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Amenity Migrations and Gentrification Among Low-Income Residents of Rural North Carolina Seeking Education or Lifelong Learning

Lenora Ellen Attles-Allen
Walden University

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Amenity Migrations and Gentrification Among Low-Income Residents of Rural North

Carolina Seeking Education or Lifelong Learning

by

Lenora E. Attles-Allen

BSW, Shaw University, 2016

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human and Social Services

Walden University

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Abstract

Sixty-four percent of North Carolina's growth is due to migration, translating into approximately 86,200 migrants residing in the state. Amenity migrations (the relocation of specific populations into sometimes, low-income, rural communities of people) have given rise to changes in many residents' lived experiences related to North Carolina communities seeking education or lifelong learning. Many older adults seek lifelong learning education that is affected by amenity migrations. As new technologies and socioeconomic changes emerge, baby boomers may strive to compete with millennials for jobs and domestic stability. The purpose of this heuristic, phenomenological study was to understand the daily, lived financial and educational experiences of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina. Data were collected from seven low-income residents who live in rural North Carolina, are pursuing education or lifelong learning and were also being affected by amenity migrations. Five themes emerged from First and Second Cycle coding. The themes were focused on earning money and competing jobs, a need for skills to return to the workforce, online courses and accessibility, the problem of commute times to and from work and school, and overcrowding affecting work, school, life, and relationships. The potential for social change is to contribute to scholarly discourse on amenity migrations and experiences of residents. This research may also inform policymakers and program managers/staff executing supports.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, Eugene and Mattie Attles, who taught me to be the best that I could be. And to my oldest grandson, Ty'Rahn Rashad Elliott. May they rest in heaven knowing that I know they would have been proud of me.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Walden University faculty, family, peers, and medical team for supporting me during this challenging journey. It has been a long and eventful journey. Thank you to Dr. Robert Wehbie, Dr. Kelly Chermack, Dr. Gregory Hickman, and Dr. Avon Hart-Johnson, who encouraged me along the way. I owe special thanks to my daughter Tracey Sharps who helped me make achieving this goal a reality. Most of all, to God, be the Glory for the things that He has done in my life.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	3
Problem Statement	4
Purpose.....	5
Research Question	6
Conceptual Framework.....	6
Nature of the Study	8
Operational Definitions.....	9
Assumptions.....	9
Delimitations.....	10
Limitations	11
Significance.....	11
Summary	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	14
Literature Search Strategy.....	14
Conceptual Framework.....	15
Self-Determination Theory	15
Attribution Theory	16
Gentrification Theory.....	18
Amenity Migrations Phenomenon	20

History of Amenity Migrations.....	20
Advantages and Disadvantages.....	22
Periurban or Resort Towns	22
Amenity Migrations and Gentrification.....	23
Amenity Migration and Retirement.....	23
Amenity Migration and Baby Boomers2015.....	24
Low-Income Rural Residents	26
North Carolina	27
Impacts of Displacement.....	28
Gentrification	28
Lifelong Learning	29
Summary and Transition.....	32
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	35
Introduction.....	35
Research Design and Rational	37
Role of the Researcher	39
Methodology	41
Participant Selection Logic.....	41
Data Collection	43
Instrumentation	43
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	44
Data Analysis Plan.....	45

Issues of Trustworthiness.....	46
Confirmability.....	46
Credibility	47
Dependability	47
Transferability.....	48
Ethical Procedures	48
Summary	49
Chapter 4: Results	50
Introduction.....	50
Setting 51	
Demographics	51
Participant 1	52
Participant 2	53
Participant 3	54
Participant 4	55
Participant 5	56
Participant 6	56
Participant 7	57
Data Collection	58
Data Analysis	59
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	60
Results61	

Theme 1: Earning Money and Competing for a Job is Hard Without Education or Skills	66
Theme 2: Older and Retired Residents Return to School to Improve Job Skills Needed to Return to the Workforce	67
Theme 3: Online Classes Provide a Venue to Continue Education.....	70
Theme 4: More Time Is Spent Commuting to and From Work and School Takes Away from Sleep, Family, and Recreation	72
Theme 5: Overcrowding Affects Work, School, Life, and Relationships	74
Conclusions.....	75
Summary and Transition.....	75
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	78
Introduction.....	78
Findings.....	79
Interpretation of Findings	79
Limitations	82
Recommendations.....	83
Implications.....	84
Conclusion	86
References.....	87
Appendix A: Interview Questions	103
Appendix B: Screening Tool	104

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographics	52
Table 2. Themes and Subthemes	64

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

With the aging of Americans and a substantial increase in amenity-led-migrations toward the rural South, life-long learning has become increasingly necessary to maintain quality of life for this population (Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Henslin, 2011). *Amenity migrations* are relocating people from urban environments or geographies to amenity-rich, low-income, rural communities (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Matarrita-Cascante, 2017). There may be a significant increase in the migration of people between the ages of 21 and 75 toward sparsely populated, rural communities (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Fry, 2020; Stoker et al., 2020). By 2022, 32.2 million people in the United States will have reached or exceeded age 65 (Chambré & Netting, 2016). Often in retirement, older adults seek to migrate from bustling, urban lifestyles to quieter, aesthetic, rural areas (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017).

The negative aspect of these migrations may be found in the potential to affect the current residents of these rural communities. *Gentrification*, or wealthier populations migrating and increasing social and economic aspects of living that often lead to the displacement of native residents, is often associated with these amenity migrations (Appelbaum et al., 2016; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Holden et al., 1988). Sometimes, this gentrification makes aspects of life too expensive for native residents, potentially resulting in the displacement of these residents (Appelbaum et al., 2016).

In addition, many of these older or retired adults may already be seeking lifelong learning or adult education to continue working or earning supplemental income, even in retirement. As new socioeconomic changes and competition emerge, older adults

(typically the baby-bomber age born between 1946 and 1955) may need to compete for jobs and domestic stability (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006). Retirement and aging may pose additional, compounded amenity migration-related-concerns for these older adults living in rural areas. Those who are already involved in lifelong learning and education to remain competitive in the labor market may see an additional advantage in doing so when facing new populations moving into their communities. According to Rice et al. (2018), low-income, permanent residents in southwestern North Carolina cannot compete economically with the influx of higher-income seasonal residents and amenity migrants.

Chapter 1 of this study includes the background and key elements of this study on amenity migrations and the experiences of aging rural individuals who are continuing education for economic stability. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature and the conceptual framework. Chapter 3 includes the details of my study, focused on how amenity migration and gentrification affect the lived experiences of low-income rural residents and individuals who have already retired or intend to retire in the next 2 years. Chapter 4 focused on the setting, demographics, data collection and data analysis. Evidence of trustworthiness and the results of the study are also discussed in chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study and recommendations. A detailed description of the potential impact for positive social changes and the description of the theoretical implications for practice are also presented in chapter 5.

Background of the Problem

Amenity migrations typically lead to increases in property taxes and other economic characteristics that may affect low-income residents' abilities to meet their financial responsibilities (Golding, 2016). Because funding for law enforcement, schools, public utilities, and projects initiated by the transportation department depends on tax revenue, the cost of living in gentrified, amenity migration-affected-communities has become increasingly unaffordable for low-income rural residents. Hence, displacement has become a concern for low-income rural residents and the local governments (Golding, 2016).

The economics of what essentially becomes the gentrification of rural areas through amenity migrations creates challenges to rural residents' general way of life. Lifelong learning and seeking education is another area where older adults in these rural communities may be affected. Though many older adults already engage in later-life education, the substantial increase in amenity-led-migrations toward the rural South has revealed the importance of life-long learning for many (Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Henslin, 2011). The benefits of lifelong learning and adult education (and the continued employment that often coincides) can include improved living conditions, improved skills needed to secure or maintain gainful employment, regained sustainability in the community, or qualifications for other life-enhancing opportunities Karam, 2014; Kungu & Machtmes, 2009). The emphasis on lifelong learning is that, in addition to the changing socioeconomic climate, the potential for increased competition for jobs compounds the challenges of residents in communities that experience amenity

migrations. It is important to understand the experiences of these older adults who are participating in an educational setting and who are being affected by amenity migrations.

Problem Statement

Amenity migrations have given rise to changes in the daily lives of many residents in low-income, rural North Carolina communities (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). North Carolina's population increased by approximately 117,000 people between July 1, 2016, and July 1, 2017, representing a growth rate of 1.1% (higher than the national population growth average of 0.7% [Tippett, 2018]). Sixty-four percent of North Carolina's growth is due to migration, translating into approximately 86,200 migrants residing in the state (Tippett, 2018). According to population projections, there will be an increase of 2,156,167 people from July 2020 to July 2038, with an estimated 19,439 of those migrating to rural North Carolina (N.C. Budget and Management, 2018).

With the aging of America and a substantial increase in amenity-led-migrations toward the rural South, life-long learning has become increasingly necessary for many older adults (Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Henslin, 2011). This education for aging adults may help improve living conditions, promote social change, improve skills needed to secure or maintain gainful employment, regain sustainability in the community after amenity-led displacements, or qualify for other life-enhancing opportunities (Baker & Johnson, 2015; Karam, 2014). The problem is that amenity migrations have given rise to an increase in gentrification and displacement of low-income rural residents in North Carolina (Walker & Fortmann, 2003) and have made life-long learning increasingly

necessary for older adults (Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Henslin, 2011). More research is needed to understand the social and educational experiences of this population. The specific experiences of those seeking education and experiencing amenity migrations may provide unique insight into the phenomenon of amenity migrations.

Although the aforementioned research regarding amenity migrations into rural geographical locations illuminates important findings, I have found no research focused on the experiences of amenity migrations among low-income, rural residents in North Carolina, especially those continuing education as a means of sustaining their current lives. Understanding the experiences of this population is vital to the social and economic benefits (and challenges) amenity migrations may have on the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents, and more so on those seeking later life education. Thus, further research is warranted on the social and economic experiences of amenity migrations (see Boucquey et al., 2012; Golding, 2016; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Herron, 2013; Siders & Keenan, 2020).

Purpose

The purpose of this heuristic, phenomenological study was to understand the daily, lived financial and educational experiences of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina. The focus was on the lived experiences and mental processes of participants who fall within this population (see May, 2019; Walker & Fortmann, 2003) as they continue to process changes to their communities that have affected their daily

lives and educational opportunities as well as social and economic options due to amenity migrants.

Research Question

What are the daily, lived financial and educational experiences of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina regarding their finances and access to education?

Conceptual Framework

In this study, I used the self-determination, attribution, and rural gentrification theories as the conceptual framework. These theories helped explain why amenity migrations were taking place and how the amenity migrations affected the daily lived experiences of low-income residents who live in rural areas (see Potter & Edwards, 1990; Walker & Fortmann, 2003). The self-determination and attribution theories provided a backdrop for why some engaged in amenity migration and, more importantly, why low-income, rural dwellers are opposed to these migrations (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Walker & Fortmann, 2003). As addressed by Lopes and Chambel (2014), the self-determination theory was used as a building block to explain what motivates amenity migrations and how individuals experience these migrations in rural areas.

Self-determination is the framework that people use to make choices in their lives that matter to them and how they accept and reject changes and ideas (Lopes & Chambel, 2014). Self-determination theory is based on autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are the three basic needs in life (Lopes & Chambel, 2014). Autonomy refers to a psychological need to agree with activities involving life and the choices made in the

environment. Relatedness represents a sense of belonging or feeling of being an essential part of something; competence is the feeling that being able to participate in things significantly impacts wellness. This theory was essential to my population because, in many cases, their self-determination is being impaired or overruled by gentrification and amenity migrations (see Lopes & Chambel, 2014; Walker & Fortmann, 2003). Finally, as discussed by Lopez-Morales (2018), the rural gentrification theory was used to explain how amenity migrations impact the lived experiences of low-income rural residents in North Carolina and their ability to compete economically (and through education) with amenity migrants.

Heider's theory of attribution addresses how people's perceptions, judgments, actions, and assumptions influence their decisions (Heider, 1958; Malle, 2011; Potter & Edwards, 1990). The attribution theory aided me in exploring and explaining how and why people who experience amenity migrations construct their assumptions and their interpretive processes, and what influences their choices. In addition, it helped me to understand more specifically how those seeking education were affected and how they constructed their daily lives. The attribution theory was used in this study to explain the possible link between the fear of gentrification and displacement and the desire to seek amenities by migrating to rural North Carolina communities (see Boucquey et al., 2012; Potter & Edwards, 1990). The rural gentrification theory was used to shed light on the amenity migrations and the socioeconomic structure of low-income rural communities and the lives of these individuals (see Lopez-Morales, 2018). The rural gentrification theory was also used to explore how gentrification of rural lands has contributed to the

displacement of naturalized residents and the exclusion of low-income rural residents (see Lopez-Morales, 2018).

