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Research Paper

Persuading tourists to stay – Forever! A destination marketing perspective

Simon Hudson*, Kevin Kam Fung So, Jing Li, Fang Meng, David Cárdenas

College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina, 701 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC 29208, USA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between tourism and retirement migration – a neglected area of academic research – and discusses how destination marketers can attract the growing segment of migrating retirees. The focus of the empirical study is the state of South Carolina in the United States, with surveys administered to three separate unique samples: potential retirees who reside outside the state; tourists visiting the state; and existing retirees. The results show the economic potential for converting more visitors into retirees. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

1. Introduction

The connection between tourism and retirement migration is a neglected area of research (Williams & Hall, 2000), although many people may identify a future migration destination while vacationing or visiting family and friends (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Spina, Smith, & DeVerteuil, 2015; Williams, King, Warnes, & Patterson, 2000; Wong, Musa, & Taha, 2017). Images of retirement are frequently drawn from leisure or vacationing experiences, and most popular retirement locations are in or near places that attract tourists and vacationers (Longino, Perzynski, & Stoller, 2002; Rodriguez, 2001; Zimmermann, 2015). Individuals or families may purchase a second home to visit for a few weeks a year or on weekends, but when their children leave home, these residences often become more permanent. When tourists do convert to retirees, they expand their social networks (Casado-Diaz, Casado-Diaz, & Casado-Diaz, 2014; Spina et al., 2015), and become both potential participants in, and recipients of the 'visiting friends and relatives' (VFR) phenomenon (Kang & Page, 2000; Williams et al., 2000). There is thus a symbiotic relationship between tourism and retirement migration.

The competition for attracting retirees is, meanwhile, intensifying. In the US, a number of states have instigated aggressive marketing campaigns to attract domestic retirees (Humphreys & Kochut, 2013), and many have initiated Certified Retirement Community programs (Crawford, 2013). There are also an increasing number of Americans deciding to retire abroad because of the desire for a higher standard of living offered at a fraction of the cost compared to a similar lifestyle in the USA, as well as the change in scenery (Hayes, 2014). In terms of cost, there are five nations have been especially popular among

American retirees for financial reasons: Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, Portugal, and Malaysia.

For Europeans, especially the British, Spain has led the market for many years as a retiree destination (Casado-Diaz et al., 2014), but economic uncertainties after the 2008 financial crash and Spain's subsequent fractured economy has driven many back home (Giner-Monfort, 2017). Portugal, Spain's neighbor, was one of the first alternative retirement destinations to emerge. Immediately after the 2008 crash, Portugal introduced an attractive 10-year income tax exemption for foreign residents. Portugal's motivation for an all-out effort to attract retirees from Northern Europe was simply to boost its economy (Ferguson, 2015). Surprisingly, Portugal is also attracting many French who upon retirement become frustrated with the high taxes imposed in their home country. The island of Malta is also becoming popular as a retirement destination with Europeans (Williams et al., 2000), with the 'Malta Retirement Plan' allowing EU nationals who take up residency to enjoy income tax rate of 15%. Greece too is becoming attractive to retirees – particularly for Germans – because of its low living costs. Countries in the Eastern Mediterranean region are likewise accelerating their entrance into this market. Croatia and Albania, for example, offer tax rates of between 15% and 20% and offer a lower cost of living compared to some of their more developed counterparts.

Finally, a growing number of developing countries are targeting retirees. Like the more developed countries, they are wooing seniors with benefits ranging from travel and health care discounts to tax breaks. Some countries, such as the Philippines and Malaysia, have government agencies devoted to attracting foreign retirees. Malaysia currently has in place the 'Malaysia My Second Home' initiative aimed at attracting retirees from both developed and developing countries

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: shudson@hrsm.sc.edu (S. Hudson), kevinso@hrsm.sc.edu (K.K. Fung So), jingli@email.sc.edu (J. Li), fmeng@hrsm.sc.edu (F. Meng), dcardenas@hrsm.sc.edu (D. Cárdenas).

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(Wong & Musa, 2014). Meanwhile, other countries like Thailand have streamlined their visa process and introduced low monthly income requirements to make it easier to move to their country (Husa, Vielhaber, Jostl, Veress, & Wieser, 2014).

The focus of this research project was South Carolina in the USA, a state with above-average unemployment and poverty levels, where the retiree economy is slowly being recognized as a potential economic engine. The purpose of the study was to understand the state's competitive position as a relocation destination as perceived by key stakeholders, including existing retirees, potential retirees who reside outside the state, and visitors. South Carolina currently hosts nearly 30 million tourists a year, and it is thought that many of these visitors tour the state with the primary purpose of investigating the purchase of a second home, relocation, retirement or exploring new business and job opportunities. On Hilton Head Island, for example, 71% of current residents first traveled to the island as a leisure, convention, or business guest (Town of Hilton Head Island, 2010). However, South Carolina still ranks below states like Florida and Texas in attracting retirement-age transplants, and rural areas of the state in particular have very few retirement communities. It has been over 10 years since a study of retirement in South Carolina was commissioned, which calls for a comprehensive, up-to-date study to support a strategy for attracting retirees to the state.

