

# Exploring Casino Impact Perceptions of a Unique Population

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## Abstract

This study is an investigation of the impact perceptions of Social Service Providers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Economic Development Officers to acquire a wide spectrum of community views. In doing so, this study advances the literature by examining this unique population's perceptions of casino gambling impacts and factors driving those perceptions, and their support for casinos in general using the social exchange theory framework. The results suggest that officers who have worked with gamblers tend to agree more with the economic benefits. A partial support for social exchange theory is also noted. The results have important implications for the casino operators, casino opponents, and the policy makers.

**Keywords:** casino gambling, social exchange theory, impact perceptions, key personnel

## Introduction

Legalization of casino gambling has become a well-known economic and social issue (Dimanche and Speyrer 1996; Rose 1998). Many local governments have extended support to casinos in the context of economic benefits (Ham, Brown & Jang, 2004), while being aware of the fact that the reputation of gambling as a magic mantra for prosperity might be overstated (Hakim and Buck, 1987; Stokowski, 1996). Thus, support for this commercial activity remains controversial (Pizam & Pokela, 1985; Stitt, Nichols & Giacobassi, 2005; Chhabra, 2007). Opponents have questioned this activity on moral and health grounds because of the declining quality of life in casino communities and a growing number of problem and pathological gamblers.

Two polarized hypotheses explain gambling effects in literature: economic boosterism and social disruption. Economic boosterism suggests that gambling stimulates local economy (Stokowski, 1996). The second hypothesis argues that gambling causes social disruption (Caneday & Zeiger, 1991; Tosun, 2002). That is, it harms the social fabric by bringing with it increased crime, bankruptcies, and social pathologies. Time and time again, host perceptions are ascertained to assess the community response to the socioeconomic impacts of gambling tourism within the social exchange theory (SET) framework (Hsu, 2000; Lee & Back, 2006). Social exchange theory posits that personal benefits influence local community perceptions of impacts (Chhabra & Gursoy, 2007). In other words, "residents who perceive themselves as benefiting from tourism are likely to view it positively, while residents who perceive themselves as incurring costs are likely to view tourism as negatively" (McGehee & Andereck, 2004: 173)

Extant literature has endorsed the application of SET as an appropriate framework for explaining residents' perceptions of gambling tourism impacts (Caneday & Zeiger, 1991; Lee & Back, 2006; Giacobassi & Stitt, 1993; Ham et al., 2004; Hsu, 2000; Jurowski et al., 1997; Pizam & Pokela, 1985; Stitt et al., 2003). A positive association between perceived employment benefits and quality of life was noted by Perdue et

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al. (1999). Likewise, Roehl found a correlation between positive perceptions and employment benefits. Lee & Back (2006) confirmed the existence of SET by showing a positive and significant association between favorable perceptions and local resident's support for casino development in South Korea. Economic benefits were reported to be the most significant predictors of resident support levels. Caneday & Zeiger (1991) reported significant association between local residents' positive perceptions of social and economic impacts, especially within the context of receiving personal benefits and overall support for casino operations.

Conversely, literature shows that lack of benefit perceptions has generated less support (Pizam & Pokela, 1985). Ham et al. (2004) reported local residents' lack of support based on the perception that no employment benefits were generated by the casino industry. This view was confirmed by Giacomassi & Stitt (1993). Evidently, all the aforementioned studies have focused on the local residents as their population of study.

Despite the abundant literature on impact perceptions and SET, very few studies have focused on the perspectives of community leaders and others (referred to as key personnel in this study) who, through the nature of their work, are directly or indirectly involved with the gambling industry. According to Giacomassi, Nichols & Stitt, "an area of opinion research that has been neglected is the study of individuals who work in areas thought to be affected by casino gaming. As a result of their work, they may be better informed than the average citizen" (1999: 125). Hence their views are important. Giacomassi et al. defined them as "community leaders (such as mayors, members of the city council, leading members of the business community) and other who work in areas (such as banking, law enforcement, and social services) which provide an insight into the positive and negative effects that casinos have on communities" (1999: 123).

