

# CACICA, THE PLACE WHERE YOU CAN FIND "THE LADY'S SLIPPER"

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## **Abstract:**

*The purpose of this paper is to promote the treatment tourism, cultural-religious tourism, historical and recreational tourism, as main forms of tourism in Cacica. In the structure of the paper, first we analyze the theme regarding the tourist offer and the tourist effect of the Cacica Salt in the local economy. Secondly, we analyze and interpret the results obtained by applying a questionnaire to tourists from Cacica, tourists who have benefited from the services provided by economic agents who are providing services. The paper highlights the fact that tourism acts by its nature, both on the tourists directly and on the population in the isolated areas. The research analyzes some elements considered as decisive for the presence of tourists in Cacica, as well as the quality of the services they benefit from. By analyzing the tourist objectives, the events that take place on certain "holidays", it is assumed that the tourism contributes to a great extent of the economic and social development of Cacica, to the improvement of the living standard of the population in this area and to its recognition at national and international level. The study shows that the tourist demand leads to an adjustment of the offer, which materializes, among other things, in the development of the technical-material base of this sector and, indirectly, in stimulating the production of the branches participating in the construction and equipping of the accommodation and food, roads, the realization of transport means, recreational facilities. The documentation shows that tourists are motivated to choose the tourist resort of Cacica as a recreational, business and spiritual food for the soul. The natural, economic and social cultural environment, as well as the infrastructure, age, gender and education, are factors that influence the development of medical, religious and agro-tourism.*

**Key words:** medical tourism, religious tourism, business tourism, Cacica Salt Mine, tourist resort.

**JEL classification:** Z32, Q26

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

A walk on the salt fields of Cacica offers the tourist moments of relaxation in the well-known Salt Mine, moments of silence that can be found at the Romano-Catholic Church "Assumption of the Mother of God" as well as opportunities for revitalization of the body at the "Mărțișor" Recreation Center. In the same context, we mention that in May/June, Cacica commune enjoys the presence of a "mini-reserve The Lady's Slipper" or "The Shoe of Venus" a very rare species of orchid that is protected since 1938 by the Royal Decree and which is found in the area known as "Saline Orchard".



**The Lady's Slipper (Cypripedium calceolus)**

<http://www.interferente.ro/papucul-doamnei-cypripedium-calceolus.html>

These wonders of nature delights with their presence the tourists and the locals. The contribution of these factors determines the emergence and development of tourism in the commune of Cacica. For a better example, we will look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats specific to Cacica.

