

# Opinions on Riverboat Casinos and the Perceived Impacts on Community Quality by Quad Cities' Residents

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## **Abstract**

*The purposes of the study were to determine the opinions of Quad Cities residents about legalized riverboat casinos in their communities and their perceptions on the importance of community quality attributes and impacts of legalized riverboat casinos on these attributes. Differences of opinions among respondents with different demographic characteristics also were examined. Stratified systematic random sampling method was used to draw samples from the Quad Cities telephone directory; 200 residents were selected from each city. Of the 800 questionnaires mailed, 231 were returned. Residents agreed that the presence of riverboat casinos was good for the community. The majority of community quality attributes were rated as either very important or important. Residents perceived all attributes to be either improved or having no change because of the riverboat casino operations. **Key Words:** Residents' perception, tourism impact, riverboat, casino, gaming.*

## **Introduction**

One goal of tourism development is to enhance the residents' quality of life in the host community. When making decisions to promote tourism, local governments tend to overlook the potential social and environmental costs of tourism development and examine only the perceived economic benefits of such developments. Existing research indi-

cates that tourism impacts consist not only of the tangible economic effects (Liu & Var, 1983) but also of the intangible social and environmental effects (Liu, Sheldon, & Var, 1987; Pizam & Milman, 1986; Sheldon & Var, 1984).

The positive impacts of tourism were identified as increased opportunity for employment and shopping, income and standard of living, quality of police protection, understanding among people with different backgrounds, availability of recreational facilities, overall revenue from taxes, and quality of life (Milman & Pizam, 1988; Pizam, 1978). Unfortunately, tourism is not without negative consequences for the host community (Milman & Pizam, 1988; Pizam, 1978; Rothman, 1978). Negative consequences include increased traffic congestion, litter, noise, vandalism, prices for goods and services, cost of land and housing, and resentment by local residents.

Residents employed in tourism or economically dependent upon visitors were more favorable toward tourists and tourism than were others (Milman & Pizam, 1988; Pizam 1978; Rothman, 1978). Schluter and Var (1988) disclosed a strong relation between economic dependency and positive perception of economic benefits among Argentinean residents. In another study, entrepreneurs of Corpus Christi, Texas, also had a more positive attitude toward tourism than did residents and public service providers (Thomason, Crompton, & Kamp, 1979).

Attitudes of residents also differ in terms of age, language, residency length, tourist contact, and personal and locational characteristics of contacts (Brougham & Butler, 1981; Sheldon and Var, 1984). The more attached residents were to the community, the less positively they perceived the impact of tourism (Um & Crompton, 1987). In a study conducted on residents of Santa Marta, Colombia, Belisle and Hoy (1980) concluded the perceived impact of tourism depended upon the distance a person lived from the tourist zone, and socioeconomic status of residents had no effect on their perceptions. However, Pizam (1978) found that residents who had a relatively high income, worked in manual or clerical occupations, or were older and more affluent had more positive attitudes toward tourism.

In 1976, the Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling concluded that states should not expect revenues from legalized casino gambling to ease their financial difficulties. However, worldwide recession combined with decreased federal funding forced many states to consider developing a gaming industry within their states as a way of strengthening local economies. As Hecht (1974) and Tyson (1979) asserted, casinos may well serve as attractions to tourism destinations.

Before 1950, gambling activity generally was prohibited at federal and state levels (Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling, 1976). The success of the lotteries led many states to consider developing the casino gambling industry as a means of increasing tourism and strengthening local economies. During 1991, consumers spent \$241 billion on gambling cruise ships and riverboats and in Nevada and New Jersey casinos (National Travel and Tourism Awareness Council, 1992). Currently, growth in riverboat casino gambling is seen in five states: Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Missouri, with 16 facilities in operation (Cahill & Kisielica, 1993).

The State of Iowa approved riverboat gambling on July 1, 1989 (Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, 1993). In April 1991, three floating casinos were launched from three Mississippi River communities. Two more boats joined the competition in May and June of 1991. The five riverboat casinos served a total of nine eastern Iowa communities. However, by July 1993, only three riverboat casinos remained in Iowa. A probable cause of the departure may be the maximum bet per hand of \$5 and a cap on total loss per

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passenger per visit of \$200. The Illinois Gaming Act, without any betting limits, was passed in December 1989 and went into effect in February 1990. As of February 1993, there were six riverboat gambling facilities in Illinois (Cahill & Kisielica, 1993).