Social issues within gaming communities have been reported by several studies and most of them fall within the realm of Social Service Provider's list of tasks. For instance Long (1996) noted that an ongoing demand exists for child protection, marriage counseling, and other social service programs in gaming communities. This view was confirmed later by Giacomassi, Nichols & Stitt (1999). The authors reported an increase in the social worker case loads in casino communities. Giacomassi et al. (1999) also found that casinos accentuated family and finance problems and Gambling Treatment Agencies often refer the problem/pathological gamblers to social service providers (SSPs) and economic development officers (EDOs) to obtain assistance and suggestions for better management of personal life and financial situations. Another study focusing on social services was conducted by Hsu (1999). The author reported reduced need for social services in some of the casino communities in the State of Iowa. Frisch, Caeti & Taylor (1999) concentrating on law enforcement officers (LEOs) suggested focused patrolling was needed in casino zones. However, interviews with LEOs reported mixed results. Decrease in criminal activity was reported in some casino zones while the exact opposite, increase in crime, was noted in other gaming areas. In sum, the authors concluded that ongoing feedback from LEOs is important to ascertain extent of criminal activity in casino zones.

Janes & Collison (2003) examined community leader perceptions of the social and economic impacts of Indian Gaming over a five year period. Community leaders included Director of Social Services, Police Chief, Executive Director of Economic Development, and Director of Public Safety. While observations of substantial economic gains in terms of taxes, employment opportunities, wages and property values were reported, community leaders also reported increasing challenges to the community, infrastructure, social, and child neglect issues over the year period. Overall, the respondents argued that despite negative impacts, community quality of life had become better. Favorable support for casino operations was thus noted.

The results of the Giacomassi et al. study indicated that 59% of the interviewed respondents supported the existing casinos and believed that they had a positive effect on the local economy. However, the authors observed that these responses varied by

community and the specific position held by the respondent in the community. Although a few studies have explored the opinions of community leaders and other key personnel, more research is required to understand these groups. As mentioned earlier, key personnel operating in casino communities can also be, for instance, treatment officers from gambling treatment programs that deal with problem or pathological gamblers on a regular basis. They can also be law enforcement officers who deal with traffic issues or crime related incidents as a result of tourists to the casino regions. Likewise, economic development officers are part of the decision making body to determine best how tax revenue generated by casinos can serve the economic needs or uplift. By examining this unique population's perceptions of casino gambling impacts and factors driving those perceptions, and their support using the social exchange theory framework, this study fills an important lacuna in gambling research (Giacopassi et al., 1999). Collectively, leaders and key personnel may present a broader spectrum of community views. In summary, this study endeavors to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of the key personnel regarding positive and negative impacts of casino gambling in Iowa?
- 2) Do these perceptions influence support for the casinos?
- 3) Can the social exchange theory be applied to this unique population? In other words, are the SSPs, LEOs, and EDOs more likely to support and have favorable perceptions of casino gambling when they believe the perceived benefits exceed the perceived costs?

### **Methodology**

A modified version of the impact scale proposed by Perdue, Kang & Long (1999), was used by this study to explore perceptions of key personnel in counties housing the 17 casinos of Iowa (including 2 racetracks). The Perdue et al. scale was based on two sources: 1) a review of tourism impact and perceived quality of life literature and 2) focus group interviews with casino industry executives and casino community residents. The results obtained were submitted to a panel of experts. These included local government officials, casino operators and research colleagues. Reliability of the final list was confirmed by alpha values of over .70. Additionally, the Perdue et al. scale has been used extensively in gambling impact literature and has provided a platform for studies focusing on local impact perceptions (Lee, Kim & King, 2003; Stitt, Nichols & Giacopassi, 2005).

Perdue et al. (1999) scale was initially tested on a small sample (10) of the key personnel population in Black Hawk and Linn counties of Iowa for clarity and to identify any omitted items associated with gambling impacts. The preliminary respondent breakdown was as follows: 2 SSP, 2 LEO, and 1 EDP each from the aforementioned counties. Based on respondent comments, the perception scale was reworded. For instance, the initial item "casino has attracted more investment into my community" was amended to "there has been more investment into my community." "Improving public facilities for visitors use is a waste of taxpayer's money" was changed to "local taxpayers' money has been wasted to improve public facilities for casino visitors." "Casino existence has increased the level of traffic congestion" was modified as "there is more traffic congestion" and "I personally receive economic benefits from gambling e.g., income, employment, lower property taxes" was changed to "I personally receive economic benefits from gambling, such as employment, gambling winnings, or because family members who benefited helped me out."