### SWOT analysis of Cacica

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><i>The landscape and microclimate of the commune;</i>  <i>The hospitality of the inhabitants;</i>  <i>The existence of tourist hotels and hostels;</i>  <i>Tourist attractions: Salt Mine with Chapel, underground sports hall and artificial lake; Salted water pool; Sanctuary of Assumption of Mother of God, Louders` Cave, John Paul II Square; The architectural monument St. Michael and Gavril's Church - Pirtești de Sus; "The Lady's Slipper" Mini-reserve - Cacica; Pelerin House in the administration of the Romano-Catholic Parish; Swimming pool with salted water SC SALUS INFIRMORUM SRL from Cacica; The Old School Building (1816); Roadside crosses and various constructions belonging to the traditional Romanian architecture and the specifics of other nationalities.</i>  <i>The existence of a Tourist Information Center;</i>  <i>Conducting cultural events;</i>  <i>Multicultural Business Center in Cacica;</i>  <i>The presence of a hydrographic network with a remarkable density of watercourses, both underground and surface;</i>  <i>Existence of the county roads DJ 178A towards Pârtești de Jos commune, DJ 178E to Botoșana commune and DJ 209L to the commune of Mănăstirea Humorului;</i>  <i>Existence of the railway in the south-eastern part of a commune bordering Suceava-Dărmănești-Todirești-Cacica-Păltinoasa, with the goods and passengers station in Cacica;</i>  <i>The existence of 3000 ha of forest;</i>  <i>Practicing various woodworking activities: woodworking - making wood, troughs, tubs, spoons, wells, cartons, etc .;</i>  <i>fabrication of shepskins, sumanes, skirts, boots, locks, wipes, traditional skirts, etc .;</i>  <i>the craft of brick fabric, the embroidery of the shirts, a traditional costume; the exploitation of salt from the wells;</i>  <i>Folk ensemble "The Forest" of the High School Pârtești de Sus.</i></p>	<p><i>Lack of strategies for promoting tourist objectives (lack of promotional materials such as free brochures in accommodation units, lack of cultural and sports guides, from which the tourists can find out about the activities and cultural and sports events taking place during their stay);</i>  <i>There is only a tourist information center;</i>  <i>Lack of modernized roads (motorways);</i>  <i>Insufficient capitalization, development and promotion of the tourism potential of the county;</i>  <i>Insufficient leisure offer - the economic agents in the field do not have recreational and sports facilities accessible to tourists;</i>  <i>Insufficient collaboration between "Stefan cel Mare" University in Suceava (Faculty of Economic Sciences and Public Administration) and economic agents with tourism activities.</i></p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p><i>Development of the new tourist resort Cacica (ethnographic resort);</i>  <i>Promotion of the mid-August days when various events take place in Cacica: on August 11, takes place the Miner's Day Festival, on August 15 - pilgrimage to Minor Basil Assumption of the Mother of God;</i>  <i>Rental of vacation homes for holidays;</i>  <i>Encourage the development of new forms of tourism (extreme tourism, adventure, etc.)</i>  <i>Rehabilitation of the county road network, priority being those that provide access to the points of tourist interest, usually very sought after;</i>  <i>Supporting projects that introduce tourist value, cultural and spiritual objectives and events in Bucovina;</i>  <i>Developing associations with tourism profile.</i></p>	<p><i>Migration of skilled and specialized labor force into countries offering motivating salaries;</i>  <i>Insufficient funds to protect the environment;</i>  <i>Uncontrolled deforestation leads to air pollution and soil degradation;</i>  <i>Insufficient funds for the protection / renovation of the art and architecture monuments</i>  <i>The fierce competition on the domestic and international level in tourism:</i>  <i>The absence of a tourist registered trademark "Cacica".</i></p>

Source: processed after the City Halls`s site [http://www.comunapirtestiidejos.ro/strategie\\_2014\\_2020.pdf](http://www.comunapirtestiidejos.ro/strategie_2014_2020.pdf) and by own contribution

In the paper "Cacica, the place where you can find Papucul Doamnei" we will analyze the tourist offer in the medical, religious and agrotourism field. We will extract these information from the potential of the locality that has the infrastructure specific to these types of tourism, as well as the events taking place every year at some certain calendar dates. We also intend to analyze the socio-economic effect of the salt mine and the tourist attractions in the locality.

In the last part of the paper we propose to carry out a case study that will show the tourists' motivation to visit the tourist destination Cacica and to determine the satisfaction degree of the tourists regarding the tourist services provided by the tourist services providers. We aim to identify customers' dissatisfaction and satisfaction, and whether employees' specialization programs and solutions to improve tourism services are needed.

### **Research hypotheses**

Tourists visiting the tourist resort of Cacica are pleased with the tourist services provided by the economic agents.

Tourists are motivated to spend their free days / holidays in the tourist resort of Cacica.

## **2. METHODS USED TO CARRY OUT OUR RESEARCH.**

To accomplish this work, I used the research method that helped me to identify the tourism potential of the study area and its importance.

We have taken from Suceava County Tourist Newsletter statistical data on the tourist infrastructure from Cacica and the length of the stay of the tourists in the area. We also used swot analysis as a method for highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats specific to Cacica.

Another method of research used in this paper was the statistical survey, and the instrument used was the structured questionnaire on two types of questions: general and identification.

### ***The tourist objectives of Cacica***

Developing this theme, we find that the Cacica Mine (6) located in Obcinele Bucovinei (in Obcina Mare) is a tourist destination of social, economic, cultural and balneo-kineto-therapeutic importance in the life of the community. The salt deposit was discovered in 1780 and the salt mine was opened in 1791 under the leadership of Austrian Paul Hoffman. An important element in the Cacica Mine is the two Orthodox and Catholic churches. The miners were praying here to get out of the mine and to get well to their families. The mines are located at the depths of 21 meters (St. Varvara Romano-Catholic Chapel) and 35 meters deep (the Orthodox chapel which was dug directly in salt). The uniqueness of this mine comes from the fact that all its galleries were dug by hand.