In combination, these theories were used to explore, describe, verify, and discern the daily, lived experiences of individuals in rural areas and who were experiencing amenity migrations and who were also seeking education as a means of sustaining their current lifestyle. Self-determination and attribution have been the cornerstones in much of the research in published literature because amenity migrations began to change the lives of other, low-income rural areas that are similar to North Carolina's rural communities (Boucquey et al., 2012; Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Jones et al., 2003; Solana, 2010).

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a heuristic, phenomenological research design, which focused on describing the commonalities and motives for human actions among low-income rural residents seeking education in North Carolina who have experienced amenity migration-led challenges, specifically the gentrification of their communities or displacement. This exploratory, qualitative study focused on exploring, describing, discerning, and verifying the individual experiences of the amenity migrations on the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina (see Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006; Jones et al., 2003; Moustakas, 1994; Siders & Keenan, 2020). A homogeneous, purposive sample of older adult residents seeking education and who had been affected by amenity migrations in their communities was selected as participants in this study (see Applebaum & Cummins,

2017; Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Solana, 2010). The final sample size, seven participants, for this research was also dependent on data saturation (see Suri, 2011). The point of data saturation was determined when no new information was being gained during the interview process (see Marshall, 1996; Sutton & Austin, 2015; Suri, 2011).

Operational Definitions

Amenity migration: The movement of people relative to relocating to other geographical locations, specifically areas rich in natural or cultural amenities and resources such as rural lands (Golding, 2016; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011).

Baby boomers: People born between 1946 and 1955 in the United States.

Displacement: Driven, expelled, or forced to flee from the homeland or habitual residence by the forces or consequences of oppression (Webster 2021).

Gentrification: Part of the functioning of urban capitalism, an effect of the constant capitalists' needs to increase private revenue by replacing fixed capital in urban space (Lopez-Morales, 2018).

Low-income: Low wages that fail to surpass the cost of living and prevent opportunities for upward mobility (Golding, 2016).

Rural: Of or relating to the country, country people or life, or agriculture (Webster, 2021).

Assumptions

In this study, several assumptions were made. First was the assumption that amenity migrations caused hardships for people who live in low-income rural

geographical locations, specifically in rural North Carolina. Second, I assumed that amenity migrations have led to drastic and costly changes to the physical geographical location and that these changes were responsible for the displacement of low-income rural residents who were no longer able to meet the cost of living due to the increases in the cost of goods and services, such as food, housing, and health care. Third, I assumed that the participants were willing to share honest answers and relate truthful narratives about their amenity migration-led experiences (see Pasque & Gildersleeve, 2012). Fourth, I assumed that all participants have had amenity migration-led experiences that would help answer the research question (see Pasque & Gildersleeve, 2012). Next, it was assumed that using van Kaam's psychophenomenological method to help interpret the participants' experiences would be useful in analyzing the data and answering the research question (see van Kaam, 1969; Sumskis & Moxham, 2017). Finally, I assumed that the questions would be understandable to participants and that they could provide meaningful responses.

Delimitations

This study included low-income, rural residents who resided in rural North Carolina. Young adults, families, senior citizens who have not been, are being, or were expected to be impacted by amenity migration into this community were not included in this study. This study included only residents of this county considered low-income, specifically excluding those who had an annual income of more than \$25,000 a year. In addition, residents who were under the age of 55 (loosely defined as a senior) were

excluded from participating in this study. See further discussion of specific inclusion criteria for income and age in Chapter 3.

Limitations

This study also has several potential limitations. First, the purposeful sample of participants represented different levels of income, but this also means that some of the participants were unemployed, while others worked minimum wage jobs. Therefore, unemployed participants may have received some financial assistance and benefited from some human and social services programs that allowed them to maintain the quality of life they were accustomed to, which employed participants were not eligible for, thereby creating some discrepancies in their experiences. For example, a working participant's income may not have been low enough for them to qualify for assistance but not high enough to afford to continue the quality of life they were accustomed to living due to amenity migration-led changes in their community. Moreover, the diversity of the sample may have been too broad, potentially limiting transferability (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition, the heuristic phenomenological nature of this study was intended to be exploratory and focused on describing, discerning, and verifying the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina, which may not have coincided with the lived experiences of the residents of other rural areas.

Significance

In this research, a gap in the literature was addressed by exploring and describing the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina who had experienced amenity migrations (see Jones et al., 2003; Rice et al., 2018). First, I

explored several social implications for this population and others. The significance for this population was to understand how amenity migrations impacted the lives of individuals and the significant outcomes and experiences that were also impacted others in the community, focusing on the multiple scales of structural changes and gentrification that took place in their communities (see Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). This research could benefit the larger population of North Carolina and others by inspiring developers and community planners to take a closer look at how they develop in and around low-income, rural areas (see Walker & Fortmann, 2003) and to understand the experiences around jobs, work, and education.

This study contributes to practice and may effect social change by providing information that could help communities, cities, states, and nations plan for amenity migrations. The research design and conceptual framework were intended to provide a foundation for government agencies to determine the scope of productive gentrification of communities that could benefit both the amenity migrants and native populations.

Summary

In this study, I explored older adults' daily lived experiences and mental processes pursuing higher education and experiencing amenity migrations in a rural community. This study can also inform scholars and practitioners, residents, and future residents about the advantages and disadvantages of amenity migrations. Chapter 1 included an overview of this study: the introduction, background, problem statement, purpose of the study, conceptual framework, and the nature and significance of the study. Chapter 2 includes a more detailed discussion about the lived experiences of low-income rural

residents who have experienced amenity migration, the gentrification of their neighborhoods, and displacement. An exhaustive literature review sheds light on amenity migration, based on both seminal and current studies. The method, design, participants, sample, and analysis procedures are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this heuristic, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina whose lives have been impacted by amenity migration and on populations who were pursuing higher education or lifelong learning. Hence, this literature review was designed to describe significant findings about aspects of amenity migrations in other geographical locations to link the findings of this research to the outcomes of these projects. The first aspect of amenity migration explored is gentrification and how this phenomenon impacts the lived experiences of the target population. Second, the focus shifts to displacement and how amenity migrations contribute to and influence social and economic changes in the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina. This literature review also includes a discussion of the conceptual framework used to explain the potential significance of amenity migrations and the lived experiences of the residents of a rural county in North Carolina.

Literature Search Strategy

To conduct this literature review, I searched databases, academic journal articles, and other acceptable sources of both recent and seminal data. The databases I used were located using the Walden University Online Library, Google Scholar, and the public library. The databases most frequently used were Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, Education Source, ERIC, Expanded Academic ASAP, MEDLINE with Full Text, ProQuest Central, PsycINFO, Sage Journals, and SocINDEX. The key search terms used during this research were *amenity migration*, *migration*, *baby boomer*, *migrant*

worker, attribution theory, displacement, North Carolina, Fritz Heider, acculturation, assimilation, gentrification, displacement, immigration, baby boomers, lifelong education, lifelong learning, low-income rural, retirement, rural education, rural gentrification theory, SES, and self-determination theory. I read approximately 50 articles about gentrification, displacement, and the benefits and challenges of amenity-led migrations. I also read approximately 30 journal articles about qualitative research, sampling, and methodology.

Conceptual Framework

I used the self-determination, attribution, and rural gentrification theories as the conceptual framework in this study. The self-determination and attribution theories provided a backdrop for why some engaged in amenity migration and, more importantly, why some low-income, rural dwellers were opposed to these migrations (see Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Walker & Fortmann, 2003).

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination is the framework that people use to make choices in their lives that matter to them as well as how they accept and reject changes and ideas (Lopes & Chambel, 2014). The self-determination theory is a methodological approach used to help understand what motivates people's natural psychological instincts to make choices (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This theory is based on autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are the three basic needs in life (Lopes & Chambel, 2014). The self-determination theory also addresses innate and psychological needs, competence, autonomy, and psychological relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Given this, the self-determination theory

has been used as a research tool across disciplines to help understand phenomena related to intrinsic motivation and intrinsic regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

This theory was essential to this study population because, in many cases, self-determination may be impaired or overruled by gentrification and amenity migrations (Abelson & Creswell, 2018; Lopes & Chambel, 2014; Ulrich-Schad, 2018). People have the versatility to be proactive, passive, or alienated regarding social conditions, depending on the context of the conditions (May 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The self-determination theory is an approach to understanding human motivation and what inner resources people need for personality development and self-regulation of behaviors (Qin, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Sometimes, environmental factors such as amenity migration, gentrification, or displacement interfere with or undermine the self-determination of individuals because they may feel like they are no longer in control (May, 2019; Qin, 2016). In other instances, changes in the environment create the motivation for people to change their behaviors and embrace social and economic change (May, 2019; Qin, 2016). When socioeconomic changes are introduced into the lifestyle or culture of any group of people, it is essential to specify factors that contribute to and nurture human potential and growth as well as to investigate and understand how changes can be made to foster the development of healthy individuals, and communities (May, 2019).

Attribution Theory

Second, the attribution theory was used to examine information gathered from participants who are being or have been actively affected by amenity migration, gentrification, or displacement resulting from amenity migrations (Potter & Edwards,

1990). Heider's theory of attribution addresses how people's perceptions, judgments, actions, and assumptions influence their decisions (Heider, 1958). The attribution theory has been used across disciplines to help explain what motivates people to do what they do (Weiner, 2018). As presented by Heider (1958), seminal ideas illuminate the causation of human behavior regarding how and the reasoning behind their decision making and when and how they temporarily or permanently decide to make changes in their ways of life (Weiner, 2018). These changes in lifestyles are often subjective, resulting from the psychological, emotional, social, or economic locus of control (Weiner, 2018). In other words, people tend to believe that there are some things in their lives they cannot control and therefore attribute life changes to events that force change upon them rather than making their own choices (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 2018).

Literature and research have and continue to be supported by the attribution theory, as demonstrated in Cromartie and Nelson's (2009) research on the social and economic impact that the baby boomer migration is having on rural America. Many people born between 1946 and 1964 are migrating to low-income rural communities and small-towns because sustainability and quality of life have become the focal point of life rather than employment opportunities (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009). Similarly, Haas and Serow (2002) posited that retirement is one of the major determining factors attributed to increased amenity migrations to rural low-income communities. People who have sufficient retirement pensions to live out their golden years in environments that are more amenable to how they envision how life should be are just as likely to migrate to low-

income communities as those who are desperate to find affordable housing (Haas & Serow, 2002).

The attribution theory has been used to support the research of Applebaum and Cummins (2017), Goyke and Dwivedi (2018), Lopez-Morales (2018), Ulrich-Schad (2018), and many other scholars who have sought to understand and explain what motivates the continued migration of amenity seekers. These research projects are being conducted to help society adjust to changes in the delivery of medical services, education, housing, and many other essential aspects of human services (see Abelson & Creswell, 2018; Byrne et al., 2013; Lopes & Chambel, 2014; Ulrich-Schad, 2018). Understanding what is causing the shift in the geographical location of amenity seekers may be a primary factor in improving both rural and urban communities to ensure stability and balance in the national economy.

The attribution theory aided in exploring and explaining how and why people who experience amenity migrations construct their assumptions and interpretive processes and what influences their choices. The attribution theory was used in this study to explain the possible link between the fear of gentrification and displacement and the desire to seek amenities by migrating to rural North Carolina communities (see Boucquey et al., 2012; Potter & Edwards, 1990).

Gentrification Theory

Finally, as discussed by Lopez-Morales (2018), the rural gentrification theory was used to explain how amenity migrations impact the lived experiences of low-income rural residents in North Carolina. As discussed by Smith (1979), the gentrification theory

refers to the profitable redevelopment of the depreciated inner-city neighborhoods that were invested in during the 19th century. Smith also contended that the gentrification of deteriorated neighborhoods provides for productive capital returns for formally suburban dwellers. That is to say that the cost of newly constructed housing is by far more expensive than the rehabilitation of inner and central city structures or of low-income rural communities that are in serious disrepair (Smith, 1979). In such cases, it has been argued that white-collar productivity provides a more stable economy than service-oriented or blue-collar workers, specifically regarding consumer consumption of expensive goods and services (Smith, 1979).

The rural gentrification theory was used to shed light on the experiences of amenity migration regarding the socioeconomic structure of low-income rural communities and the lives of these individuals (see Lopez-Morales, 2018). The rural gentrification theory was also used to explore how gentrification of rural lands has contributed to the displacement and exclusion of low-income rural residents (see Lopez-Morales, 2018).

