

# **THE ROLE OF PROMOTION IN TOURISTS' DECISION TO PARTAKE IN A CULTURAL ROUTE THE CASE STUDY OF "THE TRAIL OF ROMAN EMPERORS" (SERBIA)**

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**ABSTRACT:** The popularity of cultural routes in Europe and their positive effects on the tourist industry, together with a desire to create the opportunity for the rich Roman heritage preserved in Serbia to regain its former glory, triggered the idea of the cultural route "The trail of Roman emperors". The principal aim of this paper is to examine the familiarity of potential visitors with the cultural route and their level of willingness to participate in it, especially depending on their perception of the quality of its promotion. The survey was carried out among 298 potential visitors and the collected data was analyzed by the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The results indicate major differences between genders, different age groups and level of education in terms of their perception of promotion and willingness to participate in the route. Moreover, the research shows the connection between the source of information through which respondents have heard about the route and their perception of the promotion of the route. This paper could be used as a guideline for choosing the appropriate promotional tools and the major target markets to focus on in the future in order to make this route become Serbia's international brand. **Keywords:** cultural tourism, cultural routes, Roman heritage, promotion, Serbia.

**RESUMEN:** La popularidad de las rutas culturales en Europa y sus efectos positivos en la industria turística, juntamente con el deseo de crear la oportunidad para que la rica herencia romana preservada en Serbia recupere su antigua gloria, estuvieron en origen de la ruta cultural "El Camino de los Imperadores Romanos". El objetivo principal de este artículo es analizar la familiaridad de potenciales visitantes con la ruta cultural, la evaluación de su voluntad de conocerla, principalmente en función de la percepción de la calidad de la promoción de la misma. La encuesta fue realizada entre 298 potenciales visitantes y los datos recogidos fueron analizados con el software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Los resultados indican grandes diferencias entre los sexos, diferentes franjas etarias y niveles de enseñanza en términos de la percepción de la promoción y voluntad de participar en la ruta. Además, la pesquisa muestra la relación entre la fuente de información a través de la cual los participantes de la encuesta oyeron hablar sobre la ruta y su percepción de la promoción de la ruta. Este artículo podrá ser usado como orientación en la elección de las herramientas promocionales adecuadas y de los principales mercados apuntado a tener en atención en el futuro, de modo a cambiar esa ruta en una marca internacional da Serbia. **Palabras-llave:** turismo cultural, rutas culturales, herencia romana, promoción, Serbia

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**RESUMO:** A popularidade das rotas culturais na Europa e os seus efeitos positivos na indústria turística, juntamente com o desejo de criar a oportunidade para que a rica herança romana preservada na Sérvia recupere a sua antiga glória, estiveram na origem da rota cultural “O Caminho dos Imperadores Romanos “. O objetivo principal deste artigo é analisar a familiaridade de potenciais visitantes com a rota cultural, a avaliação da sua vontade de a conhecer, principalmente em função da percepção da qualidade da promoção da mesma. O inquérito foi realizado entre 298 visitantes potenciais e os dados recolhidos foram analisados com o software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Os resultados indicam grandes diferenças entre os sexos, diferentes faixas etárias e níveis de ensino em termos da percepção da promoção e vontade de participar na rota. Além disso, a pesquisa mostra a relação entre a fonte de informação através da qual os participantes do inquérito ouviram falar sobre a rota e a sua percepção da promoção da rota. Este artigo poderá ser usado como orientação na escolha das ferramentas promocionais adequadas e dos principais mercados-alvo a ter em atenção no futuro, de modo a transformar essa rota numa marca internacional da Sérvia. **Palavras-chave:** turismo cultural, rotas culturais, herança romana, promoção, Sérvia

## INTRODUCTION

The Former Roman Empire, which stretched over a vast territory, partly including the territory of Serbia, has left its mark in the form of valuable cultural and historical heritage from this period. Today, in many European, Asian and North African countries, we encounter the valuable Roman heritage, which is considered to be a great generator of tourist visits, as well as significant revenues. This is closely related to the growing trend of cultural and archaeological tourism, especially tourism based on cultural heritage.

The World Tourism Organization estimates that approximately 37% of all tourist visits contains an element of culture, music, history, and religion (Richards, 2001). Today, almost every tourist package includes visits to numerous cultural attractions and it is evident that destinations with significant cultural heritage are one of the most visited. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the tourist sites and destinations in the world generate tourist visits based on cultural attractions and cultural heritage (Timothy, 2011).