Inside the building of this mine there is the Ball Hall (7), a hall that impresses with its simplicity and elegance. Also, at a depth of 38 meters, there is the brine lake that is one of the attractions in the depths of the salt mine - a place where tourists throw coins with the belief that their wishes will be fulfilled. At the bottom of the salt lake there is a boat that sank and this is an interesting topic of discussion about this lake. We must also point out that in the past, citizens used saline brine to conserve cheese, pickles and bacon. The next steps lead us to the dwarf cave, which is located at 44 m deep and whose story tells us that the miners explained to the children that they talk to the dwarves - because the echo of their words echoes from one gallery to another. At the end of the mine, at the same depth, there is the gym. It is a huge hall that is and has been used over time for various activities such as volleyball games.

Over the years, the authorities and the people of the region have created three museums on the perimeter of the mine: "Museum of Minorities in Bucovina", "Saline Museum" and "Machinery Museum".

The Cacica Salt mine provides for the people with rheumatic diseases a saltwater bath with therapeutic qualities, and the air in the mine is also recommended for the respiratory tract.

We mention that the Cacica salt mine is visited by tourists both for the objectives it has in its depths (salted lake, churches, gymnasium, ballroom) and for the benefits of treating some diseases.

So, tourists come to the salt mine in Cacica both for visiting the mine, but especially for the beneficial effects of salty water and salty air on the human body.

We also note that Cacica salt is most suitable for food consumption because it achieves a purity of 99,8% (8) and it is found at a concentration of 84.71% (9).

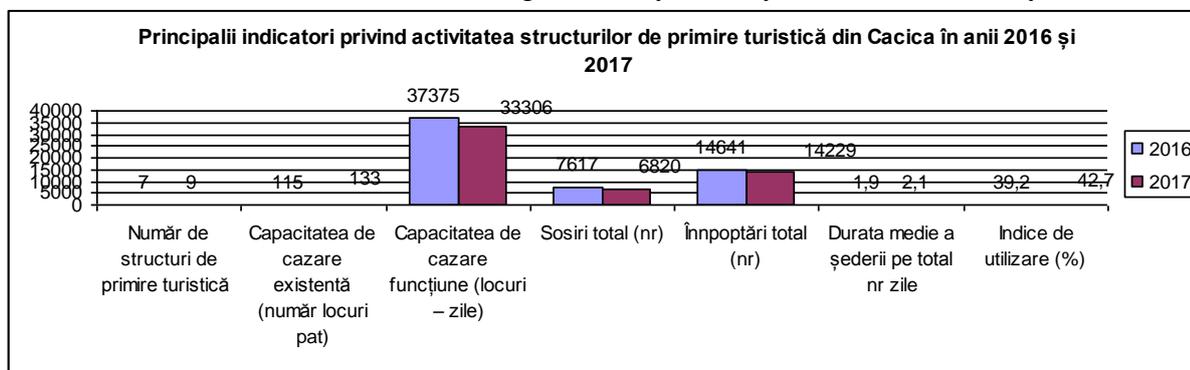
A second objective of tourist importance is represented by the Romano-Catholic Church "Assumption of the Mother of God". (12). This place of worship attracts many bishops from Romania and abroad every year between August 14-15 (by the "Assumption of the Mother of God") and on September 8 ("The Holy Mary of the Rosary"). Dozens of priests and tens of thousands of pilgrims from Moldova, but also from other parts of the country or from abroad come here on these days. This event is considered to be the largest Catholic pilgrimage in Moldova. Next to the church is the Louders Cave, a tourist attraction that has undergone changes over time and within which there are a massive stone altar serving the Divine Liturgy, a water fountain considered healing, and as it is specific to the Catholic religion, the statues of the Holy Virgin Mary and St. Bernadette Soubirous (the one that saw in 1858 the Holy Virgin Mary in the French village of Louders) and a specially arranged place for candlelight, usually taken from the Orthodox religion, were also placed in the cave. During the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, two liturgies in the Hungarian and German languages are celebrated in the cave (11).