The paper begins with a review of the literature related to the retiree economy and its relationship to tourism. An analysis of retirement and tourism in South Carolina is then presented, followed by the objectives of the study and methodology employed to achieve those objectives. The results are then followed by a discussion section that indicates both the theoretical and practical implications of the study.

2. Literature review

2.1. Retirement migration

Retirement migration is a dynamic area of research, which lends itself to multidisciplinary interest from scholars in migration studies, tourism and social gerontology (Truly, 2000). Certainly, the literature would suggest that retiree migrants have a positive impact on the communities they move to. Consequently, they are a coveted demographic group for towns, regions and countries seeking to expand their tax base and create jobs. New retirees pay taxes, spend money on local goods and services, and volunteer their time and money for local causes (Poudyala, Hodges, & Cordell, 2008). Evidence suggests that the infusion and re-circulation of retiree in-migrant dollars generates new jobs, especially in real estate, healthcare and financial services, and raises an area's tax-revenues more than local government expenditures (Sunil, Rojas, & Bradley, 2007). Studies have shown that rural counties where incomes are based on retirees have outpaced all others in per-capita income growth (Chesnutt, Lee, & Fagan, 1992).

There is also recent evidence of a 'retirement transition' stage, whereby the expectation of future retirement acts as a catalyst for behavioral change, including a possible change of residence (Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013; HSBC, 2015; Bank of America, 2016). Often, these 'amenity migrants' are empty nesters making the decision to move in their late 50s and early 60s, and they are a particularly important demographic given the current age profile of the post-war Baby Boom (Lundholm, 2012; Nelson, Nelson, & Trautman, 2014). In many cases these households have considerable savings and/or disposal income as a result of their previous property sale and the absence of a mortgage. Such migrants also record a high incidence of community participation, volunteering and holding positions of responsibility in community groups and activities (Botterill, 2016; Lough & Xiang, 2016; Nelson et al., 2014). Aitken and Hall (2000) have pointed out that international migrants can bring valuable skills to the tourism destinations in which they often settle.

For these retirees, leisure in retirement is far different than leisure

before retirement, with leisure being more about engagement, connection and activity in retirement, and less about relaxation and destressing (Bank of America, 2016). In fact, Oliver (2008) suggests that retirement migration offers a passport to a new leisured identity following working lives. She suggests that in sociological and anthropological terms, the process represents something of a modern-day rite of passage. In her book about retirees in Spain, she describes the stories of the people who go through this process.

What motivates people to move when they retire has been the subject of a number of studies. Most have found that the most significant motivations for retirees are a warm climate, the natural environment and a favorable lifestyle (Abdul-Aziz, Loh, & Jaafar, 2014; Wong & Musa, 2014). A low cost of living (Husa et al., 2014) and available medical facilities (Karner & Dorfman, 2012) are also important to retirees, especially to those moving abroad (Hayes, 2014; Ono, 2008). Cost of housing is also important: previous research has shown that in areas of the USA where housing has become unaffordable, the elderly population has chosen to 'spend' their gains in such housing markets by engaging in more migration (Steinnes & Hogan, 1992). High property taxes have also been shown to raise mobility among elderly homeowners (Shan, 2010). These monetary motivations tend to support the theory that migration is largely initiated by economics (Massey et al., 1993).

Wiseman (1980) proposed a conceptual model of decision-to-move factors, which included social and community participation (such as bonding with local residents), amenities (such as shopping facilities), cost of living reductions (such as taxes), life disruption, and the need for care (such as medical care and insurance). Additionally, a network of family and friends is an important consideration for retirees, with Gundel and Peters (2008) suggesting that the main barrier to relocating in another state is the lack of social bonds. Retirees often have a difficult time making friends with local residents and this leads to loneliness and unhappiness (Huber & O'Reilly, 2004).

In terms of social-economic preferences, towns with diverse economies and part-time job opportunities are attractive to retirees (Brock, 2015). High-speed Internet connections are also favored for allowing work-from-home opportunities. Small towns or rural areas are often preferred because they usually offer a lower cost of living and a less expensive lifestyle. Relatively low state and local taxes can be attractive to retirees, especially when the tax falls more on income taxes than on sales or property taxes (Humphreys & Kochut, 2013). Today's retirees also prefer cultural and educational opportunities for lifelong learning (Walker & Thierry, 2011). College towns are popular because retirees can enjoy benefits including getting a college degree at low cost or even free of charge. College towns allow retirees to share their wisdom, find like-minded friends, and have access to lectures, readings, concerts and plays (Walker, 2015). In addition, these towns often offer quality healthcare, public transportation, and ample volunteer opportunities (Walker, 2015).

With regard to transportation systems, retirees prefer low traffic volumes. Community features including safe and walkable neighborhoods, reliable transportation options, safe driving conditions, and emergency preparedness are favored (Lehning & Harmon, 2013). In terms of housing preferences, retirees look for accessible, affordable, and visitable housing options (Lehning & Harmon, 2013). Condos and smaller, low-maintenance homes are preferred because many retirees are empty-nesters (Brock, 2015). Easy access to high-quality health services is an additional attraction. Wellness programs and opportunities for active wellness (Crawford, 2013) are attractive because often retirees desire to keep fit and healthy (Euromonitor International, 2017; McNicol & Glorioso, 2014).