Numerous studies on perceptions and attitudes of residents toward the impacts of tourism have been conducted over the past few years. Few studies of the perceived impacts of casino gambling can be found, and very little is known about the opinions and perceptions of residents regarding legalized riverboat casinos and their impacts on the host community. Therefore, the purposes of this study were to (1) determine the opinions of Quad Cities residents about legalized riverboat casinos in their communities; (2) determine their perceptions on the importance of community quality attributes and impacts of legalized riverboat casinos on these attributes; and (3) examine the differences of opinions of residents with different demographic characteristics about legalized riverboat casinos and their impacts.

Community quality attributes refer to the factors that contribute to the quality of a community, such as availability of entertainment, opportunity for employment, traffic conditions, noise, and quality of public services. Quad Cities are Bettendorf and Davenport of Iowa and Moline and Rock Island of Illinois.

### **Methodology**

A questionnaire was developed based on parameters used in previous tourism impact studies. The questionnaire consisted of three sections with a total of 52 questions. The first section was designed to measure the opinions of residents about legalization of riverboat casinos, betting limits, outside investments, tourism taxation, and economic benefits versus social impacts and environmental protection. Residents were asked to agree or disagree with the 12 statements by selecting the appropriate number on a five-point Likert-type scale, with 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = unsure, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree.

Questions in the second section consisted of 24 community quality attributes designed to measure both perceived importance of these attributes to the quality of a community and the effect of riverboat casino activities. Two five-point Likert-type scales were used to determine importance and level of effect. For the important scale, 1 = very important; 2 = important; 3 = moderately important; 4 = minor importance; and 5 = not important. For the level of effect scale, 1 = significantly improved; 2 = improved; 3 = no change; 4 = deteriorated; and 5 = significantly deteriorated. The third section included 16 demographic questions designed to elicit descriptive information and to identify the relationship between demographic characteristics and other variables.

The instrument was reviewed by tourism researchers to ensure content validity. Several wording and layout aspects of the questionnaire were revised according to reviewers' comments to improve comprehension for Quad Cities residents. The questionnaire was pilot tested with undergraduate students enrolled in a Midwestern hospitality management program from nine original Iowa riverboat communities. Results of the pilot test indicated no further revision was necessary.

A sample for the study was drawn from the Quad Cities telephone directory using the stratified systematic random sampling method. The sample size was determined to be 800; therefore, 200 residents were selected from each city. Of the 800 questionnaires mailed, 231 were returned, representing a 28.88% response rate.

Responses from the completed questionnaires were coded and analyzed by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Inc., 1990). Descriptive statistics including means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations were calculated for all survey items. T-tests were performed to identify significant differences between responses of different demographic groups for all variables. T-tests also were used to assess significant differences between responses of Iowa and Illinois residents on all variables.

## Results

The majority of respondents (71.9%) were male (Table 1), perhaps because most telephone directory listings had male members of the households listed first, and these were the names addressed on the outgoing questionnaire envelopes. Nearly one-third of respondents (31.9%) were older than 60, and almost one-third (32.6%) were retired. This may have reflected the fact that senior citizens and retirees had more time to fill out the questionnaire than did employed persons. According to census data (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, and Bureau of the Census, 1991a and 1991b), 18.0% of Quad Cities residents were over 60 years of age. The low response rate and deviation from census data may introduce potential non-response bias to results of the study.