A third tourist attraction is the John Paul II Square. The square was arranged in 2000, when the sanctuary Marian from Cacica was raised to the rank of "Minor Basilica" and it has placed in front of the church a statue representing Pope John Paul II (12).

A fourth tourist attraction is the hotel Mărțișorul, which is frequented especially for the high-quality spa and kineto-therapeutic services offered to the tourists. The hotel offers to the tourists a wide range of leisure services. The hotel's perimeter includes: water slides with a landing pool (three Multislides, a Body Slide and a Compact Slide), a beach with sun loungers and umbrellas, terrace, children's playground, and some indoor pools: a pool with salt water, a freshwater pool with a mushroom and a waterfall, a freshwater pool for children with a bunny slide, two freshwater jacuzzis, a dry sauna, a wet sauna, a massage salon, a surface salt mine, a fitness room, a playground for children, billiard, tennis tables, minigolf, air hockey tables, foosball tables, books, rummy, chess, etc.

### *Salt mine effect in the local tourism.*

The existence of salt in this region has contributed to the constant development of tourism infrastructure, road infrastructure and specialized human resources. The results of the specialized institutions in 2016 and 2017 confirm the evolution of the number of tourist accommodation locations (from 7 to 9 tourist accommodation units), the existing accommodation capacity (from 115 to 133) and the increase in the average total days of stay (from 1.9 to 2.1 days) (chart no. 1).



**Chart no.1. The main indicators on the activity of the Cacica tourist accommodation establishments in the years 2016 and 2017 (Annex 1)**

Source: processed after Suceava County Tourism Roundup, Edition 2018, Romania - National Institute of Statistics, Suceava County Statistics Department, p.57

Promoting the various actions carried out at the above tourist attractions leads to an increase in the number of visitors, tourists and pilgrims in the region. Various actions and their themes:

- 1 to 2 May: Resurrection from The Deep - Mine Cacica;
  - 29-30 June: The days of Cacica commune (Pârteștii de Sus);
  - 14 to 15 August: Pilgrimage to the Romano-Catholic Church "Assumption of the Mother of God" in Cacica;
  - August 15: Folklore show with local artistic groups (in Cacica);
  - September 11: The "Harvest Day" Festival in Solonețu Nou;
  - December 26: The "Cetina de Brad" Festival in Pârteștii de Sus;
  - December 27: "Farmers`s Ball" - Participating in traditional costumes of Pârteștii de Sus"
- (13).

The events presented have a great contribution to the economic and social development of Cacica commune, to the improvement of the living standards of the population in this area and to its recognition at national and international level.

In the same context, we specify that salted water baths in the area are recommended for treating multiple types of affections of the spine, rheumatism, and neuralgia or neuritis. Speleotherapy or saline air therapy is a procedure that has been successfully used for almost 2 years at the Cacica Salt mine for the treatment of patients with bronchial-pulmonary disorders. The importance of medical action emerges from the fact that (14): "The patients breathe clean air loaded with aerosols, because the salinity is not allowing the existence of bacteria and fungi. There have been cases of patients who were barely breathing and, after a few days of speleotherapy, they could climb the stairs. Speleotherapy is recommended for chronic asthma bronchitis, bronchial asthma, which are allergic diseases, rising due to pollution. Apart from the bronchial sufferings, it can also be beneficial for tuberculosis. Also, the children with such suffering, as well as those with psychomotor developmental disorders, those with physical debility, who should stay for two weeks at the saline can be treated," says Dr. Ioan Iețcu. In order to certify these results, physicochemical, microbiological and pathological determinations were performed on the surface and in the underground, animal studies were carried out first and then patients were brought here in order to confirm the therapeutic quality of the saline.