The mean values of different items are presented in Table 1. All impact items were measured on a five point Likert scale with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree." A personal benefit item "I personally receive economic benefits from gambling, such as employment, gambling winnings, or because family members who benefited

helped me out” was included. At the empirical level, many studies have suggested that personal factors such as employment and winnings predict local community’s attitudes (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Long, Perdue & Allen, 1990; Ross, 1992)

In addition to the impact scale, information was elicited on the following: years in current position, if worked directly with gamblers, regulators or operators, and whether in personal favor of having a casino in their county. According to Rose (1998), these factors have a high likelihood of influencing impact perceptions of key personnel.

The final survey was conducted over the telephone by the Center of Social Behavioral Research (University of Northern Iowa). Because impact perceptions had to be rated on a predetermined Likert scale, there was less likelihood of interviewee subjectivity and bias. Nevertheless, the interviewees were trained and asked not to offer too many explanations for each item and stick to the standardized introduction and purpose of the survey. Additionally, the survey contained a few open ended questions (Does the casino have a positive or negative impact on the quality of life? What are some of the positive and negative impacts you have observed?) to address omission bias in case the scale did not prove to be inclusive of region-specific factors. The data from the open ended questions were content analyzed. Paisley (1969:133) described content analysis as “a phase of information-processing in which communications content is transformed, through objective and systematic application of categorization rules, into data that can be summarized and compared.” Three distinguishing characteristics of content analysis (objectivity, systematization, and quantification) were used (Kassarjian, 1977). Two raters (university students) were employed to confirm inter-rater reliability.

A total of 135 usable surveys were obtained. Data were gathered from a total of 8 to 10 key personnel (a mix of Social Service Providers, Law Enforcement Officers, and Economic Development Officers) from each of the seventeen casino counties. Lists for each category were gleaned from the Iowa Department of Education website, Social Services website of different counties, referrals by the staff of gambling treatment agencies, Iowa Economic Development Association, Chamber of Commerce, Iowa Department Public Safety and local police offices. Approximately, 78 SSPs, 58 LEOs, and 48 EDOs were contacted over the telephone. The response rate was 64%, 69%, and 66% for the SSPs, LEOs, and EDOs respectively. A further breakdown per casino county showed that the number of respondents interviewed per county ranged from 3 to 5.

While univariate analysis provided descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to verify scale dimensionality. Chi squared values and RMSEA values ranging from 10.87 to 18.42 and .07 to .10 confirmed positive and significant loadings of most of the items on the following impact constructs: economic benefit, economic cost, social benefit, and social cost. One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to determine differences in perceptions between economic development officers, social service providers, and law enforcement officers. Next, influence of other factors on perceptions was explored using OLS multiple regression models. The following were used as dummy variables: worked with gamblers, with yes =1 and no= 0; personally favor casinos, with yes=1 and no=0; social service providers (SSP) versus the others, with SSP=1 and others =0; Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) versus the others, with LEO =1 and others =0; and Economic Development Officers (EDO) versus the others, with EDO=1 and others =0. All independent variables were tested for multicollinearity. Tolerance statistic was used to examine the correlation matrix of predictor variables. Finally, SET was examined between different key personnel groups and across the total key personnel population. The casino support variable was gleaned from two Likert scale items (measured on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”) stating “casino gambling has contributed positively to my community and “casino gambling is a positive leisure activity.” Earlier studies have used similar descriptions of the support variable (Caneday & Zeiger, 1991; Perdue et al., 1999).

## Findings

Descriptive statistics reveal that 57.1% of all respondents were males. Average age was 47 years. Approximately 34.5% had worked with gamblers before. Based on the open-ended answers, the association with gamblers appears to be in the capacity of dealing with their social problems such as family quarrels, missing work or problem gambling behavior or advising them on finances and budgeting. Information was not clear regarding the capacity in which law enforcement officers had worked with gamblers. Violation of traffic rules or alcoholism could be possible reasons. Approximately, 31% had worked with casino operators and 18.5% had worked with casino regulators. It was interesting to note that 67.3% of all respondents were personally in favor of having a casino in their county.