Together, these theories were used to explore, describe, and verify individuals' daily, lived experiences in rural areas who are experiencing amenity migrations. Self-determination and attribution have been the cornerstones in much of the research in published literature since amenity migrations began to affect other low-income rural areas that are like North Carolina's rural communities (see Boucquey et al., 2012; Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Jones et al., 2003; Solana, 2010). The delineations that each of these theories have in common is that they all address what contributes to or motivates

people to make similar or different choices and how their choices impact their lives and the lives of others (see Golding, 2016; Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Malle, 2011; Matarrita-Cascante, 2017).

The rationale for the choice of theories for this study was to offer some of the prerequisite, theoretical, and conceptual clarification about amenity migration to improve positive results in low-income rural areas. Because amenity migration is a topic that is multifaceted in that it includes multidisciplinary contexts, it is then necessary to access how each aspect of amenity migration affects different people and rural geographical locations. In this study, I intended to further empirical knowledge that is already available and shed light on new empirical knowledge that can enhance the literature with current research findings (see Heider, 1958).

Amenity Migrations Phenomenon

Amenity migration refers to relocating specific populations of people relative to their need to use natural or cultural advantages or opportunities in other geographical locations (see Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). Gosnell and Abrams (2011) and Smiley et al. (2016) also indicated that the implications and significance of these migrations are rooted in changes in ownership, use, and government policies and laws from a consumerist perspective regarding rural lands.

History of Amenity Migrations

After 2010, amenity migration began to increase. In the mid-1990s, there was a significant increase in the demand for construction and service-oriented employment, which eased the economic devastation of the closure of textile mills in low-income rural

communities (Bickham Mendez & Nelson, 2016). The disadvantage, however, was that property value reached an all-time high, and class polarization began to spin out of control (Bickham Mendez & Nelson, 2016). As dilapidated apartment buildings began to be renovated, the locals had to learn how to compete with more educated exurban newcomers for housing and employment (Bickham Mendez & Nelson, 2016). Haas and Serow (2002) posited that by 2012, the baby boomers should have reached normative age, and only a small percentage of retirees would continue to seek to engage in amenity migrations. However, it has also been stated that although the number of retired migrants would decrease, the population of rural communities would continue to increase, resulting from the lack of skilled labor among native residents (Perlik & Membretti, 2018).

Many researchers have reported that amenity migrations encourage gentrification and displacement because many rural residents are not able to compete for employment as the social and economic culture of rural communities become more saturated with high technological employment opportunities that require technical skills or higher education (Perlik & Membretti, 2018; Rupasingha et al., 2015). For example, the number of new businesses, healthcare facilities, schools offering secondary education, and cultural attractions such as museums and the refurbishing of historical landmarks continue to attract a more significant influx of amenity migrants (see Perlik & Membretti, 2018). Another example explicates how amenity migrants move into low-income rural communities, increasing the demand in these areas for housing, medical care, schools, and recreation. Although many original residents may benefit from these migrations,

other low-income, rural residents are faced with challenges that need to be explored (see Golding, 2016).

Advantages and Disadvantages

While amenity migrations may offer economic benefits to the migrants, the gentrification of low-income rural communities has given rise to both advantages and disadvantages for native residents (see Boucquey et al., 2012; Golding, 2016; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). Many scholarly research studies have been published that focus on how gentrification contributes to the displacement of the poor (Creasap, 2016). Low-income members of the working class and retirees who are unable to adapt financially to the gentrification of their neighborhoods and communities have also become victims of displacement (Creasap, 2016; Rupasingha et al., 2015). However, few studies have examined or described how people attempt to limit or prevent the gentrifications and renovations in low-income rural communities (see Creasap, 2016; Rupasingha et al., 2015). In many cases, gentrification leads to the displacement of low-income rural residents or homelessness for the first time due to evictions from run-down tenements renovated into attractive, expensive housing that will attract amenity migrants (see Creasap, 2016; Rupasingha et al., 2015).

Periurban or Resort Towns

Another aspect of amenity migration that must be considered is settling new residents in peri-urban or resort towns (see Perlik & Membretti, 2018; Rupasingha et al., 2015). This form of amenity migration usually involves well-educated, well-to-do individuals seeking lifestyle changes (Perlik & Membretti, 2018). Although these

migrations enhance the economy of regions that are experiencing declining or stagnating tourism by bringing purchasing power into their new communities, there are also the disadvantages of creating circumstances that lead to the weakening of existing regional production and gentrification that leads to the displacement of native residents (Perlik & Membretti, 2018)

Amenity Migrations and Gentrification

Amenity migrations and gentrification affect the development of society by emphasizing revitalization and displacement. The gentrification of rural housing and the development of rural lands have created the susceptibility of rural communities becoming overrun, in the socioeconomic context, by home value segregation, which devalues many rural homes when more expensive housing is built (see Golding, 2016; Jones et al., 2003; Lopez-Morales, 2018; Matarrita-Cascante, 2017). Such activities may contribute to a rise in property taxes, rent, and the cost of living, leaving low-income rural residents unable to compete with amenity migrants for housing (Serow & Haas, 1992). Secondly, many low-income, rural residents cannot compete for higher-paying employment that would allow them to take advantage of the amenities being made available through renovations and gentrifications due to lack of education or academic credentials (see Golding, 2016).

Amenity Migration and Retirement

Goyke and Dwivedi (2018) argued that *migration* is a term used to describe a social and economic network of people who relocate seeking economic opportunities or relief. Researchers have referred to these migrants as aggregate, ethnographic groups of people returning to the rural south after aging out of the workforce (Chambré & Netting,

2016; Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018). Often referred to as *baby boomers*, many people who are approaching retirement or have retired are returning to their homeland to spend their twilight years in rural low-income geographical locations to escape the rising cost of living in communities and large cities, especially those who are not eligible to receive Social Security benefits (Sorrell, 2016). According to the Insured Retirement Institute (IRI) report, 45% of retirees do not have retirement savings, and 28% of retirees with savings have less than \$100,000 (IRI, 2019). Although many retirees have worked long enough to qualify for pensions and Social Security benefits, they have not saved enough to supplement this income, which could mean facing homelessness for the first time, should they attempt to remain in urban communities (IRI, 2019). Hence, for more than 40 years, poverty-stricken baby boomers have sought refuge in low-income communities in rural U.S. southern states (see Haas & Serow, 2002; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006; Perlik & Membretti, 2018; Rupasingha et al., 2015).

Amenity Migration and Baby Boomers

As I presented earlier in this chapter, “*baby boomers*” is a term that has been coined to refer to an aggregate population who were born between 1946 and 1964 (see Chambré & Netting, 2016; Sorrell, 2016). The term *baby boomer* is used in this research to refer to all people born between 1946 and 1965 and not to describe any other characteristic of this population. According to Sorrell (2016), baby boomers born between 1955 and 1965 are at a higher risk of experiencing poverty now more than ever before due to the lack of affordable housing and rising healthcare costs (see Sorrell, 2016). These issues are directly associated with amenity migration in that larger

hospitals, medical centers, and urgent care facilities are replacing rural, private practice medical care (see Abelson & Creswell, 2018).

Migrant workers face many of the same perils as baby boomers and low-income rural residents because of their socioeconomic status (see Diaz et al., 2016). Migrant workers tend to migrate from place to place, looking for work (see Diaz et al., 2016). They differ from amenity migrants in that they are individuals who generally come into the United States from Mexico and Central America under the H-2A Visa program as temporary agricultural workers (see Diaz et al., 2016). Secondly, this population differs from amenity migrants in that they are not seeking permanent residence; but are a vulnerable population of farmworkers facing economic hardships in their native countries who migrate due to a lack of better alternatives (see Diaz et al., 2016). Amenity migrants differ from immigrant migrants in that they are looking for permanent residence in low-income rural communities, and in doing so, these communities are changed to accommodate their needs; whereas immigrant migrants' movements do not impact the need for gentrification or create social changes that lead to the displacement of native residents (Diaz et al., 2016; Lopez-Morales, 2018).

Gentrification, in some instances, requires deep-rooted, drastic transformations on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of land use, culture, and socioeconomic stability of the host community (Lopez-Morales, 2018). During this process, rural land may be rezoned to accommodate the newcomers, medical care policies may be revamped, and other amenities such as larger schools, recreational facilities, and shopping plazas may take the place of small-town community schools and family-owned businesses (Walker &

Fortmann, 2003). These transformations have given rise to an increase in the displacement of the native populations due to the loss of land use due to urbanization and the inability to compete with the newcomers for employment opportunities due to lack of education or job training (Lopez-Morales, 2018).

Low-Income Rural Residents

The gentrification of Low-income rural neighborhoods in North Carolina has created much controversy among residents whose average annual income is between \$25,835 and \$36,524 (McKinnish, 2010). As long-term residents weigh the benefits and disadvantages of amenity migration-driven gentrification, there is yet another target population that is piquing the interest of developers and researchers alike (see Boucquey et al., 2012; Golding, 2016; Lopez-Morales, 2018). Some low-income rural residents in many North Carolina counties feel the impact of gentrification in their neighborhoods and communities as small family businesses and minimum wage jobs are replaced by automated services and corporations that only offer skill-based employment (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). As the gentrification of low-income rural towns, communities, and neighborhoods continue to move deeper into rural counties, some residents are experiencing significant changes in their daily lives (McKinnish, 2010). New subdivisions are replacing many of the older homes and mobile home parks, creating an opportunity for some to improve their living conditions while others fear losing the security of living in the *home house* that has been the only affordable place to live for many generations. In such cases, low-income residents in North Carolina's rural areas face displacements that force them to live with relatives or become part of the homeless

population (Golding, 2016; May 2019; McKinnish, 2010). Although gentrification has created some beneficial changes in rural communities, such as more jobs for trained or professional residents and more schools and medical facilities, low-income rural residents are at risk of being unable to compete with the financially stable amenity migrants (May 2019; McKinnish, 2010). The latter are changing the landscape and culture that has been historically known as the Southern way of life into a semi-urban, amenity-driven environment that will eventually redefine rural life in North Carolina.

North Carolina

Amenity-led development (ALD) in North Carolina's coastal areas demonstrates that the influx of amenity migrants into North Carolina's Inner Banks and fishing communities creates a significant concern for environmental harm (May 2019). May (2019) also posits that although ALD creates opportunities for job growth, low-income native residents and seasonal workers cannot meet the increased costs of living and are therefore at risk of displacement. Additionally, from an economic and political perspective, although long-term residents are more knowledgeable and experienced with the local risks and natural disasters, the newcomers are participating in civic and governmental organizations at higher rates (May 2019). Hence, formal governmental policies and ordinances are replacing the local community powers, depersonalizing relationships in decision-making authority, which has begun to marginalize and exclude individuals who do not have the finances or education to engage in formal political activities (May 2019). As amenity migrations increase and coastal development destroy the natural habitat of the marine animals, farmland, and other natural resources that have

been the mainstays for low-income rural residents' survival, the risk of displacement has materialized into reality for many individuals and families (see Bickham Mendez & Nelson, 2016; Campbell & A., 2011; May 2019).

Impacts of Displacement

The gentrification of rural communities can be linked to population turnover and associated with amenity migration (Golding, 2016). That is to say, the amenity development that is intended to encourage affluent newcomers has created a divide between amenity migrants and low-income rural residents in many North Carolina counties (see Boucquey et al., 2012; Golding, 2016; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; McKinnish, 2010). According to Golding (2016), the impacts of amenity-driven development and migrations may cause rural children from low-income households to become increasingly vulnerable to socioeconomic discrimination and segregation when their schools do not receive equitable funding. That is to say, amenity driven development provide new schools, homes, medical facilities, and recreational venues for the affluent newcomers while native low-income families have to continue to make do with whatever they can afford to keep local schools and activities functional (Abelson & Creswell, 2018; Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Boucquey et al., 2012; Golding, 2016; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011)

Gentrification

Rural gentrification, according to Gosnell and Abrams (2011) and Marcuse (2015), can be defined as "community change as a direct result of the displacement of long-term residents as a result of an increase in the cost of living and the lack of

affordable housing. Goyke and Dwivedi (2018) and Hagens et al. (2009) posit that since the early 1900s, African Americans engaged in homeplace migrations back and forth between the rural South and industrialized northern and midwestern cities in search of better wages and to escape the racist condition under the Jim Crow Laws. However, by 2015 North Carolina and Georgia became the second most popular states targeted for migration destinations, which required the modification of communities to attract amenity motivated migrants (Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018). With the decrease in homeplace migrations and the technology for wealthy urban dwellers to work remotely, amenity-seeking migrants began moving to the North Carolina Coastal region (Boucquey et al., 2012). In the wake of increased migrations, rural gentrification became the focal point of the tension between amenity migrants and the low-income rural residents who faced losing the family home to make way for highways, strip malls, and other amenities that modernization brought (Lopez-Morales, 2018).