So, Cacica could develop at least three forms of tourism: medical tourism, religious tourism and agro-tourism. In recent years, due to the mentioned treatment bases, swimming pools and saltwater baths, the number of those who came to treatment in Cacica tripled. For this reason it is necessary to continue the development of road infrastructure, rail infrastructure, accommodation, catering, relaxation, indicators of referral to the objectives, renovation and maintenance of buildings, swimming pools and existing pools.

In the same context we have to mention that during summertime, people who come to Cacica for treatment, also can use salted water baths and in the cold season they have the "Virgil Săhleanu treatment base" or the "House of Nationalities". This treatment base was built through a European project (15) (inaugurated on December 12, 2015), and due to the success it has enjoyed in recent years, private investors have developed and diversified their offer for both relaxation and treatment, and now both of them are particularly demanding.

The presence of the Cacica Salt mine and the diversified offer of Cacica commune attracts an impressive number of tourists from Romania and abroad (around 90,000 tourists) each year, who come here to visit the Cacica Salt Mine, to relax and benefit from the salted water baths, salt saline therapy, etc.

An analysis of the local economy shows that tourism acts as a stimulator of the global economic system. In this context, we find that the development of the tourist trip involves a request and consumption of specific goods, which results in an increase in their production. At the same time, the tourist demand determines an adaptation of the offer, which materializes, among other things, in the development of the technical and material base of this sector and indirectly in stimulating the production of the branches involved in the construction and equipping of accommodation and food, roads, transport means, leisure facilities.

So, we obtain a significant increase in production through the development of tourism, with domestic and international tourism contributing to a significant percentage of GDP at local, regional and global level. Tourism also contributes to the value added to a higher proportion of branches in terms of level of development. Research in this respect has highlighted that the activity of some branches is largely determined by the needs of tourism. For example, we find that in some countries/regions, tourism activity generates significant percentages of the hotel and restaurant activity, cultural and recreational services, transport and travel related services, retail, camera and photo production. Concluding, we can say that tourism is capable of causing mutations in territorial development and at the same time it is a solution for the prosperity of disadvantaged areas, a remedy for deindustrialised localities, as well as a local use of labor resources. In the same context, we specify that our contemporary society has the merit of bringing tourism, once reserved to elites, to everyone, giving it to "mass consumption"(16).

### ***Tourism and tourists in Cacica***

Tourism acts by its nature, both on the tourists directly and on the population in isolated areas. This highlights the fact that besides the economic consequences, tourism has a profound social and human significance. In the same context, we mention that the effects of tourism also affect the quality of the environment, the use of leisure time and, last but not least, the ties between nations.

In order to best exemplify this, we have analyzed some elements considered decisive for the presence of tourists in Cacica, as well as the quality of the services they benefit from. We mention that starting with March 2018, the Cacica commune was declared by the Romanian Government a tourist resort of local interest, as well as the town of Solca, Dorna Candrenilor commune and Poiana Stampei commune. This enables these localities to attract irredeemable funding as well as better information for tourists and an improvement in the framework for the protection, preservation and exploitation of tourism resources. Also, localities designated tourist resorts of local and national interest will be signaled on the national and county roads with signposting signs at the entrance of the resort.

To obtain results that highlight the presence of the tourists and the quality of the services, we distributed and applied a questionnaire to the tourists from the area, who benefited from the services provided by the economic agents providing services in the commune of Cacica. (Annex 2 - Questionnaire).

The questionnaire is one of the most commonly used techniques in socio-human sciences, which gathers the data necessary to obtain the desired information from the researchers. The structure of the questionnaire should include multiple choice questions or the possibility to provide answers by the interviewee.

Finally, the questionnaire applied has held in its structure a section on general data showing to whom is due the presence of the tourists and the satisfaction/dissatisfaction towards the tourist services, and a second part that includes questions identifying the tourist who is answering the questionnaire. The questionnaire contains 15 questions (8 general questions and 7 questions for respondent identification) to which the tourist has to answer and for completing it I decided to use the direct method of administering the questionnaire.