The descriptive statistics of the responses to the perception items are presented in Table 1. As the table demonstrates, statistically significant differences were noted between different groups based on social benefit and social cost domains. That means the LEOs, SSPs, and the EDPs differed from each other on overall social benefits and social costs incurred by the local communities as a result of existing casino operations. LEOs gave higher ratings to social benefit in comparison with the others and they also agreed the most on social costs. It was interesting to note that the SSPs gave the lowest rating to social impacts (both benefits and costs). It appears that the LEOs deal more with social issues than the rest while at the same time they are also observant of positive impacts on the casino communities. No differences were noted on perceptions associated with economic benefits and costs. Close to neutral rating was given to personal benefits by LEOs and EDPs, whereas the SSPs were more inclined to disagree on this item. However, these differences were not statistically significant. Furthermore, the response to the open-ended question on whether the casino had a positive or negative impact on the quality of life in the county where they work was mixed. Some of the answers were (individual comments are separated by semicolons): At my end, we provide financial resources, that are beneficial, but I wonder how many lives gambling ruins, if it is one life, it is not worth it; Provides things that would not normally be provided on their own; Dollars to city government, have attracted more retail businesses; Positives outweigh the negatives; Negatives outweigh the positives.

**Table 1: Determining Differences in Perceptions**

	Social Service Providers	Law Enforce. Officers	Economic Develop. Officers	F Value
<b>Economic Benefits</b>				1.968
Increased employment opportunities	4.02	4.36	4.23	
Increase in real estate prices	3.03	3.19	2.79	
More investment in the community	3.59	3.94	3.68	
<b>Economic Costs</b>				1.194
Increased price of goods & services	2.24	2.06	2.25	
Waste of taxpayers' money on facilities for casino visitors	2.29	1.64	2.18	
Negative effect on area businesses	2.37	2.33	2.19	
<b>Social Benefits</b>				5.307 <sup>a</sup>
More opportunities to meet different people	3.16	3.66	3.46	
More opportunities to learn about different cultures	2.79	2.91	2.93	
Increased quality of recreation opportunities	3.52	3.68	3.82	
Increase in local pride	2.95	3.09	3.63	
<b>Social costs</b>				4.054 <sup>b</sup>
More family quarrels in my community	3.17	3.00	3.00	
Frequent losing or quitting of jobs	2.36	2.42	2.31	
Local residents borrow money to gamble	3.40	3.26	3.27	
Alcohol abuse has increased	2.70	2.54	2.30	
Divorces have resulted	2.52	2.75	2.44	
Bankruptcies have increased	3.29	3.40	3.24	
<b>Support</b>				1.754
Casino gambling is a positive leisure activity	3.04	2.82	3.39	
Casinos have made positive contributions overall	3.55	3.76	3.82	
<b>Personal Benefits</b>				1.238

For the question designed to ascertain whether the respondents thought that the impact of the closest casino had been limited to the immediate county or it had impacted a wider area, most of the answers were split. In response to the question on some of the perceived positive impacts, many mentioned charitable contributions, economic growth in general, more hotels, drawing card for tourism, employment opportunities, donations, better infrastructure, and redevelopment of the riverfront. In response to the question on negative impacts, many answers commented on the increase in the crime rate, bankruptcies, negative mental health, increase in financial crimes, grocery money going to gambling, ugly on riverfront, betting house payments, domestic abuse, family fights, shoplifting, traffic congestion, public intoxication, money problems for people who cannot pay their bills or control their addiction, not a lot of extra shoppers in town, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Many answers to the question on additional costs in the county resulting from casino gambling mentioned were methamphetamine use, business leakage of dollars, emergency services, public safety, increase in the civil legal and criminal justice systems, prosecution costs, the toll taken on schools, not good for families, loss of farms, and high property taxes. However, several respondents also thought that there were few costs and that budget problems were minimal.

Finally, the respondents were asked to provide comments about the impacts of casinos in Iowa. Some of the answers were as follows: Not enough programs to deal with problems; A real attraction to the elderly on fixed incomes; Casinos are not economic development, they just move the money around but do not create wealth; More recreation opportunities, abundance of people; No idea where the rest of the casino money is, not in favor of expansion; Students not able to have food because parents gamble the money away; Just one more choice for tourism and entertainment; Do not think the disabled people who get tax dollars should be allowed to gamble their money away; Large impact on community betterment; Legislature should not have arbitrarily passed the law for table gaming at Prairie Meadows without a public vote; Less disruption and crime due to casinos than we originally thought; The dilemma of adding casinos is whether the community will derive the advantages they perceive they will.