**Table 1 Characteristics of the respondents**

Characteristics	n	Percentage	Mean	Range
<b>Gender</b>				
male	164	71.90		
female	64	28.10		
<b>Age</b>				
under 20 years	1	0.40		
20-29 years	15	6.60		
30-39 years	51	22.30		
40-49 years	43	18.80		
50-59 years	46	20.10		
60 or more years	73	31.90		
<b>Length of residence (years)</b>			27.36	1 - 73
<b>Distance of residence from dock of riverboat casino (miles)</b>			4.81	1 - 99
<b>Education level</b>				
less than high school	2	0.90		
high school diploma	47	20.50		
vocational/technical school	13	5.70		
some college	55	24.00		
two-year associate degree	12	5.20		
four-year bachelor degree	45	19.70		
some graduate school	17	7.40		
advanced degree	38	16.60		
<b>Family annual income</b>				
less than \$10,000	5	2.30		
\$10,000-\$19,999	28	13.10		
\$20,000-\$29,999	29	13.60		
\$30,000-\$39,999	36	16.80		
\$40,000-\$49,999	47	22.00		
\$50,000-\$59,999	13	6.10		
\$60,000-\$69,999	16	7.50		
\$70,000-\$79,999	12	5.60		
\$80,000-\$89,999	8	3.70		
\$90,000 and over	20	9.30		
<b>Number of household members</b>			2.52	1 - 6
<b>Visiting riverboat casinos</b>				
yes	181	79.00		
no	48	21.00		
<b>Number of times visited</b>			9.33	1 - 99

Table 1 (Cont.)

Characteristics	n	Percentage	Mean	Range
<b>Employment status</b>				
employed full-time	134	58.30		
employed part-time	11	4.80		
unemployed	4	1.70		
retired	75	32.60		
other	6	2.60		
<b>Job related to tourism</b>				
yes	15	6.80		
no	207	93.20		
<b>Business related to tourism</b>				
yes	5	2.20		
no	222	97.80		
<b>Work on riverboat casinos</b>				
yes	2	0.90		
no	227	99.10		
<b>Family members work on riverboat casinos</b>				
yes	10	4.30		
no	220	95.70		
<b>Know someone who works on riverboat casinos</b>				
yes	91	39.90		
no	137	60.10		

Note: Total number of respondents is inconsistent due to no responses.

The majority of respondents were longtime residents, with an average length of residency of 27.36 years. The average distance from the current residence to the dock of a riverboat casino was 4.81 miles. Nearly all respondents (99.1%) had at least a high school diploma. Approximately half (48.9%) had at least a two-year college degree. Close to one-third (32.2%) had an annual family income of \$50,000 or greater. The average household had 2.52 members.

Most respondents (79.0%) had visited the riverboat casinos, and the average frequency of visitation was 9.33. Close to two-thirds (63.1%) were employed full- or part-time, with most of the respondents (93.2%) having jobs unrelated to tourism. Very few (2.2%) owned or managed a business related to tourism, while even fewer respondents (0.9%) worked on riverboat casinos, and few family members (4.3%)

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did, too. Approximately 40% of the respondents knew someone who worked on the riverboat casinos. The high frequency of riverboat visitation and low frequency of having jobs related to tourism may be biased by the age distribution of respondents.

Results of the t-tests indicated no significant differences between demographic characteristics of Iowa and Illinois residents other than length of residency ( $t=2.59, p<.01$ ). The average length of residency for Iowa and Illinois was 24.33 and 30.74 years, respectively.

Mean scores of Quad Cities residents' responses showed they agreed that the community should try to attract more tourists; tourists attracted by riverboat casinos help improve the local economy riverboat casinos should be legalized in the state; and people from outside the community should be allowed to invest in tourism attractions in the area. Respondents also agreed that riverboat casinos generate more economic benefits than

negative impacts on social environments; tourism generated by riverboat casinos encourages a variety of cultural activities; and the city should spend money on preparing the community to accommodate tourists (Table 2).

**Table 2. Opinions of residents on legalized riverboat casinos in their communities**

Opinion	n	Mean
The community should try to attract more tourists to this area.	231	1.82 <sup>a</sup>
Tourists attracted by riverboat casinos to __ <sup>b</sup> help improve the local economy.	229	1.95
I agree with the legalization of riverboat casinos in the State of __ <sup>c</sup> .	230	2.20
People from outside of this community should be allowed to invest in tourism attractions in this area.	229	2.28
Riverboat casinos generate more economic benefits than negative impacts on social environments.	229	2.31
Tourism generated by riverboat casinos encourages a variety of cultural activities (e.g., crafts, arts, music).	231	2.36
The city should spend money on preparing the community to accommodate the tourists.	229	2.41
Tourism generated by riverboat casinos increases cultural exchange opportunities between local residents and tourists.	231	2.54
The city of __ <sup>b</sup> should charge tourists a special tax on hotel and motel rooms.	231	3.15
Tourists should pay more than residents to visit the parks and outdoor recreation facilities in this area.	231	3.65
State government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each visit.	215	3.73
State government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each day.	205	3.74
Economic benefits generated from riverboat casinos are more important than the protection of the natural environment.	227	3.77
State government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each bet.	210	3.80

