Probably		Very probably		Definitely		Total		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Better air transport connections	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	5.0%	5	2.6%	6	2.6%	.947
	Disagree	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	1	5.0%	24	12.5%	26	11.3%	
	Undecided	0	0.0%	2	13.3%	1	5.0%	20	10.4%	23	10.0%	
	Agree	1	33.3%	3	20.0%	6	30.0%	55	28.6%	65	28.3%	
	Strongly agree	1	33.3%	7	46.7%	9	45.0%	74	38.5%	91	39.6%	
	Can't say	1	33.3%	2	13.3%	2	10.0%	14	7.3%	19	8.3%	
	Total	3	100.0%	15	100.0%	20	100.0%	192	100.0%	230	100.0%	

Source: Authors' analysis

Two variables have a statistically significant impact on travel planning: “greater awareness of Croatian intangible heritage” and “greater awareness of cultural and historical heritage” (the value of the chi-square test is  $p < 0.05$ ).

A total of 52.1% of respondents who will definitely visit Croatia strongly agree or agree with the statement that “greater awareness of Croatian intangible heritage” is needed, while 55.8% strongly agree or agree with the statement that there should be “greater awareness of cultural and historical heritage.”

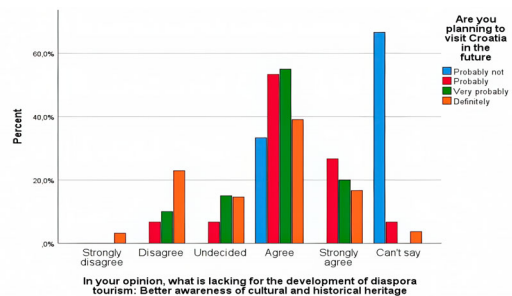
Figure 5 Importance of “greater awareness of Croatian intangible heritage” in relation to future travel intentions



Source: Authors' analysis

The results indicated that awareness of tangible and intangible heritage has a greater influence on the homecoming travel plans of potential visitors from the diaspora than other factors. Other factors did not show a statistically significant relationship with the intention to visit (all p-values  $> 0.05$ ). This finding can serve as a foundation for developing promotional strategies focused on strengthening cultural identity and heritage awareness. It is necessary to enhance the knowledge and promotion of Croatia's cultural and historical heritage,

Figure 6 Importance of “greater awareness of cultural and historical heritage” in relation to future travel intentions



Source: Authors' analysis

especially its intangible heritage. To successfully develop diaspora tourism, strategic focus should also be placed on improving other aspects, such as the perception of Croatia as a tourist destination, cooperation with the diaspora and institutions, online promotion, tailor-made tourist and cultural programs, and transport connections. Promotion, particularly through digital channels, is essential for reaching younger generations of diaspora travelers. Respondents most interested in traveling to Croatia expect these shortcomings to be addressed.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, certain key factors have been identified that influence diasporic travel intentions to visit the motherland. The analysis showed that the characteristics of the Croatian diaspora in Canada do not significantly influence their future travel intentions. This finding contrasts with the study by Peručić et al. (2024), which reported that characteristics of the Croatian diaspora residing in Australia, such as age, place of birth, migration history, degree of integration into the new society, homeland attachment, and national identity, have a direct impact on their future travel behavior. However, the lack of influence of personal characteristics among the Canadian diaspora does not necessarily imply that such characteristics have no impact on future travel intentions to the motherland.

Croatian Canadians who intend to “definitely” (re)visit their country of origin place the highest importance on the motives of “visiting family and friends,” “visiting the homeland,” and “attending important family events.” This study confirms that travel motives strongly influenced by homeland attachment, family, and cultural identity significantly affect future travel behavior among the diaspora (Wong et al., 2017; Peručić et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020).

The present study suggests that a positive perception of Croatia among the diaspora in Canada significantly influences their intentions to visit. Respondents who stated that they would “definitely” visit Croatia have a significantly more favorable opinion of almost all social and tourism development attributes. The finding that satisfaction increases future travel intentions to the ancestral

homeland supports previous research (Otoo et al., 2021; Prayag, 2009; Prayag et al., 2017; Hosany et al., 2017). A higher intention to travel among the Croatian diaspora in Canada is associated with greater interest in cultural and traditional experiences. Enhancing knowledge of Croatia’s cultural and historical heritage, particularly its intangible heritage, is crucial for encouraging visits from the Canadian diaspora. Positive future travel intentions will also depend on improved transport connections, cooperation with Croatian institutions, attractive programs specifically designed for the diaspora, and online promotion.

The current findings provide a better understanding of the behavior of diasporic travelers and the key factors influencing their future plans to (re)visit their country of origin. The diaspora represents an attractive niche market that requires more attention, especially in the context of diaspora tourism. This study contributes to the literature on diaspora as potential travelers and can serve as a guide for destination managers to enhance marketing efforts and develop diaspora tourism strategies.

However, the study has certain limitations. In terms of the research sample, the majority of respondents were from two Canadian provinces (Ontario and Alberta) and belonged to the first generation or to a generation whose parents had both emigrated from Croatia to Canada, suggesting that ties with the homeland remain strong. Future studies should include other generational groups within the diaspora. It would also be valuable to examine the key factors that drive members of the Croatian diaspora residing in different countries to (re)visit the motherland, as this would allow for comparisons of their travel behavior.

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