Next, four OLS multiple regression models were used to identify predictors of perception dynamism. All groups were combined for further analyses. Since several studies have indicated correlation between various types of impacts (Chhabra & Gursoy 2007), all impact domains were included As Table 2 reveals, all except the economic cost model, were statistically significant. Additionally, the SSP dummy variable was removed from analysis because of multicollinearity issues. With regard to the economic benefit model, all key personnel who worked directly with the gamblers agreed that economic benefits of casino operations facilitated employment, better investment, and increase in real estate prices. This was observed in the presence of intervention factors such as (in other words, controlling for) years in service, personal benefits, personal approval of the casino, gender and age. No differences were noted between the key personnel groups on economic benefits. In regard to social benefits, the officers differed from each other and also those who personally favored casinos were in more disagreement with the benefits such as providing more opportunities for recreation and to meet different people and understand other cultures. EDOs disagreed more on social benefits. On the social cost model, those who personally favored casinos were in more agreement with the social costs while controlling for other variables. No differences in perceptions on social costs were observed among the different key personnel groups. It was interesting to note that both age and gender failed to exert a significant influence on perceptions.

**Table 2: Determining Influences on Perceptions**

	Economic Benefits B/t value	Economic Costs B/t value	Social Benefits B/t value	Social Costs B/t value
Received personal benefits	.109/1.799	-.001/-.030	.092/1.811	-.027/-.536
Personally favor casinos	-.089/-.879	.119/1.454	-.191/-2.262 <sup>b</sup>	.237/2.743 <sup>a</sup>
Worked directly with gamblers	.319/2.323 <sup>b</sup>	-.126/-1.154	.176/1.536	-.049/-.425
Years in this position	.009/1.050	.006/.055	.007/1.070	-.006/-.799
Age	.014/.315	.029/.322	.032/.213	.043/.256
Gender	-.062/-.427	.071/1.604	.196/1.625	.053/.423
Economic development officers vs. others	-.202/-1.146	.073/.517	-.400/-2.745 <sup>a</sup>	.195/1.320
Law enforcement officers vs. others	.117/.695	.058/.432	-.254/-1.822	-.092/-.638
F value	2.445 <sup>b</sup>	.788	4.149 <sup>a</sup>	2.619 <sup>b</sup>
R squared	.160	.059	.242	.172

a: significant at p=.001

b: significant at p= .01

Finally, Table 3 presents the influence of perceptions on SET while controlling for other factors. Only economic benefits and social costs exerted a statistically significant influence on support across all groups while controlling for other impact perceptions, work related factors, personal benefits, and personal liking for the casino industry in addition to age and gender. In other words, those who agreed with economic benefits tended to offer more support for the existing casinos and those who agreed more with the social costs were less likely to support the gambling industry. No between-group differences in levels of support were noted. Other variables such as personal benefits, working directly with gamblers, years in service and age and gender failed to demonstrate statistically significant effects on support. Thus the results suggested a partial support for SET, even in the presence of other interventions, among this unique group of respondents.

**Table 3: Testing SET Theory (Influence of Perceptions on Support)**

Independent Variable	Parameter	t Value
Age	.008	.412
Gender	.104	.626
Received personal benefits	.006	.088
Personally favor casinos	.034	.285
Worked directly with gamblers	-.208	-1.326
Years in this position	-.013	-1.434
Economic Benefits	.309	2.298 <sup>b</sup>
Economic Costs	-.162	-1.092
Social Benefits	.276	1.775
Social Costs	-.349	-2.396 <sup>b</sup>
Personal Benefits	.006	.088
Law Enforcement Officers vs. others	.050	.261
Economic Development Officers vs. others	.034	.170
F Value	3.223 <sup>a</sup>	
R Squared	.307	

a: significant at p=.001

b: significant at p= .01

### Conclusion And Implications

Literature exploring the perceptions of key personnel in casino counties is still sparse. It is imperative to explore their support in the context of benefit/cost dichotomies. This study provides a useful insight into the perceptions of a less researched population group.

With regard to benefit and cost perceptions, all viewed economic and social benefits such as employment, investment, and opportunities to learn and interact with other cultures positively. Similar views were reported by Janes & Collison (2003) and Giacompassi et al. (1999). Among the social cost items of concern were borrowing

habits of people and bankruptcies. Giacomassi et al. (1999) also reported concerns over problem gambling. A frequency breakdown of these items also revealed that more than a third of total key personnel agreed that local residents borrowed money to gamble, and that bankruptcies had resulted (34.2%). The bulk of key personnel, on the other hand, disagreed that local residents had lost interest in their work, engaged in illegal activities, and that attendance had decreased at other entertainment centers such as museums and the cinema. With Giacomassi et al. (1999) the majority of the respondents were swayed by the tangible benefits of casino operations. It was also interesting to note that approximately 33% of the interviewees had received personal economic benefits from gambling at some point in their lives.