Overall, retirees are looking for livable communities with an active new lifestyle. They do not consider retirement as a permanent vacation; instead, they want to continue working at their own pace. Often, they do not completely retire from an active and engaged life, and they may start new businesses and new careers for financial reasons or for a sense

of fulfillment (McIlwain, 2011). In fact, a large percentage of people (56%) are exploring the idea of semi-retirement – working fewer hours and/or changing to a different job – to help ease their transition into retirement (HSBC, 2015). The new retiree is also looking for more amenities (McNicol & Pavelka, 2013; Wong et al., 2017). Research estimates that 46% of retired movers are amenity migrants, who prefer attractive physical environments and a variety of leisure opportunities (Humphreys & Kochut, 2013). As a result, warm winters plus golf in a resort context are not enough to satisfy current retirees and pre-retirees. More factors have to be taken into consideration, including the natural environment, social-economics, culture, amenities and facilities, and support services (Verdoorn, 2011).

In studies of why retirees choose to relocate in another country, motivations would seem to include an efficient visa system (Ono, 2008; Wong & Musa, 2014), geographical closeness to the home country (Gibler, Casado-Diaz, Casado-Diaz, Rodriguez, & Taltavull, 2009), access to an airport (Gibler et al., 2009), and a close relationship between the relocated country and home country (Sunil et al., 2007). Previous positive experiences traveling overseas would also seem to inspire people to retire in another country (Wong et al., 2017). However, there are also some barriers to relocating to another country or state. For some retirees, the language would be the most significant barrier (Gibler et al., 2009; Wong & Musa, 2014). In addition, a sense of community and friendship with local residents or lack thereof (Sunil et al., 2007), and the acceptance of local people and customs, would also be considered barriers for some retirees (Howard, 2008).

Among all retirees, immigrants are possibly the most mobile, due to pre-existing ties with their country of origin. The choice of whether to retire in the host country is becoming a key decision for up to 15% of the world's population. Large waves of immigrants who re-settled in the second half of the 20th century are now beginning to retire. Evidence shows that origin countries differ in their attractiveness for the return of older immigrants. For example, more Portuguese migrants in France expressed an intention to return at retirement than Italian or Spanish migrants (60% versus 43% and 34% respectively) (De Coulon, 2016). Although the determinants of the residential choice at retirement is similar to other retirees (local amenities, transport, healthcare, climate etc), it is more often the children of immigrants who are most influential in the final decision (Dustmann, 2003).

2.2. The relationship between retirement migration and tourism

Based on the literature, Fig. 1 illustrates the relationship between retirement and tourism and the different stages that might occur between deciding to move to retire and actual retirement. Of course, tourism may not play a role at all if the potential retiree decides to move directly to a retirement community without first visiting the destination. For the majority of retirees, however, the first stage will involve visiting the chosen destination as a tourist – perhaps several

times – and then even purchasing property during the 'retiree transition stage' before retiring full-time at the destination. Retirees will then influence future tourism flows either by traveling back to their former homes for vacation or via reverse migration (Kang & Page, 2000). They may also attract tourists or future retirees by spreading positive word of mouth and by attracting friends and relatives.

As Williams and Hall (2000) point out, there is nothing new in the existence of a symbiotic link between tourism and migration. But a number of structural changes in consumption and production have led to intensification and extensification of these inter-relationships. The rapid growth of retirement migration for example has been caused by an ageing population, extension of active old age, increased but polarized disposable incomes, changing working and retirement patterns, and increased familiarity with the 'global' through work and leisure. According to Williams and Hall (2000), the three main motivations for retirement migration are family re-unification, a return to roots, and the seeking out of leisure spaces informed by tourism experiences.

Although there have been few efforts to synthesize pre-existing models withing the tourism, retirement and migration literature, Truly (2000) has highlighted the apparent similarity between the conceptual models regarding tourism and retirement destination development. Butler's (1980) lifecycle model, for example, which proposes an evolution of a tourist resort, is very similar to the five phases of a retirement destination as suggested by Rowles and Watkins (1993), namely emergence, recognition, restructuring, saturation, and new concerns. However, his study of American retirees in the Lake Chapala Riviera in Jalisco, Mexico, found little evidence of the standard progression of development observed and theorized in previous studies. He did find that a 'new' group of retirees had emerged over the previous decade, one that preferred segregation from the local culture in contrast to some of the traditional groups of retirees who integrated to varying degrees with the local community. As such, "these new migrants seem to be importing a lifestyle to the area" (Truly, 2000, p.278).

Spain has been the geographical focus for much of the research looking at the relationship between retirement migration and tourism. O'Reilly (2003) for example, drew on ethnographic data from British migrants in Spain to show the complex relationship between migration and tourism. Casado-Diaz et al. (2014) also studied retirees in Spain, showing both the strength of the retirees' international bonding, the role of VFR, travel and communication technologies in sustaining the migrants' transnational social practices, and ultimately their international social capital. Rodriguez (2001) sought to understand the mechanisms by which many elderly North Europeans have made the transition from being working-age tourists to retired residents in the Costa del Sol. Finally, Haug, Dann and Mehmeoglu (2007) looked at Norwegians living in Spain, proposing a generalized continuum model linking international tourism with seasonal migration and an expatriate existence.