An important aspect of our research is to establish the objectives to be achieved:

- the motivation to visit the tourist destination Cacica;
- determining the degree of satisfaction of the tourists with regard to the tourist services offered by the service providers;
- what type of tourism people practice at Cacica tourist units;
- identification of the age categories and social categories that use the tourist services provided by the tourist units in Cacica;
- identifying the influence of income, occupation, level of studies, civil status, background and sex, on leisure behavior;
- identification of the average stay time of tourists in tourist units;
- identification of the offered services / price offered by the two tourist units;

- identifying leisure preferences by tourists;
- how tourists appreciate the behavior of the staff in the tourist units;
- identifying the conditions for returning the tourists to the accommodation units in Cacica.

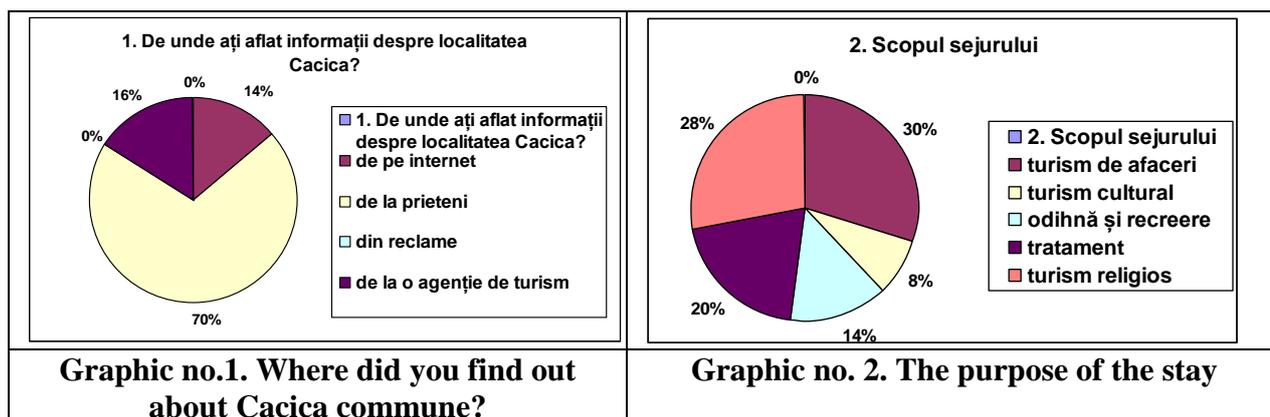
The next steps in the study are the application of the questionnaire and the harvesting of the information. The questionnaire is applied to a total of 100 respondents, women and men, of different ages, who came from different social backgrounds (17).

Also, we will present the topic of the questionnaire, the purpose of this questionnaire, the person asking the questionnaire questions and the time the tourist will spend to answer the questions.

Obtaining a correct result and forming a concise idea on the subject investigated, requires the prior preparation of each interviewee (interviewees must understand the questionnaire questions). (18).

I mention that only the people who have benefited from various services provided by service providers in Cacica have been interviewed. The period for collecting responses was 17.04.2018 - 20.05.2018. Data processing and centralization has been done with the help of the EXCELL program, which helped us to interpret the needs, wishes and thanks of the tourists regarding the services provided by the economic agents, service providers, from Cacica.

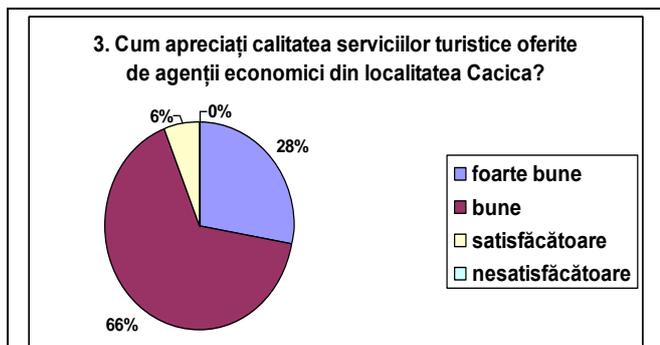
The information obtained from the interpretation of the results (graphs 1 and 2) shows that the most information about Cacica is mostly obtained from friends, from the internet and from the travel agencies. As far as the purpose of the stay is concerned, we observe that an equal percentage of participants in the study practice a business, treatment and religious tourism, and a small part practice cultural tourism and recreational and leisure tourism.