Archaeological as well as historical tourism are very popular nowadays and they are reputed to be the leading sector of the national economy of many countries, as well as of their international economy. The economic value of cultural heritage was emphasized by many authors (Feilden & Jokilehto, 1993; English Heritage, 1997; Mason, 2002; Kim et al., 2007; Ruijgrok, 2006; Worthing & Bond, 2007) as well as the economic significance of cultural routes in its various forms which became a popular theme in the modern society (Hill & Gibbons, 1994; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Council of Europe, 2002; Council of Europe, 2010). The Roman remains are certainly one of the most important forms of archaeological remains, especially on the territory of

Europe. Due to their popularity and monumentality, they are visited by a large number of tourists every year (Fokke, 2011).

In comparison with other countries with Roman remains, Serbia stands out due to the fact that 17 Roman Emperors were born on its territory, which represents one fifth of the total number of Roman emperors and the largest number ever born outside Italy. On the territory of Spain, for instance, only two were born and on the territory of Germany only one Roman emperor (Božić & Berić, 2013). This figure indicates the importance of the territory of today's Serbia for the Roman Empire from the middle of the third to the end of the fourth century AD. During that time, large cities were flourishing and the border was established along the right bank of the Danube with many fortifications. In addition, this was followed by the construction of several imperial palaces and summer houses.

The Roman heritage in Serbia represents an immense potential for tourism development, especially referring to cultural and archaeological tourism. Nevertheless, this potential has not been used in the best way, nor became a significant generator of tourist visits.

The popularity of cultural routes in Europe and their positive effects on the tourist industry, together with a desire to create the opportunity for rich Roman heritage preserved in Serbia to regain its former glory, triggered the idea of the cultural route "The trail of Roman emperors". This cultural route aims to connect all places with Roman heritage of immense archaeological and historical importance, stretching over 600 km from Sirmium, Singidunum, Viminacium through Pontes, Diana, Trajan's bridge and board, Felix Romuliana to Mediana and Justiniana Prima as the most important sites of the route (Božić & Berić, 2013). In this way, the former Roman Empire, which once stood on the banks of the river Danube, could be reconstructed, and all sites within the route would be represented as resources of global significance that will enrich and enhance cultural tourism.

However, in order to generate major tourist visits and make this cultural route become one of Serbia's international brands, a set of good promotional activities is required. International experience shows that routes designed to attract visitors often fail because of inadequate provision of information and a lack of publicity. According to Meyer (2004), 'successful promotional practices, like the more general marketing practices, are those tools that effectively ensure or create a stable tourist demand while meeting, and not overburdening, current resource supply'. This is essential in order to motivate and create desire among potential tourists to take part in this route.

The principle aim of this paper is to examine the awareness of potential visitors about the cultural route, as well as their level of willingness to participate in it. Moreover, an important goal is to determine

the familiarity with the project “The trail of Roman emperors”, as well as the opinions on the quality of its promotion and presentation to tourists. This paper also aims to explore the current interest of specific age and gender groups for inclusion in this cultural route, in order to get a clear picture of the current situation and give suggestions for its better promotion, presentation and realization in the future.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It is evident that promotion and tourism marketing has an immense role in a travel decision-making process. This indicates that promotional activities and different marketing materials and strategies can significantly influence our decision to visit certain destinations, attractions or to partake in certain activities or travel routes.

There is a large body of literature emphasizing the importance of destination image, marketing and different promotional materials and the role they have in travel-related decisions the individuals regularly make. Chon (1990) investigated the role of destination image for travel behavior, Goodrich (1978) and Woodside & Lysonski (1989) emphasize that destinations with strong, positive images are more likely to be chosen in the travel decision process, while some authors emphasize a role of different promotional materials such as social media (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Hudson et al. 2013, Hudson & Thai, 2013); brochures (Wicks & Shuett, 1994; Zhou, 1997; Molina & Esteban, 2006), websites (Lee et al., 2006; Lepp et al., 2014) etc. in the information and decision-making process.

Based on this, and given the fact that cultural routes are considered to be popular tourist destinations, the authors found it interesting to explore the role of promotion in making the decision whether to partake in the route or not.