Europe was also the focus of work by Williams et al. (2000) who presented four case studies from Tuscany, Malta, the Costa del Sol and the Algarve. They confirmed that tourism does contribute to shaping retirement migrations, as travel careers provide knowledge of potential destinations. In addition, many of the facilities which migrants may seek or demand are only available in foreign destinations precisely because these are large scale or mass tourism destinations. Further afield, Ono (2008) and Kohno et al. (2016) have examined the flow of Japanese retirees to Malaysia under the 'Malaysia My Second Home' (MM2H) program. The program encourages foreign retirees to reside in Malaysia by issuing a multiple-entry social visit pass. Describing it as a new form of international tourism, Ono (2008) suggests that the phenomenon is driven not only by Malaysia's welcoming program, but by the desire on behalf of the Japanese for a better quality of life and a sense of financial sustainability in post-retirement life.

Very few studies have explored the link between tourism and retirement migration in the USA itself. An exception is the study in Vermont by Kuentzel and Ramaswamy (2005), who found that the

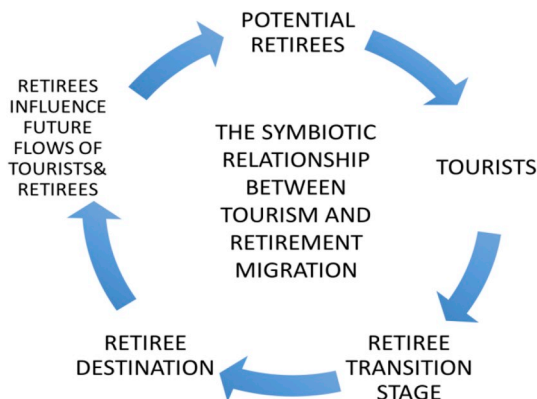


Fig. 1. The relationship between retirement migration and tourism.

decision behind retirement migration is more complex than visiting a place, enjoying it, and deciding to live there. They suggest that rural relocation may be a function of economic restraint and cultural dispositions that idealize rural places, while permanent home purchases may be influenced by local business opportunities. Consequently, this means that building tourism infrastructure in a town does not automatically mean a steady flow of more residents and seasonal home purchases.

In a study of tourism campaigns in nine states of the USA, the research firm of Longwoods International demonstrated how each destination's tourism promotion campaign created a 'halo effect', lifting not only the number of visitors, but motivating economic development objectives such as attracting new retirees (Zimmermann, 2015). The research identified those consumers who rank a destination highly for various economic development objectives such as starting a new business, a new career, retiring, or purchasing real estate. It compared the rankings by those who did see the destination's tourism advertisements and/or visited. For each economic development objective, the most dramatic improvement in image for a destination was by those consumers who both were exposed to the advertising message and visited the destination, often double the improvement over those who either saw the advertisements but did not visit or visited but had not seen the advertisements. Based on the research, Longwoods suggest that tourism marketers should be taking the lead in promoting their destinations for all purposes, including attracting retirees.

2.3. Destination overview

Globalization and technological changes have adversely affected the state of South Carolina, destroying many old-economy jobs. Rural areas in particular are struggling, and reductions in county and city budgets have limited the ability of local stakeholders to create innovative projects to stimulate local economies. South Carolina's rural counties suffer from higher average unemployment and poverty rates than the state's urban counties. Estimates from 2016 indicate that a poverty rate of 22.4% exists in rural South Carolina, compared to 15.6% in urban areas of the state. The unemployment rate in rural South Carolina is 6.2%, while in urban South Carolina it is 4.6% (South Carolina Community Loan Fund, 2017).

Increasing the number of retirees relocating to South Carolina is an effective way to create new jobs and businesses, increase real per capita income and improve tax revenues. Previous research (Center for Carolina Living, 2012) shows that new residents to South Carolina spend on average \$278,000 for a new home, and 14% intend to start a new business. Each new household creates an estimated 1.9 jobs locally. The 140,000 or so people who move to South Carolina each year bring a minimum of \$10.4 billion in new cash to the economy in their first year of arrival, creating new jobs and increasing tax revenues, decreasing poverty, fostering small business growth, and encouraging long-term sustainable economic development.

South Carolina is well positioned to increase its share of retirees. Population growth in many USA retirement destinations has slowed, partly due to the economic downturn, but also because retirees are looking for new small-town and rural destinations with lower housing costs, less traffic and more natural attractions such as mountains or lakes. Climate and the availability of healthcare are also major motivating factors in the migration decisions of retirees. South Carolina has the resources to compete for would-be retirees. The state is primarily rural, has a lower cost of living than many US states, has a very favorable climate, and an unusual abundance of natural resources that include beaches, mountains, pristine forests, lakes and several river systems. The state has a strong health service infrastructure in place that includes primary, secondary and tertiary hospitals and primary care providers and specialists. South Carolina's rich history and culture also increase its attractiveness as a new home for retirees.

However, the state still ranks below some states in attracting

retirees. Between 2010 and 2013, the five most attractive states for seniors, as measured by average annual net migration for the 55-plus set, were Florida, Arizona, South Carolina, Texas, and North Carolina respectively (Robaton, 2015). Florida was the biggest draw by far, netting more than 61,000 seniors per year between 2010 and 2013. It has been suggested in the past that strategies to attract older migrants require an increased knowledge of key factors attracting baby boomers moving to rural and small-town America (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009). This study answers that call.