<sup>a</sup> Opinion scale: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=unsure, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree

<sup>b</sup> Bettendorf, IA; Davenport, IA; Moline, IL; or Rock Island, IL

<sup>c</sup> Illinois or Iowa

Respondents were unsure whether the tourism generated by riverboat casinos would increase culture exchange opportunities between local residents and tourists, and whether the city should charge tourists a special tax on hotel and motel rooms. However, respondents disagreed with the statements that tourists should pay more than residents to visit the parks and outdoor recreation facilities in the area, and that state government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each visit, each day, and each bet. Respondents also disagreed with the statement that economic benefits generated from riverboat casinos are more important than the protection of the natural environment. It is interesting to note that statements inquiring opinions of residents on state government regulations had more missing data than other statements. Residents seemed to be hesitant in expressing their opinions on the more sensitive and debatable issues.

Almost all community quality attributes were rated as either *very important* or *important* except "free of crowds in public areas" which fell into the *moderately important* category (Table 3). According to respondents, "free of organized crime", "free of individual violent crimes", "free of other individual crimes", and "free of drug activity" were

the most important community quality attributes. Although the level of effect mean scores of these attributes fell into the *no change* category, they were ranked at the bottom of the list and may be the most probable attributes to be deteriorated.

**Table 3. Residents' perceptions of community quality attributes**

Community Quality Attributes	IMPORTANCE		EFFECT	
	n	Mean	n	Mean
Free of organized crime	222	1.26 <sup>a</sup>	215	3.18 <sup>b</sup>
Free of individual violent crimes (e.g., murder)	223	1.28	218	3.24
Free of other individual crimes (e.g., theft, vandalism)	223	1.30	218	3.26
Free of drug activity	223	1.33	217	3.22
Cleanliness of the community	227	1.41	226	2.47
Appearance of the community	226	1.42	225	2.22
Reputation of the community	225	1.50	224	2.50
Employment opportunities	224	1.54	218	2.09
Quality of public services	227	1.56	226	2.69
Free of prostitution	223	1.62	217	3.10
Courtesy of residents	224	1.64	218	2.62
Availability of public services	227	1.69	225	2.80
Friendliness of residents	224	1.70	218	2.62
Standard of living	224	1.74	217	2.81
Tax revenue generation	222	1.74	217	2.08
Cost of living	224	1.77	219	3.00
Cost of public services	227	1.81	224	2.96
Traffic flow	227	1.82	225	3.16
Cost of housing	224	1.88	219	2.89
Availability of housing	224	1.95	219	2.92
Availability of recreation	224	1.99	218	2.39
Availability of entertainment	224	2.08	219	2.18
Availability of cultural activities	222	2.14	217	2.57
Free of crowds in public areas	218	2.74	215	3.09

<sup>a</sup> Importance scale: 1=very important, 2=important, 3=moderately important, 4=minor importance, 5=not important

<sup>b</sup> Level of effect scale: 1=significantly improved, 2=improved, 3=no change, 4=deteriorated, 5=significantly deteriorated

The next set of attributes rated as *very important* were "cleanliness of the community" and "appearance of the community". These attributes were *improved* as a result of the operation of riverboat casinos. This may reflect the local government's effort to prepare the community for tourists. Although availability of recreation and entertainment were not rated as the most important attributes, additional recreation and entertainment became available with the arrival of riverboat casinos.

T-tests were used to identify significant differences between demographic groups. The mean scores of males were higher than those of females on all items with 12 significant differences. Female respondents tended to rate the social aspects of the community more important than males did.

Age, family annual income, and frequency of visits were divided at approximately the 50% cutoff. T-tests were conducted between mean scores of respondents in the  $\leq 49$  years of age group and  $\geq 50$  years group. The  $\leq 49$  years group had a significantly higher level of effect mean scores on 14 of the 24 community quality attribute items (Table 4).