1.(from the graphic) From the internet/ from my friends/ from advertisings/ from a travel agency

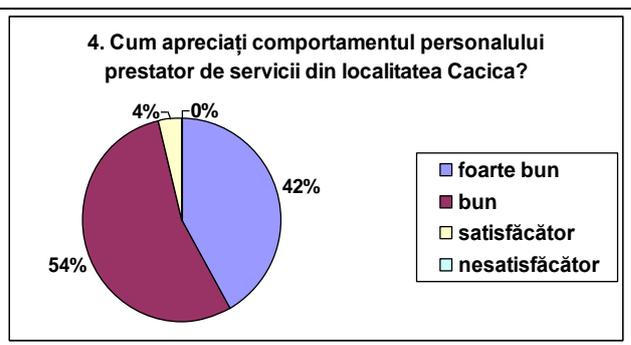
2.(from the graphic) business tourism/ cultural tourism/ leisure/ treatment/ religious tourism

Regarding the quality of tourism services and the behavior of service providers in Cacica (graph no.3 and no.4), we see that over half of the respondents appreciate them with the good qualifier, 28% consider the quality of the services very good, 42% consider the behavior of the service provider very good service, and a relatively small percentage (4% / 6%) marks a satisfactory answer.



**Graphic no.3. How do you rate the quality of tourism services offered by the economic agents in Cacica?**

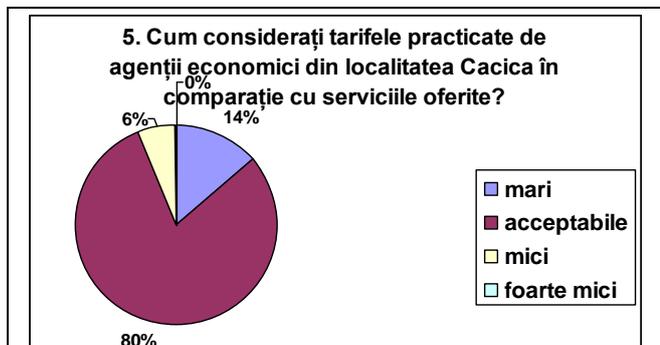
3.(from the graphic)very good/ good/ satisfactory/ unsatisfactory



**Graphic no.4. How do you rate the behavior of the service providers in Cacica?**

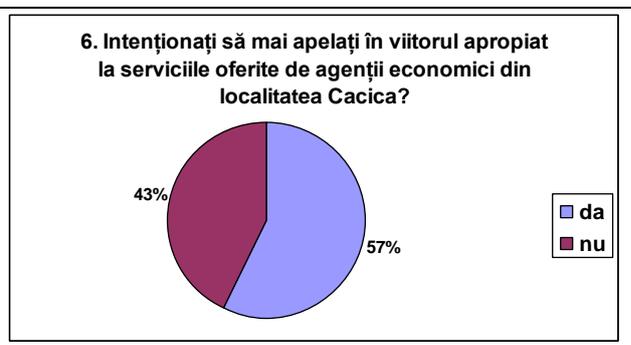
4.(from the graphic) very good/ good/ satisfactory/ unsatisfactory

Questions 5 and 6 point out that 80% of the tourists consider the rates charged by economic agents to be acceptable, while over 50% of them intend to call again in the near future for the services provided by the economic agents in Cacica.



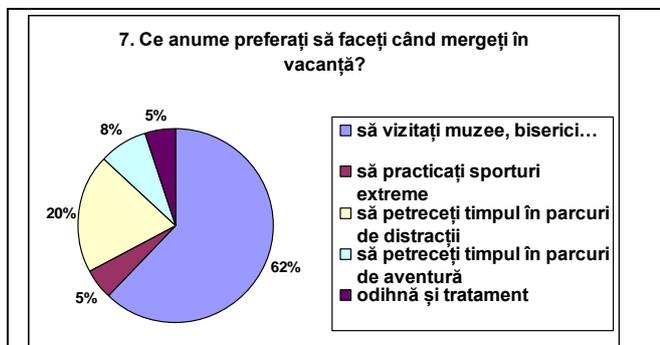
**Graphic no.5. How do you consider the rates charged by economic agents from Cacica compared to the services offered?**