3. Objectives

Specific objectives of this research project, funded by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in South Carolina, were:

- To understand South Carolina's competitive position as a relocation destination as perceived by key stakeholders, including existing and potential retirees.
- To identify the main factors that would attract new retirees to relocate to South Carolina.
- To confirm the relationship between tourism and retiree migration, as has been recognized in previous research.
- To assess the potential economic impact of attracting new retirees to South Carolina in terms of new revenue to the economy, and jobs created.
- To provide policy-makers and destination marketers with recommendations that would assist them in attracting this lucrative market.

4. Method

The study included three cross-sectional surveys to examine the following three groups of people. The first group was the potential retirees to South Carolina. Taking into account the traditional source markets of domestic visitors to South Carolina, and considering the actual and planned retirement ages of Americans today, a first survey targeted residents of states other than South Carolina aged between 45 and 65, including but not limited to North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Virginia, Arizona, Texas, Alabama, and California. The qualified respondents had to have considered relocating to another state for retirement. The targeted sample was drawn from a nationally representative consumer panel maintained by software company Qualtrics. An electronic survey was established, distributed and collected through Qualtrics for this sample group.

The second group were current visitors to South Carolina. This targeted visitor sample was in the same demographic of 45–65 years old to be consistent to the first group of potential retirees. To capture a more accurate picture of the visitors' perception of South Carolina, these qualified respondents needed to have visited the state in the past three years. The sample of current visitors was also drawn from Qualtrics and covered the similar geographic areas in the potential retiree sample. The same electronic survey was distributed and collected through Qualtrics.

The third group was composed of existing retirees in South Carolina. For purposes of this study, the survey was conducted to examine the immigrant retirees who were retirees from outside of the state and have settled in South Carolina. The survey examined their relocation motivations, perceptions of the state's attributes and competitive position, and their economic activities/contribution derived from their relocation. The survey was conducted in major retiree communities in different cities/counties across South Carolina, through retiree organizations in the state. The survey was distributed via emails, hard copies, and electronic survey links to all major retiree communities, locations and contacts in South Carolina.

Survey questions for the three surveys were based on an extensive review of the literature and all explored the following issues:

- Various motivational factors considered when evaluating and choosing a retirement destination.
- South Carolina's strengths and weaknesses as a retirement destination.
- South Carolina's overall image and brand (as compared to other retirement destinations).
- Interest in and motivations for retiring in South Carolina.
- Subjective well-being of existing and potential retirees.

Single-item measures were adopted to capture the various motivational factors under investigation. While such measurement approach may capture less information and do not allow for adjustment of measurement error, it offers several practical advantages such as ease of use, brevity, minimizing mental fatigue, and increasing response rates (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013), which were considered important to this study.

The predictive power of the studied factors was examined using partial least squares path modeling (PLS-PM). In contrast to the classical covariance-based structural equation modeling method that has a primary goal of theory testing and confirmation as well as comparison of alternative theories (Hair et al., 2013), PLS-PM is mainly used to predict key constructs or variables (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982; Hair et al., 2013). As this study investigates the effects of a number of motivation factors on retirees' behavioral intentions toward the destination, the focus of the investigation lay in the evaluation of a set of predictive relationships rather than theory testing or confirmation (see Chin & Newsted, 1999; Sarstedt, Ringle, & Hair, 2014). Furthermore, the absence of strongly established or widely adopted theories in the literature made it difficult to impose any expected theoretical structure among the variables examined in this study.

5. Results

In total, researchers sampled 878 respondents: 320 potential retirees, 322 visitors who had vacationed in South Carolina in the past three years, and 236 current retirees in the state. The respondents were mainly female (62%), married/partnered (66.6%) and Caucasian (86%). The majority of respondents reported acquiring at least some college or associate degree. The reported annual household income was distributed evenly across different levels.

In general, retirees in South Carolina rated their overall well-being and life satisfaction as high. In terms of subjective age, a majority of them (83%) felt they were mentally younger than their real age, and 64% felt they were physically younger than their real age. Potential retirees on the other hand had lower well-being and life satisfaction score than existing retirees. About two thirds (69%) of potential retirees felt they are mentally younger than their real ages, and 40% felt they were physically younger than their real age. The level of well-being and life satisfaction for visitors lay somewhere in between that of existing retirees and potential retirees. Similar to the other groups, subjective age was lower, with the majority of visitors feeling they were mentally younger than their real age (72%), and about half (51%) saying that they felt physically younger than their real age.

5.1. Sample 1 - potential retirees

The results from the 320 potential retirees – those outside the state who had considered relocating to another state for retirement – revealed that South Carolina was high on the list of places they are considering. About two thirds had been to the state on vacation, and those that had been were significantly more likely to have thought about relocating to South Carolina for retirement than those who had not. When choosing a retirement destination, respondents felt that the top three evaluation factors were the cost of living, housing prices and climate. Connectivity and a variety of culinary attractions were also important to this group. The factors that might prevent them from

Table 1
Results of path model for potential retirees.