Route tourism can be described as a strategy which links up less well known, often rural, tourist attractions in order to market them more effectively under a unified theme and improve the management and conservation of heritage assets (Timothy & Boyd, 2006; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2009). Nowadays, route tourism is becoming very popular all over the world, especially in Europe. The “Camino de Santiago” in Spain and Route 66 in the USA are well known, but there are a host of examples in developing countries, such as the Cracow Industrial Heritage Route in Poland, the Dandi Heritage Route in India and the World Heritage Route in Vietnam.

Many papers discussed the immense significance of routes and route-based tourism (Hill & Gibbons, 1994; Kent & Elliott, 1995; Murray & Graham, 1997; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Rogerson, 2007;

Lourence, 2007; Snowball & Cortney, 2010; Moulin & Boniface, 2010) as well as the diverse benefits which are produced by their creation, namely in social, economic, environmental and cultural areas.

For instance, Briedenhann & Wickens (2004) especially emphasize the role of route creation for the economic development of rural areas; Lourens (2007) states that route development is considered to be a hope for sustainability of travel and tourism; Hill and Gibbons (1994) mention that trails have provided the impetus for the development of a range of attractions and facilities along their routes, while Yu (2005) emphasizes the significance of cultural itineraries for conservation of cultural heritage.

The importance of routes in Europe, especially those related to culture, arts and history, can be confirmed by the activity of the European Council which started numerous cultural and thematic routes in 1987. The European Council, defines these routes as “roads that pass through one or more regions or countries, thematically organized on the basis of historical, artistic or social value, which are connected geographically or based on their importance”. Adding the term “European” on the route, points out the significance and importance of the route beyond the local character. The European Council claims that the route must be based on a number of attractions, places with a very rich history, which represent European culture as a whole. “Camino de Santiago” in Spain was the first European cultural route established by the European Council in 1987. Beside this one, very popular and visited cultural routes are the historic route “Valley of the Kings’ Castles of the Loire River” in France, “Route 66” in the United States, “the trail of the Castles” in Germany and the Czech Republic, etc. (Council of Europe, 1995).

Cultural routes and itineraries are a relatively recent cultural phenomenon that led to the emergence of a new type of heritage. They are not ends in themselves; they are both a geographical journey through a territory and therefore through plural local identities, but also a mental journey with representative values, meanings, expectations, experiences, and finally a tourism product. This meta system gathers different territorial systems (Majdoub, 2010).

The definition of the itineraries and cultural routes makes the object of a vast scientific and professional debate within various international authorities, in particular the International Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC) and the European Institute of Cultural Itineraries. Cultural routes defined by the international scientific CIIC-ICOMOS Committee in its draft of international charter on cultural routes is the following: “Any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterized by having its own specific dynamic and historic functionality, which must

fulfill the following conditions: It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions or continents over significant periods of time. It must have thereby promoted a cross-fertilization of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage”.

Of paramount importance was the establishment of the technical body, the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), in 1998, for operational purposes. Its role is to examine applications for new projects, to monitor activities in the field and coordinate the work of partner organizations and to disseminate and archive information documents (Council of Europe, 2010).

How significant cultural routes are for European tourism is evident from the fact that ICOMOS prepared a Charter on cultural routes presented on 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS, in Québec (Canada), on 4th October 2008. According to this charter, the consideration of Cultural Routes as a new concept or category does not conflict nor overlap with other categories or types of cultural properties—monuments, cities, cultural landscapes, industrial heritage, etc.—that may exist within the orbit of a given Cultural Route. It simply includes them within a joint system which enhances their significance. This integrated, interdisciplinary and shared framework creates new relationships among them by means of an innovative scientific perspective that provides a multilateral, more complete, and more accurate vision of history. This approach stimulates not only understanding and communication among the peoples of the world, but also increases cooperation to preserve cultural heritage (ICOMOS Charter on Cultural routes, 2005).

Moreover, in December 2010, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution CM/Res (2010) 53, establishing an Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) to enable closer co-operation between states particularly interested in the development of Cultural Routes. The Governing Board of EPA awards the certification “Council of Europe Cultural Route” and carries out regular evaluation of certified routes in conformity with Committee of Ministers Resolution (2010) 52 which establishes the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification. Routes requesting the certification should:

1. Focus on a theme representative of European values and common to several European countries;
2. Follow a historical route or (in the case of cultural tourism) a newly created route;
3. Give rise to long-term multilateral co-operation projects in priority areas (scientific research; heritage conservation and enhance-

ment; cultural and educational exchanges among young Europeans; contemporary cultural and artistic practices; cultural tourism and sustainable development);

4. Be managed by one or more independent, organized networks (in the form of an association or a federation of associations) (Council of Europe, 2010).