Lifelong Learning

With the aging of America and a substantial increase in amenity-led migrations toward the rural South, life-long learning has become increasingly more necessary (see Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Henslin, 2011). Although life-learning in informal settings may have less ambiance than in a large lecture hall filled with academic peers, video-based, online venues that are easily accessed are providing learners the opportunity to participate in learning activities that may help improve living conditions, promote social change, improve skills needed to secure or maintain gainful employment, regain sustainability in the community after amenity-led displacements, or qualify for other life-

enhancing opportunities (see Baker & Johnson, 2015; Karam, 2014; Kungu & Machtmes, 2009).

As new technologies and socioeconomic changes emerge, the baby-boomers must strive to compete with the millennials for jobs and domestic stability (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006). Hence, more attention is being given to online and distance learning than brick-and-mortar venues for individuals who need to improve competencies, skills, and life skills (see Ahmad, 2018; Anders, 2015; Aydın et al., 2018; Cabrera, 2017). Individuals who have practiced life-learning and have kept abreast of technological changes have some challenges while competing with millennials but can continue to compete because of their dedication to being life-learners (Applebaum & Cummins, 2017). Engaging in life-learning has become part of a new normal for scholars and people from all other walks of life. Society is changing in many ways, and becoming a dedicated life-learner may be one of the only ways to continue making ends meet.

Life-long learning is becoming essential in that the brick-and-mortar venues are at risk of being abandoned in the wake of the covid19 pandemic. Online and distance learning is becoming the norm rather than the exception, creating an increase in qualified online and distance learning instructors (see Allen & Seaman, 2011; Hylan, 2015). Institutions of higher learning are also becoming popular among life-long learners because of the ease in assessability and the increased opportunity to improve competencies by participating in tuition-free classes such as Massive Open Online Classes (MOOCs) and other free competency improvement classes that are geared toward

helping the unemployed and underemployed population (see Ahmad, 2018; Cabrera, 2017; Ossiannilsson et al., 2016; VGCC, 2018; Zhu Tiejun, 2016).

Although life-learning has been formally perceived as something scholars and retired individuals choose to pursue to fulfill personal or professional goals, it has become an essential element of social demographics, especially among families with young children in school. In the past, parents sent their children to school and did not have to worry about their education; however, in this new and challenging millennium, children became increasingly dependent on their parents and online education technologies to prepare for adulthood. According to Allen and Seaman (2011), over 6.1 million students were enrolled in at least one online class in 2010, and that 31% of students in all higher education participated in at least one online or hybrid course. Some researchers posit that demand for video-based learning is becoming increasingly popular because of the short but informative media that engages life-learners and learners of other pedagogies by using elucidation, didactic materials to enhance learning success by enticing life-learners to spend more time learning (see Anders, 2015; Bonk, 2011; Cavallo, 2012a; Hagel et al. 2014; Hylén, 2015).

Applebaum and Cummins (2017) posit that there is cause to be concerned about people who have or are approaching retirement because, for the most part, they are not financially prepared to live independently and do not possess the skills to seek supplementary employment. Applebaum and Cummins (2017) further hold that this population of aging adults is at risk of suffering long-term health problems and homelessness because of age and academic barriers. Thus, lifelong learning and later life

education provides several benefits to older adults: improve living conditions, promote social change, improve skills needed to secure or maintain gainful employment, regain sustainability in the community after amenity-led displacements, or qualify for other life-enhancing opportunities (Baker & Johnson, 2015; Karam, 2014; Kungu & Machtmes, 2009). It is important to understand the experiences of older adults who are participating in an educational setting and who are being affected by amenity migrations.

Summary and Transition

This study explored the many aspects of amenity migrations and how these migrations impact the lived experiences of low-income rural residents. First, researchers have noted that amenity migrations have socioeconomic and cultural impacts that are changing the landscapes and political policies to address the needs of amenity migrants without regard for the detriment of the native residents (see Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Ulrich-Schad, 2018; Walker & Fortmann, 2003; Rice, Burke, & Heynen, 2018). Furthermore, political ecologists are becoming increasingly concerned with the shift from productivism to post-productivism in rural economies because new economic technologies are influencing the hiring practices creating a demand for workers who are academically prepared to engage in high-tech employment (Boucquey et al., 2012; Fry, 2020; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011).

Second, examining the literature revealed that low-income rural communities are being targeted for gentrification, creating both advantages and disadvantages for the host communities. For example, some of the advantages of amenity migration and gentrification are that run-down, economically drained communities are being revitalized.

Condemned tenements are being renovated or replaced with affordable housing complexes and apartment buildings (Ulrich-Schad, 2018). The downside of these renovations and other gentrification projects is that many native residents cannot afford to continue to live in these communities because of increases in property taxes and the general cost of living (Ulrich-Schad, 2018).

The third aspect of this literature review sheds light on how retirement and aging have impacted amenity migration (Appelbaum et al., 2016; Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Nelson & Trautman, 2014; Ulrich-Schad, 2018). The links between amenity migration, the gentrification of low-income rural communities, retirement, poverty, and displacement are discussed at length by researchers who have endeavored to understand the impact these new trends are having on the lives of low-income rural residents as well as on rural lands (see Abelson & Creswell, 2018; Applebaum & Cummins, 2017; Boucquey et al., 2012; Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Golding, 2016; Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Nelson & Trautman, 2014).

Rural residents are becoming increasingly concerned about the extensive development of agricultural lands gentrified to provide recreation or residential accommodations for amenity migrants (Boucquey et al., 2012; Walker & Fortmann, 2003). Finally, many rural communities welcome amenity migration and the gentrification that accompany them to help revitalize their communities and their economy. When social change is integrated into cultures, communities, or the lives of individuals and families, how they perceive the change will determine their behaviors (see Heider, 1958; Malle, 2008; Mason, 2010). The research design, sample, and analysis

focused on the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

There is an increasing problem in that North Carolina's population has increased by approximately 117,000 people between July 1, 2016, and July 1, 2017, representing a growth rate of 1.1% (higher than the national population growth average of 0.7% [Tippett, 2018]). Sixty-four percent of North Carolina's growth is due to migration, translating into approximately 86,200 migrants residing in the state (Tippett, 2018). According to population projections, there will be an increase of 2,156,167 people from July 2020 to July 2038, with an estimated 19,439 of those migrating to rural North Carolina (NC Budget and Management. (2018). This increase in population has given rise to the necessity to gentrify low-income rural lands to accommodate the influx of amenity migrants. Amenity migrants refer to retired or soon-to-be-retired people who relocate to other geographical areas seeking relief from the high cost of urban living. This problem is compounded by the increase in the gentrification of low-income rural communities and the displacement of native low-income residents who have lived on these lands and in these communities for generations (Walker & Fortmann, 2003).

The purpose of this heuristic phenomenological study was to explore the daily lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina who are being affected by amenity migration, displacement, and gentrification. According to population projections, there is an expected 2,156,167 increase in amenity migrants from July 2020 to July 2038, with an estimated 19,439 migrating to rural North Carolina (NC Budget and Management, 2018). Small towns, cities, and the underdeveloped land in rural North

Carolina will become host to an increase in social and economic commodities needed to accommodate the new residents. Because the majority of the amenity migrants are expected to be retired or more than 55 years old, city and town planners have to consider senior housing and other senior citizen amenities to help the new arrivals acculturate into southern living.

The significance of this research is to understand amenity migration and how these migrations affect the lived experiences of low-income rural residents in North Carolina who are seeking lifelong learning. I examined the low-income rural resident seeking later life education who is being displaced to accommodate the low-income amenity migrant. This study adds to current literature relative to how low-income urban residents make ends meet after retirement and what happens to low-income rural residents in the wake of amenity migration.

The central concept of this phenomenon is that researchers have discovered that there will continue to be an influx of amenity migrants into low-income-rural geographical locations due to the graying of America (Henslin, 2011), thus revealing the need to further understand the lived experiences of these individuals, especially those who are in the process of trying to advance their education as well as potentially their income. As a significant number of members of the current workforce encounter retirement, social and economic changes are being made to accommodate those who do not have sufficient retirement incomes to continue living in the expensive urban neighborhoods that they are accustomed to enjoying.

The increase in retired people migrating to more rural areas from 2009 to 2011 and the themes and categories of new social and economic expansion trends are beginning to create social and economic changes that may be responsible for reshaping not just lives but the social, economic, and geographical face of American society (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009). Residents who are indigenous to low-income rural and underdeveloped land are at a higher risk of displacement and homelessness than are those who migrate with minimal retirement plans in place (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009). Some researchers have agreed that there will be a significant increase in the migration of people between the ages of 55 and 75 toward sparsely populated rural communities over the next 5 to 10 years and that by 2025, many formally low-income or rural geographical locations will become unrecognizable to former residents (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009).

Research Design and Rational

My research question was as follows: What are the daily, lived financial and educational experiences of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina regarding their finances and access to education? In this chapter, I have expounded upon the methodology, design, data collection strategy, sampling method, and data analysis procedures that were used in this heuristic phenomenological study. I present the role of the researcher and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion relative to participant selection. I also delineate the techniques used to rationalize the procedures and processes used to answer the research question.

Phenomenological research is focused on understanding the daily lives of individuals concerning a phenomenon that they were experiencing and the experiences of seeking education during this time. This study was heuristic phenomenological design and focused on exploring, describing, discerning, verifying, and interpreting the lived experiences of amenity migrations for low-income, rural residents in North Carolina (see Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Haas & Serow, 2002; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006; Jones et al., 2003; Moustaskas, 1994). This approach was focused on how individuals approached, made sense of, coped, and adapted to the daily experiences of a phenomenon to understand how decisions and adaptations were made in daily life on a decision-making and mental model level. Other designs such as general qualitative inquiry (broad exploration of a phenomenon), case study (exploration of a phenomenon within a specific, bounded unit), ethnography (understanding cultural practices and norms), and grounded theory (emphasis on developing theory and framework) would not have been appropriate because they do not place emphasis on the daily experiences of a phenomenon (see Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Haas & Serow, 2002; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2006; Jones et al., 2003; Moustaskas, 1994).

A homogeneous, purposive sampling as well as snowball sampling was conducted with a sample of seven participants which was sufficient to reach saturation (see Applebaum & Cummins, 2017; Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Solana, 2010) participants. The appropriateness of the sample size for this research was dependent on the number of participants needed to achieve data saturation (see Guest et al., 2006; Suri, 2011). According to Guest et al. (2006), data saturation is determined

when no new information is being gained during the interview process (also see Marshall, 1996; Sutton & Austin, 2015; Suri, 2011).

Role of the Researcher

Understanding the role of the researcher is a crucial construct in forming an ethical approach to research studies and projects (Cumyn, 2019). Research studies that involve the study of people in their natural environment require that a researcher can immerse to some degree in phenomenology without influencing or interfering with the natural order of the progress of the phenomenon (Cumyn, 2019). More simply put, the researcher's job is to collect raw data without contributing to its content or changing any aspect of the data by introducing ideas, comments, or changes in behavior to the target population. My role as a researcher was to collect data from participants and to record their lived experiences precisely as they were related to me without any concern for personal beliefs, ideas, or opinions. I have not met any of the participants, and all of the participants were unknown. I had no professional relationships with the participants, and there were no supervisory or instructor relationships due to the nature of the study.

As the interviewer, researcher, and data collection instrument, my role was to listen and ask questions intended to elicit a deeper, richer, more detailed narrative from the participants. The interviewees understood that probing questions were asked to help them elaborate on their experiences and that their words would be used to understand their experiences better and to describe how amenity migration contributed to their lived experiences.

Researcher biases were managed to the best of my ability in this study. To mitigate bias, I made every effort to cultivate a deliberate assessment of my values and preferences (see Babbie, 2017). In addition, I used bracketing and transcript reviews to further maintain the integrity of this study (see Abdalla et al., 2018).

I was interested in this phenomenon because I appreciate learning more about a movement that I see unfolding in the world around me. I did not foresee any conflict of interest because I did not use any incentives. The sole purpose of this study was to give participants a voice and explain the phenomenon from the perspective of the lived experiences of those who are being or have been affected by amenity migration, gentrification, and/or displacement resulting from amenity migration/or gentrification. Purposeful sampling was used to mitigate bias and conduct the study where both positive and negative experiences were studied to increase the scope and richness of the data (see Morse, 2003). In addition, I used snowball sampling to potentially add more participants through recommendations of participants who had already volunteered. Finally, I made every effort to exercise reflexivity regarding the data interpretation process and to assess the effect of my presence and the methods that were used to collect the data in an effort to prevent respondents from telling me what they thought I wanted them to say and to be open and honest in their responses (see Chang, 2014; Fischer, 2009).