5.(from the graphic)big/ acceptable/ small/ very small



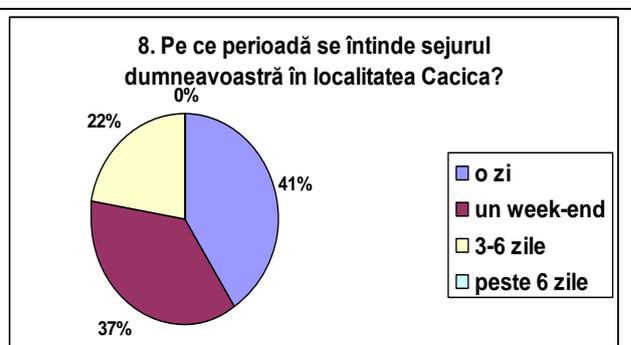
**Graphic no.6. Do you intend to call in the near future for the services provided by the economic agents in Cacica?**

Graphs 7 and 8 show that more than 80% of the tourists want to visit museums, churches, etc., and the number of days spent in Cacica has increased, while over 50% of respondents spend between 3 and 6 days in Cacica.



**Graphic no.7. What do you prefer to do when you go on holiday?**

7.(from the graphic)to visit museums, churches.../practice extreme sports/ spend time in amusement parks/ spend time in adventure parks/ leisure and treatments



**Graphic no.8. For how long are you staying in Cacica?**

8.(from the graphic) one day/ one week-end/ 3-6 days/ over 6 days

Concerning identification questions, we find that the tourists average age is between 25 and 55 years; most of them have finished high school, post-secondary and university studies. To the question: What is your profession? - the highest percentage is held by public sector employees, followed by private, freelance, retired and one unemployed person.

For the question - "In what category of income do you fit?", the answers show that most of the tourists have an income between 2000 and 3000 lei. A relatively large percentage is represented by tourists with incomes between 3000 and 5000 lei, while a very small number (1 tourist) has an income of over 5000 lei.

From questions about the sex of interviewees we see that the ratio is about 60% men and 40% women; most of the interviewed tourists (75%) are from urban areas; over 50% are married and over 40% are single.

The presence of service providers in Cacica is an important actor in the development of tourism and to the economy in the area. Our study helps those interested (public institutions and economic entities) to identify weaknesses and find solutions to diminish and even eliminate them, and to develop new strategies to attract tourists in the region. The need for investment as well as continued specialization of hired personnel must be the number one priority for the economic environment in this area. Another priority is also a better promotion of the area (with everything on it) on the Internet, through travel agencies and in mass-media.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Cacica must benefit from the capitalization of all resources and especially of natural resources. Their results are derived from elements such as the beauty of the landscape, the curative qualities of mineral or thermal waters, climate conditions, cultural and artistic events, art monuments, historical vestiges, folk traditions, etc. We note that in terms of international tourism, foreign exchange earnings contribute to mitigating the balance of payments deficit, strengthening the national currency and free convertibility.

The effects of tourism are reflected in better communication, exchanges of ideas, information, widening the cultural horizon, etc. In the same context, we mention that the most important functions of tourism consist in its comforting role, in its capacity to contribute to the regeneration of the working capacity of the population, both in the forms of rest and in the forms of balneo-medical treatments. At the same time, tourism is a means of educating, raising the level of training, culture and civilization of the people.

In a different way, tourism contributes not only to the satisfaction of material needs but also to the satisfaction of the spiritual needs of the people. "Every step of a journey becomes an adventure of knowledge; at every step you die and overcome the joy, the novel makes you re-come, nature re-emerges on the base of every day, witness to your own miracle " (19).

#### **Proposals for future research ideas**

I believe that the research in our work should be carried out on a regular basis, as tourists' expectations and requirements are becoming more and more complex as a result of increasing leisure time, increasing income, increasing competition, etc. Also, in order to make a name, it is necessary to carry out research both among those directly interested in tourism in the area of Cacica and among the undecided or uninterested.

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