According to Richards (2011), cultural routes can play an important role in anchoring narrative in the cultural spaces through which they travel, providing:

1. Raw materials for narrative
2. Linkage between narrative and place
3. Creative spaces for narrative development and intercultural dialogue

The cultural routes are important not just because of the physical journey, but also because they are in themselves a form of narrative. Routes tell stories about the places they pass through and link, and also about the people who travel them (Richards, 2011).

Cultural Routes, with a similar context to the route “The trail of the Roman emperors” are located throughout Europe, and even in the African continent. Examples are numerous, but some of the better known are Hadrian’s Wall Path National Trail in England; The German Limes, Via Claudia Augusta in Italy, Austria, Germany; Le Vie Romane del Mediterraneo in Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Algeria and Tunisia; Via Romana in Italy, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Greece, etc.

## REGIONAL SETTINGS

The Roman Empire occupied the vast territory stretching over 5,000 km from the north of England (the border with Scotland), through Germany, Austria, Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, all the way to Iraq and Iran, including the Middle East and Turkey, and the entire sub-Mediterranean part of North Africa. A series of fortifications were built on either side of the road along which the legions marched during the campaigns against the barbarian tribes across the Rhine and the Danube. About 40 legion camps, the so-called castrums (castrum) were built on that long defense line criss-crossed with thousands of smaller forts for stationing Roman troops. The Upper Moesia and Lower Pannonia, located in Southeast Europe (the territory of today’s Serbia), were parts of the Roman Empire which in the third century had a rapid expansion, managing only in two centuries to get at the very focus of events in the Roman Empire. It kept this position for six centuries and this was the time of construction of many fortifica-

tions along the right bank of the Danube (eastern border of the Roman Empire), as well as Roman cities, imperial palaces and summer houses (Master plan, 2007). This valuable Roman cultural and archeological heritage was preserved and today it is connected and presented to tourists in the form of a cultural route called “The trail of Roman Emperors”. The route reveals ancient Roman towns, roads, ruins and artifacts, including Felix Romuliana, which has been on UNESCO’s list of World Cultural Heritage since 2007.

The route begins with Sirmium, located in the northern part of Serbia, on the left bank of the river Sava. It extends to Singidunum (today’s Belgrade) located at the mouth of the rivers Sava and Danube. Further on, the trail continues following the Danube, known as Corridor 7, via Viminacium, the centre of the route, to the Djerdap Gorge and Roman sites: Trajan’s board and table, Diana and Pontes. Then the route continues to Felix Romuliana and further on to Mediana and Justiniana Prima located at the southern part of the country. The position of the sites included in the cultural route “The trail of Roman” emperors is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: The map of the cultural route “The trail of Roman emperors”

Source: Archives of Viminacium Archaeological Park (modified by authors)



## METHODOLOGY

*Sample profile*

The total number of respondents (N) was made up of 298 conveniently picked persons from the major emissive tourist centers as well as other centers located in the major dispersive zones of the route (Novi Sad, Beograd, Sremska Mitrovica, Požarevac, Donji Milanovac, Zaječar, Niš and Leskovac). The respondents were approached via an online questionnaire.

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents' gender, age groups, educational structure and employment status.

**Table 1: Sociodemographic profile of the respondents (N=298)**

Sociodemographics	%
Gender	
Males	61.0
Females	39.0
Age	
Up to 19	32.6
20-40	38.2
41-60	29.2
Education	
High school	53.0
Faculty	47.0
Employment status	
Employed	21.4
Unemployed	15.8
Student	30.9
Pupils	31.9

Table 1 shows that among respondents, there is a significant number of males (61 %), while the remaining part consists of females (39%). Majority of respondents belong to the age group 20-40 (38.2%). Education structure shows that more than half of respondents (53%) completed high school or high school attendance is still in progress, while a slightly lower number (47%) has a faculty degree. Of the total number of respondents, 21.4% were employed, while the rest are students (30.9%), pupils (31.9%), and currently unemployed (15.8%).