Inclusion criteria for this study were low-income rural residents who have experienced amenity migration and who live in rural North Carolina; all others were excluded from the study. Inclusion criteria for low-income included respondents who earned slightly more than the poverty level and who were between 55 and 75 years old

(see Morse, 2003). The broad scope in the age category was intended to capture a deeper, clearer understanding of the daily lived experiences of low-income rural residents in North Carolina for the specific purpose of raising awareness about amenity migration-led social and economic changes.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Appropriate documents such as informed consent forms were used to satisfy Walden University's requirements to begin soliciting for participants and conducting the research. The sample size was planned between six and 10 participants (see Morse, 1996). Theoretical data saturation was the ultimate determiner of the final sample size so that the results of the study reflected an accurate representation of the lived experiences of low-income rural residents in North Carolina, as suitable for a phenomenological study (see Morse, 1996).

The second step was to identify low-income, rural residents who had experienced amenity migration. To aid in identifying low-income rural residents who live in North Carolina, a group chat seeking older individuals who are engaging in higher education and who met the criteria was posted on Instagram, Facebook, Linked In, and Hangouts. Once potential participants were identified, an e-mail including four yes/no questions was sent, intended as a preselection screening tool. The answers to these four questions were used to verify eligibility based on my criteria of age, location, experience with amenity migrations, and intentions regarding lifelong learning. The requirements for participating in this study were as follows:

- Participants must live in a low-income, rural community in North Carolina.
- Participants must earn \$25,000 per year or less.
- Participants must be permanent residents of sparsely populated, rustic geographical locations in North Carolina.
- Participants must have had an amenity migration-led experience that occurred in a low-income rural community in North Carolina.
- Participants had to be 55 to 75 years old.

Potential participants volunteered by responding to my inbox or by email. The responses were reviewed and sorted. Qualifying responders received an email containing relevant information about the study and an informed consent form. The signatures were submitted by e-mail or as an attachment to a text message. Signed consent forms are being stored in a secure electronic file.

Amenity-led migration locations were located by contacting local planning committees and the Department of Transportation to inquire about past, present, and future projects that have been or will be directed at rural communities.

Finally, the participants who fit the inclusion criteria were invited to participate in interviews intended to collect data about their lived experiences sent via email. The email addresses were recorded during the initial search for participants. Following this communication, times were scheduled to connect with participants, using Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, or Google Duo to complete the interviews.

Data Collection

The next step in the procedure was conducting semistructured interviews (see Sumskis & Moxham, 2017). Again, participants were selected based on volunteers who met screening criteria and who were solicited through Instagram, Facebook, other online platforms, or snowball sampling. In addition, notes and memos that I kept as the researcher were also included as data sources. The data were verified through the use of interviewee transcript review (ITR; see Hagens et al., 2009; Saldaña, 2016).

Instrumentation

Data collection included semistructured telephone, digital interviews due to the coronavirus pandemic, and recorded participants' The interviews were transcribed by a transcription service, agreeing to the confidentiality of the data and information, and approved by the institutional review board (IRB). Copies of the transcribed interviews were provided to the interviewees for feedback regarding accuracy—ITR, as mentioned previously.

Saturation was reached when the sufficiency of data collection had been established and when the data began to become redundant, and no new data could be collected from participants (see Baker et al., 2012; Guest et al., 2006). The data were then hand-coded and analyzed based on significant characteristics, similarities, differences, and themes to describe and understand the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents who have experienced amenity migration.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The recruiting process for this study began by posting an invitation poster on my wall on Instagram, Facebook, Linked In, and Hangouts. The purpose of the post was to introduce the study and give interested individuals an opportunity to respond privately by boxing me. I responded to the inbox by sharing my contact information and asking for an e-mail address that could be used to send out the initial documents. The initial documents that were sent included a brief description of the study, criteria for participation and the Screening Tool, the informed consent form and my contact information. When the screening tools had been completed and returned to me, I reviewed each one to ensure the applicants met the criteria for inclusion in the study. As applicant assessments were completed, they were contacted to let them know if they were a good fit for the study. The next step was arranging times to meet with each participant and choosing the venue for the interview. After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed; interviewees received a copy to ensure that the document was accurate and represented what the respondent had intended to say. All interactions and communication were conducted electronically due to the Covid-19 social distancing restrictions.

In addition to the electronic recruitment process, I posted hard copies of the IRB-approved poster on the grocery store public bulletin board, in the community gas station/variety store window, and on the public bulletin board in the community park. When I received responses, I contacted respondents by e-mail or telephone and sent the initial documents: study description, Screening Tool and informed consent. Upon receiving the Screening Tool, I assessed applicants to ascertain eligibility for inclusion in

the study. Next, I contacted potential participants by email or telephone to answer any pertinent questions and to determine the technology that was to be used for the interview. Participants indicated consent by responding via e-mail with “I consent to participate in this study.” During this conversation or email communication, an interview date was set. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted via Facetime and Google Duo. This process took approximately 3 weeks to complete.

The interviews continued until data saturation was reached. If recruitment resulted in too few participants, the follow-up plan was to contact possible participants using the snowballing method of recruitment. The transcript review was facilitated using the ITR technique to improve the study's rigor (Hagens et al., 2009). The ITR process requires researchers to provide interviewees with a verbatim transcript of their interview "to verify for accuracy, correct errors, and provide clarifications" (Hagens et al., 2009, p.1). Participants exited the study by receiving a hard copy of their interviews and were given a chance to verify that the transcript reflected their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and intentions. Interviewees were contacted 5 days after receiving the transcript to discuss any additions or changes to the transcript for clarification. If participants did not respond to the initial sending of the transcript or within 5 days of my 5-day follow-up contact, I considered that as verification of their transcript.

Data Analysis Plan

First, semistructured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 7 participants who were low-income rural residents who live in North Carolina. The data conformed to Van Kaam's (1969) psychophenomenological method in that while the

participants' experiences of amenity migration differed, some experiences were similar or the same in which common elements could be identified or characterized (Sumskis & Moxham, 2017). “The data was examined to make sure that the elements were explicitly communicated by some of the participants, explicitly or implicitly by most, and compatible with the whole” (Sumskis & Moxham, 2017, p.x). Second, the data were coded, and then the codes were reviewed and split into; then hand-coded by compiling, disassembling, and reassembling them to arrange them into a systematic order to create classifications that could be categorized (see DeVaney, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2016).

Third, the data were recoded and recategorized for interpretation and concluded with what they meant regarding understanding the language and images that emerged from the patterns (see DeVaney, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2016). Forth, these patterns were used to perform the second cycle coding in which the data were framed and reframed to find categories and subcategories used to identify other themes and concepts (Saldaña, 2016). Fifth, the themes and concepts were then analyzed to ascertain how the data was related or different (see DeVaney, 2016; Saldaña, 2016). Next, the new categories and themes were subjected to the third cycle of coding, which created new themes and concepts used to formulate assertions and theories (Saldaña, 2016).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Confirmability

Confirmability means the extent to which findings of a study are driven by the respondents and not by researcher bias, motivation, or interest and can therefore be

replicated by other researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researcher self-checking, transcript review, and transparency regarding beliefs were incorporated to ensure confirmability (see Abdalla et al., 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

Credibility

According to Abdalla et al. (2018), credibility means how the participant's truth and accuracy are to the questions. Credibility was demonstrated through triangulation, which helped provide reliability (Abdalla et al., 2018). Triangulation refers to the multi-methodological process of collecting data to validate the veracity of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, for this study, field notes and an audit trail in addition to interviews to collect the data were to enhance credibility. In addition, transcript reviews were constructed to verify the accuracy of participant responses. The research process will be described in detail to provide for the reproduction of the study in other environments to produce reliable results (Abdalla et al., 2018).

Dependability

The participants in the study were provided written written informed consent forms that have been recorded and agreed that details would be taken during the interview so that the data could be accurately recorded. The transcribed interviews were assessed using the ITR before the data was processed to ensure accuracy (see Abdalla et al., 2018; Hagens et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Dependability means the research shows that the findings are consistent and can be repeated given the method used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

Transferability refers to demonstrating the application of the outcome of the study (Abdalla et al. 2018) to other settings. Guba and Lincoln (1989) posit that the researcher's responsibility is to make sure that the phenomenon is set in (location, time, and participants) sufficiently to allow the reader to experience transferability.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), researchers should set: (a) the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, (b) how many individuals participated in the study, (c) the method used to collect the data, (d) the number and timeframe of the data collection sessions, and (e) how the data was collected (see Abdalla et al. 2018).

Ethical Procedures

The ethical procedures that were used to ensure that the right of the participants in this study was protected followed the guidelines of the Walden University IRB. I did not collect data or select participants without approval. Upon approval from the Walden University IRB, I adhered to all rules and regulations set by the board and the university. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before conducting interviews, recording sessions, and taking detailed notes. Participants were made aware of the study's purpose and understood their right to terminate a session for any reason. All data collected were coded to provide confidentiality and security; they were stored on an external device, password-protected, and locked in a fireproof safe. The data was only made available to my Walden University Dissertation Committee.

The participants for this study were chosen according to the guidelines of purposive sampling without regard for gender, race, age, natural origin, or ethnicity. The

criteria for participation was singular in that only individuals who were low-income rural residents in North Carolina, who had experienced some aspect of amenity migration, were qualified to participate. All others were be excluded.

Summary

To facilitate this study, a qualitative research design was used to illuminate how the phenomenon of amenity migration impacts the lived experiences of low-income rural residents in North Carolina. A heuristic phenomenological methodology was used to describe, understand, and explain the lived experiences of low-income rural residents who had experienced amenity migration, gentrification, and displacement. The primary instrument that was used for data collection was interview questions.

In this chapter, I reviewed the purpose of the study, the research design, rationale, and sampling procedures. I also described the data collection, analysis, and ethical protection of participants. Chapter 4 describes the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This research study was conducted to understand and describe the daily, lived financial and educational experiences and mental processes of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina regarding their finances and access to education. The previous chapter expounded upon the appropriateness of a phenomenological design in seeking to understand how amenity migrations affect the lived daily, lived financial and educational experiences and mental processes of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning in rural North Carolina finances and access to education. In this chapter, I will review the data analysis process and results.

The research question that guided this study was as follows: What are the daily, lived financial and educational experiences of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina regarding their finances and access to education?

This chapter focuses on the data analysis and results, the setting, and demographics of seven low-income rural North Carolina residents who are seeking education or lifelong learning and who have been affected by amenity migration, gentrification, and/or displacement. The participants were recruited by passing out flyers in public places and by placing posters in areas frequented by the public. This chapter also details the data collection process and data analysis procedures facilitated through semistructured individual interviews, sequential coding, and evidence of trustworthiness.

The results of the data analysis reflect the common characteristics and themes of the participants' daily, lived financial and educational experiences and mental processes after having been affected or who are currently being affected by the increase of amenity migrations into rural North Carolina.

Setting

This qualitative, interpretive, phenomenological research study was conducted via FaceTime, GoogleDuo, and telephone due to the restrictions imposed by the government during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 safety protocols imposed by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention dictated that citizens' practice stay at home and physical distancing, which would have compromised the confidentiality of the data collected in a public environment. Because the participants were solicited through posters and flyers, it was expedient to conduct the interviews using digital technology.

Demographics

A purposeful sample of seven low-income rural North Carolina residents seeking education or life learning and who had been or were currently being affected by amenity migration, gentrification, or displacement were selected to participate in the study. The sample size of seven was ultimately based on data saturation (see discussion in Chapter 3). The participants were chosen from voluntary e-mail and telephone responses to posters and flyers distributed in public locations and online venues (like Facebook). All participants were screened using a prepared screening tool to determine eligibility for inclusion in the study (See Appendix B). All eligible participants spoke fluent English and fit the criteria for inclusion. All others received an email or a telephone call thanking

them for responding to the poster or flyer. The sample included individuals of African American, White, and Hispanic descent and had an income of \$25,000 a year or less. All applicants under age 55 (loosely defined as senior) were excluded from the study. Table 1 shows the participants demographics.

Table 1

Demographics

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Employment status
1	66	African Am.	Female	Working
2	56	African Am.	Male	Working
3	70	White	Female	Retired
4	59	Hispanic	Male	Self-employed
5	57	White	Male	Self-employed
6	54	African Am.	Female	Unemployed
7	73	African Am.	Female	Working

Participant 1

Participant 1 was a 66-year-old African American female born and raised in the same house as her mother and grandmother and worked for a noted fast-food chain for minimum wage. She stated,

I had to go back to school to try to get a better education because it is getting rough out here. All these new people are coming here to get the best jobs while we are still working for minimum wage. They are tearing down our neighborhood and building houses we can't afford to live in.

