

Sustainable Housing and Urban Development: A Study on the Soon-To-Be-Old Population's Impetus to Migrate

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Abstract : With the unprecedented increase in elderly population globally, it is critical to search for new sustainable housing and urban development alternatives to traditional housing options. This research examines concepts of elderly migration pattern in the context of a high density city in Hong Kong to Mainland China. The research objectives are to: 1) explore the relationships between soon-to-be-old elderly and their intentions to move to Mainland upon retirement and their demographic characteristics; and 2) What are the desired amenities, locational factors and activities that are expected in the soon-to-be-old generation's retirement housing environment? Primary data was collected through questionnaire survey conducted using random sampling method with respondents aged between 45-64 years old. The face-to-face survey was completed by 500 respondents. The survey was divided into four sections. The first section focused on respondent's demographic information such as gender, age, education attainment, monthly income, housing tenure type and their visits to Mainland China. The second section focused on their retirement plans in terms of intended retirement age, prospective retirement funding and retirement housing options. The third section focused on the respondent's attitudes toward retiring in Mainland for housing. It asked about their intentions to migrate retire into Mainland and incentives to retire in Hong Kong. The fourth section focused on respondent's ideal housing environment including preferred housing amenities, desired living environment and retirement activities. The dependent variable in this study was 'respondent's consideration to move to Mainland China upon retirement'. Eight primary independent variables were integrated into the study to identify the correlations between them and retirement migration plan. The independent variables include: gender, age, marital status, monthly income, present housing tenure type, property ownership in Hong Kong, relationship with Mainland and the frequency of visiting Mainland China. In addition to the above independent variables, respondents were asked to indicate their retirement plans (retirement age, funding sources and retirement housing options), incentives to migrate to retire (choices included: property ownership, family relations, cost of living, living environment, medical facilities, government welfare benefits, etc.), perceived ideal retirement life qualities including desired amenities (sports, medical and leisure facilities etc.), desired locational qualities (green open space, convenient transport options and accessibility to urban settings etc.) and desired retirement activities (home-based leisure, elderly friendly sports, cultural activities, child care, social activities, etc.). The finding shows correlations between the used independent variables and consideration to migrate for housing options. The two independent variables indicated a possible correlation were gender and the frequency of visiting Mainland at present. When considering the increasing property prices across the border and strong social relationships, potential retirement migration is a very subjective decision that could vary from person to person. This research adds knowledge to housing research and migration study. Although the research is based in Mainland, most of the characteristics identified including better medical services, government welfare and sound urban amenities are shared qualities for all sustainable urban development and housing strategies.

Keywords : elderly migration, housing alternative, soon-to-be-old, sustainable environment

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