### *Questionnaire design*

The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part involves items which concerned sociodemographic characteristics of respondents (gender, age groups, occupation, and education level) (Table 1). The second part contains questions regarding the familiarity of respondents with the cultural route (yes/no questions) as well as question related to their interest to partake in the route measured in the form of a four-grade Likert scale (1-definitely wouldn't, 2-probably wouldn't, 3-probably would, 4-definitely would).

The third part consists of questions related to the visitors' perception of the route promotion as well as a source of information they used to be informed about this route. These questions were in form of open, yes/no and multiple-choice questions.

### *Procedure*

The research was carried out in order to get a clearer picture of the familiarity of potential visitors with the cultural route and their perception of its promotional activities. The research data was collected via an online specialized structured questionnaire in Serbian language designed by the authors. The research was conducted in the territory of the Republic of Serbia between January 2013 and May 2013. Google Docs, which is a freeware web-based office suite, was used in creating the online questionnaire. All questions were marked as obligatory so that respondents could not return an incomplete questionnaire. Online survey was chosen to reduce time and cost limitations. A total of 298 respondents fully completed the questionnaire and were taken for the study sample.

The data was processed by applying the statistical SPSS package 17.0. The statistical data analyses applied in the research were: frequency analysis, descriptive statistical analysis, Chi-square test, T-test for the independent samples and One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

## RESULTS

Research results show that the sample meets the basic requirements for the application of the parametric tests, as the data used in the analysis is derived from the interval scale and is distributed normally ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Clark et al., 1998). Moreover, the verification of the normality of the distribution scores was performed for the dependent variable. The normality of the distribution scores for the dependent variables was performed prior to using T-test and ANOVA. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed significant results ( $p > 0.05$ ), and the actual shape of normal probability plots suggested a reasonably straight line, which indicated a normal distribution of dependent variables.

According to research results, respondents proved to be quite informed about the actual existence of this cultural route, as 67.1% (almost 2/3 of the total sample) have heard about this route before, while the remaining 32.9% gave a negative response meaning they did not have any previous knowledge about it.

The potential visitors were also asked about the way they were informed about the cultural route. Internet (36.2%) and friends (30.9%) showed to be the most common sources of information, followed by the press (18.5%), television (10.7%) and other sources (3.7%).

In order to examine the level of information they have about the route, the respondents were asked if they know what the center of this cultural route is. Out of the total number of respondents, about one third (29.2%) gave the correct answer (Viminacium), almost the same percentage (29.5%) stated that they do not know which site is the center, while the rest gave an incorrect answer. When it comes to promotion, the largest number of respondents (64.1%) claims that the cultural route is not well promoted and presented to tourists, compared to 35.9% who claim that it is.

The analysis of general indicators in the first part of the research shows the structure of respondents by gender, age groups, educational structure and employment status. Using additional analysis, all general sociodemographic indicators of the respondents were crossbred with the question about perception of promotion of the cultural route. Using Chi-square test, we intended to investigate whether there is statistically significant difference among respondents related to the question whether the cultural route is well promoted.

Chi-square independent test (Table 2) shows a statistically significant difference between the gender of respondents and their opinion on the route promotion  $X^2(1, n = 298) = 4.43, p = 0.035, fi = 0.13$ . According to Cohen's criteria (1988) effect size (*fi*) is small. The results show that females in a greater extent (40.9%) believe that the route is well promoted compared to males (28.2%).

**Table 2: Chi-square test/Crosstabs (Gender\*TTRE promotion)**

Gender	TTRE well promoted?		Total
	No	Yes	
Males	84 (71.8%)	33 (28.2%)	117 (100%)
Females	107 (59.1%)	74 (40.9%)	181 (100%)
Total	191 (64.1%)	107 (35.9%)	298 (100%)

$X^2 = 44.4; p = 0.035; Effect\ size\ (Fi) = 0.13$

Another Chi-square independent test also shows a statistically significant relationship between the potential visitors' age, and their perception of the route promotion  $X^2(2, n = 298) = 40.770, p = 0.000, fi = 0.37$ . According to Cohen's criteria effect size (*fi*) is moderate (Co-

hen, 1998). The 20-40 age group is significantly less satisfied with the cultural route's promotion (14.0%) compared to the  $\leq 19$  age group (54.6%) and 41-60 age group (43.7%).

Table 3 presents results of Chi-square test and cross tabulation (Age groups\* the route promotion).