At the time of the interview, Participant 1 was currently enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistant program in a nearby community college. She also stated,

There is so much traffic now that it takes more time to get from home to work, and it is hard to get to school on time because of traffic and road construction. I don't know what I am going to do. I think I might have to move to a cheaper place to live where they won't come tearing down things and messing up people's lives.

Although Participant 1 was clearly upset by some of the changes in her community, she did say, "The only good thing about what they are doing is that the neighborhood looks nicer. It is cleaner, and there are more places to buy gas and to go grocery shopping. That's about the only thing I like."

Participant 2

Participant 2 was a 56-year-old African American male pizza delivery employee for the neighborhood pizza parlor. He began his pizza delivery job in 2010 after sustaining a back injury in an automobile accident. He received a small Social Security Disability Insurance Check and worked part-time to help make his ends meet. Participant 2 stated,

Amenity migrations have changed my life; it has made it easier in some ways and harder in others. Easier because more things are accessible such as the grocery store, entertainment, and places to go out to eat. It makes it difficult maybe the commute home is a little bit longer and more congested, and sometimes when you go out to eat its more people around, it takes longer to access the things you need. It is a lot more crowded.

Participant 2 also explained,

I started in a community college, and then I saw that it was affordable to go to certain school areas and therefore I went to enhance my skills by going to a four-year college so that I have skills to help me to be competitive in this economy because as you know with COVID and stuff like that people can choose who they want and be a little pickier than they could be beforehand in the jobs I could get. I really, truly believe in community colleges, and I believe in the programs that they offer. It's helping people improve their skill sets for older adults and young ones who possibly can get a better education or even obtain skills to get a good job and be successful in life. Holding on to a job is getting even harder with the new people coming in, so we have to get ready to compete with them by getting our education and skills in order.

Participant 3

Participant 3 was a 70-year-old White female retiree. She spent the majority of her life working as a teacher assistant in the neighborhood elementary school. She retired after being diagnosed with cancer when she was 61 years old. She stated,

After I got over being sick, I just didn't have the energy to do it anymore. I went back to school the year after I stopped working to finish my bachelor's in education degree because I thought it would be easier to get a better job, but I guess I was just too old to get it done. So, I stopped, and now I am taking some online classes to help me keep my mind sharp. I like the online classes because I can choose when I want to work instead of having to go all the way into the city

to get to campus...I'm not sure how long I will keep taking different classes, I like learning, and there are so many opportunities to learn online.

Participant 3 also clarified her opinion about amenity migration and how it affected her daily routine; she said,

I don't like how crowded the stores are now with all the new people around here. I don't even know who my neighbors are anymore. These people come here and take over everything. They are crowding us out of our own neighborhoods. This used to be a quiet neighborhood, but now there is always something going on. But I guess I will have to get used to it; I can't afford to move and start all over again someplace else.

Participant 4

Participant 4 was a 59-year-old Hispanic man, originally from Mexico, who had a wife and four children. He was a self-employed painter and handyman. According to Participant 4, amenity migration is a good thing because it brings him more work to do. He said,

I came to this country 35 years ago; I got my citizenship papers when I was 26 old. It wasn't easy, and I had to study a lot, but I finally did it...Now new people are coming here to live, and even though I don't like all the traffic and the noise, I can make a little more money to take care of my family...The other thing is that some of the people coming here are making more crime; I don't like that.... I want my family to be safe from crime.

Participant 5

Participant 5 was a 57-year-old White male. He was a carpenter and a jack of all trades. His father owned a gutter and drainpipe business that he worked in until his father passed away. He stated,

Back in the day, it was my dad, me and my brother. We did all the gutter work on the houses in this town. After my dad died, my brother lost interest in the business, so I have been working it by myself. I built almost all the decks, porches, and sheds in this town. I have even put quite a few new roofs on the houses around here. When people need something done, they call me.

He also said,

This new amenity migration thing is messing up my business. A lot of people are moving away because things are getting so darn expensive with all the tearing down and building up. It is a real mess. And don't get me started about the traffic.

Participant 5 ended by saying,

I know things have to change, and I don't know how it will all turn out, maybe it will be okay, I can't say, but I am taking a couple of classes on fixing these new cars so that if I have to, I will go back to being a mechanic.

Participant 6

Participant 6 was a 54-year-old African American female. She had four children and three grandchildren. According to Participant 6, she lost her job when the COVID-19 pandemic hit her community. She recalled,

Everything just shut down. We were struggling to survive not knowing what was going to happen to us. My oldest daughter is a nurse and has a big house, so after I lost my land and home because they were putting in a new road, I came to live with her, they didn't pay me enough for my property to start over. So here I am. She also said,

I am not going to complain too much because now I take care of my grandchildren, and I am enrolled in an online college where I am studying to get my master's degree in social work. I can get a better job when I finish; I don't have much longer to go...I don't have a problem with the amenity migration thing altogether; I just wish the people who are making all the decisions would take us more into consideration before they just come in and start changing stuff. I do miss the family connection we used to have around here. But that is another story. Let me just say I don't get to see people I know anymore. They either moved away or lost their place and just went somewhere trying to survive.

Participant 7

Participant 7 was a 73-year-old African American female who worked as a personal care assistant in a private duty situation for a local temporary agency. She said,

I never thought I would still be going to school at this age, but I have to keep pressing on because I am doing a little part-time work and trying to take care of my mother. She is 94 years old now, and she needs a lot of help, so I went back to school to learn how to give her the best care. You know, take care of her the right

way. I am almost finished taking the CNA classes, so maybe that will help me out some.”

Participant 7 also stated,

The amenity migrations have been okay. I like the convenience of having more stores and other things closer to where I live, but I don't like the traffic. I try to plan where I go during the times of day when people are mostly at work. I don't travel during rush hours. The one thing I can say is good is that I have been able to meet a lot of new people from different places, and school has given me a chance to talk to some of the younger people who are coming here. It is an interesting experience.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected using a semistructured, individual interview process. Three participants were interviewed by FaceTime, two participants were interviewed via GoogleDuo, and two participants were interviewed by telephone. The participants were given a choice of how they preferred to be interviewed. I adapted the technology used to meet their skills and their convenience. All participants received explanatory information about the study by both email and telephone before the interviews were scheduled. In addition, their understanding of their rights and conditions for participation was confirmed during telephone communication and in a confirmation, email providing informed consent to proceed.

After informed consent was confirmed, a time was agreed upon and scheduled for the formal interview. All interviews were conducted in a semistructured format, recorded,

and later transcribed. During each interview, most of the questions asked were open-ended to allow participants to express their opinions, thoughts, and ideas. In addition, several probing questions were asked to encourage the participants to expound upon their explanations, description, and experiences about amenity migrations, gentrification, displacement, education, and life-learning. This protocol provided a venue for maintaining the scheduled time limit of approximately 45 minutes to an hour for each session and maximizing data collected.

All participants received a copy of the transcribed interview to review before the data analysis phase began. Participants were given 5 days to make corrections, additions, and approve the transcripts for analysis. Transcripts were coded for the first cycle as they were returned and approved. Upon receipt of the last transcript, a data coding matrix was constructed, and the data were entered.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began as soon as the interviews started. I began understanding and making connections. I continued data analysis by coding the data to find emerging patterns and characteristics. Next, I created a color-coded matrix to define coding terms, calculate the frequency that codes appeared in each dataset, categorize codes, and consider themes. According to Saldaña (2016), the second cycle of coding entails repeatedly reading the data to verify that all statements made by the participants have been coded and recorded in the matrix. In the second cycle, the data were coded by highlighting phrases or sentences that contained descriptions of the participants' lived experiences relative to amenity migrations, gentrification, displacement, and pursuit of

higher education or life-long learning. Again, specific codes were applied to patterns and clusters that were later recoded as new patterns, categorized, and reviewed. These results were then used in the third coding cycle to reveal the research question's themes. These themes were recorded in the matrix (see Table 2).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In this research, trustworthiness was addressed through confirmability, credibility, dependability, and transferability. Through researcher self-checking, transcript review, and transparency regarding of beliefs (see Abdalla et al., 2018; Moustakas, 1994) I addressed credibility. Credibility is understood as the participant's truth and accuracy are to the questions. Credibility was demonstrated through triangulation, which helped provide reliability (Abdalla et al., 2018). For example, for this study, field notes and an audit trail in addition to interviews to collect the data were used to enhance credibility. In addition, transcript reviews were constructed to verify the accuracy of participant responses. The research process was described in detail to provide for the reproduction of the study in other environments to produce reliable results (Abdalla et al., 2018).

The participants in the study were provided written informed consent forms that was documented and recorded and participants agreed that details would be taken during the interview so that the data could be accurately recorded. The transcribed interviews were assessed using the interviewee transcript review technique (ITR) before the data was processed to ensure accuracy (see Abdalla et al., 2018; Hagens et al., 2009; Moustakas, 1994). This research exhibits dependability in that it demonstrates that the findings are consistent and can be repeated given the method used (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). This study was set in location, time, and participants sufficiently to allow the reader to experience transferability. The criteria was set for (a) inclusion and exclusion, (b) how many individuals participated in the study, (c) the method used to collect the data, (d) the number and timeframe of the data collection sessions, and (e) how the data was collected (see Abdalla et al. 2018).

Results

The next section describes the overall results. The results of this study suggest that amenity migrations into low-income, rural communities in North Carolina have been a part of significant socio-economic changes that have affected the quality of life for older adults age 55+ regarding the pursuit of equitable opportunities, especially for employment and higher education. Respondents consistently expressed concern an inability to compete with amenity migrants for employment due to lack of education, training, or skills.

Participants also expressed that within their communities, it was likely that they were not adequately compensated when they were displaced. In some instances, residents were forced to live with family, friends, or in worse case scenarios, became homeless for the first time. Additional points of interest participants expressed were that although their neighborhoods looked nicer and that some of the amenities were helpful, they felt like they had lost control of their communities at large to strangers who knew nothing about their culture or way of life. Some of the participants felt that their lives were in turmoil because the changes to their communities were for the financial gain of the amenity migrants and large construction companies. The problems facing low-income, rural

residents in North Carolina are the influx of amenity migrants, extensive gentrification of neighborhoods and, in some cases, entire communities. This migration promoted a sense of the need to improve the academic and life-learning skills necessary to compete with the newcomers for scarce resources.

As the literature review revealed, a significant increase in amenity migrations into rural communities since 2010 has dramatically increased property value in low-income rural communities (Bickham Mendez & Nelson, 2016). Although the economic devastation of the closing of textile mills in rural communities was somewhat eased by construction jobs and service-oriented employment, class polarization has continued to spin out of control (Bickham Mendez & Nelson, 2016). New businesses that require higher learning and skilled technical labor have created new problems for native residents because they cannot compete with amenity migrants for employment due to a lack of training, education, and credentials (Perlik & Membretti, 2018; Rupasingha et al., 2015). This study also further exemplifies how new businesses, healthcare facilities, schools offering secondary education, and cultural attractions such as museums and the refurbishing of historical landmarks continue to attract amenity migrants (see Perlik & Membretti, 2018). This research also describes and explains how amenity migrations affect the social and economic status of native low-income rural residents concerning the advantages and disadvantages related to earlier research (see Boucquey et al., 2012; Golding, 2016; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). In essence, this study examines and describes how people are affected by the gentrifications and renovations in low-income rural communities (see Creasap, 2016; Rupasingha et al., 2015). In some cases, the

gentrifications have led to the displacement of low-income rural residents or homelessness due to evictions from run-down tenements (see Creasap, 2016; Rupasingha et al., 2015). As communities continue to be gentrified, low-income, rural residents in North Carolina are preparing themselves for the social and economic changes that are redefining their way of life by seeking higher education, technical training, and life learning skills.

In this study, five major themes emerged to answer the research question: What are the daily, lived financial and educational experiences of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina regarding their finances and access to education? Earning money and competing for a job is hard without education or skills.

1. Older and retired residents return to school to improve job skills needed to return to the workforce.
2. Online classes provide a venue to continue education.
3. More time commuting to and from work and school takes away from sleep, family, and recreation.
4. Overcrowding affects work, school, life, and relationships.

Table 2*Themes and Subthemes*

Code	Category	Summary points	Theme
1. Education and life-learning 2. Online Education	compete with migrants for employment	Need for additional skills Education provides skills On-campus classes fill up faster than online classes	<p>1. Earning money and competing for a job is hard without education or skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to earn enough money to meet higher education and living expenses at the same time without previous higher education or life-long learning skills. <p>2. Older and retired residents return to school to improve job skills needed to return to the workforce.</p> <p>3. Online classes provide a venue to continue education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • without interfering with other responsibilities such as work and family. • Participants prefer online classes because it saves travel time and it is easier to enroll in the courses they need. • Overcrowded rural communities have caused lines to be longer when attempting to register for face-to-face classes.