Predictors of intentions to retire to the destination	Path Coefficients	Standard errors	Critical ratios	p-values
Air Access	.04	.04	.87	.385
Climate	.28	.05	5.32	.000
Close to family	.18	.04	4.36	.000
Friendliness welcoming people	.19	.06	3.28	.001
Housing	.04	.06	.55	.585
Infrastructure	-.02	.05	.43	.667
Insurance	.00	.06	.01	.990
Living cost	.13	.06	2.05	.041
Medical and health care	.12	.07	1.73	.084
Recreational activities	-.01	.06	.08	.939
Restaurant	-.08	.07	1.12	.264
Safety	-.04	.06	.66	.510
Shopping	.05	.06	.85	.394
Sites to visit	.17	.05	3.42	.001
Taxes	.06	.07	.86	.390

moving to South Carolina were family concerns and the weather, including the potential for high winds, heavy rain, and flash flooding. In order of preference, most would prefer to retire in small towns, coastal regions, mountains, rural, and urban areas. In general, potential retirees had lower well-being and life satisfaction scores than existing retirees.

The proposed model was evaluated through an examination of path coefficients between the exogenous and endogenous variables, bootstrap critical ratios, coefficient of determination R^2 , f^2 effect size, and predictive relevance Q^2 (Hair et al., 2013). Table 1 presents the results. First, the researchers evaluated the significance of the predictors in explaining the outcome variable. To test whether path coefficients differed significantly from zero, t values and the associated p -values were calculated based on bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples. The results of the analysis suggest that, of all the 15 predictors tested in the model, five were supported at $\alpha = 0.05$. Specifically, climate ($\beta = 0.28$, $t = 5.32$, $p < .001$), close to family ($\beta = 0.18$, $t = 4.36$, $p < .001$), friendliness and welcoming people ($\beta = 0.19$, $t = 3.28$, $p < .001$), living cost ($\beta = 0.13$, $t = 2.05$, $p < .05$), and sites to visit ($\beta = 0.17$, $t = 3.42$, $p < .001$), significantly influenced the intention to retire in South Carolina, whereas medical and health care has a marginal effect ($\beta = 0.12$, $t = 1.73$, $p < .10$).

Second, as the primary objective of PLS-PM is prediction, the most important criterion for the assessment of the goodness of a model is R^2 (Ringle, Sarstedt, & Mooi, 2010). The R^2 value for the endogenous variable was 0.558, exceeding the 0.26 value suggested by Cohen (1988) as indicating sound predictive power of the model. Cohen's (1988) guidelines were used - that the f^2 effect size of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively, of the predictor variables. All significant exogenous latent constructs had effect sizes ranging from small to medium, with the exception of one path (i.e. living cost), which was slightly below the value of small.

Third, the blindfolding procedure was used to generate the cross-validated redundancy measure Q^2 (Stone-Geisser test) (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). According to Hair et al. (2013), the Q^2 value greater than zero implies that the exogenous construct has predictive relevance to the endogenous construct in the paired relationship. The Q^2 values of the endogenous latent constructs all exceeded zero 0.406 for potential retirees' intentions to retire to the destination, thus indicating the model's high predictive relevance for the outcome variables. Overall, the results support the predictive power of the paths, thereby substantiating the structural soundness of the proposed model.

5.2. Sample 2 - current visitors

The survey of 322 visitors aged between 45 and 65 who had visited South Carolina in the past three years, also showed a strong interest in

retiring to the state. In fact, they were significantly more likely to relocate to the state than potential retirees, and they would also be more likely to recommend and spread positive word of mouth about South Carolina as a retiree destination. Although Florida ranked higher as a potential retirement destination, three quarters of the sample had considered relocating to South Carolina. In order of preference, most would like to retire in coastal regions, small towns, rural areas, mountains, foothills, and urban areas. When choosing a retirement destination, they were looking particularly at the cost of living, climate and safety, and they perceive South Carolina to have the advantages of plenty of places to visit, a favorable climate, and recreational activities. However, visitors believed the general infrastructure in South Carolina to be poor, and for many, the state was not considered close enough to family and friends.

Following the same test procedure, results generated from the current visitors were evaluated. The results of the analysis suggest that, of all the 15 predictors tested in the model, three were supported at $\alpha = 0.05$. Specifically, climate ($\beta = 0.13, t = 2.42, p < .05$), close to family ($\beta = 0.23, t = 4.96, p < .001$), and recreational activities ($\beta = 0.18, t = 3.00, p < .001$), significantly explained current visitors' intentions to retire to the destination, whereas sites to visit ($\beta = 0.09, t = 1.77, p < .10$) and taxes ($\beta = 0.10, t = 1.75, p < .10$) had a marginal effect. Table 2 presents the results.

The results also show that the R^2 values for the endogenous variable was 0.557, well above the 0.26 value suggested by Cohen (1988) as indicating sound predictive power of the model. Using Cohen's (1988) guidelines for interpretation, all significant exogenous variables had a medium effect size. The Q^2 value of the endogenous was 0.379, well exceeded zero, indicating the model's high predictive relevance for the outcome variables.

5.3. Sample 3 - existing retirees

Finally, the survey of 236 current retirees in South Carolina revealed a general satisfaction with their decision to move to the state. Most of them expect to continue living here, and 89% would recommend South Carolina as a place to retire and would spread positive word of mouth. The majority had visited South Carolina three or more times before deciding to relocate, saying they were mainly motivated to move because of the climate, cost of living and recreational activities. After moving, they were particularly impressed with the welcoming people and the climate, but least satisfied with access by air, shopping facilities, and the general infrastructure. Their main interests were spending time at home with friends and family, visiting libraries, and engaging in recreational activities.