**Table 3: Chi-square test/Crosstabs (Age groups\*TTRE promotion)**

Age group	TTRE well promoted?		Total
	No	Yes	
$\leq 19$	44 (45.4%)	53 (54.6%)	97 (100.0%)
20-40	98 (86.0%)	16 (14.0%)	114 (100.0%)
41-60	49 (56.3%)	38 (43.7%)	87 (100.0%)
Total	191 (64.1%)	107 (35.9%)	298 (100.0%)

$X^2 = 40.770$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; *Effect size (Fi) = 0.37*

Chi-square independent test shows no statistically significant relationship between respondents' educational structure and employment status and their attitudes associated with the route promotion.

Furthermore, another Chi-square test was conducted in order to examine whether there is a connection between the source from which the respondents have heard of the route and their opinion on the promotion (Table 4).

Chi-square independent test showed a statistically significant relationship between the respondents' information source about the route, and their perception of the cultural route's promotion  $X^2(4, n = 298) = 41.770$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $f_i = 0.37$ . According to Cohen's criteria effect size ( $f_i$ ) is moderate. With the exception of the respondents who were informed about the route via television, which showed to be a source of information which contributes to a positive opinion about the promotion of the route (68.7%), all the rest have a negative opinion about the promotion of the route, ranging from 55.4% to 92.7%.

**Table 4: Chi-square test/Crosstabs (Cognition of route\*TTRE promotion)**

Source	TTRE well promoted?		Total
	No	Yes	
Television	10 (31.3%)	22 (68.7%)	32 (100.0%)
Press	51 (92.7%)	4 (7.3%)	55 (100.0%)
Internet	69 (63.9%)	39 (36.1%)	108 (100.0%)
Friends	51 (55.4%)	41 (44.6%)	92 (100.0%)
Other	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	11 (100.0%)
Total	191 (64.1%)	107 (35.9%)	298 (100.0%)

$X^2 = 41.030$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ; *Effect size (Fi) = 0.37*

Another part of the research was dedicated to the potential visitors' interest to participate in the route in relation to sociodemographic and cultural route variables. Using descriptive statistics, it was determined that between the lowest rank 1.00 and the highest rank 4.00, the overall mean is 3.22, so it can be said that potential visitors would probably participate in the cultural route. This can clearly be seen from the fact that only 7 % of the respondents said they definitely would not participate in the route, 16.8% probably wouldn't, the majority of them (42.6%) probably would, while a significantly large number of them (39.9%) definitely would partake in this route.

Furthermore, the authors intended to determine whether there were differences between the continuous scale score with respect to men and women, good and poor promotion as well as secondary and higher education. To achieve this, we conducted T-test for independent samples with mentioned criteria as independent variables together with a scale score as an outcome variable. The primary interest was not only to determine the statistical significance of possible differences, but also to discover the effect size of the independent variables for which purpose an eta squared measure was conducted (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Indicators of the effect size do not point out just whether the difference is accidental or not but the size of differences between the groups. Eta-square can have values ranging from 0 to 1 and represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent (grouping) variable (Pallant, 2009).

Using T-test of the independent samples, the research results of the visitors' willingness to participate in the cultural route were compared (Levene's test results of the two groups' equal variances), and results show that there is statistically significant difference between all analyzed independent variables.

The results of independent T-test for gender show that males ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) and females ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ) are different on the dependent variable ( $t(296) = 3.85$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The difference between the mean values of group characteristics (mean difference = 0.33, 95% CI: 0.16 to 0.50) is moderate (effect size eta-square is 0.05).

The second independent variable was education level. The results show that secondary education ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 0.792$ ) and higher education ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $SD = 0.947$ ) are different also on the dependent variable ( $t(296) = 4.44$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The difference between the mean values of characteristics by group (mean difference = 0.45, 95% CI: 0.25 to 0.65) is moderate (effect size eta-square 0.06).

Poor promotion ( $M = 2.66$ ,  $SD = .647$ ) and good promotion ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = .548$ ) also show differences on the dependent variable ( $t(296) = 11.68$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The difference between the mean values of

group characteristics (mean difference = .87, 95% CI: 0.72 to 1.01) is large (effect size eta-square 0.31).

Moreover, using the ANOVA test, the mean rank values results of the attitudes related to participation in the cultural route were compared in three different groups of respondents, classified by their age (Group 1:  $\leq 19$ ; Group 2: 20 – 40; Group 3: 41-60). The ANOVA test showed that there are no statistically significant differences between the three age groups.

