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## Dynamics and Fluctuations of Tourists in Turda Salt Mine – a Case Study

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### Abstract

Tourism has become an important sector with an increasing impact on the development of an economy. The main benefits of tourism are producing income and generating jobs. For many regions and countries is the most important source of wealth. The ability of the national economy to benefit from tourism depends on the availability of investment, to develop the necessary infrastructure and capacity to meet the needs of tourists. Romania has a great potential for tourism development in the entire country. Tourism activities contribute to income redistribution reducing the degree of poverty. In Romania, the presence of valuable natural resources, such as thermal, mineral or salt waters, sludge for treatment purposes, salt mines or herbs, favor spa tourism, which can bring significant economic benefits. To highlight this, we conducted a study in Turda, at the salt mine, Cluj County, and watched the evolution of the number of tourists over the past two decades. The comparative study shows the number of touristic entries and the entries for treatment. It resulted from the present study, that the number of tourists has risen steadily, and the explosion of visitors, both for tourism and treatment, took place in 2010, when it was completed the modernization of the mine.

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the priority areas for Romania and which through its resources and through interconnections with other branches of the national economy is an important factor for economic progress. Tourism is totally dependent on the environment, which is the activity and tourism venue. The more resources are diverse, the tourism value of the area is greater, thereby satisfying a wide variety of touristic motivations. Romania has a very high chance of developing because it has rich and diverse natural and anthropogenic resources.

Related to economy, tourism is a factor of progress with broad and positive impact on development of the entire society, acting in the direction of introducing the economic cycle and anthropogenic natural tourism resources. Tourism acts as a stimulating factor for the global economic system. By developing tourism get an increase of production, or GDP contribution is proportional to the development level of each country (Cristureanu, 2001).

Tourism contributes to diversifying the economy of a country, causing the appearance of specific activities, such as: industry leisure, cableways, travel agencies, production crafts, printing new dimensions of some of the existing activities such as agriculture, food industry, construction, transport and cultural services. Through tourism are effectively recovered items as: beauty of the landscape, curative qualities of mineral or thermal waters, lakes, mud and therapeutic gases, mines, herbs, monuments of art, historical relics and traditions (WTO, 2005).

Tourism and social life is manifested by traditional influence on the lifestyle of the inhabitants of an area, on the enlargement of their horizon, both spiritually and professionally. Harnessing the natural heritage and cultural tourism of a tourist area has an impact both positive and negative. In social terms, positive impact is manifested by increased chances, social and professional, by creating new jobs, decreasing disparities between socio-professional categories in terms of revenues. The negative impact is manifested by disrupting and destroying gradual lifestyle changes in traditional social structures, and the acceptance by the local population of the negative influences social plan (Nistoreanu, 2005).

Most tourists want to visit attractive areas, clean and unpolluted environment quality is therefore an essential condition to be maintained and improved, leading to sustainable tourism. Sustainable development in tourism occurred in early 1990 and aims to avoid the medium and long term production of economic imbalances or ecological because both reserves as well as the planet's natural resources are limited, as is the power to absorb all the waste and waste resulting.

Romania has an exceptional potential for spa that concentrates a variety of cure factors (Aluculesei and Nistoreanu, 2014; Sandu et al., 2010). In the last years spa experienced a large activity in terms of organizational development, research and medical use, and natural base was modernized, expanded and diversified. Romania currently has about 160 state and local spa for cure factors. Their existence has boosted tourism and recovery spa treatment of wide range of diseases. Natural cure factors in spa tourism are thermo-mineral waters and lakes therapeutic muds therapeutic, natural gas emanations therapeutic salt mines, herbs and ionization. Among these are the salt mines, Romania having on its territory some of the largest in Europe.

## 2. Materials and Methods

To highlight the importance of tourism to develop a special tourism zones and spas, we conducted a case study in Turda Salt mine and we were interested in the evolution of the number of tourists over the past two decades.

Turda Salt Mine is located on the outskirts of Turda, Cluj County and is a major tourist attraction and an important center for treatment and recovery (<http://salinaturda.eu/>).

To describe the dynamics of tourists in Salina Turda, we evaluated the total number of tourists who visited this goal in the period 1995 - 2015. We analyzed as a comparative study, the years 2014 - 2015, who had the elevated values of tourists. There were also analyzed and compared entrances for visiting purpose and entrances for treatment purpose. It was done a case study consisted of seasonal dynamics of tourists on months, to identify the periods with high tourism potential and those with low tourism potential.

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