The data collected from current retirees indicates that recurring

Table 2
Results of path model for current visitors.

Predictors of intentions to retire to the destination	Path coefficients	Standard errors	Critical ratios	p-values
Air access	.05	.07	.72	.472
Climate	.13	.06	2.42	.015
Close to family	.23	.05	4.96	.000
Friendliness welcoming people	.05	.04	1.10	.271
Housing	.03	.06	.54	.591
Infrastructure	.10	.06	1.60	.109
Insurance	.03	.05	.46	.646
Living cost	.02	.05	.32	.751
Medical and health care	-.07	.06	1.23	.220
Recreational activities	.18	.06	3.00	.003
Restaurant	.09	.07	1.42	.156
Safety	.08	.06	1.34	.180
Shopping	.03	.05	.52	.606
Sites to visit	.09	.05	1.77	.076
Taxes	.10	.06	1.75	.080

spending among retirees in South Carolina generates an annual total economic impact of approximately \$29.6 billion in total output. This dollar value is associated with 333,521 jobs and nearly \$11 billion in labor income for South Carolinians. Based on spending patterns collected from respondents, if retirement in-migration to South Carolina were to increase beyond its current rate of 53,845 individuals annually by 1%, 5%, or 10%, this would yield an increase in the number of in-migrant retirees by 538, 2692 or 5385 respectively. If in-migration expanded by 10%, then the economic impact would expand by approximately \$201.6 million in total output, which is associated with 2274 jobs and nearly \$74 million in labor income for South Carolinians. The one-time economic impact would expand to approximately \$638.6 million in total output, which is associated with 4720 jobs and nearly \$161.8 million in labor income for South Carolinians.

Again, the researchers tested the significance of the predictors based on bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples. The results of the analysis suggested that, of all the 15 predictors tested in the model, six were supported at $\alpha = 0.05$. Specifically, air access ($\beta = 0.18, t = 2.17, p < .05$), insurance ($\beta = 0.21, t = 3.10, p < .01$), medical and health care ($\beta = -0.17, t = 2.88, p < .01$), recreational activities ($\beta = 0.28, t = 3.32, p < .001$), safety ($\beta = 0.24, t = 3.13, p < .01$), and shopping ($\beta = 0.15, t = 3.13, p < .01$) significantly explained existing retirees' intentions to continue to stay in the destination, while taxes ($\beta = 0.13, t = 1.78, p < .10$) had a marginal effect. Table 3 presents the results.

The results also showed that the R^2 values for the endogenous variable was 0.517, exceeding the 0.26 value suggested by Cohen (1988) as indicating sound predictive power of the model. Using Cohen's (1988) guidelines for interpretation, all significant exogenous variables had effect sizes ranging from small to medium. The Q^2 value of the endogenous was 0.359, well exceeded zero, indicating the model's high predictive relevance for the outcome variables.

6. Discussion

6.1. Theoretical implications

As Truly (2000) has acknowledged, tourism destinations often possess the amenities and qualities desired by retirees, but research on the nature of the retiree migrants, and ties between tourism migration is sparse. This study therefore makes an important contribution to the literature, both by synthesizing existing material from the social sciences, and by confirming the strong relationship between tourism and retiree migration that has been recognized in previous research (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Longino et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2000). Three quarters of visitors surveyed are considering relocating to South

Table 3
Results of path model for existing retirees.

Predictors of intentions to continue to stay in the destination	Path coefficients	Standard errors	Critical ratios	p-values
Air access	.18	.08	2.17	.030
Climate	-.06	.07	.98	.327
Close to family	-.02	.06	.40	.691
Friendliness welcoming people	.00	.06	.01	.990
Housing	-.04	.07	.72	.470
Infrastructure	.07	.07	1.11	.269
Insurance	.21	.07	3.10	.002
Living cost	.02	.07	.30	.763
Medical and health care	-.17	.06	2.88	.004
Recreational activities	.28	.09	3.32	.001
Restaurant	-.02	.08	.32	.750
Safety	.24	.08	3.13	.002
Shopping	.15	.05	3.13	.002
Sites to visit	.08	.08	.96	.340
Taxes	.13	.08	1.78	.074

Carolina for retirement, and visitors had a higher perception/image of the state as a retirement destination than potential visitors. Potential retirees who have traveled to South Carolina are significantly more likely to consider the state for retirement than those who have not been. This supports the findings of the Longwoods study referred to earlier, that proposed that people who have visited a destination are much more likely to perceive the destination as a favorable place to retire, as opposed to those who have not visited (Zimmermann, 2015). In addition, the majority of existing retirees had visited South Carolina three or more times before deciding to relocate.