Finally, a second ANOVA test examined mean rank values of results of the attitudes related to participation in the route compared in five different groups of respondents, classified by the source of information they used to get informed about the route (television, internet, press, friends, other). The independent variable was the respondents' information source and the dependent variable was the mentioned continuous scale. The variance equality in each of the five groups was examined with the Levene's test and it has been determined that the homogenous variance assumption was not violated as the values of significance are higher than 0.05. The ANOVA test showed that there are statistically significant differences (0.01) between the analyzed groups:  $F(4, 293) = 4.8, p = 0.001$ .

Based on the results of the ANOVA test, the eta-square was calculated, as one of the most commonly used indicators of the size effect, i.e. the relative size of differences between the variables. According to the Cohen's criteria 0.01 value has a small effect, 0.06 value has medium effect and 0.14 value has a high effect (Cohen, 1988). The actual effect of differences in the groups' mean values is moderate (eta-square is 0.06).

Based on the results of subsequent tests (Turkey HSD test) among groups considerable statistical difference was determined between the group of the respondents who have heard about the route from the press and the group of respondents who were informed about it from friends (MD = 0.455; SD = 0.123,  $p = 0.002$ ). The willingness to participate in the route was also rated differently by the respondents acquainted with the route via Internet and the respondents who were informed about it from friends (MD = 0.315; SD = 0.102,  $p = 0.01$ ).

## DISCUSSION

Since one of the principal aims of this research was to discover how familiar potential visitors are with the cultural route they were asked questions related to their knowledge about the route. For instance, as it was mentioned, the respondents were asked if they know what the center of this cultural route is and about one third of the respondents

knew that Viminacium is the correct answer. However, almost the same percentage reported that they do not know which site is the center of the route while the rest gave an incorrect answer. The research showed that more than one third of the sample informed themselves about the cultural route mostly via the Internet and friends, which implies that either they were not interested to know what is the center of the route, or simply they did not find this information in other media. This also indicates that the route is not well promoted and the media is not providing enough useful information about it.

In addition, although nearly 2/3 of the total sample stated that they are aware of the existence of the cultural route, quite a similar percentage speculated that the cultural route is not well promoted.

In terms of differences in the attitudes of males and females, statistically significant differences in opinions on the route promotion have been determined by Chi-square independent test with small effect size. Females in a greater extent (40.9%) believe that the route is well promoted, compared to males (28.2%). In the future, promotional plans and marketing campaigns should be focused on the market group represented by men, as research shows that they are less familiar with this route and they are not satisfied with its promotion. Nevertheless, they are more willing to take part in the route than women. This indicates that men in Serbia are part of the tourist market which is more interested in archeological and cultural tourism and thus represent a significant target group which should be in focus in future.

While analyzing the relationship between the potential visitors' age and their judgment regarding the route's promotion using Chi-square independent test, a statistically significant relationship was found with moderate effect size. The  $\leq 19$  age group (54.6%) and the 41-60 age group (43.7%) showed to be significantly more satisfied about the route's promotion compared to the 20-40 age group (14.0%). Subsequent strategic planning should consider better outreach to people of this age. This indicates that younger respondents are more satisfied with promotion than the older ones, and the reason for this can lie in the fact that younger generations mostly rely on the Internet as a main information tool where they can come across a wide array of details about this route. As senior tourists are interested in taking part in this route as well, in the future, information about the route should be distributed also through media which they commonly use, making it more available to them. One of the ways to achieve this can be promotion of the route in newspapers where information reaches all different segments of the market. By promoting this route mainly on the internet, a part of the market which doesn't use computers is neglected, thus promotional activities should be performed through a wide array of different media.

Furthermore, by using the Chi-square test, a statistically significant relationship with moderate effect size was found between information sources respondents used and their perception of promotion of the cultural route. Precisely, all information sources except television are related to negative impressions on the promotion of the cultural route. The results indicate that people who use television as a main information tool more than others think that the route is well promoted. This can be explained by the fact that information about this cultural route is more present on television than on other promotional tools. In accordance with these findings, the promotional campaign should be more focused on other forms of media and public advertising besides classical media such as television. Generally, respondents are mainly informed about the route via Internet and friends, and the smaller percentage of them via newspaper, television and other sources. The respondents with a different level of educational and employment status did not differ on their perception of the cultural route's promotion level.