With regard to the predictors of perception domains, surprisingly, those officers who have worked with gamblers were the ones who agreed more with the economic benefits. It appears their exposure to the externalities of gambling has not tainted their overall perspective. This also confirms Chhabra's (2008) argument that casino gambling is an alternative form of business that, like any other business, generates both positive and negative impacts. This can also be attributed to the fact that casino gambling is often considered a part of the overall tourism equation and has ancillary effects. This view finds support with previous studies which contend that economic benefits of casino operations are substantial (both in terms of direct and spillover effects for complementary businesses such as retail stores, gasoline stations, and restaurants) for communities which are specifically rural in nature (Perdue et al., 1999; Pizam & Pokela, 1985). Most of the casinos in Iowa are located in rural counties. Furthermore, those who were in personal favor of the casinos were more likely to disagree with the social benefits. This can be attributed partly to those who gamble for purposes other than socialization. Alternatively, it can reflect the feedback respondents obtain from problem gamblers. Another reason could be lack of effect on perceived quality of life in terms of feelings of pride (a social benefit factor) associated with having a casino in the jurisdiction. Differences on social benefits between key personal groups were also noted. It is likely that the nature of profession affects observation of social benefits. Social Service Providers and Economic Development Officers are less likely to be convinced of the much touted social benefits of gambling. On the other hand, they also might not be as exposed to favorable views as the Law Enforcement Officers because the latter's job depends on their mobility and ability to observe surroundings. It was also interesting to note that despite personal preference for the casino industry, all officers confirmed that casino gambling produces social costs.

Additionally, the study results suggested a partial support for SET. It appears that key personnel perspectives are mixed and more rational than the local residents. For instance, despite dealing with negative consequences of casino gambling, in the form of problem or pathological gamblers, Social Service Providers take a somewhat balanced perspective. Also, all three provide a similar level of support in the presence of other factors, but appear to be driven by economic benefits and social costs.

Like all studies, the results of this study are also subject to several caveats. While the study provides important information on perceptions, the causal effects could not be explored fully. Due to time and budget constraints, it was not possible to collect data on other socio-demographic characteristics such as annual household income, family size, marital status and education. This study formed one section of a bigger study sponsored by the Iowa Legislative Council that focused on local resident perceptions. Hence budget had to be split based on each research section.

Moreover, the sample size was small although it was drawn from all the casino counties. Caution should be exercised while generalizing these results within the context of other regions in the United States because the study population was focused on only one state: Iowa. Moreover, not all community leaders per casino county could be

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interviewed and it was difficult to obtain a pure random sample within each study area. Similar limitations were observed by Giacomassi et al. (1999). Despite this, these surveys can be considered a large scale statewide effort to gather views of key people.

Finally, a broader spectrum of key personnel such as those working in medical services is recommended to diversify the key personnel population. Moreover, although the open ended questions suggested additional items of concern and benefit, it was not possible to include them in the scale for quantitative analyses. This can be considered a limitation.

That said, the findings have important implications for the casino operators, casino opponents, and the policy makers. Perceptions and voices of behind-the-scenes observers are unveiled in this study. Most of the impact studies have centered round the local residents, but this research focused on a unique population that directly deals with casino gambling impacts through the jobs they hold. As gaming operations expand in Iowa, as is seen from the lifting of the moratorium and granting of four additional licenses to the state in 2005, gaming problems will become more prevalent. The results can be used by both opponents and proponents to devise sustainable gambling strategies. For instance, casino operations can work with the key personnel such as those working for the gambling treatment agencies or those dealing with problem gamblers (who commit crime, larceny, etc.) to identify people who are victims of social and economic costs. Consequently, assistance can help treat and minimize negative effects. Likewise, the gaming opponents can work with the key personnel to voice their concern. Moreover, key personnel employed in different professions can form a bipartisan group to advise lawmakers on regulations associated with casino operations. On a positive note, information on casino benefits can garner more support from those who are not knowledgeable about them. Although this study did not measure perceived impacts with actual changes, similar concerns and benefits across the state reported by those working closely in casino-related environments (Hsu, 1998) validate issues and benefits that need to be taken into serious consideration. For a complete picture, however, it is recommended that future studies document actual economic and social impacts.

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