Respondents in the  $\leq 49$  years group may have been more active in the community and have had contact with the community in a wide variety of ways; therefore, they may have been more aware of the changes brought about by the riverboat casinos.

**Table 4. Comparison of significantly different mean scores of variables by age**

Variable	$\leq 49$ years		$\geq 50$ years		t-value
	n	Mean	n	Mean	
<b>Opinions</b>					
I agree with the legalization of riverboat casinos in the State of __ <sup>a</sup> .	109	2.43	119	1.99	2.56**
The community should try to attract more tourists to this area.	110	1.95	119	1.71	2.18*
State government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each visit.	104	3.52	109	3.91	-2.01**
State government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each day.	99	3.41	104	4.03	-3.18**
Riverboat casinos generate more economic benefits than negative impacts on social environments.	110	2.49	117	2.14	2.38*
Economic benefits generated from riverboat casinos are more important than the protection of the natural environment.	109	3.95	116	3.58	2.53**
Tourists should pay more than residents to visit the parks and outdoor recreation facilities in this area.	110	3.44	119	3.83	-2.53**
<b>Level of effect</b>					
Quality of public services	108	2.08	116	2.61	2.13*
Cost of public services	108	3.06	114	2.88	2.08*
Availability of public services	108	2.93	115	2.70	2.75**
Free of crowds in public areas	105	3.21	110	2.97	2.94**
Standard of living	104	2.94	113	2.69	2.72**
Cost of living	104	3.10	114	2.92	2.29*
Availability of housing	104	3.08	114	2.79	3.28**
Cost of housing	104	3.06	114	2.74	3.35**
Free of prostitution	103	3.21	113	3.00	2.14*
Free of organized crime	102	3.31	112	3.05	2.43*
Free of individual violent crimes	103	3.39	114	3.10	2.68**
Free of other individual crimes	103	3.41	114	3.13	2.63**
Friendliness of residents	103	2.79	114	2.47	3.59**
Courtesy of residents	103	2.80	114	2.46	3.67**

<sup>a</sup> Illinois or Iowa

\*  $p \leq .05$

\*\*  $p \leq .01$



The  $\geq 50$  years group disagreed with the statement that state governments should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each visit and each day. The older group tended to have the leisure time and discretionary income to frequent the riverboat casinos; therefore, they held relatively strong negative opinions toward government interference. They also disagreed with the statements that tourists should pay more than residents to visit the area's parks and outdoor recreation facilities and that economic benefits generated from riverboat casinos are more important than the protection of the natural environment.

Residents with  $\geq \$40,000$  family annual incomes agreed more strongly than those with  $< \$40,000$  family annual income with the statement that people from outside of this community should be allowed to invest in tourism attractions in the area (Table 5). Perhaps this is the group that has more money for investment and, therefore, understands the importance of and would like to have flexibility in investment. Individuals with  $< \$40,000$  family annual incomes considered "standard of living" and "cost of living" as more important. Cost may be a determining factor for this group when selecting a community because of limited financial resources.

**Table 5. Comparison of significantly different mean scores of variables by family annual income**

Variable	$< \$40,000$		$\geq 40,000$		t-value
	n	Mean	n	Mean	
<b>Opinions</b>					
People from outside of this community should be allowed to invest in tourism attractions in this area.	97	2.47	116	2.10	2.62**
Tourism generated by riverboat casinos increase cultural exchange opportunities between local residents and tourists.	98	2.37	116	2.67	-2.01*
<b>Importance</b>					
Standard of living	97	1.62	113	1.88	-2.33*
Cost of living	97	1.63	113	1.90	-2.51**
<b>Level of effect</b>					
Appearance of the community	96	2.08	112	2.36	-2.24*
Availability of housing	94	2.82	111	3.03	-2.24*

\*  $p \leq .05$

\*\*  $p \leq .01$

Table 6 shows that residents who had visited riverboat casinos had relatively more favorable opinions and perceptions about legalization of riverboat casinos than those who had not visited riverboat casinos. They disagreed, however, with the statements that state governments should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each visit, each day, and each bet.