Moreover, we examined possible differences in the three independent variables (gender, education level and good and poor promotion) on continuous scale using t-tests. T-tests showed that there are statistically significant differences between independent variables in the attitudes relating to willingness to participate in the cultural route. Reported effect size eta-square for males and females is moderate ( $\eta^2 = 0.05$ ), likewise for secondary and higher education ( $\eta^2 = 0.06$ ), while for good and poor promotion it is large ( $\eta^2 = 0.31$ ). This suggests that respondents of different genders and level of education differ when it comes to their willingness to participate in the cultural route (men are more willing to take part in the route as well as people who have finished high school). A possible explanation for why people with a high school diploma are more ready to take part in the route than people with a faculty degree can be their need to follow the trends and upgrade their cultural level through cultural tourism. In addition, there is a big difference between people who believe that the cultural route is not well promoted and those who think that it is in terms of their willingness to partake in it. The promotional activities of the cultural route should be intensified and they should cover a wider range of media in order to attract more visitors. The important step for achieving this would certainly be the constitution of an organization for coordination of marketing and promotion of the route, which is not yet established.

The first ANOVA test showed that there are no statistically significant differences between any of the three age groups. Taking into account mean ranks for particular age groups  $\leq 19$  ( $M = 3.28$ ), 20-40 ( $M = 3.24$ ), 41-60 ( $M = 3.13$ ), it is noticeable that different generations would probably take part in the cultural route.



Moreover, there is a significant difference between respondents' willingness to participate in the route depending on the source of information they commonly use. Additional comparison using Turkey's HSD test, points out the difference between people who used press and those whose main source of information were friends, while the other discrepancy exists between groups of potential visitors informed via the Internet and those informed by friends. Those whose main sources of information are newspaper and the Internet are more willing to take part in the route which indicates that these promotional tools should stay in focus of future promotional campaigns due to their huge effect on potential visitors' motivation. However, the research shows that respondents who were informed about the route via friends were less motivated to partake in the cultural route. This can also be the evidence of a bad word of mouth, and because of this the route management team should focus on developing a good word of mouth as a very strong motivational tool. A good word of mouth from satisfied visitors is spreading very fast and it could encourage people to take part in this route. Nowadays it is evident that people trust word of mouth more than other media considering it more reliable (Ćurčić, 2008).

## CONCLUSIONS

Generally, the research showed that the majority of respondents is aware of the existence of this cultural route in Serbia, but still not all of them (about 1/3 of respondents stated that they hadn't heard about this route). The percentage of respondents not aware of the existence of this route can be considered significant as all respondents are from Serbia, the country through which this route extends. Based on this, it can be assumed that even a larger number of people from abroad have never heard about the route, which indicates that this route is still of local significance and that it is not well promoted, even in the domestic tourism market. This can be confirmed by the fact that, as research showed, even people who have heard about this route by large percent consider that it is not well promoted. There is firm evidence in practice to confirm this, one of them being the fact that the route still doesn't have its own website, as one of the crucial information tools.

The quality of promotional actions related to this route certainly would help in the creation of its image as well as in motivating people to take part in it. In order to attract more visitors, the promotion campaign should be carefully planned and intensified with a special emphasis on promotional strategies focused on men and the age group of 20-60, as groups of respondents who in a larger percent than others consider that the route is not well promoted. The lack of well-or-

ganized promotional activities also strongly influence familiarity of respondents with this route, as 2/3 of them don't even know what the center of the route is.

Certainly, the encouraging fact is, as research showed, that the majority of respondents would probably take part in this route. Therefore, promotional and marketing activities could be used as an assisting tool for making this potential tourist demand become a real one. For this purpose, promotional tools should be carefully chosen in order to reach the target market, and the results of this research could be used as a guideline for this.

Although this research contributes to the enrichment of knowledge on the significance of promotion and visitors' familiarity with cultural routes as a motivational factor for participation in such routes, it has, nevertheless, certain limitations. The research results are limited to only Serbian citizens. While the respondents were representative in terms of their profiles, the survey sample can be characterized as non-international. These results, therefore, mean that the conclusions obtained cannot be generalized to potential visitors outside of Serbia. By examination of a larger sample including potential foreign visitors, the results would be more reliable and more representative.

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