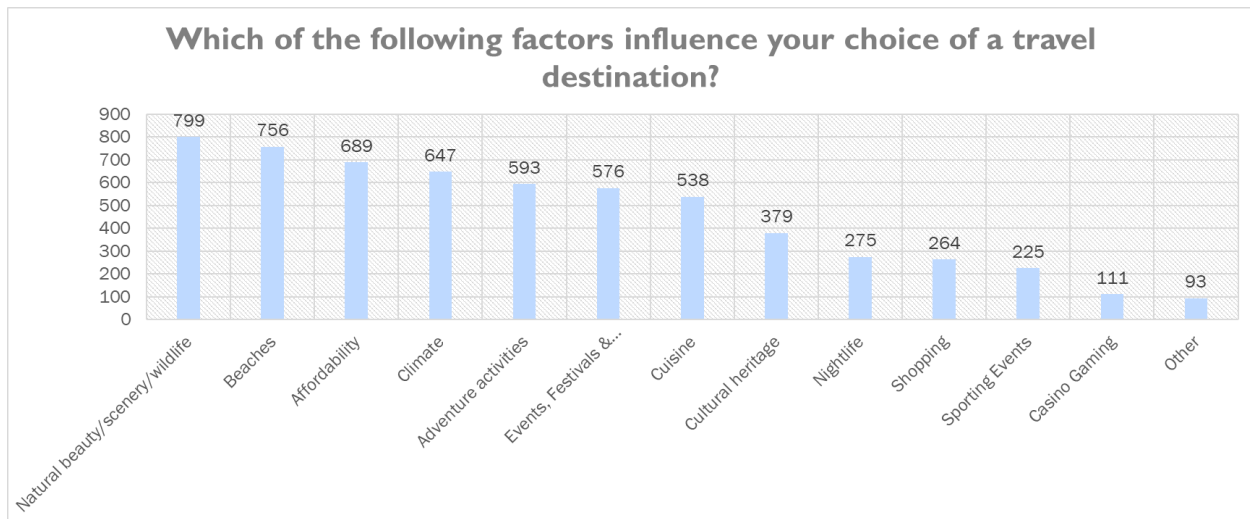# STOCKTON UNIVERSITY

LLOYD D. LEVENSON INSTITUTE
OF GAMING, HOSPITALITY & TOURISM
School of Business

Understanding Public Perceptions of Atlantic City

As part of their Spring 2024 'Research Methods' course, Dr. Noel Criscione-Naylor and her students (Sharise Bowie, Ryan Nelson, Amelia Olsson, Lydia Pool, Natalie Russo, Ashlyn Szczypinski and Matthew Verret) studied the destination perceptions and travel decision-making processes of individuals in the greater Atlantic City region. Their survey of 1,719 individuals, conducted in April and March of 2024, examined (among other aspects) the relative importance of various factors in tourists' decision-making process when selecting a destination.
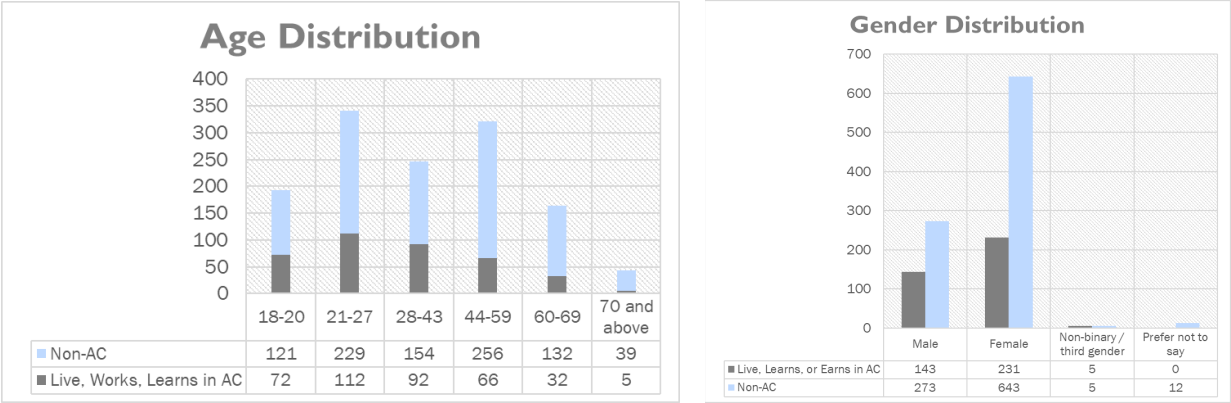
The students' findings suggested that factors, such as natural beauty (799 respondents), beaches (756 respondents), affordability (689 respondents), climate (647 respondents) and adventure activities (593 respondents), had a significant influence on respondents' choice of travel destination.
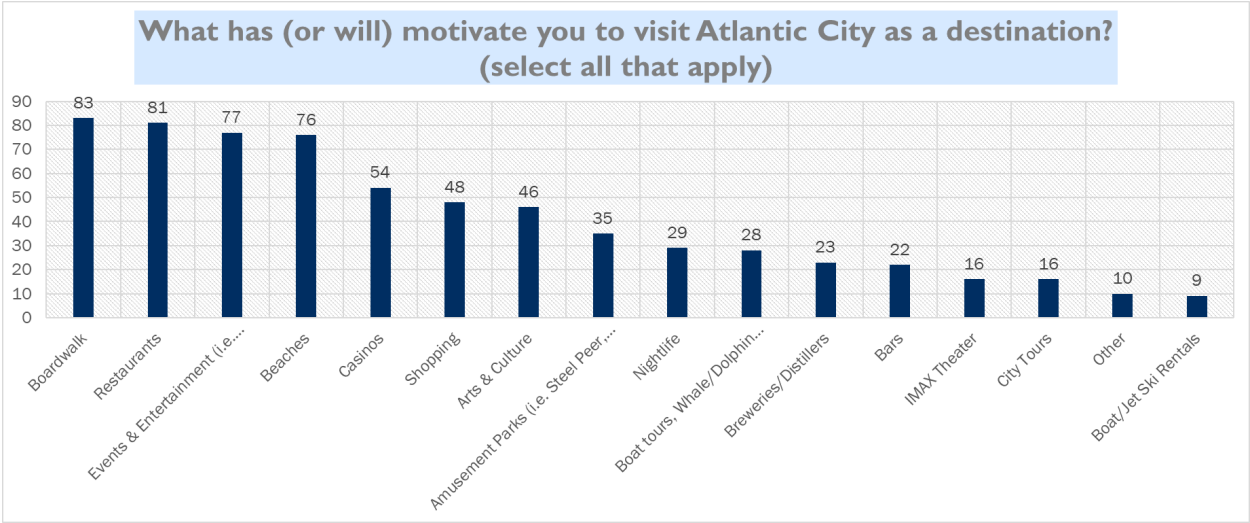