**Table 6. Comparison of significantly different mean scores of variables by riverboat casino visits**

Variable	Yes <sup>a</sup>		No <sup>b</sup>		t-value
	n	Mean	n	Mean	
<b>Opinions</b>					
I agree with the legalization of riverboat casinos in the State of __ <sup>c</sup> .	180	1.99	48	3.00	-4.30**
The city should spend money on preparing the community to accommodate the tourists.	179	2.29	48	2.92	-3.10**
The community should try to attract more tourists to this area.	181	1.75	48	2.13	-2.19*
State government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each visit.	171	3.87	42	3.07	3.36**
State government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each day.	165	3.88	38	3.03	3.49**
State government should regulate the maximum amount of money spent on each bet.	169	3.94	39	3.13	3.36**
Tourists attracted by riverboat casinos to __ <sup>d</sup> help improve the local economy.	180	1.82	47	2.49	-3.73**
Tourism generated by riverboat casinos encourages a variety of cultural activities.	181	2.23	48	2.92	-3.55**
Tourism generated by riverboat casinos increase cultural exchange opportunities between local residents and tourists.	181	2.44	48	3.00	-3.22**
<b>Level of effect</b>					
Reputation of the community	178	2.40	44	2.93	-3.32**
Tax revenue generation	174	2.04	42	2.29	-2.00*
Employment opportunities	176	2.03	41	2.34	-2.42*
Free of prostitution	176	3.05	40	3.33	-2.13*
Friendliness of residents	177	2.56	40	2.88	-2.73**
Courtesy of residents	177	2.56	40	2.85	-2.36*

<sup>a</sup> Have visited riverboat casinos

<sup>b</sup> Have not visited riverboat casinos

<sup>c</sup> Illinois or Iowa

<sup>d</sup> Bettendorf, IA; Davenport, IA; Moline, IL; or Rock Island, IL

\*  $p \leq .05$

\*\*  $p \leq .01$

T-tests in Table 7 show results similar to those in Table 6. Residents who had visited riverboat casinos five or more times had significantly more positive perceptions of riverboat casinos' impacts than those who visited riverboat casinos four times or less. The frequent visitors were unsure that economic benefits generated from riverboat casinos were more important than the protection of the natural environment. However, they had significantly more favorable opinions about legalization of riverboat casinos.

**Table 7. Comparison of significantly different mean scores of variables by frequency of visits to riverboat casinos**

Variable	4 times		5 times		t-value
	n	Mean	n	Mean	
<b>Opinions</b>					
I agree with the legalization of riverboat casinos in the State of __ <sup>a</sup> .	94	2.28	87	1.72	3.24**
The city should spend money on preparing the community to accommodate the tourists.	93	2.44	87	2.15	1.99*
Tourists attracted by riverboat casinos to __ <sup>b</sup> help improve the local economy.	93	2.01	88	1.65	2.80**
Riverboat casinos generate more economic benefits than negative impacts on social environments.	94	2.43	88	1.83	4.13**
Economic benefits generated from riverboat casinos are more important than the protection of the natural environment.	92	3.98	87	3.41	3.54**
Tourism generated by riverboat casinos encourages a variety of cultural activities.	94	2.41	88	2.06	2.46*
Tourism generated by riverboat casinos increase cultural exchange opportunities between local residents and tourists.	94	2.65	88	2.23	2.78**
<b>Level of effect</b>					
Reputation of the community	90	2.54	88	2.26	2.13*
Appearance of the community	92	2.35	87	2.02	2.61**
Cleanliness of the community	92	2.55	88	2.31	2.11*
Employment opportunities	91	2.15	86	1.92	2.18**
Standard of living	91	2.91	85	2.66	2.57**
Free of drug activity	91	3.33	86	3.02	2.74**
Free of prostitution	91	3.15	86	2.94	1.98*
Free of organized crime	89	3.28	86	2.99	2.51**
Free of individual violent crimes	92	3.38	86	3.06	2.69**
Free of other individual crimes	92	3.37	86	3.09	2.39*
Courtesy of residents	92	2.66	86	2.45	2.02*

<sup>a</sup> Illinois or Iowa

<sup>b</sup> Bettendorf, IA; Davenport, IA; Moline, IL; or Rock Island, IL

\* p ≤ .05

\*\* p ≤ .01

T-tests performed between mean scores of Iowa and Illinois residents indicated only five significant differences (Table 8). Iowa residents agreed more strongly with the statements that tourists should pay more for recreation facilities and the city should charge tourists a special hotel/motel tax. It is interesting to note that both Illinois and Iowa residents perceived *no change* on the attributes "free of crowds in public areas" and "free of other individual crimes". However, mean scores of Illinois residents were significantly higher than those of Iowa residents.

**Table 8. Comparison of significantly different mean scores of variables by state**

Variable	Iowa <sup>a</sup>		Illinois <sup>b</sup>		t-value
	n	Mean	n	Mean	
<b>Opinions</b>					
Tourists should pay more than residents to visit the parks and outdoor recreation facilities in this area.	123	3.46	108	3.87	-2.67**
The city of ___ <sup>c</sup> should charge tourists a special tax on hotel and motel rooms.	123	2.95	108	3.37	-2.53**
<b>Importance</b>					
Appearance of the community	119	1.50	107	1.33	2.04*
<b>Level of effect</b>					
Free of crowds in public areas	115	3.00	100	3.19	-2.34*
Free of other individual crimes	114	3.16	104	3.38	-2.07*

<sup>a</sup> Residents from Bettendorf and Davenport

<sup>b</sup> Residents from Moline and Rock Island

<sup>c</sup> Bettendorf, IA; Davenport, IA; Moline, IL; or Rock Island, IL

\*  $p \leq .05$

\*\*  $p \leq .01$

Due to betting limits, Iowa may not have attracted as many tourists as Illinois. Because other individual crimes seem to follow the crowds, this may explain the lower level of effect mean scores of Iowa residents. There was no significant difference found between Iowa and Illinois residents' perceptions on the level of effect on economically related attributes. It may be too early for Illinois residents to see any significant improvement in such attributes because the Illinois riverboat casinos were in their first year of operation at the time of the survey.

### Implications

One of the typical goals of tourism development is to enhance the quality of life of residents in the host community. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate and integrate local residents' opinions and perceptions of the impact of tourism on their communities in developmental decisions. A number of states are considering the legalization of riverboat casino gambling in the future. This study lays the groundwork for the type of analysis state governments will need to use to select riverboat casino gambling as a potential tourism development or promotional tool.

This study was an investigation of residents' opinions and perceptions concerning the impact of riverboat casinos on their communities rather than a measure of the actual impacts. Therefore, the question is not whether community quality attributes improved or deteriorated because of riverboat casinos, but what Quad Cities residents thought in this

regard. Perceptions of residents resulted from the interplay of several factors such as economy, personal characteristics, and community make-up. Therefore, the items in the questionnaire were selected to represent as broad a range of potential impacts as possible.

Results of the study indicated that, overall, Quad Cities residents favored toward state legalization of riverboat casinos, tourism development in their communities and the lifting of betting limits. They perceived presence of riverboat casinos in their communities as improving the reputation, appearance and cleanliness of their communities as well as tax revenue generation, employment opportunities, and availability of entertainment and recreation. The government of Iowa may take residents' opinions and perceptions into consideration when making decisions on eliminating or modifying betting limits.

According to the respondents, "free of organized crime", "free of individual violent crimes", "free of other individual crimes", "free of drug activity", "cleanliness of the community", and "appearance of the community" were the six most important community quality attributes of the 24 studied. Therefore, it is advisable to install crowd control procedures and take preventive measures against drug activity, organized and individual crimes, as well as other individual crimes such as theft and vandalism, to minimize the potential social and environmental costs of further gaming and tourism development.

This study was exploratory. Age representation of 60 year old Quad Cities residents differed between survey (31.9%) and census (18.0%) results which leads to a limitation in generalization of the findings. Further research with larger population and higher response rate is needed to validate results of this study. It is also recommended that this study be replicated to monitor changes in opinions and perceptions of Quad Cities residents on legalized riverboat casinos and their impacts on the

community over time. Replication of the study would also provide an opportunity to further investigate the validity of the research instrument.

## **Due to betting limits, Iowa may not have attracted as many tourists as Illinois.**

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