When comparing motivations across the three groups, both potential retirees and current visitors were strongly motivated by the climate and being close to family. This validates previous studies that have found that a significant motivation for retirees is a warm climate (Abdul-Aziz et al., 2014; Wong & Musa, 2014) and proximity to family (De Coulon, 2016; Wong et al., 2017). Likewise, previous research has found closeness to home and accessibility to an airport important factors for retirees when they consider a relocation destination (Gibler et al., 2009). The results also show that both existing retirees and current visitors are strongly motivated by recreational activities, and this confirms more recent research suggesting that today's retirees are looking for more amenities and plenty of leisure opportunities (Humphreys & Kochut, 2013; Wong et al., 2017). Finally, medical and health care was an important motivator for both existing retirees and potential retirees, supporting previous studies that have found medical facilities to be significant for retirees (Karner & Dorfman, 2012; Ono, 2008; Wiseman, 1980; Crawford, 2013). Interestingly, although cost of living was important to respondents, economic reasons did not significantly influence the intention to retire in South Carolina, debunking the theory that migration is largely initiated by economics (Massey et al., 1993).

6.2. Practical implications

For policy-makers, the results show the potential for converting more visitors into retirees. Since South Carolina does not currently actively pursue retirees, responsibility should perhaps fall with destination marketers to do so, as suggested by Longwoods (Zimmermann, 2015). Marketers targeting the retiree sector should focus initially on getting people to visit South Carolina, before attempting to convert them into retirees. Inspection/site visits should be offered, and it would be prudent for destination marketing organizations to collaborate with retirement communities on coordinated marketing campaigns. Marketers should focus on the main motivating factors for retiring in the state, such as the climate, medical facilities, cost of living and recreational facilities. The survey results also suggested that 'welcoming/friendly people' was an unexpected bonus for current retirees, so marketers should promote this aspect in communications materials.

An ongoing coordinated marketing campaign should then be initiated to strengthen the state's brand as a retiree destination, a campaign that should stress the warm welcome the state offers, and the cost of living advantages over states like Florida. There should be one organization in the state that is responsible for coordinating such a campaign, and the joint marketing of amenities to retirees and tourists would be a cost-effective start to foster retiree-based economic development. When targeting would-be retirees, marketers need to appeal to the subjective age of the target market and not their real age. Current retirees are significantly more likely than the other groups to feel mentally and physically younger than they really are. Marketers could therefore promote the fact that retiring to South Carolina will make you happier and make you feel younger. Communities should consider changing how they brand themselves. Instead of being labeled as retirement communities, they could be marketed as 'smart and active-living' communities.

Another recommendation for marketers based on the research, is to use current retirees as ambassadors; the majority of existing retirees

would recommend South Carolina as a place to retire, and this represents an opportunity to make them part of the marketing strategy. Marketers elsewhere in the USA have adopted such strategies (Baxter, 2015). Additionally, many retirees come to South Carolina because of family ties, so marketers could reach out to potential retirees in other states (and countries) who have connections to South Carolina. Marketers should consider targeting the African-American population in particular: a market segment that is growing in importance (Nielsen, 2015). Related to this, marketers in South Carolina seeking to attract retirees should consider focusing on nostalgia as a strategy to draw in the aging population. Nostalgia has become a big driver in destination choice, especially for baby boomers (Hudson, 2010).

Finally, marketers in South Carolina could promote the 'college town' aspects of South Carolina's communities. Results of the study support the contention that today's retirees are seeking educational opportunities for lifelong learning (Walker, 2015). South Carolina has many rural and urban communities with excellent education institutions, all of whom could offer education programming to retirees. This would not only help educational institutions increase enrollment but would help engage retirees in the community, would help keep their minds active, could help stimulate new and innovated ideas, and thus increase employment in and around the region.

There are other recommendations that can be made as an outcome of the research. Funding and resources should be allocated for planning, recruiting, and preparing communities to house the next generation of retirees. To be truly competitive, the state also needs to upgrade its infrastructure and built environment (i.e. roads, transportation sectors, bridges, telecommunication, and signage), and improve access to quality healthcare. The results suggest that retirees of the future want amenities and activities such as parks, trails, access to water, libraries, and good restaurants and cafes. Access to technology is also a must to attract new retirees to the state. In short, South Carolina's retirement community of the future needs to be an "active" and "smart" community.

7. Conclusion

This study has confirmed the symbiotic relationship between tourism and retiree migration. It has also shown the potential for converting more visitors into retirees. The study has also verified key motivational factors for retirees when they consider retirement destinations, such as climate, accessibility, medical facilities, as well identifying more contemporary motivational drivers such as recreational activities, leisure opportunities, amenities, connectivity, culinary attractions and educational opportunities.

But there is clearly a need for further work to integrate the divergent lines of tourism and migration research. In the USA alone, 10,000 people are retiring every day, and the retiree population is projected to increase significantly, reaching 72 million nationwide by 2030. Further research therefore is required to understand the needs, expectations and motivations of this group, particularly those who intend on migrating to retire. In particular, little is known about the decision factors that motivate immigrants to retire in their country of origin. As mentioned earlier, large waves of immigrants who resettled in the second half of the 20th century are now beginning to retire, and it is estimated that over 50% choose to go back home to retire (De Coulon, 2016).

One limitation of this study is that it is focused on just one state and in one country, so the results may not be generalizable elsewhere. Further research could therefore be conducted in other states and in other countries like Japan and the UK, both of which are experiencing ageing populations. As mentioned previously, the competition for attracting retirees is intensifying, with many towns, regions and countries seeking to attract new retirees in order to expand their tax base and create jobs. More research of this type across different cultures and regions would therefore be beneficial to both policy-makers and destination marketers.

Declarations of interest

None.

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