<p>3. Increase in traffic 4. Amenity Migration</p>	<p>Road construction and accidents</p>	<p>Traffic is extremely heavy during the morning, afternoon, and evening</p>	<p>4. More time is spent commuting to and from work and school takes away from sleep, family, and recreation.</p>
<p>5. Entertainment and Socialization 6. Changes to the infrastructure of low-income rural communities in North Carolina. 7. Unaffordable new homes. 8. New homes/property taxes to increase</p>	<p>Overcrowded Older homes and apartments torn down. . .</p>	<p>Longer commutes to visit family and friends are longer because many have moved out of the community to more affordable places. No real contact with classmates in online classes.</p>	<p>5. Overcrowding impacts work, school, life, and relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes are unaffordable • Commute times to school, work, and family may be longer. • No contact or socialization with classmates.

Theme 1: Earning Money and Competing for a Job is Hard Without Education or Skills

The lived experiences of low-income rural residents generally involved challenges earning enough money to meet the rising cost of living as their neighborhoods faced amenity migration and gentrification. Several participants noted that they could not compete for jobs due to a lack of education or experience in the new job markets. A second challenge was difficulty competing for jobs in the new job market due to lack of training and age. Participants 1 and 4 expressed concern about the additional expenses they have incurred since the gentrification of their rural community began. Participant 4 shared,

I have to work more hours to take care of my family because now I have a water bill when I didn't use to have a water bill. I had a well. When I didn't have those bills, that's extra money that I didn't have to pay out of my household that I didn't have to pay before. I have to work more hours which is taking time away from my family.

Participant 1 indicated, "I think I might have to move to a cheaper place to live."

Several other participants also indicated that they feared not making enough money to sustain their present way of life without returning to school or improving their skills. Three of the participants expressed specific concerns about competing with amenity migrants for employment opportunities. Participant 7 remarked that

I never thought I would still be going to school at this age... but I have to keep pressing because ... I'm doing a little part-time job and trying to take care of my mother. She is 94 years old now, and she needs a lot of help.

Similarly, Participant 3 noted,

I have to adjust something that I used to do that I can't do anymore because being on a fixed income, you have to work within a certain budget. So, I have to adjust my budget to fit all these other new things that are coming in, and I may even have to let go of some things because of that...yeah...it is just extremely difficult to find work that doesn't require going back to school.

Theme 2: Older and Retired Residents Return to School to Improve Job Skills Needed to Return to the Workforce

Furthering education is one way to build those skills. Many participants realized that continuing education and skill-building would be one way to remain competitive and employed or seek necessary additional employment. Participants explained the need for additional skills to compete for work. It is difficult to earn enough money to meet higher education and living expenses at the same time without previous higher education or life-long learning skills. The participants in this study were aging and living in an area where a growing population and increased gentrification created many challenges.

Participant 1 was a 66-year-old African American female born and raised in the same house as her mother and grandmother and worked for a noted fast-food chain for minimum wage. At the time of the interview, she was enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistant program in a nearby community college. She stated,

I had to go back to school to try to get a better education because it is getting rough out here. All these new people are coming here to get the best jobs while I am still working for minimum wage. They are tearing down our neighborhood and building houses we can't afford to live in. There is so much traffic now that it takes more time to get from home to work, and it is hard to get to school on time because of traffic and road construction...I don't know what I am going to do.

Six of the participants in the study were either already enrolled in higher learning courses or contemplating the possibility of having to return to school to compete in the new job market that required technical skills that the local residents of the low-income rural communities do not possess. The participants in this study repeatedly expressed how being an older adult created additional challenges for returning to school and competing with the newcomers for higher-paying jobs. With respect to this, Participant 1 said,

Everyone needs a degree to make money no matter how old you are now or how long you have been doing the job...all these young kids they got bachelors degrees, masters degrees, at twenty-something years old is what makes the job market ah, extremely competitive in a field that I have been in most of my life. Right now, I am stuck. I cannot be promoted or go any further in my job without furthering my education. So I guess, I would have to say ah, furthering my education is more so required not optional.

Participant 2 explained how returning to school had been a difficult but necessary experience. When he returned to school as an older adult, he was unfamiliar with the younger students' technology to communicate and submit assignments. He remarked that

I didn't know anything about files and computers and stuff like that. So, my first report, even though they were telling me one thing, I couldn't find it because I didn't know they were talking about a computer file that you would send to someone else, and they were emailing, and you didn't open it up. I wrote my paper on paper while everyone else had theirs on a disc drive that you could load up and read it and access. That was a learning curve for me!

Adaptive experiences for older adults have made it challenging in many ways since amenity migrations and gentrification have started reshaping life in the rural communities of North Carolina. Technologies such as self-checkouts in stores and kiosk check-ins at medical facilities were not used in rural communities or businesses before the migrations began. However, these technologies have become the primary focus of new companies in newly developed and gentrified communities due to overcrowding. Furthermore, locals cannot fill open positions due to a lack of education or skills when seeking employment. The rise in unemployed among locals has increased the demand for higher learning or life skills to survive. Returning to school for the participants in this study provided them with the skills and credentials needed to compete for higher-paying jobs. As an example, Participant 4 reported,

I went back to school to learn how to use some of the new equipment the new construction companies were using. I am getting better jobs now... maybe I won't

have to keep working these long hours when I finish school. I might even get hired by one of these big companies...who knows.

Theme 3: Online Classes Provide a Venue to Continue Education

Participants indicated that online courses are generally the way they are engaging in higher learning and life-skills training. On-campus classes fill up faster than online classes. In addition, online courses offer the flexibility needed to participate in higher education courses while continuing to work and attend to personal needs such as getting enough sleep and spending time with the family. Participant 3 stated,

Because of where I am age-wise, I have sought other ways of obtaining education in a way that we didn't do years and years ago. It used to be that we had to go to a public facility to get any kind of education. Now because of technology and all these advances coming forth, I can go to the computer, I can go to an online service, so that has helped me in a great way because I haven't had to put out finances for all of those things.

Online classes have become popular among low-income rural residents who are experiencing amenity migration and gentrification because of the convenience of studying at home and the affordability of the specific courses they need to improve their work skills. The participants in this study suggested that they preferred online classes because it is difficult to attend face-to-face classes due to overcrowded classrooms, long commutes in heavy traffic, and the expense of traveling to far away campuses. Another benefit of online courses for older adults is that they can work slower than in a classroom with large numbers of younger students. As an example, Participant 7 shared,

Going back to school has been a good thing. It helps keep your mind sharp; I have learned a lot, I have enjoyed interacting with the young people in my online classes, but I have also enjoyed the quiet time at home when I am trying to learn...I took some face-to-face classes at one point... but it was too noisy for me to stay focused. I don't see how these young folks learn with all the noise they make laughing and talking in class. I like my quiet... Yes, I do enjoy the classes, and I am learning what I need to know to keep moving forward.

According to participants going back to school as an older adult is very challenging. The online venue was better than attempting to attend on-campus classes because, as almost all participants shared, it is hard to get around the campuses after a certain age. Participant 3 provided some context:

I thought about going on campus, but the classes are too far apart. As slow as I walk, I would never get to class on time, or I would be too tired to learn anything. So, I tried taking the online classes; it was alright at first. I had planned to earn a bachelor's in education, but after a while, like I said before...I just didn't have the energy to keep going. So now I take a class here and there to keep my mind sharp... I love the online classes... I guess I am just too old to try to get a degree, especially since I probably won't ever use it anyway.

Several participants, especially Participants 1, 2, and 6, cited that online courses helped them attend to their daily lived experiences of working, taking care of their families, and saving travel time. Participant 6 was especially hopeful that her life would improve markedly when she finished school. Other participants also shared that they

preferred online classes to face-to-face since they believed it was easier to enroll in the courses needed before they filled up. Only one of the participants in this study preferred face-to-face classes. Participant 7 stated,

I appreciate being able to go to school and learn new things at my age. At some point, I plan to take a face-to-face class so that I can interact with the young people; I have learned a lot from them...just not right now. For now, I am on a mission to stay employed... so online classes are the way to go.

There were 42 positive comments among the participants during the study regarding the benefits of attending online classes. Although some of the participants were not seeking higher learning in degree programs, they expressed interest in online courses that would contribute to life learning, work skills, and other interest such as learning to do crafts or cooking specialty foods. The primary similarity in the data collected regarding older adults and online classes answer the research question regarding the daily, lived financial and educational experiences and mental processes of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina regarding their finances and access to education.

Theme 4: More Time Is Spent Commuting to and From Work and School Takes Away from Sleep, Family, and Recreation

Not all participants participated in online courses. Among this aging generation, in-person courses were the preference—when possible and available. Time, in general, has become scarce when returning to school and attempting to engage in work. Commute time around this growing and developing area has posed several challenges to

schooling, work, and life. Many of the participants had attempted to attend on-campus classes. Still, their time spent navigating road construction and increased traffic delays due to accidents took a heavy toll on other aspects of their lives. Participants 2 and 5 reported that their commute time had decreased the amount of sleep they were getting because they had to leave at least an extra hour earlier to get to work on time and that returning home was just as time-consuming as the morning commute. Participant 1 shared that, "There is so much traffic now that it takes more time to get from home to work, and it is hard to get to school on time because of the traffic and road construction." Similarly, Participant 6 said,

I don't like going out much anymore to the grocery store or anything because of the traffic. There are so many people here now that it takes twice as long to go anywhere. That is one thing about online classes. I don't have to deal with all that traffic. I have to leave so early to get where I am going that it takes me all day to do what I use to do in a couple of hours.

The general pattern among the participants was that the influx of amenity migrants had caused such an increase in road construction and traffic that their daily experiences are interfering with the time needed to sleep, spend time with their families, and participate in recreational activities. Additionally, many participants indicated that they were not as likely to participate in social or civic activities because of the lengthy commute.

Participant 3 noted that she no longer attends church on Sunday because of the traffic and the extra time it takes to get home. She also said that she avoids going to the

grocery store or doing other shopping because of the commute and the long check-out lines, and the self-checkout process. Participant 3 stated,

Everything has changed. It takes all day to get anything you want to do done. It is exhausting. I don't know if I will ever get used to it, but I guess I will have to deal with it the best I can. It was so quiet around here. But now cars are running up and down the street all night long. It makes it hard to get a good night's sleep with all that racket going on.

Theme 5: Overcrowding Affects Work, School, Life, and Relationships

All participants indicated that overcrowding had affected their daily lives in many ways, especially regarding education and work. Overcrowding has caused many residents to choose online classes rather than return to on-campus face-to-face venues. The steady influx of amenity migrants has created overcrowded classrooms and challenges for students when attempting to enroll in the courses they need to complete their studies. All participants expressed concerns about the increase in traffic and overcrowding at restaurants and other social venues. Additionally, all participants were concerned about how overcrowding has affected their daily experiences regarding visiting friends and family, indicating that travel time has become a barrier to engaging in social events and family outings. There was also concern about long lines in the grocery stores, gas stations, and medical facilities. Living in rural North Carolina is steadily being reshaped by amenity migrations. Families are moving further apart due to seeking affordable housing. Traditional activities such as community functions have faded away

along with the cultural camaraderie that existed before amenity migration and gentrification began.

Conclusions

The daily socio-economic, educational experiences and mental processes of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina. Both positive and negative aspects of amenity migration, gentrification, and displacement were discussed and evaluated in this study. Rural North Carolina residents have reported that although many of the gentrified communities look nicer and that new businesses continue to bring opportunities for employment and economic gain, the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Native rural residents have reported that they do not have the skills or credentials to compete with amenity migrants for employment, nor can they afford to live in the newly renovated homes.

Summary and Transition

The primary aim of this phenomenological study was to contribute a detailed, explanatory description of aspects amenity migration, gentrification, and displacement on low-income, older adults in rural North Carolina. Secondly, this study was intended to raise awareness about the advantages and disadvantages of amenity migration and gentrification in low-income rural communities to help inform policy makers on the mezzo and macro levels of government regarding the affects these activities are having on native residents. Third, this study was intended to explain how low-income rural residents' self-determination affects amenity migrations and how their decisions to seek

higher education and life learning skill. Fourth, this study was designed to illuminate the advantages and disadvantages of amenity migration and gentrification in low-income rural communities among older adults. Finally, this study is intended to inform the literature of the current advantages and disadvantages of amenity migration into the rural communities of North Carolina and to provide a research design that can be used to evaluate other rural communities on a global scale.