Other factors, such as events, festivals, entertainment (576 respondents), cuisine (538 respondents) and cultural heritage (379 respondents), also played notable roles in destination selection, albeit to a slightly lesser extent.

Notably for the greater Atlantic City region, nightlife (275 respondents), shopping (264 respondents), sporting events (225 respondents) and casino gaming (111 respondents) appeared to be of comparatively lower importance in influencing respondents' choices of tourist destination.

The sample population included 376 individuals who indicated that they either lived, worked or studied in Atlantic City, and 917 respondents who indicated they did not have these relationships with the city (non-A.C.). Respondents were fairly well distributed across age and gender.

Age Distribution

	18-20	21-27	28-43	44-59	60-69	70 and above
Non-AC	121	229	154	256	132	39
Live, Works, Learns in AC	72	112	92	66	32	5

Gender Distribution

	Male	Female	Non-binary / third gender	Prefer not to say
Live, Learns, or Earns in AC	143	231	5	0
Non-AC	273	643	5	12

In addition to their preferences when choosing a destination in general, respondents who did not have a live, work or learn relationship with Atlantic City (non-A.C.) were asked about those aspects that motivated or would motivate them to choose Atlantic City as a travel destination.

What has (or will) motivate you to visit Atlantic City as a destination? (select all that apply)

Category	Count
Boardwalk	83
Restaurants	81
Events & Entertainment (i.e…)	77
Beaches	76
Casinos	54
Shopping	48
Arts & Culture	46
Amusement Parks (i.e. Steel Peer…)	35
Nightlife	29
Boat tours, Whale/Dolphin…	28
Breweries/Distillers	23
Bars	22
IMAX Theater	16
City Tours	16
Other	10
Boat/Jet Ski Rentals	9

Among the listed choices, the most popular options included the Boardwalk (83 respondents), restaurants (81 respondents), events and entertainment such as concerts and comedy shows (77 respondents) and beaches (76 respondents).

Respondents frequently mentioned visiting casinos (54 respondents), engaging in shopping activities (48 respondents), exploring arts & culture venues (46 respondents) and enjoying amusement parks like Steel Pier, Showboat, and Dave & Buster's (35 respondents). Other notable choices included nightlife options (29 respondents), boat tours, whale/dolphin watching and fishing activities (28 respondents), as well as visiting breweries/distilleries (23 respondents) and bars (22 respondents). Less commonly mentioned activities include visiting the IMAX Theater (16 respondents), participating in city tours (16 respondents), and selecting "other" options (10

respondents). A smaller number of respondents indicated engaging in boat/jet ski rentals (9 respondents). Overall, this data suggests there are a diverse range of attractions and activities that visitors enjoy during their time in Atlantic City that motivate their choice of the city as a tourist destination.

The study also took the opportunity to ask individuals who indicated that they had not visited Atlantic City in the preceding 18-month period, why they hadn't visited the city. The most common reason (above perceptions of safety, cost, travel distance, etc.) was a lack of familiarity with the resort and its offerings. This observation highlighted the importance of increased marketing and public messaging about Atlantic City and reveals an opportunity to shape perceptions of the resort moving forward.

Understanding the motivations of current and potential visitors and how they match up with Atlantic City's many assets can help local tourism stakeholders tailor their marketing efforts, develop relevant infrastructure, and plan experiences that align with the desires of potential visitors. Further effort, supported by ongoing benchmarking research, is needed to see Atlantic City reach (and sustain) its full potential as a world-class resort destination.