The results of this study answered the research question: What are the daily, lived financial and educational experiences of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina regarding their finances and access to education? The five themes that emerged in this study were: (1) earning money and competing for a job is hard without education or skills, (2) older and retired residents return to school to improve job skills needed to return to the workforce, (3) online classes provide a venue to continue education, (4) more time spent commuting to and from work and school takes away from sleep, family, and recreation, and (5) overcrowding impacts work, school, life, and relationships. Overall, the participants daily lived experiences revealed concerns about employment, rising costs of living, congested roadways, overcrowding in classrooms, stores, and recreational venues. Other concerns circumvented the contributory factors causing low-income rural residents in North Carolina to either seek further education or abandon their homes and seek more affordable living arrangements.

The findings in this study also illuminated how rural residents feel about the changes that are taking place in their neighborhoods and communities and what they

think may be a solution or alternative for gentrifying rural lands to accommodate amenity migrants. A further discussion of the findings in this study supported by the self-determination, Attribution, and Gentrification theories is presented in Chapter 5 (see (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Heider, 1958; Lopes & Chambel, 2014; Lopez-Morales, 2018; Potter & Edwards, 1990; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Smith, 1979). The limitations, recommendations, implications, and conclusion of this heuristic, phenomenological study are also discussed further in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this heuristic, phenomenological study, I aimed to understand the daily, lived financial and educational experiences of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina. Researchers Applebaum and Cummins (2017), May (2019), and Siders and Keenan (2020) cited the effects of amenity migration as disruptive to low-income rural residents' socioeconomic status throughout the literature. In some cases, low-income rural residents in rural North Carolina have been displaced due to the gentrification of their communities. In addition, some have become unemployed because of the inability to compete with amenity migrants who have the technical skills needed to take advantage of hi-tech employment opportunities. These disruptions have created a venue that has made it imperative for low-income rural residents to seek affordable housing in other geographical locations and pursue additional learning experiences to improve their salable skills.

With the understanding of the barriers, low-income rural residents in North Carolina have experienced, I used a purposive sample of eight participants and a semistructured interview tool to collect detailed descriptions of the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina who had been affected by amenity migrations, with particular focus on gentrification, displacement, higher education, and life-learning. The interview process allowed me to gain a deeper, richer understanding of how amenity migration has affected the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents

in North Carolina. The results of this study can inform local and state planning boards regarding gentrification and local residents. This study can also be used to inform the department of transportation and local institutions of learning about the issues that residents are concerned about relative to overcrowded campuses, the need for additional online classes, and decision-making regarding planning future highway expansions. The results of this study can also be used as the underpinning for future studies relative to the socioeconomic ramifications of amenity migrations with regard for older adults to pursue higher education and life-learning.

Findings

The findings of this study illuminate and describe the daily, lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina regarding amenity migration, gentrification, displacement, and how five themes emerged from the data that described and explained how low-income, rural residents are being affected by changes to their communities. The five themes that emerged in this study were as follows: (a) earning money and competing for a job is hard without education or skills, (b) older and retired residents return to school to improve job skills needed to return to the workforce, (c) online classes provide a venue to continue education, (d) more time spent commuting to and from work and school takes away from sleep, family, and recreation, and (e) overcrowding impacts work, school, life, and relationships.

Interpretation of Findings

The data analysis collected in this study provides insight into the lived experiences of low-income, rural residents in North Carolina who have been affected by

amenity migrations. The overarching theme that emerged is that amenity migrations have caused social and economic changes in low-income rural communities, affecting affordable housing, education, and gainful employment opportunities for native residents. Secondly, the gentrification of rural communities has created a lack of a sense of community among the residents because of the drastic increases in population and the displacement of residents, forcing families to leave their communities in search of affordable housing and employment opportunities.

In addition, these social and economic changes have affected older adults. They have faced a lack of affordable housing, lack of employment opportunities, and in some cases, hardships when seeking higher education or life-learning experiences. Multiple participants expressed that education inequality posed a significant hindrance to obtaining gainful employment, which has caused them to make marked adjustments to their lifestyles that have resulted in inconveniences and, in some cases, severe hardships.

The findings and themes as related to the literature review in Chapter 2 indicate that there is a definite link between amenity migrations, gentrification, displacement, and the need for higher education and the development of life skills. As discussed in Chapter 2, this study was grounded in the self-determination, attribution, and rural gentrification theories as the conceptual framework. The results of this study revealed the lived experiences of the native, low-income rural residents who made choices in their lives that mattered to them as well as how they coped with, accepted, and rejected changes and ideas that came with the influx of amenity migrants and gentrification (see Lopes & Chambel, 2014). The results of this study also helped understand what motivates people's

natural psychological instincts to make choices (see Ryan & Deci, 2000). Their self-determination was evident in that many of the participants stated that they had returned to school to improve their chances of competing with the newcomers for employment and other resources, such as higher pay and the ability to afford to live in the newly gentrified communities.

Self-determination theory was used as a research tool to study this help illuminate the life processes and the versatility people use to be either proactive, passive, or alienated regarding changes in their social conditions (May, 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Understanding human motivation and what inner resources people need for personality development and self-regulation of behaviors was one of the key themes revealed in this study (see Qin, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The environmental factors such as amenity migration, gentrification, or displacement were also earmarked as key themes that interfered with or undermined the self-determination of individuals because many of the participants felt like they were no longer in control (see May, 2019; Qin, 2016).

In addition, this study addressed the attributes that actively affected low-income, rural communities that are being affected by amenity migration, gentrification, or displacement resulting from amenity migrations (see Potter & Edwards, 1990). Heider's theory of attribution was used to address how people's perceptions, judgments, actions, and assumptions influenced their decisions (Heider, 1958). As presented by Heider (1958), seminal ideas illuminate the causation of their temporary or permanent decisions to make changes in how they live (as cited in Weiner, 2018). These changes in lifestyles are often subjective, resulting from the psychological, emotional, social, or economic

locus of control (Weiner, 2018). The participants in this study tended to believe that there are some things in their lives they cannot control and therefore attributed the changes they made in their lives to circumstances that forced them to make changes that they would not have otherwise made (see Heider, 1958: Weiner, 2018).

Third, as discussed in Chapter 2, the rural gentrification theory was used to explain how amenity migrations impact the lived experiences of low-income rural residents in North Carolina while seeking higher education or life learning experiences. The participants in this study related how the gentrification of deteriorated rural neighborhoods provide for productive capital returns for formally suburban dwellers, which was also discussed by Smith (1979). Essentially, the cost of newly constructed housing is by far more expensive than the rehabilitation of inner and central city structures or of low-income rural communities that are in serious disrepair (Smith, 1979). Thus, developers are renovating old houses and buildings for the purpose of housing new businesses and newcomers to rural communities. The participants in this study argued that although white-collar productivity provides a more stable economy than service-oriented or blue-collar workers, specifically regarding consumer consumption of expensive goods and services, the disadvantage is that native residents are unprepared to take advantage of the new amenities without developing new skills or seeking higher education.

Limitations

This study also has several potential limitations. First, the purposeful sample of participants represented different levels of socioeconomic standing in that some of the

participants were employed in low-income foodservice chains. At the same time, others were retired and depended on small social security checks and food stamps. Some of the participants had some college education. In contrast, others had not graduated from high school but had later earned a General Education Diploma and had enrolled in online classes to improve or gain the skills needed to compete with the newcomers. Some participants reported that their social security and retirement pensions were not enough to afford to live in their newly gentrified communities. In such instances, residents were compelled to return to school to improve employment chances or move out of the community.

Recommendations

Amenity migrations, gentrification, and displacement are widespread in North Carolina, affecting rural populations economically, socially, culturally, and academically (Boucquey et al., 2012; Evenson & Ayala, 2004; May, 2019). Although people of all ages are somewhat affected by amenity migrations, this study revealed that people ages 55 and over have been affected, resulting in displacement and unemployment (see Sorrell, 2016). Otherwise, they were compelled to return to school to improve or gain skills that would facilitate domestic sustainability. In exploring the advantages and disadvantages of amenity migrations in low-income, rural communities, several themes emerged. However, the most frequently occurring themes were (a) earning money and competing for a job is hard without education or skills, (b) older and retired residents return to school to improve job skills needed to return to the workforce, (c) online classes provide a venue to continue education, (d) more time is spent commuting to and from

work and school takes away from sleep, and (e) overcrowding affects work, school, life, and relationships. These themes were identified as significant aspects of rural residents' response to amenity migration and gentrification. This study was limited to a small purposive sample of respondents over the age of 55. Further research is needed to compare the effects of amenity migrations on a broader scope to understand how amenity migrations affect native residents in other locations, socioeconomic standings, and educational backgrounds. The recommendations for future research regarding the lived experiences of people over the age of 55 who are being affected by amenity migrations are (a) to investigate how to limit the number of urban businesses and residents that migrate for economic purposes, (b) to implement programs and services for older adults that will better prepare them for retirement, thus reducing the need to relocate to rural communities, and (c) to implement programs and services for rural residents to better prepare them for the gentrification of their neighborhoods and communities (collaborate with the department of transportation and with local government to encourage the use of unoccupied lands for constructing new office parks and subdivisions, thereby reducing the instances of disrupting the life-styles of rural residents).

Implications

This study has several implications. This study reinforces the need to close the gap between the most recent research regarding the advantages and disadvantages of amenity migrations and understanding of how the economy in low-income, rural communities in North Carolina may be impacted. Second, this study illuminates the need for state and local governments to use environmental scans to reduce the displacement of

low-income rural residents over age 55 (loosely defined as senior citizens) living on a fixed income or depending on minimum wage jobs to survive. Third, this study reinforces the North Carolina Department of Transportation's need to reevaluate the need for wider roads and safety during road construction, especially during rush hour traffic.

In other research, Applebaum and Cummins (2017) noted that many individuals age 55+ are not financially ready for retirement and face hardships that contribute to deciding to migrate to a more affordable geographical location. Although I also implied that other recent studies present credible results, more research is needed to completely understand and describe how amenity migrations affect the daily lived experiences of local residents over age 55. The literature does address in limited detail how some retirement plans are insufficient to provide security in exurban communities, forcing retirees to seek more affordable living arrangements and contributing to amenity migrations; however, there is still a need to examine the effect these migrations have on the daily lived experiences of the local residents in the host communities (see Abelson & Creswell, 2018; Applebaum & Cummins, 2017; Bickham Mendez & Nelson, 2016; Fry, 2020; Goyke & Dwivedi, 2018; Keough & Edwards, 2016; May, 2019; Perlik & Membretti, 2018).

The significance of higher education in this study explains why older adults must consider acquiring additional skills when competing in the amenity driven gentrification of their neighborhoods and communities. The themes that emerged in this study helped explain how the daily, lived financial and educational experiences and mental processes of low-income, rural residents seeking education or lifelong learning who have been

affected by amenity migrations in rural North Carolina are changing more than the landscape of low-income rural communities. The value of this study to those who work in higher education serving this population is evident in the discovery of the kind of higher education that is most needed and how preparing older adults for the challenges of changes to their daily, lived financial, educational, and mental processes can help older adults adapt to the amenity driven changes that have affected them in their twilight years. This study is also significant in that it informs older adults about what to expect and how to prepare for amenity driven changes that will affect them regarding the ability to earn money, the advantages of online education, and gaining the knowledge needed to build coping skills as amenity migrations into low-income rural communities escalate.

Conclusion

Despite the advantages of amenity migrations into low-income, rural North Carolina communities, failure to provide viable options for the native residents in host communities had caused many hardships. In this research, I also demonstrated that although low-income rural North Carolina residents face loss of employment and domestic sustainability, many have returned to school to improve or gain the technical skills needed to compete with the influx of amenity migrants. Within this research, the best practices for supporting low-income, rural communities affected by amenity migrations are increasing online education opportunities for older adults and using environmental scans to plan new neighborhoods and communities, business emporiums, and roadway expansions.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. In general, how have amenity migrations changed your daily life?
2. How have amenity migrations possibly affected your social, economic, and educational status as an older adult?
3. I understand that you are also seeking education right now, how has this affected your access or ability to engage in your education and learning?
4. Have you benefited from these amenity migrations? If so, in what ways have you benefited?
5. How has your approach to your daily life and education been different? Can you walk me through an example of a way that you have adjusted and how?
6. Has it created opportunities or restricted them with respect to your education and learning? Tell me about that.
7. Do you think that these amenity migrations may increase the availability of lifelong learning programs? If so, how and why.
8. How do you feel amenity migrations will affect you in the future and your future ability to engage in education and learning?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix B: Screening Tool

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Do you speak fluent English | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Do you earn \$25,000.00 or less per year | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Are you 55 years old or older | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Are you seeking higher education or life-learning skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |