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June 2008
Home Truths: Understanding the Key Motives that Underlie Consumer Home Choice

Catheryn Suan Chin Khoo-Lattimore

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

10 December 2008
Abstract

This thesis aims to identify the motivating factors driving consumers home purchase decisions from the consumer's point of view. Although there is an abundance of past real estate research, dating back as far as the 1920's, the factors shaping consumers home choice have not been fully explored. Past research has tended to assume that homebuyers arrive at a decision following a logical and rational decision making process. These studies have also tended to focus on utilitarian or economic factors shaping home choice. Although past research has unquestionably added to the understanding of home purchase behaviour, the focus on utilitarian and economic factors does not explain decisions that are underpinned by deep-seated motives. The present thesis extends past research by exploring the less tangible, non-economic aspects of home choice in order to provide a fuller story of why and how people consume homes.

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the unsolicited motives underlying consumers' home choices, therefore, a qualitative technique known as ZMET was employed. Based on the notion of unconscious thoughts, ZMET uses visual images gathered and/or generated by consumers to elicit and probe the metaphors that represent their thoughts and feelings. For the present study, 14 consumers who had recently placed an offer on a home took part in the ZMET interview. The present methodology extends past property research which has predominantly taken a quantitative approach.

The findings of the study provide a rich insight into the motivations behind consumer home choice. Firstly, it reveals that the pre-purchase checklists used by many homebuyers and real estate agents are inaccurate representation of consumer home choice, and explains why this is so. Secondly, it demonstrates the influence of twenty four motives, including three central constructs (space, nature and views) on consumer home choice and highlights the fact that autobiographical memories underpins many of the motives to impact on choice. Thirdly, it provides a model mapping out the interaction between utilitarian and
hedonic motives, which evokes a network of feelings, sensations and emotions that shape consumer home choice. In doing so, the research provides theoretical insight into the link between the rational information-processing model and the experiential view of hedonic consumption in home purchases. This study has shown that a specific set of utilitarian and deep-seated hedonic factors interrelate to culminate upon one's home choice. The findings in this study maintain that while utilitarian factors are significant determinants of home choice, in themselves, they do not always tell the whole story.

This new knowledge of how and why homebuyers chose what they did is valuable to practitioners in predicting accurate property demands and value. Real estate agents can sell more effectively by matching a property to a homebuyer's hedonic needs. The information in this study also helps homebuyers understand that their home choice is guided by internal images and deep-seated motives derived from many years of past experience but more importantly, they can decide if these motives justify the price they pay for the property. Finally, the model gives future researchers a new framework to access meanings necessary for understanding homebuyer choice and allows a closer examination of the mechanics of these influences on the housing market and its demands.
Declaration

The following book chapters, journal publications and conference papers have been presented on the research contained in this thesis:

**Book and Book Chapters**


**Refereed Journal Articles**


**Refereed Conference Proceedings and Presentations**


**Industry Reports**


The work in this thesis has also gained media attention. The researcher was interviewed on the findings of this thesis in “Getting to the Heart of the Matter: Childhood Memories Influence Choice” in *Otago Daily Times*, 18 April 2008, p. 8 by Stevens, S (2008).
Acknowledgements

This thesis has been the result of many things and many people - starting with the support from the academic supervisors and peers, comments from fellow property investors, constructive reports from journal reviewers, pointers from conference discussants, assistance from local Dunedin businesses and willingness of the respondents.

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I am very thankful to the local Dunedin businesses that have helped me in gaining access to the participants in this study. Thank you too, to all the homebuyers who voluntarily and anonymously gave their time. Without their support I would not have had the opportunity to gain such invaluable insights. My gratitude is also extended to Professor Gerald Zaltman and his associate at Olson Zaltman Associates in Boston. Their guidance has provided the much needed help to carry out the interview. To Professor Morris Holbrook and all my colloquium discussants, I do appreciate the words of wisdom – they have served as a constant reassurance that my small study has a contribution to make to the field.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank all my fellow PhD colleagues at the Department of Marketing who made it a convivial place to work – they have helped me with their friendship. Specifically, I thank a dear friend, Sue Callahan, who helped me crawled my way through the struggles while developing this thesis.
Finally, I would like to thank my parents and family for always believing in me and I cannot end without thanking my husband, Lyndon for his endless love, patience and company. Throughout the years of completing this thesis, we have built our property “empire”, gotten engaged, then married, toured half the world and had our gorgeous baby Remmus. Looking back, it has been a whirlwind experience and although I have gained so much from the PhD, I have regrettably promised Lyndon I won’t be doing one again...not in the near future anyway.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

“Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.”

John Howard Payne (1791 – 1852)

For many people, the purchase of a residential home is one of the most important and difficult decisions that they will ever make, fraught with high financial risk, substantial physical disruption and much emotional investment. The search for the perfect home is complicated because each residential unit is characterised by a combination of unique attributes including its neighbourhood, transport and community amenities, structural design and its accessibility to work, schools, leisure and entertainment. The complex characteristics of each property, coupled with individuals’ unique personal preferences, budget constraints and time availability means buying a home is not an easy task. Despite the complicated decision making process surrounding buying a new home, very little is known about the non-financial factors that influence consumers’ home choice decisions. The present research addresses this pertinent research gap and by doing so will advance knowledge within the fields of real estate and consumer behaviour.

Housing choice has been and still is a focus of many housing research projects. Due to the financial nature of real estate, however, most academic study has been limited to neoclassical economics with a primary focus on finance. For instance, real estate research has tended to focus on figures and numbers with an emphasis on appraisals (Cho & Megbolugbe 1996; Gallimore 2002; Parnham & Rispin 2001) valuations (Adair, Berry & McGreal
French & Wiseman 2003; Rossini 1997; Theriault et al. 2003; Watkins 1999), market analysis (Carn 2001; Roulac 2000), investment analysis (Din, Hoesli & Bender 2001; Greer & Kolbe 2003; Quan & Quigley 1989) and brokerage studies (Jud 1983; Wu & Colwell 1986).

Only recently has there been an interest in understanding the behaviour of real estate decision makers from a consumer behaviour perspective (Black et al. 2003; D'Arcy & Kaleva 2003; Gibler & Nelson 2003) with the emphasis being placed on housing preferences and housing choices (Bates & Kane 2003; Black & Diaz 1996; Crews & Dyhrberg 2004; DTZ 2005; Findsen 2005; Jameson 2004; Reed & Conisbee 2005; Susilawati 2001; Watkins 2005).

With the exception of Coolen and van Montfort (2001), these studies have been based on choice processes from comprehensive models of complex consumer decision making where consumer behavior is considered to be a rational process. Research from a marketing perspective, however, shows that purchases are sometimes subconscious, emotional and intuitive (Alien 2002; Olshavsky & Granbois 1979; Rook 1987). However, these theories have not yet been applied to the consumption of homes.

Despite extensive research in the property discipline, our understanding of what drives consumers' decisions is still limited. There has been little empirical research on the non-financial, non-economic and less tangible factors that motivate a consumer’s home choice. Consumer research has shown that a non-deliberate purchasing behaviour does happen even for very expensive products (Allen 2002). Anecdotal evidence has also suggested that the choice for a home can be significantly influenced by an intuitive “This is it!” experience – the sudden realisation that the search is over, that the house they have been looking for has been found. The present research contributes to the understanding that the functional attributes of a property, although important, do not solely drive consumers' home-buying behaviour. The findings give insight into the key motives that underlie a homebuyer's choice and help to bridge the gap between economic and non-
economic reasons for a specific home choice. This new knowledge of how and why homebuyers choose what they did is valuable for predicting property demands and value, and for shaping future research.

This thesis applies an alternative methodological approach to examining consumer real estate behaviour namely the ZMET method. The ZMET method employed in the current research allowed respondents to express themselves in their own language, revealing the deep-seated motives for their respective home choices and hence providing explanations for consumer home choice — explanations that until now have not been empirically investigated. Just as each house is unique, each home buyer is an individual and has their own combination of motivations which shape their home choice. This thesis will explore the different motivations and attempt to conceptualise the outlining factors into a model that underlie consumer home choice. It will be argued that a research method such as ZMET captures the richness of a home buyer’s choice experience and offers insights into deep-seated motivation for a particular home choice, from the consumer’s own voice.

It is also important to pursue research from the consumer perspective for a number of practical reasons. This is particularly so for a country like New Zealand where 68% of its population goes through the experience of purchasing a residential property (DTZ 2005). An understanding of the factors influencing home choice will provide consumers with new knowledge and perhaps a form of heuristics that will help minimise the tribulation of finding the perfect home. From a managerial perspective, real estate management and property marketers at all levels devote considerable resources to promoting their housing stock. This thesis will further practitioners’ understanding of the most compelling reasons for why people choose to buy a particular home, given all other alternatives. This information will benefit key stakeholders in developing more effective promotional strategies when marketing a residential property.
1.2 Justification for the Research

It is imperative to understand the factors shaping consumers’ home choices within New Zealand because its residential real estate market is the largest investment asset class in the country (DTZ 2004). With a total market value of between NZ$450 and NZ$500 billion, it came as no surprise when Housing New Zealand Corporation launched the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand (CHRANZ) in August 2003 to encourage housing research that will provide an evidence base for policies and practices that meet New Zealand’s housing needs (Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d.).

However, despite extensive studies in residential real estate across a range of disciplines including finance, economics, architecture, geography and even marketing, there is still limited knowledge regarding why and how people consume residential homes. That is, we know very little about what motivates people to put their money down for one house over all other alternatives. Researchers in finance and economics have predominantly been interested in the relationship between house prices and the physical attributes of a house whereas property studies in architecture and geography have looked into the impact of environmental attributes on house prices. In consumer research, studies have been carried out mainly to investigate the correlation between housing attributes and housing preferences. While all have undoubtedly contributed to the development of residential real estate as an academic area of study, the tendency of past research to focus on the physical attributes of the properties only accounts for the economic and rational approach to studying consumer housing choice. These perspectives have not yet been able to explain the many experiences of consumer home choice. For example, residential real estate agents are often heard to say, “Buyers are liars.” A statement such as this is the result of practitioners’ observations that homebuyers often ask to be shown properties meeting
specific economic and physical criteria such as the size of the property, the number of bedrooms, the location, the condition and the age of the property and yet when they do buy, more often than not, they end up buying a house that does not fulfil the criteria in the checklists. This phenomenon has left many real estate marketers perplexed. To understand what influences consumers home choice decisions above and beyond meeting a list of economic and physical characteristics, research needs to determine what other factors motivate consumer’s home choice decisions. Factors influencing homebuyers decisions will be explored in the current thesis by interviewing homebuyers about their home-buying experiences.

Property research from an economic and finance perspective, cannot fully explain what causes the “This is it!” feeling for homebuyers. Moreover, economic motivations cannot distinguish consumer’s choices between properties with very similar economic criteria (similar price range, similar size and age, same location). How do consumers, after examining a series of similar alternatives using their criteria of selection, arrive at a conclusion as to which to buy? Why did they buy what they bought? Why this house and not another? As a property investor, the researcher has been repeatedly exposed to declarations from other property investors that homebuyers do not buy rationally (Barrymore & Brammal 2006; De Roos & Somers 2000; Newland 2002). Rather, it is the observation of property investors that people tend to buy emotionally hence property investors are often advised to “stage” a property, to “dress it up” with shiny doorknobs, fresh paint, designer-looking furniture, abstract paintings and fresh flowers. Whether or not this strategy is effective in influencing housing choice has received little academic research. More often than not, an emotional home purchase could reflect an instant processing of many factors that may have influenced that choice. The question then is what are the factors that cause people to fall in love with or feel a certain attachment with a particular residence? Do the factors interact with one another in determining a buyer’s decision. If so, what are their relationships with one another? This thesis aims to develop a model to
explain consumer motivations for home choice. This model is hoped to help real estate practitioners understand buyer motivations when entering the market to purchase a home. The model will also assist future homebuyers in gaining understanding and awareness of the factors that influence their decision – this knowledge may help decrease cognitive post-purchase dissonance hence resulting in better satisfaction of the choices consumers make.

There is currently a call for property researchers to seek answers to critical questions such as, "what motivates people to be at this space rather than at other spaces and why do people choose to live where they do" (Roulac 2002, p. 14); to consider all aspects of non-financial decision factors" and to "examine the human influences that real estate consumers have on real estate demand" (Gibler & Nelson 2003, p.63). This thesis begins to address these calls by investigating the non-calculative, non-economic and less tangible motives – also referred to by the literature as hedonic motives - that determine a particular home choice for buyers.

The present thesis also employs a rich qualitative methodology that will enhance findings from previous property research which has tended to rely on stated or revealed preferences. Stated preference approach is based on intended choices or hypothetical choices while revealed preference uses observed market choices in secondary data to estimate their values for goods and services. While not discounting the importance of the findings from these studies, both stated and revealed preference approaches are limited in that they do not allow for a deeper understanding of the motives that determine consumer home choice. Stated preference does not measure actual or real choice while revealed preference limits the researcher from going beyond mere descriptions of any given phenomenon. The limitations are caused, in part by the length of time from purchase to survey, by which time respondents may not recall their home buying decision-making process, nor their initial search criteria. It is argued that research in consumer housing
choice must first be based on real homebuyers with actual purchases. Only then can the meanings embodied in the words of the people under study be captured fresh to avoid meanings that may be lost by memory or cognitive dissonance. It is considered that this will deepen understanding of the "lived" or real experience of the people under study (Thompson, Locander & Pollio 1990).

After considering recent acknowledgement in the real estate literature of the limitations of applying quantitative methods based on utilitarian attributes to examine stated and revealed preferences, this study uses The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Method (or more popularly known as ZMET) to investigate the issue at hand. ZMET is a hybrid qualitative research method that combines a series of other techniques such as the projective test, photography, Kelly Repertory Grid, means end chain and laddering. The current methodology fits in with the recent increase in support for qualitative approaches in real estate research to allow for a closer observation and deeper understanding of the buying behaviour of home purchasers (Levy & Lee 2006). Furthermore, given the utility of this research procedure as a commanding tool to surface relevant constructs in consumer decision-making, it is surprising that there have been very few studies applying qualitative techniques to residential real estate.

1.3 Research Question
The aims of this thesis are two fold: 1) to investigate the motives that influence consumer home choice behaviour and 2) to evaluate the relationships between these motives on choice.

The primary question guiding this thesis is:-

What are the motives underlying a consumer’s home choice, and how do hedonic factors, if any, impact on their choice?
To assist in answering this research question a number of specific research objectives were identified. These are set out below:

i. To evaluate past and current approaches to the study of consumer home choice in real estate research;

ii. To examine and critique the relevant marketing literature relating to motives behind consumer choice;

iii. To establish and apply an appropriate methodology to uncover motives influencing consumer home choice;

iv. To produce a theoretical model of the motives behind consumer home choice;

v. To evaluate the implications of these motives on the residential real estate market.

1.4 Research Methodology

As already mentioned, research into behavioural real estate has traditionally taken a quantitative and/or deductive approach. There has clearly been a dominance of positivism and the employment of quantitative methods (Black et al. 2003; Clapham 2002; Diaz III & Hansz 2007; Levy & Henry 2003). This is primarily because real estate has had a financial and economic heritage. The insights from this type of research are limited in nature, because they only provide a snapshot description of consumer behaviour. Additionally, research employing quantitative methodologies within housing choice research has tended to consider only the utilitarian aspects of consumption (see Chapter Three for reviews and critiques of current approaches used in the study of motivation in residential real estate). The growing sociological-based qualitative and interpretive methodologies have already facilitated much consumer research to date and would be instrumental in shedding light on the understanding of consumer behaviour in real estate.

Property researchers have acknowledged the need to consider the important influence of human behaviour in real estate research (D'Arcy & Kaleva 2003;
Gibler & Nelson 2003; Levy, Murphy & Lee 2008; Winstanley, Thorns & Perkins 2003). This thesis is in support of such views and believes that in order to understand the behavioural aspects of consumers in the real estate market, research needs to shift away from the confirmation of probabilistic laws and single empirical accounts of reality. Rather, research needs to move towards understanding and interpreting how people create and maintain meanings for themselves in their everyday lives. Therefore, the interpretivist paradigm is the guiding worldview and provides the ontological and epistemological foundation for this study. A more detailed discussion on ontology and epistemology is provided in section 6.2.

The primary aim of the present study is to understand the unsolicited motives underlying consumers’ home choices rather than to impose those from the literature, therefore, a humanistic perspective is taken and a naturalistic inquiry is adopted. The focus of this research is the consumer and their home-buying experience concentrating specifically on their decision-making processes and the impact of their past and present, direct and indirect experiences on their choices. The method chosen, therefore, must allow an in-depth insight into participants’ experiences within a naturalistic setting whilst also ensuring systematic data collection. In this sense, understanding is derived from information gained directly from the consumer.

The research was conducted in three main stages. The first stage was an informal interview which involves getting to know potential homebuyers, their intention to purchase and their intended purchase. Stage two involved an assignment carried out by the participants after they had placed an offer for a house. This was taken to be the consumer’s revealed and actual choice regardless of whether they were successful or not in securing the house. In this assignment, participants collected eight to twelve pictures and/or photographs that represented reasons for their home choice. Photographs are deemed to be a powerful tool for projecting subjective emotion, especially when what participants value in a home may not be a tangible, physical
attribute. Having homebuyers collect pictures that they define as relevant will yield meaningful insights and "increases the likelihood of uncovering important but previously unconsidered, customer issues" (Zaltman & Higie 1993, p.10). Stage three followed after participants had submitted their photographs and pictures to the researcher. A semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted to ascertain the reasons behind their choice, constantly referring to and comparing it with their photographs. The method used in the interview in stage three follows that of ZMET (Zaltman, 1997), which focuses on exploring the participants' thoughts and feelings about their home choice. The research design, including the interview process, is described in detail in Chapter Six.

1.5 Research Context

In this thesis, the context is New Zealand where almost three quarters of the population are home owners. Home ownership is perceived by most New Zealanders as the normal tenure. Acquiring one's own home is a rite of passage, taken for granted, and "anybody who reaches 40 without buying a house is decidedly suspect, not fully adult" (McLeod 1989, p. 11). In such a context, an understanding of the motives that drive people to their home choice is therefore significant.

The process of buying a home in New Zealand is different from those in other countries where purchasers often make appointments with real estate agents to view the property privately. In New Zealand, intending buyers usually start with attending an "open home". Anyone is welcome to look around an "open house" without making an appointment first. For many, visiting open homes is a great way to learn about the property market in an area. When one eventually finds the dream house, an offer for the property will be made. Often, a New Zealand property is offered at a fixed asking price and an offer is usually made through a real-estate agent. The process usually involves offer and counter offer until an agreement is arrived at between the seller and
purchaser. Another popular way of selling houses in New Zealand is by auction. More often, auctions are used when sellers think buyers will bid the price up. A person who buys at an auction will need to have funds available immediately for settlement. Sometimes, purchasers buy a document known as the LIM report prior to completing a purchase. LIM (Land Information Memorandum) is available for purchase from local city councils and contains information about a house such as the property's zoning, boundaries, building consents, sewerage drains, storm water and rates owing. Purchasing a home in New Zealand is a fairly quick process where one is able to move in within a few weeks or days after an offer is accepted.

In a more specific context, the present research has been undertaken in Dunedin, situated in the southeast coast of the South Island. Dunedin was chosen for two main reasons, the first is attributed to role of the researcher in this study, who resides and invests in residential properties in Dunedin. It was important that the study be carried out in an area where the researcher has in-depth knowledge of the market (see section 6.4.1). In fact, Gummesson (2000) believed that the researcher's experience is at times a prerequisite to the research. The second reason was because Dunedin has a wide variety of property types on offer, with a strong investment market, and tends to follow national trends in real estate purchase (REINZ 2006).

The Dunedin real estate market will be detailed in section 6.4.2, but a point worth mentioning about Dunedin here is that it is one of the cloudiest centres in the country, recording approximately 1650 hours of bright sunshine per annum (Lambert & Palenski 1984). This compares poorly to other northern cities such as Blenheim, Wellington, Auckland and Tauranga which receive up to 2,500 hours of sunshine a year. This, coupled with Dunedin's reputation for old and poorly-insulated houses have caused many to regard Dunedin as a cold and damp city. Many discerning home buyers look for a "sunny house", and phrases such as "sun-trapped", "sunny", "sun room", "warm", "logburner" and "heatpump" appear repeatedly in advertisements selling
properties. The climatic conditions of Dunedin may have implications for the study as the choice of properties may be underpinned by factors associated to Dunedin's weather.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

The present thesis makes a significant contribution by examining actual motivations that underlie choices that real homebuyers make, with a focus on capturing the immediacy of their experience.

The second chapter begins with a review of the literature related to the context of the research problem – that of residential real estate. After discussing the nature of property research, four major criticisms of previous research are presented as a prelude to suggesting that behavioural and humanistic factors have been excluded from the property literature.

Chapter Three attempts to fill the gaps within property research by looking into studies from the field of psychology, sociology, geography and marketing to provide some insights into this phenomenon. The applications of theories from these various disciplines are analysed by contrasting them with literature from real estate. The review in Chapter Three suggests that the reasons people buy homes are complex, multi-faceted and attributed to factors that are less tangible and not calculative.

Chapter Four therefore considers the definition of motives versus motivation; the two different levels of motives (motivations for why people buy and motivations for what people buy); the bipolarity of motives (utilitarian versus hedonic); and the methodologies used for uncovering motives (quantitative and qualitative). It must be highlighted, however, that the purpose of the literature review in Chapter Four was not to direct the researcher to form an initial opinion about why people bought what they did. Rather, it serves to
establish the broad context for this thesis and provide a theoretical framework for this study.

Chapter Five is a summary of the entire literature review. It presents an overview of the literature review findings and highlights the apparent gaps in the literature that give rise to this study. This chapter proposes that there is a need to study consumer motives in residential real estate choices as expressed by the homebuyers themselves. Chapter Five concludes by outlining the research objectives.

Chapter Six begins by describing the epistemology and theoretical perspective methodology adopted by the researcher in this study. It then describes the methodology employed to achieve the objectives of this research, including a review of ZMET which is an elicitation technique using photographs. Data collection procedures and the data analysis undertaken are also outlined.

Details of the results obtained, together with a discussion on the detailed meaning of those findings are presented in Chapter Seven. An empirical model that explains consumers' motives for residential home choice is also presented in this chapter. The model comprises twenty four key motives for consumer home choice. Three central themes were identified as Space, Views and Nature and linked to an overall end goal – the respondents' autobiographical memories. Ultimately, it is demonstrated that the homebuyers' motives were made up of both utilitarian and hedonic constructs that interact with one another in determining the home choice. The discussion sets the findings in the wider context of existing housing choice and the motivation literature.

Chapter Eight summarises the thesis and highlights the theoretical contributions of this study to consumer research and real estate research. Attention is also drawn to practical implications for both buyers and sellers in
the real estate market. The chapter also reflects on the merits of capturing the immediacy of actual homebuyer's motives and the value of ZMET as a research method. The thesis concludes with a note on the limitations of the research and suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

Residential Real Estate and Property Research

2.1 Introduction to Residential Real Estate

"Housing is a complex multi-faceted aspect of our society. This arises as housing plays many roles from that of shelter to an indicator of social position."

(Smith 1970, p. 1)

Residential real estate or housing is an essential human need and has a significant influence on people’s welfare, wellbeing and quality of life (Howard, Solomom & Woodley 2007). Houses and homes are a key setting which shape and develop people (Perkins & Thorns 1999) and are therefore, important rudiments of everyday life. People buy residential properties for many varied reasons - apart from its popular investment value, a house is also purchased for its intrinsic values. In fact, a house can be viewed as part of the extended self, an object that helps to shape an identity and to portray that identity to the world (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1999).

This chapter outlines the residential real estate scenario in New Zealand. The importance of the residential property market to the country is highlighted, forming the context for a study examining the consumption of homes in New Zealand. Following this, an analysis of residential real estate research from the past to the current is presented. The history and development of property research will be discussed, which explains why much of the literature in this area has been written by academics in the field of finance and economics and has focused on the investment and financial implications of property ownership.
Section 2.5 highlights the current gaps in real estate research and examines openings for potential research. The review elucidates important unresolved issues that exist within the literature. Finally, a summary of the literature review is provided in section 2.5., linking real estate consumption to the following chapters on motivation.

2.2 Residential Real Estate in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the residential real estate market is currently going through a slump with high interest rates and easing house prices. In April 2008 the average sales figure had fallen by 45.5% from April 2007 while the national median sales price also decreased from $349,000 in April 2007 to $345,000 in April 2008. This slump, however, only affected certain areas of the country. Among the twelve real estate districts examined, only five were found to experience price falls whilst the other seven saw their median price increase (REINZ 12 May 2008).

The present study was conducted in 2006, during which time the residential real estate market was highly competitive with more than 92,000 properties totalling approximately $1.2 billion sold annually (National Research Bureau, 2007). The house market was very buoyant, with a high turnover of sales. Furthermore, over the 5 year period between 2001 and 2006, the number of sales agents rose by 60% from around 10,000 agents to 16,000, coinciding with the increasing market. Property vendors also enjoyed good capital gains, as property prices rose on average 85% between 1997 and 2005, the single biggest global increase by any country covered during this time period (Gibson, 2006). With a total market value of between NZ$450 and NZ$500 billion, New Zealand's residential real estate market is still the largest investment asset class in the country and accounts for almost 50% of the total assets of the New Zealand population (de Bruin & Flint-Hartle 2003). Thus, even considering the recent slump in the market, residential real estate
is an important industry to New Zealand. Largely fuelled by the strong encouragement for home ownership by New Zealand public policy, any issue related to the industry continues to receive wide media attention.

Since the 1920s, the New Zealand government has strongly urged as many of its citizens as possible to own their own homes, as a way to integrate them into the mainstream of New Zealand social and economic life. In the 1920s and 1930s under the Coates Government for example, home ownership was seen as a defence against socialism and as a way of encouraging citizens to be more supportive of conservative values (Ferguson 1994; Thorns & Sedgwick 1997). From the 1950s to the 1970s, support for home ownership in the form of government subsidised loans and increased family benefits meant that most newly formed households seeking a place to live could buy a home. The majority of these were low cost houses supplied by group builders in new subdivisions. Hence, home for most New Zealanders has been constituted through ownership and owning one's house has been associated with positive values and seen as a secure base for the development of a household and family (Perkins & Thorns 1999). As a result, home ownership in New Zealand is one of the highest in the world, with the 2001 census showing 68% of the country's population owning their own homes (2003 Quality of Life Report 2003; DTZ 2004). Due to a number of factors, this has recently fallen to 66.9% in 2006 (DTZ 2007; Morrison 2008). The current Housing minister Maryan Street stated that the government plans to develop large-scale housing developments involving partnerships between government and the private sector to increase the amount of affordable housing being built ('News Upfront' 2008). However, home ownership rates in New Zealand are still high by international standards (Ferguson 1994) with New Zealand being placed tenth in the world (Hargreaves 2002). Furthermore, home ownership rates in New Zealand are comparable to those in other developed countries. For instance, the United States stood at 68.9% in 2005 ('Housing Vacancies and Home Ownership' 2008) and Australia at 69.8% in its 2006 Census (Year Book Australia 2008:...
Home Owners and Renters 2008). The importance placed on home ownership in New Zealand has lead to home ownership meaning more than just secure shelter or sensible investment. In fact, “becoming a home owner is a rite of passage and anybody who reaches 40 without buying a house is decidedly not fully adult” (McLeod 1989, p. 11).

Given that residential real estate is the biggest investment asset class in the country, it is not surprising that Housing New Zealand Corporation launched the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand (CHRANZ) in August 2003 to invest in and promote housing research that will provide an evidence base for strategy implementations that meet New Zealand’s housing requirements (Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d.). The focus of research for CHRANZ remains largely positivistic, with the majority of its studies reporting findings in the forms of statistics and graphs. Reasons for this can be traced back to the roots of real estate research.

2.3 History of Real Estate Research
This section summarises past research and reveals what has already been learned throughout the historical evolution of real estate research. This review leads to the identification of new areas for further study.

2.3.1 Economic Roots
The history of real estate research has evolved from land economics followed by urban planning and architecture and finally, finance (Weiss 1989a). Weiss (1989b) outlines the development of real estate research from its early beginnings and traces its roots to the early 1920s, when the Institute for Research in Land Economics (IRLE) and Public Utilities was founded by world-famous economist Richard T. Ely (Weiss 1989a). IRLE was responsible for studying the economic aspects of housing policy but as rapid real estate and urbanisation began to take place, IRLE found more
opportunities for research. In addition to analysing the interplay of supply and demand factors in land markets and the impacts of population growth on housing supply, researchers at IRLE quickly branched out to studying the spatial arrangement of land uses and the public and private regulation of land utilisation (Weimer 1984). As a result, early economic models and the supply and demand theory were developed to explain the cyclical performance of the real estate economy. Statistical data were popular outputs in real estate studies measuring the impact and volume of transactions and property values (Grissom & Liu 1994).

IRLE first published the results of their findings in 1925 in their own journal, The Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics and is known today as Land Economics. A study attempting to rank real estate research journals (Diaz, Black & Rabianski 1996) documented eight major academic journals and Land Economics was rated favourably by real estate academics.

2.3.2 The Development into Finance

IRLE undertook a project for the US Bureau of Census in 1923 and followed that by producing a report entitled, “Mortgages on Homes” (Weiss 1989a). The study found a sharp rise in the percentage of owned homes that were mortgaged, rising from 27.7% in 1890 to 39.7% in 1920. The ratio of debt to total home value had also risen and more people were borrowing money to buy homes (Gries 1924). In his foreword to the report, Richard Ely argued for the need for research into mortgage debt on urban real estate (Weiss 1989b). He identified housing finance and the role of financial institutions in mortgage lending as a major area for academic and policy research.

An extension of this study resulted in another report in the same year (1923) entitled, “Real Estate Mortgages as Investments for Life Insurance Companies.” Analysing data on investments of 201 large life insurance companies, IRLE found that real estate mortgages yielded a better average
rate of return than corporate bonds and stocks. This report was groundbreaking: commercial banks and life insurance companies began increasing home mortgage lending while building and loans were granted tax advantages by federal and state governments. Public policy started favouring home ownership and the industry witnessed a housing boom with more than $15 billion of new mortgage lending over the decade (Weiss 1989b). Given this success, more research in real estate was conducted from and within the domain of finance.

Although ensuing research interests at IRLE grew wider to include other areas of real estate development and construction issues such as subdivisions of land, location analysis and changes in urban structure, the main focus of the IRLE was on the financing of the construction and sale of houses (Weiss 1989b). The domination that economics and finance have had in the study of real estate issues continues to persist over the years long after the studies conducted by Richard Ely and IRLE. Roulac (2000) noted that by the end of the twentieth century, a disproportionate number of real estate academics placed a primary emphasis on finance in their approach of the subject.

2.4 Real Estate Research Since the 1920s

Today, real estate research is conducted from a variety of academic departments such as geography, built environment, architecture, surveying, city and urban planning. Thus, academic research on residential real estate is abundant; however, most of the work in the area remains conceptually grounded within the fields of economics and finance.

The formal launch of the field of urban land economics in the 1920s led to advances in real estate as a discipline (Weiss 1989a) and much of the early work on residential real estate is conceptually derived from research in the area of economics. Given that real estate activities revolve around the
economic concept of supply and demand, the world of residential real estate has become a system of lending and investing, accounting and appraisal, construction and legislation. Consequently, research into real estate investment has regarded consumers as highly rational in their behaviour. Given a set of needs that needed to be satisfied, a person would go about satisfying them in a rational and logical manner. It thus sees needs in the decision making process as being matched with product attributes (Dieleman 2002; Gibler & Nelson 2003).

This economic version of the decision maker as a calculating machine is particularly seen in studies treating residential real estate as an investment. For example, studies have been undertaken to consider the return on investment on landscaping a property (Des Rosiers et al. 2002) and the impact of water views on property value (Benson et al. 1996; Benson et al. 1998; Bond, Seiler & Seiler 2002; Rodriguez & Sirmans 1994). Furthermore, residential properties have been valued based on their physical attributes (Diaz III 1999; Diaz III & Hansz 2007). A number of additional and equally important factors are, however, overlooked from this perspective, namely, intangible consumer benefits. For instance, consumer benefits such as a consumer’s perception of the status of the property, the attainment of stability and overall satisfaction are not considered when exploring real estate from an economic perspective.

Even when specifically focusing on consumers, this economic approach portrays consumers as being completely rational and utilitarian, placing value solely on the physical characteristics of real property. Other less tangible attitudinal factors shaping home choice decisions have not been examined. For example, in an examination of consumer’s home choice, Park and Lutz (1982) focused specifically on the physical attributes of a house as the basis of choice (Park & Lutz 1982). The findings of Park and Lutz have advanced our understanding of the consumer’s choice behaviour in residential real estate, however, the researchers reliance on home features such as location,
price and the number of bedrooms has meant other hedonic factors were largely unexplored. The approach by Park and Lutz is well-grounded in the early economic theory of the rational man, where maximisation of economic utility or satisfaction in decision making is considered to be rational. The economic concept of utility maximisation assumes that a house can only offer consumers its utilitarian value. This thesis disputes this singular view and argues that less tangible factors and the subjective characteristics of a property may also play a significant role when homebuyers are deciding on what to buy and are hence salient determinants of a consumer’s home choice.

The above discussion has reviewed the importance of real estate research in New Zealand. The genealogy of real estate research has illustrated explanations for why research in this field is predominantly conducted from the perspectives of finance and economics. It has also concluded that there is a lack of research into the non-financial and non-economic aspects of housing demand and preferences. The next section will explore this further through a discussion of the gaps in past and current real estate research.

2.5 Gaps in Real Estate Research

In recent years, traditional real estate research has received criticisms for its “inadequate consideration for vital issues that should be thought out” (Roulac 2002, p.5). In general, many approaches to the property discipline are constricted in focus and restricted in scope. This section now considers these criticisms and identifies the gaps in real estate research.

2.5.1 Grounded in Economics and Finance

As briefly discussed above, the study of real estate has evolved from economics and finance and has since then been dominated by statistical and persistent quantitative analysis.
The Journal of Real Estate Literature in 2007 published a list of journals surveyed in the real estate discipline (Anonymous 2007). In the 116 journals, 38 of these titles contained the word “economics”, and a further 37 contained the word “finance”, “tax”, “appraisal”, “risk”, or “assessment”. A study attempting to rank real estate research journals (Diaz, Black & Rabianski 1996) documented eight major academic journals (numbered 1 to 8 in Table 2.1). The nature of these journals according to their reported aims and scopes, is presented in Table 2.1 and illustrates the dominance of economics and finance in real estate studies. Levy and Henry (2003) added four UK journals (numbered 9 to 12 in Table 2.1) to this list in their comparative analysis of US, UK and Australian published real estate research. From the table it can be seen that the US journals tend to publish articles exclusively on statistical analysis and econometric modelling, the nature of the UK journals is also found to be entrenched in finance and economics. Most, if not all the studies in these journals are still very much based on neoclassical economics, conducted quantitatively on real estate transactions, valuations, development and more popularly investment (Gibler & Nelson 2003). Furthermore, the articles in these journals primarily focus on figures and numbers with an emphasis for appraisals, valuations, market analysis, investment analysis and brokerage studies (Black et al. 2003). Hence, much of the work in real estate and specifically in residential real estate today, still concentrates on the performance of the product rather than on people who buy the product (Gibler & Nelson 2003).

Further evidence that real estate is grounded in the field of economics was provided by the work of Webb and Albert (1995) who noted that over 85% of the full-time tenured and tenure-track real estate faculties in US colleges and universities are housed in the College of Business Departments of Finance. In addition, a study ranking real estate authors selected only academic journals that “focus on financial/economics approach to the study of real estate” (Clauretie & Daneshvary 1993, p.446). Roulac (2002) noted that real
estate research is "biased towards and reflects a narrow, even restricted interpretation of the dimensions and domain of the discipline; often reflects a limited, often culturally narrow, even parochial view of the world" (Roulac, p. 3).

In short, economics and finance have dominated much of the real estate research in the USA and the world. While such research clearly has its place, it misses a large non-economic factor – the human factor which captures consumers' attitudes, perceptions and experiences.
Table 2.1: The Nature of Published Research on Real Estate Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Journal</th>
<th>Published by</th>
<th>1st Volume</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Nature of Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Land Economics</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin Press</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>...dedicated to the study of land use, natural resources, public utilities, housing, and urban land issues...has consistently published innovative, conceptual, and empirical research of direct relevance to economists.</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Real Estate Economics</td>
<td>Blackwell Publishing on behalf of American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Real Estate Economics is the publication of the American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association. Give three examples of its articles</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Journal of Real Estate Research</td>
<td>American Real Estate Society</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>...has a special interest in research that can be useful to the business decision maker in areas such as development, finance, management, market analysis, marketing, and valuation.</td>
<td>Varied but mainly finance and economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics</td>
<td>Springer</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>...theoretical and empirical research on real estate using the paradigms and methodologies of finance and economics. Examples of this research include the working and structure of markets, the role of various institutional arrangements, the attention given mortgages and asset securitisation, risk management and valuation...</td>
<td>Finance and Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Journal of Real Estate Literature</td>
<td>American Real Estate Society</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>...includes working papers, dissertations, book reviews and articles on literature reviews on specialised topics, real estate information technology and international real estate.</td>
<td>Varied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Journal of Housing Economics</td>
<td>Elsevier</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>...the publication of economic research related to housing ...covers the broad spectrum of topics and approaches that constitute housing economics, including analysis of important public policy issues.</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.1 (cont.) Nature of Published Research on Real Estate Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nature of Research</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Journal of Regional Science</td>
<td>Blackwell Publishing</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>...publishes original analytical research at the intersection of economics and quantitative geography</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Journal of Urban Economics</td>
<td>Elsevier</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>...publication of research papers in the rapidly expanding field of urban economics... on a wide range of topics and employing a wide range of approaches to urban economics</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Journal of Property Investment and Finance</td>
<td>Emerald</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>...ideas relating to property valuation and investment, property management and decision making in the commercial property market.</td>
<td>Economics and Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Journal of Property Research</td>
<td>Routledge</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>...publishes papers in property investment and finance, and in land development.</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5.2 Rational Choice Theory

Consumer studies in real estate have been “theoretically underpinned by the rational man construct” (Diaz III 1999, p.327) based on the assumption that home choices are always preceded by lengthy decision making and an intense information search stage (Adair, Berry & McGreal 1998; Baryla, Zumpano & Elder 2000; Bates & Kane 2003; Black & Diaz 1996; Crews & Dyhrberg 2004; Dennis 2006; DTZ 2005; Jameson 2004; Levy & Lee 2000). The rational choice theory views the consumer as a logical, information processor. This approach is also known as the information-processing model and regards the consumer as a rational thinker who solves problems using logical flow models to make purchasing decisions. The perspective that consumers rationally consider their options is not surprising given the financial and economic nature of real estate properties. A residential home purchase is considered high involvement as it is likely to involve decisions that are expensive, bought infrequently, risky, or highly expressive (Asch & Wolfe 2001; Baryla, Zumpano & Elder 2000; Findsen 2005). The information processing model has become so omnipresent in real estate research that many researchers may be oblivious of its pervasiveness.

Some research has, however, inadvertently touched on the notion that house purchases can also be driven by emotional motives. One such example is a recent study by Findsen (2005) who investigated decision making processes of first homebuyers in New Zealand. Although the research concluded that choice in home ownership involved many stages of separate purchase decisions, there is also an evocation that some respondents were flexible in their search methods and impulsive in the choices they made. This important finding was not elaborated on or highlighted in the research. However, it alluded to the possibility of the respondents experiencing an emotional “This is it!” moment and warrants further investigation. Knowledge of the reasons why the respondents were impulsive in their home choice would advance our understanding on consumer home choice. However, there appears to have been no attempt to investigate the factors underlying their impulsive behaviour.
A further example where non-calculative consumer behaviours were alluded to is a 2007 report published by the New Zealand National Research Bureau to measure consumers’ attitudes and behaviour in their purchase of residential property. In this study, data from face-to-face interviews with buyers and sellers was used to analyse how different consumers arrive at their decision. The study sought answers to numerous questions such as the type of attributes mentioned in advertising content and the home features sought after by buyers. Although the study reported mainly utilitarian attributes including price, garaging, location of facilities and section size, other less tangible factors such as views, private section and quiet street were mentioned by the respondents in the study. All findings were visually represented by graphs hence no further elaboration or exploration was made on what might be vital, emotional factors that could have influenced the consumer’s choice. The argument portrayed in this thesis is that individual differences cannot be fully explained through an examination of charts and percentages; that it is also important to understand other unique individual differences and motivations that might have shaped their choice to buy. New knowledge of why people want the things they do will provide new insights for theory and practical applications.

Clapham (2002) sums up the criticisms of housing studies. He is critical of the fact that real estate researchers “have assumed that homebuyers are always rational and instrumental in their approach to housing decisions and that there is little empirical work to investigate and attempt to understand how different households perceive and react to the housing context facing them” (Clapham 2002, p. 59). This knowledge is important as it would facilitate the identification of a number of important dimensions which might be of concern to buyers. Homebuyers with such information would be more aware of their decision-making process and the influences that determine their choices. This information may also be instrumental in resolving issues relating to post-purchase dissonance.
Despite the overwhelming focus on the tangible factors influencing housing choice and the dearth of research looking at less tangible factors, there has only recently been acknowledgement within the discipline of real estate that the economic models (such as that of information-processing) used to explain housing prices and housing demand are somewhat lacking (Bramley, Leishman & Watkins 2008). Bramley et al suggest that even the most plausible economic models have a propensity to be, "not so precisely fitting or consistent" (p.207) as to answer all the relevant questions. They recognise that what "the models fail to explain may be what other research approaches can begin to illuminate" (p. 208). Other recent studies also concluded with the notion that some questions are sometimes more appropriately addressed by means of different conceptual frameworks (Watkins 2008).

2.5.3 The Positivist Approach
Real estate research has tended to be conducted from a positivist framework. Following a review of published real estate research, Levy and Henry (2003) concluded that positivism remains as the dominant paradigm. As discussed in section 2.5.1., the study comparing the research methods and methodologies of real estate journal articles found that US journals tend to publish articles exclusively from a positivist standpoint and favour econometric modelling and other forms of quantitative statistical analysis. Meanwhile, UK and Australian journals although containing a wider range of analysis, also tend to publish articles from a positivist perspective (Levy & Henry 2003). This dominance of positivism in real estate research is no doubt attributable to its roots in economics and finance. However, it may also be partly due to the fact that journals are more likely to accept research from a quantitative rather than a qualitative perspective and therefore lean towards the positivism. Concern for the over-emphasised positivist approach and use of quantitative methods is reiterated by Dieleman (2002) when he applauded attempts at developing new ways of looking at the housing field because he believed that this can potentially shed new and fresh perspectives on what housing is and means to people.
Of late, there has been acknowledgement of the limitations of quantitative research. An important article was published in 2002 by David Clapham highlighting the methodological problems in housing research. In it, he noted that "all of the approaches are positivist in that they assume the existence of a world of social facts to be uncovered by researchers using quantitative and empirical research methods. The housing field is portrayed as an objective reality, which is perceived in uniform ways by the participants in it and is not contentious" (Clapham 2002, p59). This claim has been echoed more recently by other researchers in the same field (Black et al. 2003; Diaz III & Hansz 2007; Levy & Henry 2003; Levy & Lee 2006).

2.5.4 The Absence of the Consumer's Voice

Given the dominance of the positivist paradigm, Gibler and Nelson (2003) noted that, "most real estate educators continue to approach the market from a production orientation rather than a consumer marketing orientation." They further observed that, "analysts stratify real estate markets by property types that are defined by physical construction rather than consumer benefits" (Gibler & Nelson 2003, p.63). Although quantitative methods such as surveys, questionnaires and secondary data can be analysed statistically to generate rigorous and scientific data, positivist techniques may not allow for the consumers' views and opinions to be heard to a great extent. These techniques do not take into account the previous experience of the consumers and the interactions they have with their world that will impact on their real estate choices. Yet, as will be discussed in the following chapter, these are important factors about the consumers that researchers should seek to understand.

Further discussion based on actual empirical research on the importance of including the consumer's voice in real estate research will be presented in Chapter Four but for now, it is suffice to know that there is currently a call for real estate researchers to find new ways of looking at the housing field,
because there is a lack of focus on the voice of the home buyer (Black et al. 2003). Furthermore, there has recently been an increased interest to understand the behaviour of real estate decision makers from a consumer marketing perspective (D'Arcy & Kaleva 2003; Levy, Murphy & Lee 2008; Winstanley, Thorns & Perkins 2003). Current literature sees property researchers being encouraged to “examine the human influences that real estate consumers have on real estate demand” (Gibler & Nelson 2003, p.63).

2.6 The Recent Past

Thus far, this chapter has considered the main focus and direction of research in real estate literature since its early beginnings. It has clearly demonstrated that real estate researchers have taken an economic and financial approach to their studies and that there appears to have been little work examining consumer influence in real estate issues. In 1999 Julian Diaz III published an article which introduced a new perspective on the study of real estate (Diaz III 1999). He proposed that economic activity comprises human behaviour and called attention to the necessity to view and understand decision-making behaviour within property activity.

As other authors followed, Diaz’s approach was labelled “behavioural real estate” research. The key distinction between this approach to research and the traditional approach was that Diaz recognised that human behaviour is elementary to property. Roulac (2002) concurred with Diaz and suggested that researchers seek answers to critical questions such as, “What do people want, what factors influence decisions, what motivates people to be at this space rather than at other spaces, why do people choose to live where they do?” (Roulac 2002, p.14). Gibler and Nelson (2000) added to this suggestion and called for the first time, for real estate researchers to incorporate the study of consumer behaviour with the economic approach in real estate, particularly when studying residential real estate.
One of the most recent responses to this call is a publication of a special issue in 2008 by Housing Studies, an academic journal "perceived to be a top-ranked interdisciplinary academic journal... which constitutes the core terrain for property academics" (Levy & Henry 2003, p. 49). The special issue on the microstructures of housing markets brings to light a persistent theme that runs through almost every paper in the issue – that emotional and passionate factors affect the markets just as much as rational and economic ones do. Prior to this special issue, there was little acknowledgement in the literature on the role of emotion as an underlying motivation for housing choices. The less tangible facets of the consumption experience appear to have received scant or little attention within real estate research even though this affective component points strongly to the motives for home choices.

2.7 Conclusion
This chapter began by outlining the importance of home ownership to New Zealanders, the significance of the residential real estate market in New Zealand, and the need for research in residential real estate. An examination of the origins of real estate research found that its roots can be traced to economics and finance, hence the prevailing nature of positivistic research on residential real estate studies. The availability of a multitude of real estate journals are evidence that literature published on residential real estate is extensive. However, despite the growing acknowledgment that further knowledge of real estate consumers and their behaviour will lead to a better understanding of decision-makers' actions in the real estate market, a statistical financial focus still overrides academic thought. The limitations of real estate studies which have assumed that consumers are information processors were highlighted for the first time by Julian Diaz Ill in 1999. The literature reviewed in this chapter has addressed the first research objective of this thesis, to evaluate past and current approaches to the study of consumer behaviour in real estate research.
The review also found that recently there have been more and more calls for property academics to reconsider the information processing model and examine human influence in real estate issues. Specifically, the publication of a special issue on the microstructures of housing markets has drawn attention to non-economic motives such as consumer emotion and passion and the roles they play in an individual’s consumption behaviour and experience. Prior to the publication of this special issue, the focus on the subjective nature of consumer motivation and experience had rarely been discussed in real estate studies - the recognition of such a rarity in recent real estate literature has provided the key aim for this research study. In order to understand the consumers and their experience, the following chapter reviews the literature on the subjective nature of consumption and contrasts this with the dominant economic perspective.
CHAPTER THREE

Head and Heart: Contrasting Perspectives on Consumer Choice

3.1 Introduction

"Special homes and intense feelings often go together."

Bruce MacDonald (2007)

The review in the previous chapter demonstrated that there is a scarcity of knowledge on the non-economic aspects of consumer choice in real estate studies. There is, however, an abundance of real estate studies underpinned by the rational choice theory. Although illuminating, these studies have not been able to provide explanations for why homebuyers sometimes behave illogically - why people fall in love with a property, why homebuyers decide on a purchase after only the first viewing and why consumers pay more than what a property is worth. As suggested in the preceding chapter, real estate academics need to bring together economics and consumer behaviour to begin to answer these questions.

To provide a context in which to understand homebuyers less rational behaviour, this chapter focuses on the consumer and the antecedents of consumer behaviour. It compares the information processing model traditionally adopted by property academics and the experiential view, a relatively new perspective in the study of real estate. The experiential view proposes that an understanding of the subjective factors of human behaviour will necessitate an understanding of consumer choice within any economic activity. Literature pertaining to the experiential aspects of consumption provides very useful
insights into the affective aspects of consumer choice which may be applied to a home buying context.

To provide an insight into experiential research, the few studies relating to the experiential consumption of homes from disciplines such as psychology, sociology and consumer research will be assessed. An analysis of this literature allows for a fuller understanding of the complexities of a home purchase and the importance of including consumer experience when researching property-related issues. Finally, section 3.4 provides a summary of the chapter.

3.2 The Information Processing Model

Like real estate studies, theoretical models of how consumers make purchase decisions have evolved from the economic paradigm. Early models such as the information processing model were developed to explain consumer choice in terms of economic calculations such as demand theory and utility theory. Over the years, scholars in consumer behaviour have been able to refine, develop and reinvent new models and theories by studying the history of consumer behaviour. However, within real estate, this information processing model still remains significantly influential today.

The model views consumers as cognitive problem-solvers who usually assume both a deliberate search for information and a cognitive response to search and choice (Bettman 1970 1979). It is characterised by a dominance of concepts, theories and models in economics and finance. In this model, the consumer goes through five stages of decision-making: need recognition, information search, evaluation and selection of alternatives, decision implementation (the choice itself), and post-purchase evaluation (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1990; Howard & Sheth 1969; Lawson et al. 1996; Nicosia 1966). Figure 3.1 illustrates this model.
The starting point in the purchase process occurs when the consumer recognises the need for an item in order to solve a problem. This stage is seen as a precursor to the second stage of information search and both are related only in their chronological existence in the decision-making process. Once a problem or a need is identified, the decision-making model stipulates that consumers start searching for information with which to solve the problem or need. Studies from normative consumer research have concluded among others, that the higher the price, the greater the propensity there is to search (Punj & Staelin 1983); that the more uncertain consumers are about the product, the more information they search (Urbany, Dickson & Wilkie 1989) and that highly involved consumers were found to search more information before they bought, to process relevant information in greater detail and to use more criteria in their buying decisions than other consumers (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy 1990). After evaluating alternative products that emerge from the information search, the next stage of the consumer decision process is to consider, compare and contrast a product’s attributes. Attributes such as price, reliability, quantity and size are compared and given weight according to their importance to the consumer with the objective of gaining the best benefits that
they are looking for. The choice stage is where the consumer actually makes a purchase. From the flow of the decision-making process model, this act of purchase is a cognitive effort based on extensive information search and information processing in the preceding stages. After a choice is made, consumers take possession of and consume the product.

The stages of the decision-making models have emphasised an information processing approach to problem solving and choice. Studies have found that substantial delays in these stages are typically expected for major purchases. One exploratory study found that respondents spent on average a total of 28.7 weeks from need recognition stage to making the actual purchase (Greenleaf & Lehmann 1995). In addition, Lawson et al (1996) acknowledged that consumers have tendencies to engage in a substantial amount of information search and extensive problem solving in order to make the ‘right’ choice when deciding on a high-involvement purchase. Making a property acquisition decision would be considered a high involvement purchase situation. Hence, it is not surprising that the stages of the information processing model are accepted by a majority of scholars as the generic stages homebuyers go through. Most academic studies on the subject of housing choice have taken on the assumption that home purchasers are always rational and that their choices are always preceded by lengthy decision making and an intense information search stage with careful consideration for utility value such as size of land, size of property, location and neighbourhood. For example, Baryla et al (2000) examined buyer search under different market conditions. Market conditions in this study refer to the different interest rate regimes and economic conditions. Data for the study was gained from three surveys of home buyers who had purchased a home in 1988, 1991 and 1993, mainly because 1988 and 1991 saw higher interest rates compared to 1993. Included among the variables studied was the average number of homes people looked at each week, the ability of the searcher to purchase a home at or below reserve price and the length of time first home buyers searched prior to purchase. The researchers in this study employed a statistical method known as survival regression analysis, which involves the
modelling of time to event data. In this case, the ‘event’ was the purchase itself while the time to event modelling was the rate or time taken to purchase after their search for information. The results concluded that economic conditions are the dominant factor influencing search durations and that search is influenced by interest rates – the higher the interest rates, the more propensity there is to search.

Similar to Baryla et al (2000)’s study, Hempel (1969) conducted one of the first foundational studies of housing choice concerned with the search processes of homebuyers examining the duration of search, the extent of information seeking and the extent of product examination. He found that most homebuyers sought non-expert information (i.e. from colleagues and friends) on matters relating to subject like location while expert advice was sought on issues concerning valuation, mortgage and insurance. By focussing on the determinants of a specific aspect (information utilisation) in a specific stage (external information search) of the decision-making process, the study implies that consumer home choice can only be arrived at after having gained adequate understanding of the property through the information search process.

Like Hempel (1969), most real estate studies have concentrated on the effects of buyer search on consumer home choice following the information processing model. Many have chosen to look at a single variable as source of information search and evaluation of alternatives. For instance, an early study by Houston and Sudman (1977) investigated real estate brokers as sources of location and neighbourhood information for homebuyers. From a national sample of 311 neighbourhoods, the study employed four types of informants who represented four areas of concern. These four informants were the clergyman of the most active church in the neighbourhood (church informant); the principal or PTA president of a neighbourhood school (school informant); an officer or staff member of an active community group (community organization informant); and a broker who had been actively engaged in residential sales for several years in the neighbourhood (real estate informant). The study aimed to gain insights into
the reliability of real estate agents as an information source in the search stage, by comparing the differences between the real estate agent and other informants of a non-expert nature. Questionnaires were administered to the four informants in every neighbourhood. Statistical analysis was used to categorise the frequency with which each type of informant disagreed with the agent. This was used as an indication of the accuracy of information provided by the real estate agents. Their results showed that real estate agents were a reliable source of information for homebuyers searching for information regarding neighbourhoods and the overall nature of the geographical markets.

In addition to real estate agents as an information source, other single variables that have been investigated include house numbers (Bourassa & Peng 1999), floor numbers (Chau, Ma & Ho 2001), water views (Benson et al. 1996), landscaping (Des Rosiers et al. 2002), location (Frew & Wilson 2002) and house prices (Black & Diaz 1996). In all the aforementioned studies, there have been attempts to explore, predict, explain and describe individual decision processes that lead to consumer home choice. However, each study has chosen to do this from the perspective of the information processing model. Despite the predominance of the information processing model within real estate research, the assumption that people apply a logical decision calculus in the effort to maximise utility has been questioned.

Search and evaluation of all available options are impossible in today’s world of voluminous information and the information processing approach to problem solving is not only impractical but also not achievable (Lye et al. 2005). A review of the early literature on consumer decision making found that Olshavsky and Granbois in 1979 had already suggested that a significant amount of consumer choice does not involve decision making, “not even on the first purchase” (p. 98). This idea has been around for a long time but has not yet been fully explored, particularly in real estate research. Olshavsky and Granbois (1979) also questioned the utilisation of information-processing models and warned that consumer researchers who have been influenced by their assumption of
decision process behaviour may produce biased findings by using research instruments to measure what they expect to find. The researchers also highlighted that in some purchases, information search is absent and consumer choice is influenced by social and historical experience such as “preferences acquired in early childhood” (p. 98). This claim is backed by other researchers who questioned our understanding of consumers’ search behaviour (Beatty & Smith 1987; Moorthy, Ratchford & Talukdar 1997; Wilkie & Dickson 1985). After the publication of Olshavsky and Granbois (1979)'s study, Holbrook and Hirschman continued to contribute to knowledge in this area with their theory on the “experiential view” and hedonic consumption, in recognition of the experiential aspects of consumption choice (p. 132). The following section analyses the experiential view.

3.3 The Experiential View

Developed by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), the experiential model provides a general framework to represent subjective factors on consumer behaviour. The experiential view focuses on the symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic aspects of consumer choice. It regards consumer choice as a culmination of consumer experiences, directed towards the quest for positive feelings, fun and fantasy.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the experiential model and Table 3.1 draws the distinction between the variables contained in the information processing model and those from the experiential model. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) discuss the dissimilarities between the information-processing model and the experiential view in four broad components: environmental inputs; consumer inputs; intervening response system; and output consequences, criteria and learning. The environmental input component relates to variables directly relating to the product whereas consumer inputs refer to the resources that a consumer brings to the exchange of transaction. The third component that Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) used is the intervening response system, referring to variables that could modify decision implementation. The last component refers
to variables to be considered after choice and post consumption. In short, the
variables in the information processing perspective sees choice as a logical,
rational outcome after having considered a series of calculative economic
benefits in an analytic manner. On the contrary, the variables in the experiential
view depict choice as an upshot of a diverse range of emotions which seek to
satisfy hedonic needs such as pleasure and fun. Table 3.1 summarises the
contrasting characteristics of the variables within these four sections.
Figure 3.2: Contrast between the Information processing and Experiential View of Consumer Behaviour
Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 133)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Information Processing Perspective</th>
<th>The Experiential View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment Inputs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>Products have tangible benefits and perform utilitarian functions based on objective characteristics (i.e. size, price and age of property)</td>
<td>All products carry symbolic meaning of more subjective characteristics (i.e. security, safety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulus Properties</td>
<td>Research utilises verbal descriptions based on product attributes</td>
<td>Several sensory channels operate simultaneously hence research must involve non-verbal sensory cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Content</td>
<td>Focussed on explaining the cause and effects from data source</td>
<td>Emphasis is on drawing inferences about the source of the message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Monetary income, the effects of prices and consumer's allocation of time</td>
<td>Subjective time resources, the nature of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Definition</td>
<td>Consumer is a problem solver engaged in goal-directed activities of searching for information, retrieving memory cues, weighing evidence and arriving at carefully considered judgmental evaluations</td>
<td>Consumer seeks fun, pleasure, arousal, sensory simulation and enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Involvement</td>
<td>Involvement is defined as a left-brained phenomenon which refers implicitly to cognitive responses associated with analytic, logical, problem-oriented cerebration</td>
<td>Involvement is right-brained, is emphasized by the degree of activation or arousal and includes components such as attention, interest and excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Activity</td>
<td>Emphasis is placed on how consumers acquire information and what information is acquired in order to arrive at choice</td>
<td>Focus on exploring other humanistic factors that could contribute to the arrival of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Differences</td>
<td>Focus on customer characteristics such as demographics, socioeconomic status and psychographics</td>
<td>Includes factors such as personality and subculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervening Response System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>Focus is on memory and other cognitive phenomena which form the substance of conscious thought patterns</td>
<td>Focus is on cognitive processes that are more subconscious such as daydreams and pictorial imagery which consists of latent content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>Covers limited aspects of affect such as attitude and preference</td>
<td>Considers a full gamut of emotions and diverse feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Choice is a behavioural outcome of the stages of decision-making</td>
<td>Choice is only a small component in the constellation of events involved in the overall consumption experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output Consequences, Criteria and Learning</td>
<td>Consequences of consumer choice are viewed in terms of product's useful function. The criteria for evaluating success of a choice are primarily utilitarian in nature. A product attains value primarily by virtue of economic benefits they provide.</td>
<td>The consequences of choice appear in the fun that a consumer derives from a product – the enjoyment that it offers and the resulting feeling of pleasure it evokes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Satisfaction with a purchase choice serves to reinforce future behavioural responses in the form of repeat purchases</td>
<td>Sensations, feelings, pleasures and other hedonic components are frequently paired together in a purchase experience to become mutually evocative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extracted from Holbrook and Hirschman (1982)
After their 1982 publication, Holbrook and Hirschman subsequently developed a framework that included emotion (Havlena & Holbrook 1986; Holbrook 1986), value (Holbrook & Corfman 1985) and holistic-intuitive consciousness (Hirschman 1985) in experiential consumption. They also proposed the Thought-Emotion-Activity-Value model, suggesting that experiential consumption encompasses all forms of consumption (Hirschman & Holbrook 1986). In this model, “thought” incorporates notions of dreams, fantasies and imagination while “emotion” includes varied types of feelings, expressive behaviours and physiological responses. “Activity” involves physical and mental events relating to both action and reaction and lastly, “value” refers to evaluative judgements in consumption. The Thought-Emotion-Activity-Value model assumes that consumption is an experience that is complex and suggests interdependencies among its constructs.

Since the publication of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982)’s work, there has been increasing evidence which suggests that even decisions for complex and expensive products may not necessarily follow the traditional stages of the decision-making process. An early support for the experiential view came from Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1990). Through their interpretive investigations, they found that choice is an experience that can be captivating and made on the spot. Informants in their study experienced the object of choice as an overwhelming force thus consumption was seen as an impromptu exercise of free choice rather than based on a logical decision making process.

The work by Thomson, Locander and Pollio (1990) later paved the way for the model of constructive choice theory. In their paper, Bettman, Luce and Payne (1998) explained that constructive choice theory has evolved to resolve the flaws and criticisms in rational choice theory. The authors maintain that contrary to rational choice theory, choices are constructed on the spot rather than through deliberate cognitive effort and calculative decision making processes. They also put forth the notion that choice among options is highly context dependent and will
not always follow a flow of decision making stages.

Building on the framework of constructive choice theory and an ethnographic study on choice for postsecondary education, Allen (2002) has pieced together the Fits-Like-A-Glove (FLAG) theory of choice. This theory emphasises the embedded sociohistorical virtues of everyday experience that drive consumers to the perfect choice. He went further to explain that the perfect choice arises from the consumer's in situ encounter with an object of choice. When this happens, consumers experience a moment of enlightenment and will not be able to give reasons or rationales for their choices – they only know that the object of choice fits like a glove, not as a result of “calculated pursuit of previously existing goals or preferences”. This area of knowledge is crucial for this thesis because it is concerned with explaining the many experiences of consumer home choice – answers to whether or not consumers adhere to the information processing model would propound implications for theory and practice.

The experiential view was often applied to the study of hedonic consumption experiences associated with products that tend to evoke strong aspects of fun, fantasies and feelings. Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf (1988) found that buyers and sellers participate in swap meets because of the freedom “from institutional constraints of jobs, stores, offices, sales and income taxes and indoor and formal retailing rules of behaviour” (Belk, Sherry Jr & Wallendorf 1988, p.462). Celsi et al (1993) applied it to their study of high-risk leisure consumption. In their study investigating why consumers choose to sky-dive, answers point to factors such as exhilaration, fun, peace and feeling free. Arnould and Price (1993) discussed the extraordinary experience of white river rafting and reported a complex relationship between consumer expectations and the feeling of satisfaction. They found three broad themes, all related to the hedonic aspects of consumption. The themes were: communion with nature, communion with people and personal growth. Schouten and McAleander (1995) investigated reasons why bikers choose to ride
only Harley Davidsons and found hedonic motivations underlying their choice. Reasons were attributed to a sense of patriotism, freedom and self transformation as well as an expression of masculinity and masochism. In another study, the hedonic aspects of consumption for mountain biking were attributed to a sense of accomplishment, the chance to share and connect with other people, a time to escape to nature and the opportunity to be transformed (Christensen & Olson 2002). In a retail context, Arnold and Reynolds (2003) found that people shop for the sheer excitement and adventure of the shopping trip. Reasons for shopping were attributed to spending time with friends and family, to alleviate a negative mood and to escape to another world, all of which are hedonic in nature. Joy and Sherry (2003) explored art museum experiences with research objectives concentrating on the consumers' senses. Logically, work on experiential consumption also lead researchers to focus on the role of less tangible constructs such as emotions and feelings in consumer decision-making (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer 1999; Derbaix & Pham 1991; Holbrook & Batra 1987; Holbrook & Gardner 1998; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy 2002; Richins 1997; Sherman, Mathur & Smith 1997).

The emergence of these alternative theories within the experiential view of consumption has important implications for research. These theories give rise to the supposition that it is possible for other non-economic, less-tangible variables to ultimately influence a consumer's choice, like “the fact that consumers are feelers as well as thinkers and doers; the significance of symbolism in consumption; the consumer's need for fun and pleasure; the roles of consumers; beyond the act of purchase; in product usage as well as in brand choice, and so forth” (Addis & Holbrook 2001, p.50). Alternative choice theories also open doors to the possibility of consumers discarding options and decision-making processes for a FLAG housing choice. Indeed, in some circumstances, consumers are looking for emotional benefits rather than solely utilitarian performance, as noted by many other academics in consumer research (Arnold & Reynolds 2003; Babin, Darden &
Thus far, this chapter has considered two major perspectives on consumer choice, suggesting that the experiential view may be useful in supplementing the information processing model when explaining consumer home choice. Before drawing implications from this for the current study, it is appropriate to review if and to what extent the experiential view has been tested through empirical research relating to real estate.

3.3.1 Property-related Studies Underpinned by Experiential View

The experiential view has been used as a lens through which a variety of products and services have been studied, from skydiving (Celsi, Rose & Leigh 1993) to the aesthetics experiences of museum visitors (Jcy & Sherry 2003). In a 1991 pilot study by Derbaix and Pham, an attempt was made to integrate the literature on economic versus hedonic behaviour in consumption. Content analysis was carried out to explore the types of affective reactions prompted by seventy specific consumption situations but none of the seventy situations covered that of a home purchase – the closest comparisons that can be drawn are those of a car, jewellery and an important purchase. It is evident by now that no study in mainstream marketing literature has been entirely devoted to investigating real estate issues from an experiential view. Therefore, studies related to consumer housing from other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, sociopsychology, geography, urban studies and mass communication are sought to understand the non-economic aspects of housing and housing choices.

Insights into the importance of experiential factors when considering consumers home purchase behaviour can be gained through an examination of a study by
Sixsmith (1986), an academic in the field of psychology who found that a home has significant psychological benefits. Using phenomenology to explore what homes mean for people, respondents in her study provided descriptions of all past, present and possible ideal homes, along with places never thought of as home. No preconceptions limited the type of places described, and descriptions could take any form the participant felt conveyed their thoughts. Then, the participant sorted their own descriptions into categories using a single sorting criterion based around the general idea of 'what is home to me'. The criterion was thought up and carried through by the person concerned. Only after the criterion and categories had been discussed was a further sort conducted. This continued until all the person's ideas had been exhausted. Providing descriptions, the sorting procedure and clarification process typically lasted from two to three hours. In this way, data was collected within a standard, structured and systematic framework which allowed people freedom of expression. Because of the relative purity of the information gained and its structured format, inter-subjective comparison and verification of types and meanings of home were possible. This allowed the researcher to take account of individualistic case studies and then progress beyond these to shared conceptualisations. The findings provided insights into the motivations that underlie a consumer's home choice. This study found two significant meanings of homes – 1) personal, where the home is seen as more than just a living space but as an "extension of oneself" (p. 290) and 2) social, where relationships with friends and relatives are enjoyed. More importantly, the study also found that even the physical meaning of home differs greatly from that of the investor's. For example, warmth, comfort and modern everyday conveniences are important to a person who is going to live in the house.

One study grounded within the field of Mass Communication provides insights into the meaning of homes for people of varying personality types and at different life stages (Doyle 1992). The meaning of home for four types of individuals (Drivers, Expressives, Amiables and Analyticals), at three different stages of life (Young
Adult, Middle Adult and Older People), in four different family stages (the pre­children couple; the couple with grade-school-age children; the couple with high­school-age children; and the post-children couple) were examined. Doyle found that different people at different stages in life attach different meanings to their homes. Furthermore, the meanings for homes are vastly varied, from that of “a shelter” (p. 795) (by young adults); to “a statement of values to the world” (p. 795) (also by young adults); “a symbol of achievement” (p. 795) (by middle adults) and “a nest in which they pursue their final life evaluation” (p. 796) (by older people). As for individual types, the Driver sees the home as a place where competence can be exercised while the Analytical views the home as a place one can let go of control. Just as interestingly, Expressives see the tangible and visible features of the house as an expression of his or her image to the world while Amiables are more concerned with the “more subtle, less overt, less visible...spirit of the house” (p.794).

The focus on psychological rather than economic benefits of a property, was indicated in a sociology study conducted with older New Zealand home owners (Dupuis & Thorns 1996; Dupuis & Thorns 1998). Dupuis and Thorns (1996) carried out in-depth interviews with fifty three home owners. Not all of the respondents were homeowners when the interview was conducted but all had been at some stage within the last four years. The researchers’ interview guide covered the respondents’ housing history, views about and experiences of home ownership, ideas of home, the images this conjures up and a series of issues surrounding inheritance. These interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and subjected to qualitative analysis. The study found that people attach personal, social and historical meanings to their homes and that they buy homes not for investment but for security, family continuity and inheritance. Their subsequent study extended the literature on the meanings of homes and found that the meanings people attach to homes are “multifaceted and complex” (Dupuis & Thorns 1998, p.43). Their findings showed that the home for people means ontological security, which refers
to a deep psychological need. Ontological security was described as “the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of their social and material environments” (Dupuis & Thorns 1998, p.27). Some of the themes that emerged from this study were privacy, familiarity, memory and nostalgia, stability, sense of achievement, family and inheritance. Consistent with Dupuis and Thorns (1996 and 1998), another theoretical paper on New Zealanders found that the home means a secure base for the development of a household and family (Perkins and Thorns, 1999).

Interestingly, the notion of a home as an investment asset may not be that important to consumers, vastly contradicting the widely held beliefs of past real estate research that has focused on the rational financial decisions of consumers. A large empirical study was conducted with a randomly selected sample of 6,500 adults in West Central Scotland (Kearns et al. 2000) – 2,838 questionnaires were analysed suggesting that the response rate was approximately 50%. Using factor analysis on survey questionnaires (with a five-point Likert response scale), the study found that the home for both owners as well as renters, is a haven, a status symbol and a locus of autonomy. These themes were of more importance to the consumer than were notions of investment.

Related to the meaning of homes is research investigating residential mobility, that is, the change of residence either in the same city or town, or between cities, states or communities. The reasons why people move from home to home or buy new homes have been researched extensively within the discipline of real estate, however most of the literature arose out of quantitative approaches. Critics have already drawn attention to the inability of these approaches to capture the increasing complexity of residential mobility. To illustrate, factors contributing to residential mobility are frequently associated to life stage models - reasons why people buy or move houses are analysed in relation to their family size and make-up and changes within households such as divorces and re-marriages (Kendig
Another stream of literature on residential mobility emphasises economic rationality, hence reasons for buying are attributed to financial benefits such as buying at a time to capitalise on government policies (Clark 1982) or buying to generate capital gain (Hamnett 1999; Pickles & Davies 1991). Winstanley, Thorns and Perkins (2002) acknowledged the inherent problems and drew attention to the methodological problems where studies have displayed,

"deficient characterisations of residential mobility. The first deficiency stems from the way that the complexity of residential mobility is oversimplified to meet the requirements of statistical analysis. Similarly, the use of 'static' secondary data is problematic because it does not capture the longitudinal journey of residential mobility. The focus on single individuals or 'individual households' does not provide information pertaining to all household members" (Winstanley, Thorns & Perkins 2002, p.817).

Given these issues, the researchers employed an ethnographic approach to their study, carrying out forty one in-depth interviews with a variety of residents in contrasting areas in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. They interviewed all household members and encouraged respondents to talk about their experiences of home. Their decision to move away from employing quantitative approaches provided new insights on the events and issues which influence residential mobility.

The study found that the decisions to move onto new dwellings depended on factors relating to privacy, safety, security and freedom. Additionally, they found that when choosing where to move to, people looked for homes where they can express their sense of self and identity. This implies that the values that people attach to the meaning of homes are the same factors that encourage residential mobility.

Another study which hinted at the experiential view of home consumption is one that investigated the ways New Zealand home owners engage with print media in
creating their houses and homes (Leonard, Perkins & Thorns 2004). The researchers in this study examined twenty seven magazines and brochures published and printed during 1998-2000. The materials were grouped into six categories of home design magazines, gardening magazines, women's magazines, general lifestyle magazines, supermarket and pharmacy publications and trade brochures and a content analysis was carried out on the materials. The findings concluded that there are elements in the media which allows the readers to fantasise and dream about houses and gardens beyond their means. The study also found that most, if not all of the print materials marketed house and home products in aesthetic and symbolic terms – this is consistent with the experiential view which posits that all products carry symbolic meanings of more subjective characteristics. The elements of fantasy and aesthetics found in this study are a strong indication that the consumption of houses and homes could be hedonically inclined.

Research has been undertaken to study the influence of family members on housing purchase decisions (Levy & Lee 2004). In-depth interviews were conducted with nine New Zealand real estate agents to gain an overall view of family decision-making for the purchase of real estate through the eyes of experts. Using the five stages of the information processing model as a framework, results pointed to the fact that the purchase of a residential property is complex and "may not always reflect a rational process with the sole purpose of maximising utility" (Levy & Lee 2004, p. 334). Findings also highlighted that other humanistic factors such as culture and personality traits that could contribute to the arrival of choice. This study was recently expanded to include in-depth interviews with eighteen families (Levy, Murphy & Lee 2008). They found that both real estate agents and family members repeatedly commented on the significant role of emotions and feelings in the final decision to purchase. The emotional dimensions of home choice in this study provides further support for the experiential view. When identifying key motives that underlie home choices, this thesis aims to extend the
work Levy, Lee and Murphy (2008) by ensuring that the methodology used will allow for these humanistic and affective factors to surface.

The review of literature thus far has highlighted the studies on homes and houses that are underpinned by the experiential view. Although these studies were not conducted from the framework of the experiential model, their findings pointed to distinct symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic aspects of consumer choice. Table 3.2 below summarises these studies and outlines how they have addressed the variables of the experiential view previously presented in Table 3.1.
### Table 3.2: Studies on Homes and Houses Underpinned by the Experiential View

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Variables of the Experiential View Addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sixsmith 1986)</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td><strong>Product</strong>: The home was seen as an extension of oneself, a place to enjoy relationships with friends and family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Individual Differences</strong>: The home was taken to represent the respondents' personal statement of values to the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Product</strong>: The home was seen as a symbol of achievement a nest in which they pursue their final life evaluation; a place where competence can be exercised; a place one can let go of control; an expression of his or her image to the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dupuis &amp; Thorns 1998)</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td><strong>Product</strong>: The home meant a refuge and escape from the outside world. <strong>Learning &amp; Affect</strong>: Feelings such as nostalgia and memory are examples of hedonic factors that serve to reinforce future behavioural responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins and Thorns (1999)</td>
<td>Geography, Sociology</td>
<td><strong>Product</strong>: The home was seen as a secure base for the development of a household and family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kearns et al. 2000)</td>
<td>Urban Studies</td>
<td><strong>Product</strong>: The home carries with it the symbolic meaning of a haven, status and locus of autonomy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Winstanley, Thorns &amp; Perkins 2002)</td>
<td>Geography, Sociology</td>
<td><strong>Search Activity</strong>: Decisions on residential mobility were attributed to humanistic factors such as the need for a sense of self, identity, privacy, safety, security and freedom. <strong>Cognition</strong>: Focussed on subconscious cognitive process such as daydreaming and fantasy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Leonard, Perkins &amp; Thorns 2004)</td>
<td>Geography, Sociology</td>
<td><strong>Product</strong>: Print materials marketed house and home products in aesthetic and symbolic terms. <strong>Cognition</strong>: Focussed on subconscious cognitive process such as daydreaming and fantasy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Levy &amp; Lee 2004; Levy, Murphy &amp; Lee 2008)</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td><strong>Search Activity</strong>: Investigated other humanistic factors such as the influence of family members that could contribute to home purchase decisions. <strong>Individual Differences</strong>: Rather than focussing on demographics and family life cycle, discussed factors such as personality and culture in the household decision-making process. <strong>Affect</strong>: Considered feelings and emotions in in the final decision to purchase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This review has demonstrated the complexity of housing choice as a subject, reflected in the variety of issues associated with homes and home purchases. It has also suggested that housing choice may be influenced by reasons beyond economics and finances. The motivations for why people bought what they did warrant explanations wider than what the information processing model can provide.

3.4 Conclusion

As commented on previously, one of the main drivers for this research agenda examining consumer home choice has been the outcome of research highlighting the scarcity of studies surrounding behavioural real estate. The decision-making stages emphasised by the information-processing model assume that homebuyers are rational human beings who only seek to maximise economic utility through lengthy decision-making and comprehensive information search. Reasons and explanations for what was thought to be “irrational” home buying behaviour have so far been left unfounded because of the information processing view.

However, in reviewing the literature from marketing and consumer behaviour, a richer understanding of the factors underlying choice is gained. The concept of the experiential view has suggested alternative theories of choice such as the Fits-Like-A-Glove. The notion that choice can be made on the spot are indications that the heart may win out over the mind more often than is commonly thought. The information processing model, from which most real estate research is reliant upon, has tended to neglect the equally important subjective aspects of consumer choice, thereby limiting our understanding of it.
The literature review also surfaced a collection of studies from other disciplines such as psychology, geography, sociology, urban studies and mass communication that touched on the complexities of home choices. These studies explored the question of what homes mean for people and suggested that the conditions and reasons individuals buy homes are attributed to factors that are multi-faceted, complex, and often not tangible. The literature in this chapter has established that although reasoned deliberation of cost advantages, attribute weights and appropriate decision strategies can be aspects of a home choice, other consumption goals and non-economic motivations may also bear influence on the decision process and outcome. Therefore, the next chapter will explore the non-economic motivations that drive people’s home choices.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Home Buyer Motivation

4.1 Introduction to Motivational Research

"Motivational research opportunities in real estate abound to assist in understanding why people value certain properties for reasons other than physical features"

(Black et al. 2003, p.6)

While there is consensus that motivation is the driving force underlying most behaviour (Deci & Ryan 1985; Kuper & Kuper 1996), there remain a number of varying theories around motivation. A literature review on the concept of motivation is of direct importance to this study, given that the aim of this thesis is to understand the motives behind a homebuyer's decision to purchase a particular home.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the evolution of motivation theories in marketing. Then, the various definitions that have been proposed for the term "motivation" and "motives" are discussed in Section 4.3. This section of the literature review is designed to clarify some terminology issues within this thesis. The conceptualisation of motives then led on to a discussion of the classification of motives and relatedly, values in Section 4.4. The literature indicated that motivation for purchasing a home is separated into two stages. The first stage is the motivation to start searching for a new home while the second stage is the motivation for the choice of house, that is, which house to buy. This thesis is
interested in examining motivations driving the latter. The dual classification of utilitarian versus hedonic motives provides very useful insights into the affective aspects of consumption which may be applied to a home buying context. The literature review also found support for values to operate as motives in consumer home choice.

Existing gaps in motivation research within real estate studies are identified in Section 4.5. This analysis allows for a fuller understanding of the complexities of a home purchase and the importance of including consumer experience when researching property-related issues. It also reveals the inherent methodological issues in applying motivation research to real estate studies.

In order to address the methodological issues, section 4.6 presents alternative approaches to studying motivation, mainly found in consumer research. What emerges is a number of qualitative techniques used to uncover hidden or intrinsic motivations for consumption. Finally, a summary of the chapter is presented in section 4.7, providing justification for the investigation of the motivations that underlie consumer choice in residential real estate.

4.2 The Beginnings of Motivation Research in Marketing

Like many major concepts in consumer behaviour, motivation has evolved from the field of psychology. It was the famous psychologist by the name of William James (1890) who first discussed aspects of motivation (Deci & Ryan 1985; Ferguson 2000).

Within marketing, it was Ernest Dichter who revolutionised the understanding of the role of human motives (Gries & Schwarzkopf forthcoming). Dichter's approach to motivation research quickly gained success in America where he had set up a market research and management consultancy in New York and his service was in
great demand amongst some huge corporations, including Esquire Magazine and Chrysler Motor Corporation. The Dichter's Institute for Motivational Research then continued to enjoy global success with offices established in the UK, Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany and Austria earning Dichter fame (he was featured in Time magazine, Newsweek, Business Week and Playboy) (Schwarzkopf 2007). Following his dedication to motivation and ensuing publicity, he earned himself the title, “father of motivation research” (Schwarzkopf 2007, p.221) from both critics and supporters.

As swiftly as success befell, succeeding scholars began to shift away from Dichter’s work. There were a number of reasons for this, one of which is simply attributed to researchers preferring “to forget the early emphasis on subconscious motivation” (Shaw & Jones 2005, p.262). A further reason to move away from subconscious motivation was driven by a move made toward the end of the 1950s by the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation, as the most important financial contributor to marketing at the time (Bartels 1988), made a political decision to redirect marketing theory towards logical empiricism and quantitative methods (Tadajewski 2006b). This decision was in turn the consequence of Vance Packard’s international bestseller “The Hidden Persuaders”, released in 1957. Translated into all major European languages, the book declared Dichter and his organisations dangerous and unscrupulous, brainwashing unsuspecting customers to reveal their buy buttons that marketers could manipulate (Hodgson 2003; Packard 1968). The impact of Packard's book was enormous given the post war atmosphere which left the general public in fear of brainwashing techniques and the technical manipulations of human emotions by financial interests (such as Ford) and governments (Bauer 1958; Belk 1995; Schwarzkopf 2007; Tadajewski 2006a).

The Ford Foundation’s decision to fund politically-neutral research had “a huge impact on the course of research in marketing” (Wilkie 2002, p.144), particularly for
motivation research. The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of scientific experimentation and multivariate revolution and a number of researchers started blending experimental, quantitative survey with the humanistic orientation of motivation research that Dichter was advocating (Wells 1975). Given a variety of names such as “lifestyle” (Plummer 1974), “activity and attitude” (Hustad 1971) and more popularly, “psychographics” (Wells 1975), motivation research was developed through qualitative variables that could be tested quantitatively. Research then continued to move on to “precoded, objective questionnaires that could be self-administered or administered by ordinary survey interviewers” (Wells 1975, p.197). This move was also made possible not only with the availability of computer technology in the 1960s and 1970s but also the skills to use such technology (Tadajewski 2006a). The result of this revolution was the re-conceptualisation of the consumer and the reigning model during the 1970s and 1980s was that of the consumer being an information processor. The information-processing model assumes the consumer is a logical, rational thinker whose purchase behaviour is motivated by utilitarian factors with economic value (Bettman 1979). This model is still a dominant theory in real estate studies today.

The end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s began to see researchers questioning the dominance of the information processing perspective. Researchers argued that the information processing perspective had left certain aspects of consumer motivation largely untapped (Tadajewski 2006b) and that some purchases are motivated by factors that are subconscious and emotional (Olshavsky & Granbois 1979). The conceptual paper by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) was a significant contribution to consumer motivation research because it was one of the first which argued forcefully for the need to look into consumers’ hedonic shopping motives, which had largely been ignored because the information-processing model only emphasised utilitarian motives. In the paper, they discussed the “experiential view” of consumption, in which consumers consider the elements of fantasies, feelings and fun when deciding on a choice.
Their work pioneered a revolution in motivation research as subsequent studies began to focus on hedonic consumption (Arnold & Reynolds 2003; Babin, Darden & Griffin 1994; Batra & Ahtola 1991; Dhar & Wertenbroch 2000; Earl & Kemp 1999; Hirschman & Holbrook 1982; Snell, Gibbs & Varey 1995; Voss, Spangenberg & Grohmann 2003) and the role of less tangible constructs such as emotions and feelings in consumer decision-making (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer 1999; Chaudhuri 2005; Holbrook & Batra 1987; Holbrook & Gardner 1998; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy 2002; Richins 1997; Sherman, Mathur & Smith 1997; Zaltman 2003). Given that the experiential view is "phenomenological in spirit" (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982, p.132), many of these studies adopted a non-positivistic approach which begins with an exploration of a phenomenon as a means to grasp the absolute, logical and ontological truths behind the phenomenon. This resulted in the revival of qualitative investigations within motivation research. Figure 4.1 illustrates this cycle. It is interesting to note this qualitative-quantitative-qualitative cycle is not duplicated when motivation is investigated in real estate research. As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, studies examining motivation for home choice are dominated by quantitative studies which often treat motivational factors as utilitarian attributes.

Figure 4.1: The Evolution of Motivation Research

1946 Dichter founded the Institute of Motivational Research

1957 Publication of Packard's book

Late 1950s Ford Foundation decides to fund only politically-neutral research

1960s & 1970s Motivation research was developed through qualitative variables but tested quantitatively. E.g. Lifestyle studies, psychographics

1982 Experiential view, Hedonic consumption, Phenomenology

Post 1982 - Today Humanistic research, Qualitative studies

1950s Qualitative methodology used to uncover subconscious motivation
4.3 The Complexities of Defining Motivation

Despite the variety of research from a range of disciplines investigating motivation over the past years, there is a lack of consensus on what exactly constitutes motivation (Wise 2004). Generally, it is taken to be concerned with the determinants of choice, persistence, and vigor of goal-directed behaviour (Beck 1983).

One broad definition is that of Petri (1986) who suggested that motivation is “the concept we use when we describe the force acting on or within an organism to initiate and direct behaviour” (Petri 1986, p.3). Another wide definition was given by Ryan and Deci (2000, p.54) who characterised motivation as being “…moved to do something…orientation of motivation concerns the underlying goals and attitudes that give rise to action – that is, it concerns the why of actions…”.

The definition adopted by Mook (1987) is general in nature: “The study of motivation is the search for principles that will help us understand why people and animals initiate, choose, or persist in, specific actions in specific circumstances” (Mook 1987, p. 4). Perhaps the most encompassing and widely accepted definition of the term motivation is one suggested by Weiner (1992): “motivation is why human and subhuman organisms think and behave as they do” (Weiner 1992, p. 1). These definitions, although varied, have nonetheless demonstrated that the “motivational question has remained why – that is, not how one learns or how one perceives, but rather why one acts” (Weiner 1992, p. 2).

However, none of the definitions above distinguish the term motivation from motives. In fact, there appears to be wide acceptance that the term motivation and motives are interchangeable to mean reasons for behaviour (see for example Arnold & Reynolds 2003; Castaneda et al. 2007; Childers et al. 2001; Eastlick & Feinberg 1999; Elliot & Friedman 2006; Mayer, Faber & Xu 2007; Tadajewski
Not even in undergraduate consumer behaviour textbooks can a definition that clearly differentiates motives from motivation be found. For example, Loudon and Della Bitta (1993) dismissed the issue of having to differentiate motives and motivation and went on to discuss only motives, with a motive being defined as “an inner state that mobilizes bodily energy and directs it in selected fashion toward goals usually located in the external environment” (Loudon & Della-Bitta 1993, p. 322). Other textbooks also implicitly reject any idea of a difference between motivation and motive by using them interchangeably (Hanna & Wozniak 2001; Hawkins, Roger & Coney 1998; Schiffman et al. 2005). Before discussing any such issues in more depth, it is necessary to define the term “motive” encompassed within the overall concept of motivation and to differentiate it from the term “motivation”.

Gnoth (1999) in his paper investigating tourist expectations, provides some insights into their distinguishing features. According to Gnoth, “when we have a drive, a need, and a person acting on it, we can call it a motive” whereas “motivations is the result of specific person-situation interactions” which contain motives influenced and operationalised by people’s values and their perception of given situations (Gnoth 1999, p.248). Gnoth’s definition is in accord with Meneghetti (2003) who suggested that motives fall into content-based theories which discuss the “specific needs or factors that give rise to behaviour” while motivations are process-based which focus “on how the mechanism of how behaviour arises and is sustained” (Meneghetti 2003, p.13).

This implies that although used interchangeably with the term “motive”, “motivation” is wittingly used in attitude modelling research to stand for drive arousal and strength of drives (see for example Cohen, Fishbein & Ahtola 1972; Correia, do Valle & Moço 2007; Fishbein & Middlestadt 1995; Lim & Dubinsky 2004; MacKenzie & Spreng 1992; Moorman & Matulich 1993; Sujan 1986; Weitz, Sujan & Sujan 1986).
In contrast, "motive" is generally taken to specifically mean needs and "reasons that behaviour occurs" (Horton 1984, p. 114). This is supported by Gnoth (1999) when he said that "each motive has its distinct type of content in the form of behavioural goals..." (Gnoth 1999, p. 248). He further provided an example of a motive for wanting to go on a holiday as the need to escape from noise. At this juncture, it must be highlighted that a small number of scholars have attempted to propose a distinction between needs and motives (Mahatoo 1989; McKenna 1987) but the terms "motive" and "need" are almost always used interchangeably throughout the consumer behaviour literature and it is not possible to distinguish the two.

In addition to needs and reasons, a motive has also been defined as a "motivation construct" (Correia, do Valle & Moço 2007; Jansen-Verbeke & Van Rekom 1996) and more broadly as "factors" (Klenosky 2002; Uysal & Jurowski 1994; Yuan & McDonald 1990). In fact, Murray (1964) defined a motive specifically as an "internal factor that arouses, directs and integrates a person's behaviour" (Murray (1964) in Yuan & McDonald 1990, p. 42). To further distinguish motives from motivation, Tadajewski (2006) wrote that generally, motives are "classifiable" (Tadajewski 2006a, p. 435) and support for this is evident in the many attempts to classify and organise human motives.

The next section details these attempts and the diversity of human motives but from the discussion above, it can be deduced that even though research to date has not yet determinedly distinguished the term "motivation" from "motive", the work in this thesis is about identifying the individual "constructs", "factors", "reasons" or "motives" that underlie consumer home choice, rather than measuring motivation arousal. However, this thesis also acknowledges the work of Beck (1983, p.25) who has cautioned that, "we cannot just define motivation (or motives); we define a set of variables that are called motivational".
4.4. The Classification of Motives

One of the first attempts to classify motives was carried out by Copeland who provided a list of thirty three consumer buying motives, classified alternatively as emotional and rational (Copeland 1924). Since Copeland, there have been a number of theories proposed with regards to the categorisation of motives. It is not the intention of this section to provide a census of such theories, but rather to review those which have been applied in consumer behaviour and will be relevant to the study of the motives influencing consumer home choice.

On this basis, Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is reviewed because it is commonly referred to in discussions on consumer motivation. Maslow posited that “the classification of motivations must be based upon goals rather than instigating drives or motivated behaviour” (Maslow 1943, p.371). Maslow’s work provided a framework within which the needs underlying human behaviour can be viewed as being hierarchical in nature. Fundamental to an understanding of this idea of a hierarchy is the concept of prepotency. That is, Maslow argued that higher order needs cannot become prepotent, or determine behaviour, until the lower levels of need are at least adequately satisfied. He thus theorised that humans seek to prioritize their needs commencing with the basic physiological needs for food, water, safety and shelter and that these must be met prior to progressing towards the more advanced needs such as the affective needs to belong and feel loved, and higher order needs of esteem for respect, recognition and status. The ultimate need that humans seek to attain is the need for self-actualisation through the individual reaching his or her full potential (Maslow 1943 1970). Maslow did not feel that self-actualisation determines one’s life, rather, he felt that it gives the individual a desire, or motivation to achieve ambitions. This concept of self-actualisation is explicitly defined in his publication of “A Theory of Human Motivation”:  
the desire for self-fulfillment, namely the tendency for him [the individual] to become actualized in what he is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming (Maslow 1943, p. 382).

Another theory which also provides a classification of needs is David McClelland who developed the notion that three basic learned needs motivate an individual (Maddock 2000; McClelland 1953 1987). These are the need for affiliation, power and achievement. He argued that the need for affiliation will cause an individual to base his decisions on the need to be with others rather than on the enjoyment of accomplishing the task – this is similar to Maslow's theory of individuals needing to feel belonged and loved. The need for power results in the desire to have some degree of authority or influence over others which coincides with Maslow's need for esteem. Finally, McClelland posited that the need for achievement may result in wanting to overcome challenges and the engagement in personal growth. The need for achievement also motivates a person to seek competition and success hence providing further support for Maslow's theory on the need for self-actualisation.

William McGuire's typology of human motives is probably one of the most comprehensive, especially when compared to Maslow and McClelland. McGuire developed sixteen human motives (McGuire 1974), with a focus on both the cognitive and the affective factors. The cognitive motives are those driving aspects of human personality that stress the person's need for achieving a sense of meaning. The affective motives stress the individual's need to reach satisfying feeling states and to attain emotional goals. Both these cognitive and affective factors are subdivided into those that stress the individual as striving to maintain equilibrium versus those that deal with the person's need for further growth. Putting
these two dichotomies (cognitive-affective and preservation-growth) into conjunction yields four classes of motives. Each of these classes is then divided based on whether the person's behaviour is actively initiated or a passive response to circumstances (active – passive striving) and whether the motives were directed towards achieving a new internal state or new external relationship to the environment (internal-external goals). By using bipolar opposites for each of these four dimensions, a sixteen cell matrix was developed with each cell said to represent a basic human need. The list covers the needs for consistency, attribution, categorisation, objectification, autonomy, stimulation, teleology, tension reduction, expression, ego defense, reinforcement, assertion, affiliation, identification and modeling. This makes McGuire’s theory a complicated one but when compared to Maslow and McClelland, he differs in that the goal of self-actualisation as the ultimate motive is not mentioned as part of his theory.

More related to the context of home purchase is Tauber’s classifications of the fundamental motivations that underlie shopping behaviour (Tauber 1972). Based on exploratory depth interviews, Tauber identified both personal and social motives as influential in shopping behaviour. The personal factors as espoused by Tauber are the opportunity to enact a culturally prescribed role; diversion from daily routine; provision of self-gratification; learning about new trends; obtaining physical exercise and receiving sensory stimulation. On the other hand, social motives include social interactions outside the home; communication with others; affiliating with reference groups; obtaining increases in social status and achieving bargaining and negotiation. Tauber’s social shopping motives relate to that of Maslow’s affective needs and McClelland’s need for affiliation. These theories emphasize that man are social animals, seeking affection and acceptance in interpersonal relations. An important contribution of Tauber’s classification of shopping motives is the recognition that individuals shop not only for products for which the need arise but also to acquire non-product related needs.
Although the classification of motives that Maslow, McGuire, McClelland and Tauber have put together are systematic and involved a great level of specificity, the more general dual characterisation of motives that other scholars discussed are also relevant to this thesis. Two in particular, are directly relevant to the study on consumer home choice and are given attention in the following sections.

4.4.1 Push versus Pull Motives
First espoused in tourism marketing, Dann (1977) described push motives as the specific forces in our lives that lead to the decision to take a vacation while pull factors refer to those that lead an individual to select one destination over another once the decision to travel has been made. Push and pull motives have generally been characterised as relating to two separate decisions made at two separate points in time - one focussing on whether to go, the other on where to go (Klenosky 2002) “thus, analytically and often logically and temporally, push factors precede pull factors” (Dann 1977, p.186). Push motives therefore, are viewed as relating to the needs of the traveller while pull motives have been characterised in terms of the features of the attractions, or attributes of the destination itself.

4.4.1.1 Push-Pull Motives and Consumer Home Choice
Applied directly onto real estate research, this means push motives are the motives to purchase a house and/or move from a house; this then sets in motion the directive motives for the choice of the house. Coolen and Hoekstra (2001) observed that the most looked-at motivational factors at the micro level are push motives - “reasons for moving” or “motivations for buying.” Typical housing research exploring motivations for buying has identified both macro economic factors (housing market, economic situation, household composition) and micro economic (age, income). For example, reasons why people buy or move houses are analysed in relation to their family size and make-up and changes within
households such as divorces and re-marriages (Jameson 2004; Kendig 1984; Li 2004; McAuley & Nutty 1982). Kendig (1984) found that 43% of the people surveyed moved because they had experienced changes which required moves even though they were satisfied with their previous dwelling. The motivation for moving as identified included job transfers, marriage, co-habitation, divorce and separation. Kendig (1984) also concluded that the remaining 57% moved because of changes in the family life cycle. Other researchers have attributed reasons for buying to financial benefits such as buying at a time to capitalise on governments’ policies (Clark 1982) or buying to generate capital gain (Hamnett 1999; Pickles & Davies 1991).

Indeed, people’s motivations for buying have been looked into rather extensively by academics in real estate (Baryla, Zumpano & Elder 2000; Boehm 1982; Findsen 2005; Kendig 1984; Painter, Gabriel & Myers 2001). In contrast, the motivations for choosing a particular home over all available options have been less extensively examined. Sirgy, Grzeskowiak and Su (2005) noted that “research on motivational factors of housing preference and choice has been scarce” (Sirgy, Grzeskowiak & Su 2005, p.330). Coolen and Hoekstra (2001) also commented that, “despite the vast amount of research on housing preferences, there seems to have been relatively little attention for underlying motivational micro-level factors such as goals, attitudes and values” (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, p. 286). Therefore, there is a current appeal for property researchers to “consider all aspects of non-financial decision factors” (Gibler & Nelson 2003, p.63). A response to this appeal is the 2008 publication of a special issue on the Microstructures of Housing Markets in Housing Studies, a reputable academic journal within the discipline of real estate (Levy & Henry 2003). The Guest Editor of the issue commented that “much more is known about the macro-scales than microstructures, and this theme issue is an attempt to redress this balance” (Smith & Munro 2008, p.159).
Thus, there exists a gap in academic literature: very little is known about the motives that drives people to put their money down for one particular house given the complex array of alternatives and home features. It is hence the aim of this thesis to examine the motives involved in selecting from amongst alternatives, one particular home. For this reason, the following section will concentrate on studies relating to pull factors motivating consumer home choice.

4.4.2 Utilitarian versus Hedonic Motives

As discussed in Chapter Three, work on hedonic and non-functional motives began after the publication of Olshavsky and Granbois (1979) and advanced after Holbrook and Hirschman (1982). The conceptual paper by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) made a significant contribution to consumer motivation research because it was one of the first studies which argued forcefully for the need to look into the hedonic shopping motives of consumers, which had largely been ignored because the information-processing model emphasised utilitarian motives. In the paper, they discussed the "experiential view" of consumption, in which consumers consider the elements of fantasies, feelings and fun when deciding on a choice.

Their work pioneered a shift in research focus as subsequent studies began to focus on hedonic consumption. Researchers began to make the conceptual distinction between behaviour based on utilitarian or instrumental motives and behaviour based on pleasure seeking or hedonic values (Babin, Darden & Griffin 1994; Dhar & Wertenbroch 2000; Tse, Belk & Zhou 1989). Babin, Darden & Griffin (1994) for example, contended that consumption driven by hedonic motives are more subjective and personal than their utilitarian counterparts. Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000) described utilitarian consumption as cognitively driven, instrumental and goal oriented. They argued that instrumental consumers will buy based on the accomplishment of a functional or practical task while those who are
driven by hedonic motives will buy based on aesthetic or sensual pleasure, fantasy and fun.

A good illustration of the distinction between utilitarian and hedonic motives was given by Derbaix and Pham (1991): when an individual buys a Mercedes Benz because of its "resale value, its transportation capacity or its powerful brakes" (p. 326), that individual is motivated by economic or instrumental factors. On the other hand, when another person buys the same car for the pleasure of feeling superior or to seduce, then the motive for buying the car is hedonic. This is a direct implication that utilitarian motives encompass product attributes, and the following section will show that many housing studies have adopted this approach in their investigations of home preference and choice.

4.4.2.1 Utilitarian - Hedonic Motives and Consumer Home Choice

It will be argued that in many studies touching on motivations for home choice the physical attributes of a house have been treated as motives for purchase. More often than not, the home is viewed as a bundle of benefits or utility that needs to be traded off against costs. These motives are utilitarian and functional in the sense that these home features are related to the core function of what a home is supposed to be. For example, Park and Lutz (1982) predicted motives for home choice in the form of twenty four basic attributes of homes, some of which included the number of bedrooms, fenced yard, age of home, recreational facilities and the size of garage by using decision plan nets (DPN). DPN is constructed based on a step-by-step interview where the respondent is asked to name in order of importance all attributes that play a role in evaluating the choice alternatives. A more elaborate explanation of the DPN is detailed in Park and Lutz (1981) but for the purpose of this thesis, it is suffice to say that the DPN method that Park and Lutz (1982) used in their study assumed that consumers have one primary goal - to select a choice option that features a combination of physical housing attributes
which yields the highest evaluation according to some utility function. In support of this view, an empirical study undertaken with the assistance of the Dunedin City Council in New Zealand found that people do make their choices based exclusively on the utilitarian features of the property (Dennis 2006). The study which collated questionnaire responses from 770 Dunedin households, on attributes such as size of dwelling or section, parking, number of bedrooms, age of dwelling and income size, assumed that these were the sole factors that determine homebuyer’s choices.

An earlier study following a similar approach was conducted by Peter Rossini (1998). The study sought to establish the basic behaviours of home buyers in terms of their search and purchase patterns, based on a survey of consumers who had recently purchased a property. The survey included a question in which the researcher listed eight main reasons for purchase, including beach location and close proximity to family and friends. Purchasers were asked to rank these in order of importance when deciding to purchase a property. It was not clear, however, how the researchers generated the eight reasons examined. It is possible that a different methodology that does not use a predetermined list may provide the respondents the opportunity to voice additional motives. This thesis will build on this research by further exploring factors motivating consumer home choice through an open ended interview.

Relevant studies have focused on investigating the impact of a specific pull motive on house prices. These motives have included the location of the property (Frew & Wilson 2002), apartment floor numbers (Chau, Ma & Ho 2001) and water views (Benson et al. 1998; Rodriguez & Sirmans 1994). While these studies have provided insights into specific areas, they have also been based on mathematical formulations with water views, floor numbers and house location represented by economic figures and numbers. This, coupled with the focus on a single factor has meant that other important motives may have been overlooked.
A further reason explored to explain home choice motive is apartment numbers. Chau, Ma and Ho (2001) assumed that superstitious Chinese buyers would pay more for apartments on lucky floor numbers such as 8, 18 and 28. Hence, the “lucky” floor is turned into a mathematical variable known only as FL in an equation where \( P \) is the natural logarithm of actual transaction price and \( SA \) is the saleable floor area. Their datasets consisted of transaction records of 12,308 apartment units in a housing estate in Hong Kong. The analysis was done by evaluating numbers based on their formulated equation. It could be argued that superstition is an underlying non-economic factor that drives Chinese homebuyers to increase their bid for a house but the researchers chose to examine motive from a structural rather than from a consumer perspective. A subjective factor such as “luckiness” is converted into a utilitarian attribute that can be equated to a certain amount of economic value. This methodology provides interesting information regarding the influence of house numbers on a consumer’s home choice but it also raises a question about the potential of other less tangible motives that influence consumer home choice. Following on from this study, it would also be interesting to determine whether or not consumers are consciously aware of their decision to purchase houses with “lucky” number addresses.

Other researchers have also examined luck as a motive for paying high prices for their homes. Bourassa and Peng (1999) examined the concept of luck from the perspective of feng shui, literally translated from Chinese to mean wind and water. The Chinese believe that by living harmoniously with the environment – the winds and waters of the earth – they can attract good luck. In this study, Bourassa and Peng adopted a quantitative technique known as hedonic price analysis which values all abstract constructs as utility-bearing attributes (Griliches 1971; Rosen 1974). House numbers were selected to represent variables for good and bad luck – three, six and eight were considered good while four was considered bad. Data (such as house prices and house numbers) from 2,164 houses sold between 1986
and 1996 were obtained from a government agency responsible for a national property database. They calculated the average value of lucky and unlucky house numbers. It was concluded that a lucky number added between 2.4 and 4.8 percent more value to a property. The outcomes from the study also implied that lucky house numbers are motivations for why Chinese buyers are prepared to pay higher prices for their homes. It can be appreciated that this study highlighted an important motive for people (from a particular culture) buying homes. The researchers have considered feng shui as an important aspect of consumer motive underlying home choice. Again, it would be useful to gain more depth of understanding as to the decisions behind these purchases, for example, if there were other factors besides feng shui or even other aspects of feng shui that the consumers might have also experienced.

Location has also been found to be an important pull motive and determinant of a property's value. Frew and Wilson (2002) collected data on 670 apartments in Portland, Oregon including rent, location and amenities. The driving distance to the city centre, highway and intersection between highways was plotted on a map to include variables on access to transportation. These distance variables were then processed using regression analysis. The findings showed people pay substantially less for apartments more than ten miles outside the city centre and concluded that there is a significant connection between apartment location and the prices people pay.

Apart from location, house number and floor numbers, regression analysis has also been used to calculate the value of a “good view” as a consumption motive for single-family housing (Rodriguez & Sirmans 1994). Rodriguez and Sirmans (1994) used transaction data from 194 owner-occupant residential properties from Fairfax, Virginia. It not only concluded that “a good view adds about 8% to the value of a single-family house” but that “multiple regression analysis can be used to arrive at an estimate market value of a good view” (Rodriguez & Sirmans 1994, p. 601). The
intention of this study was to consider the impact of a good view on property price, however, the factors that constitute a “good view” could be explored. What an attractive view means can be subjective considering different people like different views - there are views of the golf course, the hills, the sea, the harbour, the city, the bush, the mountain and the lake, hence the present thesis seeks to extend Rodriguez and Sirmans’ study by exploring the variety of views or the different facets of consumer experience with views. Incorporating these would add value to the research because views may not mean the same to all buyers and not all views may motivate all buyers in the same way.

It is clear from the literature reviewed in this section that past research has been useful in identifying a selection of less tangible factors that underlie home purchase choices. These studies have suggested that factors such as luck, superstition and views (which are subjective aspects of choice) are factors that consumers consider important when deciding on the home that they want to purchase. However, each study only concentrated on investigating the impact of one motivational factor (such as location or neighbourhood) on another real estate variable (such as house prices), rather than to map definitively all the factors that motivate a consumer’s home choice. Although having varied intentions, these studies treated motivational factors as utilitarian attributes - the focus on their impact on house prices restricted the insights they might have gained into consumers’ home buying process, their consumption experience and the motivations for their ultimate home choice. This focus may have led either to important attributes being missed from the study, or results concentrating on outcomes and attributes which are unimportant to the homebuyer. Within marketing, studies as early as 1924 have suggested that consumers do possess with them a set of emotional desires that impact on their product choices (Copeland 1924). Yet, much of the existing research in real estate has tended to focus on how consumers are conscious, calculating individuals who evaluate the functional and utilitarian worth of products rationally.
Of late, property researchers seem to have been encouraged to embrace the "experiential view" (Black et al. 2003; Clapham 2002; Gibler & Nelson 2003) and the idea that the motives for home choice can be hedonic. However, work incorporating the experiential perspective has only just begun. The next section reviews the home choice literature that touches on hedonic motives.

The earliest attempt to examine hedonic motives was found in a pilot study conducted by Coolen and van Montfort (2001) to uncover psychological factors that "may tell us something about the meaning housing attributes have for people" and "their motivations for specific housing preferences" (Coolen & van Montfort 2001, p.3). The aim of the pilot study was to explore the feasibility of using means-end chain and laddering interviews in the study of preferences for housing attributes. Therefore, the means-end theory, its measurement, its analysis procedure and its theoretical perspectives were the emphasis in the discussion of this article rather than the results. More details of this study will be discussed later in section 4.5.1.2 but the researchers did arrive at a general conclusion that people's preferences for housing attributes are motivated by a significant range of reasons ranging from functional to psychosocial motives.

The most recent studies highlighted a pertinent issue when examining home purchases – that of homebuyers' emotions and their responses to emotional energies (Khoo & Ndubisi 2008; Munro & Smith 2008). The articles highlighted that extant academic literature in housing choice has provided a biased picture by either discounting the role played by emotion or conceptualising emotion as an irrational construct that prompts unsustainable over-investment (Munro & Smith 2008).

Munro and Smith's (2008) study further found that fear and desperation have provoked people to pay above the valuation for their homes. A total of 21 buyers in their study paid up to 10 percent more than the valuation price for their homes.
while a further 21 home purchasers paid between 10 to 32 percent more than the valuation price. Respondents in their study reported experiences such as, “go as high as we could to get something we wanted”, “just decided to bid what we could afford rather than what it seemed worth”, “make them an offer they can’t refuse”, “empty the piggy bank” (Munro & Smith 2008, p. 358). For these people, the economic factor of price and the rational information of market valuation “seemed to have no useful function” (Munro & Smith 2008, p.358). While most studies attributed house price appreciation to economic factors, Munro and Smith (2008) have outlined some important social reasons and attributed the reasons for such phenomenon to the relationships between people and objects (Munro & Smith 2008, p.363). The same study also outlined the homebuyers’ “feelings that override economic rationality” and concludes that what encourages people to pay a premium is their feeling that the property (not the price) is right.

This conclusion is consistent with the experiences echoed by the homebuyers in a pilot study conducted by Khoo and Ndubisi (2008): “Though we were very nervous, we decided to go with the bigger home. We simply took a gamble and hoped that we would have no problem making the payments”; “The home literally struck us ... my husband and I. We both really liked it and were excited. We knew this was the place we wanted” and “We didn’t even go into the house. As soon as we saw it from the outside, we knew it was the one. We put an offer on the house without even looking inside” (Khoo & Ndubisi 2003, p.127). The descriptions from homebuyers during these interviews help to suggest that there may be other important constructs that real estate researchers need to address. These preliminary interviews combined with consequent conversations with colleagues and friends who were buying their own homes highlighted the need to begin research in an area that investigates the direct, intervening or moderating constructs in the home buying decision-making process.
Meanwhile, the mainstream literature and the business press have already emphasised the significance of emotional experience and influence in the home-buying decision-making process (De Roos & Somers 2000; Fahy 2006; Hamilton 2006; Newland 2002). For instance, Dolf de Roos (2002), a reputable name in the New Zealand residential property investment field, recommends that sellers adopt numerous ways of improving the look of their properties by playing on their emotions, some of which includes putting up a new front fence, painting, putting in a new letter box, landscaping, putting up new curtains and even as far as changing the door knobs. Another prominent New Zealand investor, Olly Newland (2002), advises home sellers to spend money on “new switches and taps” rather than “on wiring and plumbing” because “most buyers are only interested in the shiny paint and chrome finish” (p. 172). This highlights the potential role of emotion as an interfering influence on the decision-making process and ultimately the consumer’s choice of home.

While there is adequate evidence that people stretch their banks to buy the homes they fall in love with (Khoo & Ndubisi 2008; Munro & Smith 2008), it is significant that to date, the question of what prompts people to fall in love with the home remains unanswered. The hedonic motives that induce such feelings are yet to be investigated and the non-calculative factors that trigger the “This is it!” feelings in consumer home choice have not yet been explored in academic research.

When discussing (hedonic) motives, McGuire (1976) suggests that consideration ought to be given to the systemisations of domains not usually called “motives” but conceptually related to them, such as the lists of values proposed Rokeach, Kahle and Schwartz. Personal values have been shown to be efficient and more closely related to motivations than demographic and psychographic measures (Madrigal & Kahle 1994). In fact, Rokeach (1973) argued that values may be more useful than attitudes in understanding human behaviour as they are more central to an
individual's cognitive system. The following section thus reviews the literature on values.

4.4.3 Operationalising Values as Hedonic Motives

One of the most cited definitions of human values is that of Rokeach's (1973) which reads as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally or socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end states of existence" (Rokeach 1973, p. 5). Schwartz and Blisky (1990) preferred to define values by outlining the five features of values as concepts or beliefs; about desirable end states or behaviours; that transcend specific situations; guide selection or evaluation of behaviour; and are ordered by relative importance.

Research on motives and needs are often linked to values because even though human needs are considered to be fundamentally the same (Rokeach 1973), how we satisfy these needs differs based on our values (Watkins 2006). Therefore, the immediate purpose of values "is to give expression to human needs and to guide action" (Watkins 2006, p. 37). Values then are directly linked to an understanding of behaviour, just as motives and needs, and are "powerful determinants of consumer behaviour" (Brangule-Vlagsma, Pieters & Wedel 2002, p. 267).

Like motives, values have also been classified. One of such classification work was carried out by Milton Rokeach who categorised values simply into eighteen instrumental and eighteen terminal constructs, to be ranked by respondents in order of importance. Instrumental values, according to Rokeach, are concerned with characteristics, traits and modes of conduct such as "self-respect", "courageous" and "helpful" while terminal values are concerned with end states of existence such as "a sense of accomplishment", "family security" and "inner harmony" (Rokeach 1973). Terminal values then are more abstract than instrumental values. This concept of instrumental versus terminal values provided
the base for Gutman (1978, 1982) to develop the means-end theory and model. The theory contends that consumers believe that the specific attributes of a product can help them achieve desired values through the consequences or benefits of that product. For example, a consumer may choose to consume a fruit only because it is organic. This attribute (organic) is important because it is perceived to be more healthy (consequence) and will in turn promote well-being (terminal value). A detailed discussion on the means-end theory is carried out in section 4.5.1.2 but it is important to point out here that the theory adopts the view that product features or attributes themselves have no inherent meaning to the consumers, rather they gain importance through the consequences that are perceived to be positive. Given that work on values fall within the parameters of hedonic consumption, it is not surprising that the means-end model does not treat product characteristics as motives even though past research has treated utilitarian attributes as salient motives for purchase and consumption (Bourassa, Hoesli & Sun 2003; Bourassa & Peng 1999; Chau, Ma & Ho 2001; Derbaix & Pham 1991; Frew & Wilson 2002; Park et al. 1981; Park & Lutz 1982; Rossini 1998). Rokeach’s scale of instrumental and terminal values is relatively easy to apply but some of the values in the list have been criticised for their lack of relevance to everyday life which has little to do with consumption (Madrigal & Kahle 1994).

Given the criticism, Lynn Kahle (1983) modified the Rokeach Value Survey into a smaller subset of values that were person oriented and generalizable across many activities. The result is Kahle’s List of Values (LOV) which includes sense of belonging, excitement, fun and enjoyment, warm relationships with others, self fulfillment, being well respected, a sense of accomplishment, security, and self respect. Not only is Kahle’s list more parsimonious compared to the Rokeach’s, it also contains many items that people say influence their daily lives (Beatty et al. 1985).
Another attempt at classifying values was carried out by Shalom Schwartz. Schwartz endeavoured to identify a universal set of values which would operate on the cultural level and individual level (Schwartz 1992 1994). At the individual level, he validated 56 values and generated ten distinct universal values which included power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. From this, he identified a circular structure of relations among the dimensions, which supports his idea of that human values are universal (Schwartz 1992). Schwartz’s categorisation of values is a comprehensive one, not to mention theoretically sound. However, criticisms were drawn to the fact that it is too large and time consuming for respondents to fill out (Holdsworth 2003).

From the discussion above, there seems to be significant parallelism between values and the motives espoused by Maslow, McGuire, McClelland and Tauber. For example, Tauber’s personal and social motives are covered by list of values in in Rokeach’s, Kahle’s and Schwartz’s theories. The same is to be said of Maslow’s theory on the need for self-actualisation, which is a terminal need in Rokeach’s terms. Developing on the work of Rokeach, Kahle and Schwartz, past marketing research have investigated values as reasons for consumption, covering a wide range of topics ranging from e-shopping (Jayawardhana 2004) to organic food choices (Baker et al. 2004; Zanoli & Naspetti 2002), brand choice (Dibley & Baker 2001), consumer choice (Manyiwa & Crawford 2002) and tourist behaviour (Klenosky 2002; McIntosh & Thyne 2005). In addition, studies on hedonic consumption have identified values such as freedom (Belk, Sherry Jr & Wallendorf 1988), connection with others (Arnold & Reynolds 2003) and personal growth (Arnould & Price 1993). These studies have all regarded values as a deeply rooted, abstract reason of why consumers behave as they do. Despite this, its applications in real estate choices is still somewhat limited. The next section reviews the few studies investigating values as motives for consumer home choice.
Values and Consumer Home Choice

To the author's knowledge, only two studies examining values as motives for consumer home choice have been published. The first was by Lindberg et al (1989) who specifically examined the role of consumers' belief-value structures as motivation in the context of residential choice. A list of twelve life values (comfort, excitement, family, freedom, happiness, health, inner harmony, leisure, money, pleasure, security and togetherness) on a 13-point scale ranging from -6 to +6 was given out to thirty six respondents. They were required to rate their perceived life values as well as another list consisting of twelve housing attributes (cost, size and age of property; distance to downtown, friends and relatives, recreation, schools and work; neighbourhood facilities; noise level; reputation and transportation). In each of these housing attributes, four different levels were constructed and given quantifiable definitions. For example, size of the house was given four levels of 102, 66, 50 or 40 square metres while the attribute neighbourhood facilities was given very good, rather good, rather poor and very poor. Five to ten days later, the respondents were presented with the same lists again and asked to rate how much each of the housing attributes facilitated the attainment of the twelve life values. Results were generated using computational analysis. The study found that the housing attributes believed to have the strongest impact on value fulfilment were size of the house, distance to recreation and transportation facilities and that these attributes have the largest impact on the attainment of comfort, freedom and family. In contrast, the attributes with the least rated impact were age of the home and distance to downtown. The study was only limited by the fact that the respondents were students and not real home purchasers. It was felt that a different methodology design could have added to the richness of the data as it would have allowed the researchers to assess the "real" motives that guide real homebuyers to their "actual" home choice. This thesis aims to build on Lindberg et al's (1989) work by involving actual home buyers in the study.
The second study on values as motives for consumer home choice was the pilot study by Coolen and van Montfort (2001) described in Section 4.4.2.1. Using the means-end chain and laddering interview technique, they found that the motives for specific housing preferences were attributed to values such as privacy, order, tradition, safety, enjoyment of nature, comfortable, pleasure, freedom, independence and the enjoyment of life.

Other indirect implications that values were treated as motives can be seen in the studies discussed earlier in Chapter Three, where scholars in the areas of psychology, sociology, geography, mass communication and urban studies have found that homes were regarded as for example, as a refuge (Dupuis & Thorns 1998), a place where competence can be exercised (Doyle 1992), a secure base for development (Perkins & Thorns 1999) and a place where relationships with friends and relatives are enjoyed (Sixsmith 1986). The home as a refuge is closely associated with security proposed in Schwartz’s theory and Kahle’s List of Values. The home as a place where competence and development can be cultivated falls into the value, sense of achievement in Rokeach’s as well as Kahle’s work. The notion of the home being a place where friends and family are enjoyed ties in with Kahle’s warm relationships with others.

So far, this chapter has considered the literature on the motives underlying consumer home choice. Although there are many ways to classify motives and “there is no universal set of explanatory motives” (Britt 1950, p.667), the previous chapter (which discussed the contrasting perspectives between information processing model and experiential view) have set the background for considering the dual characterisation of utilitarian versus hedonic motives.

While work specifically on values such as the means-end model does not consider product attributes to be a motive, many marketing and tourism marketing studies have argued that consumers and consumption can be motivated by attributes due
to its economic value and rational reasoning (Correia, do Valle & Moço 2007; Derbaix & Pham 1991; Kim, Lee & Klenosky 2003; Sirakaya & Woodside 2005; Uysal & Jurowski 1994). Section 3.2 has already shown that consumers do place importance on attributes as they laboriously search, consider, compare and contrast a product's attributes before arriving at choice (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy 1990; Moore & Lehmann 1980, Punj, 1987, Punj and Brookes, 2002, Punj and Staelin, 1983). Additionally, as seen in the literature review in this chapter, real estate researchers have often accepted property characteristics such as size, number of bedrooms, location and views as motives for home choice (Benson et al. 1998; Bourassa, Hoesli & Sun 2003; Bourassa & Peng 1999; Chau, Ma & Ho 2001; Frew & Wilson 2002; Park & Lutz 1982; Rodriguez & Sirmans 1994; Rossini 1998). These attributes are utilitarian motives and are contrasted to their more hedonic counterparts. Table 4.1 summarises the studies exploring utilitarian versus hedonic motives in consumer home choice and categorises the motives discussed accordingly. The table demonstrates that the majority of real estate studies on consumer home choice have focussed on property attributes as utilitarian motives and do not often pull out the more deep-seated hedonic motives.

Therefore, compared to the economic, utilitarian aspects of home choice, the hedonic side has been less studied. Given that many consumers will consider utilitarian and hedonic benefits when making a choice (Derbaix & Pham 1991), an attempt should be made to appreciate the less understood aspects of decision-making in property purchases. There is also a need for a more comprehensive examination of the multiple and varied reasons that motivate consumer home choice, because a combination or interaction of these factors could contribute to the culmination of the “This is it!” experience. This thesis intends to further existing work on home buyer motives by incorporating all the possible factors, be they utilitarian or hedonic, that drive consumer home choice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Utilitarian Motives</th>
<th>Hedonic Motives</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>House numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Chau, Ma &amp; Ho 2001)</td>
<td>Apartment floor numbers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Privacy, order, tradition, safety, enjoyment of nature, pleasure, comfort, freedom, independence, enjoyment of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dennis 2006)</td>
<td>Size of dwelling or section, parking, number of bedrooms, age of dwelling and income size.</td>
<td>Not investigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Frew &amp; Wilson 2002)</td>
<td>Location of the property</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lindberg, Gärling &amp; Montgomery 1989)</td>
<td>Size of the house, distance to recreation and transportation facilities, etc</td>
<td>The attainment of comfort, freedom, and family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Park &amp; Lutz 1982)</td>
<td>24 basic attributes of homes, some of which include age of home, location, neighbourhood, resale value, size of home, tax amount, size of home, number of bedrooms, etc</td>
<td>Not investigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rodriguez &amp; Sirmans 1994)</td>
<td>A good view</td>
<td>Not investigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rossini 1998)</td>
<td>Low price, view/outlook, hills location, beach location, close to city, close to work, close to families, friends/relatives.</td>
<td>Not investigated</td>
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</table>
4.5 Gaps in Motivation Research in Real Estate Studies

Until now, the majority of the studies exploring motives underlying housing choices have taken very similar routes. Largely determined by the nature of housing research, these studies have focussed predominantly on the calculative, economic and utilitarian aspects of a property. It can be seen from the discussions above and in the preceding chapter, property researchers have paid scant regard to the non-calculative, non-functional hedonic motives that drive homebuyers' choices. Where an experiential view has been espoused (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001; Coolen & van Montfort 2001; Khoo & Ndubisi 2008; Munro & Smith 2008), research has been exploratory in nature. It is clear that there is little work, if any, to date which has investigated motives underlying consumer home choice in a comprehensive manner, mapping all of the definitive reasons that drive home choices. These are important factors to be considered given that economic motives alone has yet to provide explanations for the “This is it!” phenomenon in consumer home choice.

Another gap in past research on motives in real estate studies concerns the methodology. The following section will explore these limitations.

4.5.1 Methodological Issues

The first limitation of motivation research is that most of the literature arose out of quantitative approaches and critics have already drawn attention to the inability of these approaches to capture the increasing complexity of residential mobility. For example, Jameson and Nana (2004) who conducted a study on the impact of financial circumstances on tenure choices in New Zealand noted that information about housing affordability is well developed but information about pure preference is sparse. The issue of “pure” preference will be discussed in the next section.
4.5.1.1 **Stated Preference and Revealed Preference**

One primary issue in the investigation of motives in housing choice is the inherent reliance on either stated or revealed preferences. The stated preference approach is based on intended choices or hypothetical choices. Stated preference methods aim to derive the utility functions that individuals use to make choices (Timmermans, Molin & van Noortwijk 1994). To unravel the utility functions, respondents are presented with profiles (descriptions in terms of relevant attributes) of hypothetical choice alternatives. They are then asked to express their preference for these profiles. It is argued however, that the hypothetical homebuyer does not have a sound idea of his or her priorities and considerations until confronted with concrete alternatives in a real homebuying process. Kroes and Sheldon (1988) suggested that stated preference is only appropriate for experimental testing of hypotheses about the utility value of functional attributes. Despite this limitation, stated housing preferences in housing choice have been used extensively - indeed, Mulder (1996) observed that literature on this subject is vast.

In contrast to stated preference, the revealed preference approach uses observed market choices that individuals make to reveal their underlying preferences and to estimate their value for goods and services. Property researchers who have used the revealed preference approach are typically those who conduct surveys from retrospective data such as recent home purchasers. Actual house purchasers over certain geographical areas are surveyed to generate in-depth statistics such as the price of housing, purchaser characteristics, the household structure of purchasers, time spent looking for a house, method of sale when purchasing a house, method of discovery and number of homes seen before purchase (Crews & Dyhrberg 2004, New Zealand National Research Bureau, 2007; Oluwoye 1996; Rossini 1998). While not discounting the importance of the findings from these studies, survey methods used in the revealed preference approach are limited in that they do not allow for a deeper understanding of the motives that determine consumer
Secondary data, surveys and questionnaires yield insights observed by the researcher as an outsider but they also limit the researcher from going beyond mere descriptions of any given phenomenon. The limitations are caused, in part by the time differential between purchase point and survey point. Due to the length of time from purchase to survey, respondents may not recall their home buying decision-making process, nor their initial search criteria.

Both the stated and revealed preference approaches fit into what Gummesson (2000) referred to as the researcher's number one challenge - access to reality. According to Gummesson (2000), access refers to the opportunities available to find real world data by getting close to the object of study and this is an inherent weakness of the stated and revealed preference approaches. The approaches do not require researchers to get close to the topic nor the participants. This is particularly a problem because there is often a discrepancy between what consumers say they seek and what researchers identify as unspoken motives (Arnould & Price 1993). Moreover, it has been found that consumers themselves are sometimes not aware of the unconscious motives that influence them (Lawson et al. 1996). It has been argued that researchers should seek to understand the subject under investigation as lived by the consumer (Thompson, Locander & Pollio 1990). Such investigations will capture the meanings embodied in the words of the people under study and deepen understanding of the topic at hand (Schwandt 2000a; Thompson, Locander & Pollio 1990).

4.5.1.2 Ranking and Categorisation of Housing Attributes

Another problem evident in property research investigating motives underlying consumer home choice is the traditional use of multi-attribute attitude indices. These indices consist of attributes involving both financial costs and utilitarian benefits (see Boehm 1982; Boehm 1999; see Franklin 2000; Park & Lutz 1982;
Although arguably applicable for many studies in real estate that are quantitative in nature, the ranking of housing attributes is problematic when property researchers begin to impose it on respondents in qualitative studies, particularly those that intend to uncover important values that drive a consumer's home choice. In Coolen and van Montfort's (2001) qualitative study, they asked respondents to sort sixteen housing attributes (generated not by the respondents but by the researchers) into three categories. These attributes were utilitarian in nature - number of bedrooms, size of the kitchen, type of house, just to name a few. The respondents were then asked which category was the determining attribute for their home, should they buy a home. A laddering interview was then conducted based on the respondent's selection of ranked attributes. Motives inferred from rating housing attributes were presumably researcher driven, and could be argued as a less accurate reflection of the respondent's motives. This is evidenced in an early study by Collier (1957). In order to examine the distribution of affluence and poverty, the study employed teams of two researchers who drove along selected areas. They were asked to rank each house based on attributes such as size of the house, condition of yard, condition of walls and condition of chimney and roof, on a three point scale of poor, average or good. The study revealed conflicted values between the researchers and concluded that the accuracy of the results suffered because of this.

Another important point of critique concerns the validity and reliability issue of the methods used in these studies. It has been suggested that individuals may not be capable of articulating the reasons for their choice since they have little awareness of the nature of the cognitive process that mediates complex behaviour (Lawson et al. 1996; Nakanishi 1974). In addition, some people may choose to only express what they perceive as ideal because they are aware of being observed (Nakanishi 1974).
Of late, there has been acknowledgement in the real estate literature of the limitations of applying quantitative methods based on ranking utilitarian attributes (Diaz III & Hansz 2007; Winstanley, Thorns & Perkins 2002). This argues that the non-utilitarian and hedonic factors that may have influenced the decision-making process are overlooked and left uncovered. There is thus growing encouragement for real estate researchers to adopt qualitative approaches to allow for a closer observation and deeper understanding of the behaviour of home purchasers (Levy & Lee 2006). This will provide insight into home purchasers’ deep-seated motives, be they economic or non-economic, hedonic or utilitarian, extrinsic or intrinsic, functional or non-functional.

4.6 Methodological Approaches to Motivation

Given its origin in psychology, measurement of motivation typically involves the use of experimental-statistical tools, pre-coded questionnaires and large samples. There are an astonishing 230 tests and scales found to be related to the measurement of motives (Mayer, Faber & Xu 2007). Many of these scales however, are specifically designed according to context. For example, there are a variety of different scales that measure motivation only in schools (Vallerand et al. 1992; Waugh 2002; Wigfield & Guthrie 1997) and the workplace (Amabile et al. 1994). Then, there are those that are used to test academic motivation and athletic motivation (Li 1999; Pelletier et al. 1995; Trail & James 2001). There are even tests that focus on measuring only one motive such as fear of success and achievement (Midgley et al. 1998). In line with the focus of this study, only significant instruments relevant to uncovering consumption motives will be discussed in the following sections. Table 4.2 provides a snapshot of the instruments used in these studies, highlighting studies conducted on pull motives.
The following section reviews the literature on the measurement of motives in other areas outside real estate. This is important because not only does it give insight on what past researchers in other disciplines have used successfully but also serves as a building block when considering the best method to employ for the purpose of this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Method Used</th>
<th>Primary Research Question</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Arnould &amp; Price 1993)</td>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Why and how people decide on a river rafting adventure that costs much time and money?</td>
<td>River rafting provides a feeling of communion with friends, family and strangers; absorption and integration into nature, personal control, a spontaneous letting-be of the process, and a rediscovery of the personal sense of self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Belk, Sherry Jr &amp; Wallendorf 1988)</td>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Theme generation for small scale buying and selling?</td>
<td>People who participate in swap meets do so for freedom – to be free from institutional jobs, offices and income taxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Christensen &amp; Olson 2002)</td>
<td>ZMET</td>
<td>Why are people highly involved in mountain biking?</td>
<td>Highly involved mountain bikers ride for challenge, thrill, and a sense of accomplishment; to share experiences and connect with a group; to seek a transformation experience in their emotional and/or cognitive state; and to escape to nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dichter 1979)</td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Why do people smoke?</td>
<td>People smoke to combat stress and for a feeling of security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Embacher &amp; Buttle 1989) * Investigated pull motives</td>
<td>Kelly Repertory Grid</td>
<td>How English tourists decide on where to go and how they perceive Austria as a potential summer holiday destination?</td>
<td>People visit Austria for its attractive landscape, impressive scenery, many natural attractions, fresh air, accessibility by car, cleanliness, excellent food, suitable environment for children, high accommodation standards, well organised services, a lot of walking opportunities, lack of crowds, and suitability for the independent traveller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Klenosky 2002) * Investigated pull motives</td>
<td>Means End Chain &amp; Laddering</td>
<td>How do people choose where they want to go as a spring break destination?</td>
<td>People choose a destination based on a destinations attributes such as beaches, scenic resources, historic and cultural attractions, warm climate, party atmosphere and its potential as a new and unique location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Thyne 2001)</td>
<td>Means End Chain &amp; Laddering</td>
<td>Why do people visit museums?</td>
<td>People visit museums not only for education purposes but for a social outing, to be with their friends, and to spend quality time together. Other motives include feeling a sense of accomplishment (by being a good guardian because the child was learning from their experience) and for fun and entertainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Watkins 2006)</td>
<td>Means End Chain &amp; Laddering</td>
<td>How and why Japanese culture influence their decisions to travel?</td>
<td>The values relevant to Japanese tourism behaviour are culturally linked. Some of the values identified are security, privacy, freedom, warm relationships, fulfilment, self respect, knowledge, accomplishment, happiness and human relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6.1 Ethnography
Ethnography refers to the genre of writing that presents qualitative description of human social phenomena, based on fieldwork. Ethnography can be best described as an, “inquiry in a specific culture or setting: It calls for the acquired knowledge of the special language spoken in this setting, first-hand participation in some of the activities that take place there, and most critically, a deep reliance on intensive work with a few informants drawn from the setting” (Van Maanen 1982).

So this means that a researcher carrying out ethnography does at least one of the following:

- Direct, first-hand observation of daily behaviour
- Conversation with different levels of formality (small talk / long interviews)
- Detailed work with key consultants about particular areas of community
- In-depth interviewing
- Discovery of local beliefs and perceptions
- Longitudinal research
- Secondary analysis of relevant documents and archives

In marketing, ethnography is valued by product developers, who use the method to understand unstated desires or cultural practices that surround products. Arnould and Wallendorf (1994) highlighted that ethnography has a long history of practical applications in marketing and it has helped to produce actionable marketing strategies. The key benefit of ethnography is that it is a research method that allows the researcher to directly link what people say to what they actually do. This is of utmost importance for marketers seeking a thorough and accurate understanding of the phenomena studied.
In their ethnographic study investigating why and how people decide on a river rafting adventure, Arnould and Price (1993) combined qualitative research methods with quantitative data analysis. Interviewing outfitters, guides and participants, before, during, immediately after and well after the rafting experience, qualitative data collection took the researchers two years to complete. However, ethnographic studies do not necessarily have to extend to a period of months, let alone years. Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf (1988) conducted an ethnographic study on a swap meet (similar to a flea market) as a pilot study to identify themes for further investigation into the markets of small scale buying and selling. The three researchers were at the site for four days, participating in the swap meet. They also conducted observations and interviews from an etic (a distanced perspective) and emic (perspective of the participants engaged in the activity) point of view. At the end of the four days, they collected sets of field notes and journal material, photographs, videotapes and audio tapes. The study yielded several research themes and hypotheses for future research, one of which is the interplay of freedom versus rules at swap meets. The researchers also outlined ten advantages of ethnography compared to traditional positivist methods, some of which include a richer description of consumer behaviour phenomena, greater openness to the insights of consumers themselves, and findings that explicitly take into account the complexity of people’s lives and experiences.

In the case of the current study, the employment of ethnographic study was initially considered. Given a variety of difficulties mainly involving logistics (unlike the ethnographic studies conducted on swap meets, bikers, and river rafting, it was not possible to observe different groups of homebuyers simultaneously), it was decided that an ethnographic study should not be adopted. However, the positive aspects of ethnography such as obtaining insights from the consumers themselves and consideration for the complexities of people’s lives and experiences were taken into account when deliberating on the most suitable methodology for this thesis.
4.6.2 Kelly Repertory Grid (KRG)

An additional method for getting people to reveal the subjective meanings that they attach to their world is the Repertory Grid, developed by George Kelly in 1955 (Beail 1985; Marsden & Littler 2000; Reisenzein & Hofmann 1990). Kelly's metaphor of man-as-scientist captures the contention that all people strive to make sense out of their universe, out of themselves and out of the situations they encounter. To this end each person invents and re-invents an implicit theoretical framework which, be it well or badly designed, is a personal construct system. It is in terms of this system that the individual lives, anticipates events, determines behaviour, and asks questions. Kelly developed the repertory grid as a method for exploring personal construct systems (Fransella & Banister 1977). Thus it is an attempt to see other peoples' worlds as they see it, to understand their situations and their concerns.

Elements and constructs are the keystones of Kelly's methodology. Elements are the objects to be considered. Constructs are the qualities that people attribute to these objects. A construct is a way in which some things are alike and yet different from others. Kelly (1955) explains that a construct, in its minimum context, "is a way in which two elements are similar and contrast with the third" (Kelly 1955, p.61). Using this method, the respondent is presented with three elements and asked to say in what way two of them are alike and thereby different from the third. The respondent is asked to give both the emergent pole, that is, the way in which the two are alike, and the implicit or contrast pole, i.e. the way in which the single element differs from the pair. This process is repeated until the person either cannot identify any new constructs or until the researcher feels that an appropriate and representative set of constructs has been elicited.

As a technique of eliciting personal constructs, the validity and reliability of the repertory grid has been recognised (Shaw & McKnight 1992). The application of KRG in academic research is vast. Within marketing, KRG has
been used with shoppers to elucidate factors influencing their choices for shopping centres (Timmermans, Heuden & Westerveld 1982); consumers to examine the constructs they consider important when selecting food stores (Buttle 1985); people to identify the attributes perceived in meat products (Thomson & McEwan 1988); children to explore their perceptions on eight common vegetables (Baxter, Jack & Schröder 1998); tourists to investigate attributes that they consider significant when considering domestic short-break holiday destinations (Pike 2003) and; high school students to determine what they deem as salient attributes of a superior university (Pike 2004), just to name a few. To illustrate, one study used KRG to investigate the images held by English vacationers of Austria as a summer destination (Embacher & Buttle 1989). The grid was used to find out how tourists construed destination countries and to discover how they perceived Austria in terms of the constructs generated. Each respondent in the interview was shown a triad of countries (for example, Austria, Switzerland and Sweden) and asked to think of a way in which two of the countries are alike and the third one is different. Conducted on twenty five respondents, the interviews generated a total of 296 constructs. Austria was perceived as having a number of strengths and weaknesses. The strengths included attractive landscape, impressive scenery, many natural attractions, fresh air, accessibility by car, cleanliness, excellent food, suitable environment for children, high accommodation standards, well organised services, a lot of walking opportunities, lack of crowds, and suitability for the independent traveller. Perceived weaknesses were lack of beach facilities, an inadequate variety of activities particularly for children, a cool and reserved people, an inadequate supply of self-catering facilities, and cost. KRG according to the researchers has allowed them to see the world as their respondents see it. Consequently, “the image data the method generates have the potential for greater validity than those produced by structured questionnaires” (Embacher & Buttle 1989, p.7).
To this end, KRG is deemed to be an appropriate tool, given that this current study is interested in allowing themes to emerge from the respondents' own voice rather than impose those from the literature. Chapter Six explains how and when KRG is integrated as a research method in uncovering hedonic motives underlying consumer home choice.

4.6.3. Means-Ends Chain and Laddering

Depth interview was adapted as the main tool of motivational research to gain insight into underlying motives (Newman 1957). The basic idea in depth interview is that “fruitful insights into underlying motives can be derived from encouraging a respondent to follow his own line of thought with a minimum direction” (Collins & Montgomery 1969, p.107).

One form of depth interview is laddering, a qualitative interview technique which uses a series of probes, mainly asking ‘why is that important to you?’ (Thyne 2001). The laddering technique is commonly used with means-end chain in order to elicit hierarchical constructs that depict the relationship between product attributes and personal values (Veludo-de-Oliveira, Ikeda & Campomar 2006). As implied by its name, the means-end approach emphasises that consumers consume most products, services and experiences as a means to some end. The means–end chain is a model of consumers’ mental structures, depicting the way in which concrete characteristics of products, services and experiences are linked to the attainment of life values (Gutman 1982 1997; McIntosh & Thye 2005; Olson 1988; Pieters, Baumgartner & Allen 1995; Reynolds & Gutman 1988). More specifically, it emphasises the linkages among the attributes, the consequences resulting from the attributes and the personal values that the consequences reinforce. For example, a car of a specific brand (attribute) may be bought for its perceived status (consequences) and ultimately, for attaining a sense of achievement (values). These three levels of cognitive
abstraction that are hierarchical in nature form the chain from the "means" to the "end".

Within marketing, the means-end theory and laddering technique have already been used to identify the values that consumers consider important enough to influence their decision-making in a purchase choice situation (see for example Gutman 1982; see for example Gutman 1997; Pieters, Baumgartner & Allen 1995; Reynolds & Gutman 1988). The psychosocial consequences and values in the means-end chain are self-related, personal, and emotional and, therefore, are a major influence of the motivation that energises and directs consumer decision making. Thus, the means-end perspective can help marketers understand the primary motives for consumers' purchase choices. Specifically within tourism marketing research, Thyne (2001) used the technique to examine the values that motivate people to visit museums. An analysis of 12 interview transcripts found that the reasons people visit museums are socially-oriented, with factors such as fun and entertainment being identified. When concluding the study, Thyne noted that the methodology used in this study was better than a quantitative method because,

\[ \text{it is possible to determine the intrinsic values behind the respondents' visit to museum} \] \[ \text{and "enables a concrete attribute to be linked to an intrinsic value such as warm relationships with others (Thyne 2001, p.128).} \]

In her PhD thesis, Watkins (2006) used means-end and laddering interviews with fourteen Japanese tourists to identify the key values that motivate their decisions to visit New Zealand. The study found their motives for travel are shaped by underlying cultural assumptions specific to Japanese values.

For real estate research, the employment of means-end and laddering have been sighted in recent years (Coolen, Boelhouwer & van Driel 2002; Coolen & Hoekstra 2001; Coolen & van Montfort 2001). Although this initiative is to be applauded, there are several issues relating to the research procedure and implementation which are highlighted in section 4.5. It is believed that
these issues, if resolved, can place means-end chain and laddering as an effective tool in uncovering consumer motives in residential real estate choice. Critics have also argued that the level of abstraction as espoused by the means-end theory may hold for utilitarian products but not hedonic products (Mort & Rose 2004). Nevertheless, there has been increasing application of means-end chain and laddering in academic research because of its potential to identify salient determinants of consumer choices. Considering the potency of means-end and laddering in enabling people to define the nature of their resultant behaviour, the method employed by this thesis integrates to a certain extent, the use of these methods. This will be elaborated in the chapter on methodology (Chapter Six).

4.6.4. Photography
In line with the primary interest in motivation research in this thesis, is how home choice is determined in part by the subjective, non-utilitarian and hedonic motives of the homebuyers. For answers to this type of research question, Dichter offers some insights, “I must use interpretive research. I cannot exclusively rely on asking people or groups involved why they are doing what they are doing (Dichter 1978, p. 54).” The father of motivation research himself, Ernest Dichter, (Schwarzkopf 2007) lamented that the existing head-counting methods are “outmoded” and inefficient” to determine and understand consumer motivations” (Dichter 1947, p.432). Such methods he notes are “only scratching the surface of the motivations underlying why humans behave as they do (Dichter 1947, p.432).”

In an attempt to understand why people smoked, Dichter himself used a combination of observation techniques combined with extensive photography and made the following research notes,

...some people warmed their hands on the cigarette which they held in inverted fashion. Another type smoked and chewed gum at the same time. Some Western Union boys whom I caught in the
act were lighting each other’s cigarettes in a secretive fashion while goofing off and standing behind the corner. Observing human behaviour in this fashion became... a scientific discovery... why did people smoke? Obviously, not just because of the addiction to nicotine, but for many other reasons, too. Tightening your lips around a cigarette gives you a feeling of security... Therefore, cigarette smoking was a way of combating stress” (Dichter 1979, p.42).

Dichter’s use of photography as a research tool to uncover human motives and explain their consumption behaviour has been supported by other researchers (Lee et al. 2003) including those investigating hedonic motives (Belk, Sherry Jr & Wallendorf 1988; Christensen & Olson 2002; Schouten & McAlexander 1995; Wallendorf & Arnould 1991). Photographs have been used to interpret the meanings of symbols (Christensen & Olson 2002; Wallendorf & Arnould 1991) as well as to illustrate the themes that have emerged from their study (Schouten & McAlexander 1995). For many, photographs have assisted them in “reliving the lived experience” (Schouten & McAlexander 1995, p.47). These studies have shown how photographs can be used to stimulate inquiries that would have otherwise remained unexplored. Rather than using just text alone, the additions of photographs can evoke deeper elements of human consciousness.

The reliability and validity of photography in representing human thoughts have been recognised (Clark-IbaNez 2004; Collier 1957; Collier & Collier 1986; Epstein et al. 2006; Harper 2002). Harper (2002) observed that photo elicitation interviews will elicit a different kind of information rather than more information. This was evidenced in a comparative study on photo elicitation interviews and non-photographic interviews to explore the efficiencies of each method (Collier 1957). In examining how families adapted to residence among ethnically different people, he concluded:

*The characteristics of the two methods of interviewing can be simply stated. The material obtained with photographs was precise and at times even encyclopedic; the control interviews were less structured, rambling and freer in association. Statements in the*
photo interviews were in direct response to the graphic probes and different in character as the content of the pictures differed, whereas the characters of the control interviews seemed to be governed by the mood of the informants (Collier 1957, p. 856).

In a more recent study, Epstein et al (2006) used photographs when interviewing children with cancer to find out if they found specialised summer camps therapeutic. Although the photographs were taken by the researchers themselves, they found that,

the data collection technique that focused on photos taken by the researcher as an icebreaker activity to create a comfortable space for discussion and to open opportunities to involve children in different ways so as not to limit their responses. Using the PEI (Photo Elicitation Interview) influenced my relationship with the children in a positive way, even though we took the photographs. It allowed us to invite the children to take the lead in the interview; the photos created a relaxed atmosphere that allowed the child to enter and leave the interview place; and the photos stimulated opportunities for the children to bring their own photos to the interview to fill the gaps and talk of things and people that were missing in my photos.

The researchers however, found limitations as a result of using researcher-generated photos. They felt that they might have missed important findings from the study and advocated instead that photos used in elicitation interviews should be taken or owned by the respondents themselves. Other researchers who have used photographs in their study concurred and are of the opinion that allowing respondents to bring their own photographs gives them more control to talk about issues that are most relevant to their lives (Berman et al. 2001; Collier & Collier 1986; Epstein et al. 2006; Smith & Barker 2000).

The discussion above demonstrated that photographs could be potentially powerful in uncovering subjective, less tangible motives. As will be discussed later, it makes sense for the current study to utilise photography as a projective technique in an attempt to uncover deep-seated motives underlying consumer home choice. This thesis also considers the
recommendation made by past researchers using photographs to utilise the respondents' photos rather than the researcher's.

### 4.6.5. Projective Techniques

Inspiration for the use of projective techniques was gained from the field of clinical psychology where therapists have long been faced with the problem of patients unable or unwilling to say what they think or how they feel (Westfall, Boyd Jr & Campbell 1957; Williams 1957). The adoption of clinical tests such as word association, sentence completion, non-directive questioning and picture response has enabled consumers to reveal what they might otherwise choose to conceal about their preferences and buying behaviour (Rothwell 1955). Within psychology, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) by Murray (1943) is the most widely used scale amongst motivation researchers in the field of psychology today and is "arguably central to much interesting work in the motivational area" (Mayer, Faber & Xu 2007, p. 87). TAT is a projective technique that employs the use of cards containing ambiguous pictures. People respond to these pictures by telling stories about the characters and situations they see. The researchers then draw conclusions about the subject's motives from the nature of their stories.

For marketers, projective techniques are not used to measure (that is more the territory of other techniques such as surveys), but to uncover feelings, beliefs, attitudes and motives which many consumers find difficult to articulate (Webb 2002). Motivation researchers also claimed that these techniques are potent in obtaining the unconscious reasons that motivate consumers and explain complex consumption behaviours (Collins & Montgomery 1969; Haire 1950). Donoghue (1998) cited in Donoghue (2000) used unstructured interviews and projective techniques to explore and describe the role of social motives and consumer stereotyping in consumers' choice of large electrical household appliances. The projective techniques that were used included sentence completion and construction. The
construction techniques involved asking the subjects to respond to pictures that depicted ambiguous situations relevant to the aspects that were being studied. The subjects were asked to assume the role of and to characterise the person depicted in each picture. They had to describe what was going on in each picture, what gave rise to it and what they expected the outcome to be. The results of this study indicated among other things that social motives seemed to guide the subjects’ choice of large electrical household appliances. These subjects apparently formed stereotypes of their reference groups and allocated certain symbolic meanings to them, based on their ownership of large electrical household equipment. The projective techniques used in this study revealed consumers’ hidden attitudes, feelings, beliefs and motives that were intimately associated with the decision to buy or not to buy.

It is possible to use projective techniques to find out from a consumer what the phenomenological characteristics of various products may be, in other words the value character of a product in the consumer’s life and not the physical characteristics of the product (Haire 1950). Projective techniques have been acknowledged to be fundamental to consumer research in that they provide a greater depth of understanding of what people truly think and feel about a product (Boddy 2007; Will, Eadie & MacAskill 1996). Given its importance in uncovering underlying motives, projective techniques will be utilised as a research method in the present study.

4.6.6 Zaltman’s Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET)

ZMET is patented as “a technique for eliciting interconnected constructs that influence thought and behaviour” (Catchings-Castello 2000, p.7). Professor Gerald Zaltman, who invented the technique to be used in corporate market research, described ZMET as a research tool which will “allow people to understand their own thinking more fully and to share this thinking with researchers” (Catchings-Castello 2000, p.7).
Zaltman first used this technique on a market research trip in the rural areas of Nepal. He gave people cameras and film and asked them to take their own pictures. After developing the films, he asked the individuals to tell him what the pictures meant to them. The most striking observation was that in most pictures, people's feet were cut off from the pictures. During the interviews with them, Zaltman discovered that they did not aim the cameras wrongly. Rather, being barefoot was a sign of poverty and people chose to hide their bare feet in the pictures. This discovery of a “hidden meaning” in pictures prompted Zaltman's work on a new approach to marketing research. ZMET confirms earlier discussion on photography as a powerful research tool (see section 4.6.1) and uses photographs and pictures as entry points to understanding the consumer because they are basic, information-rich and attribute-laden (Coulter 1994). Photographs are used in ZMET because it is built on the basic premise that most human communication is non-verbal (Zaltman 1997; Zaltman & Higie 1993). This has been shown to be true by past studies which confirmed that only a maximum of 30% of the meaning in a social exchange is conveyed by words (Knapp 1980; Mehrabian 1971; Weiser 1988).

Photographs are used in ZMET because it contains metaphors that may be visual, verbal, mathematical or even musical (Zaltman 1997). ZMET contends that these metaphors are instrumental in an attempt to understand the consumer's voice. A metaphor is the perception of one thing as if it were a different kind of thing (Lakoff 1993). It compares seemingly unrelated subjects. For example, the dove is a metaphor for peace and freedom. The importance of metaphors in shaping people's thoughts and reality in their daily lives have been highlighted by many studies in the past (Gibbs Jr, Colston & Johnson 1996; Glucksberg 1995 2001; Glucksberg & McGlone 1999; Kövecses 2002; Short 2001). Most of these studies have associated use with scientific inquiry as they are deemed to assist researchers and psychotherapists in “surfacing important mental states that literal language might altogether miss or under represent” (Zaltman 1997, p.425).
In order to elicit important concepts from the participants' metaphors, it relies heavily on the use of the laddering interview technique. Throughout the interview, the laddering technique is employed to identify the linkages between concepts. ZMET is particularly interested in two types of linkages, both of which can have strategic relevance. The first is a general association between two concepts - one concept tends to activate or make conscious another concept (for example, table and chair are related in this way). This type of association tends to naturally be evidenced in the ZMET interview as participants mention related concepts. The second type of association is one of perceived or psychological causality. Participants may mention such connections spontaneously during their interview, but more often they are elicited via laddering probes. The linkages between concepts in ZMET are very similar to that of the means-end chain - the first general association between concepts in ZMET reflect the Attribute-Consequences fraction in the means-end chain while the second psychological association in ZMET is comparable to the Consequences-Values segment in means-end.

During one stage in a ZMET interview, the interviewer chooses three images at random and asks each participant to talk about similarities and differences between them. Details of the stages of the ZMET interview will be presented later in Chapter Six but this triad task is analogous to the Kelly Repertory Grid. To this end, ZMET seems to be an amalgamation of at least four of the five techniques discussed in sections 4.6.1 to 4.6.5 - it incorporates the Kelly Repertory Grid, projective technique, photography, means-end chain theory and laddering, all of which are instrumental in probing deeper, the underlying less tangible aspects of motives for home choice. In addition, it includes the positive elements of ethnography such as allowing the respondents to provide insights from their own voice.
Given that the method is relatively new, academic studies adopting ZMET as a research method have only been sighted recently. One study employed ZMET to compare the experiences between male and female students in a campus ministry organisation (Sease 2005) while another used ZMET to examine the differences between black and white students with regards to their thoughts and feelings about a certain university (Vorell, Theses & Center 2003).

Christiansen and Olson (2002) have used ZMET to elicit consumer’s motives for their involvement with mountain biking. Having interviewed fifteen very highly involved mountain bikers, their study found four broad meaning themes associated with mountain biking. The four themes are (a) riding for challenge, thrill, and a sense of accomplishment; (b) sharing experiences and connecting with a group; (c) seeking a transformation experience in their emotional and/or cognitive state; and (d) escaping to nature (Christensen & Olson 2002, p.487). Their study also found that ZMET “is able to tap into consumers’ knowledge that lies well below the surface of everyday conscious awareness” and elicited “vivid and detailed meanings in consumers’ mental models, some of which are deep and perhaps unconscious” (Christensen & Olson 2002, p.497).

Lee et al (2003) also used ZMET to explore consumers’ risk perception in the adoption of 3G mobile banking services. Using eight participants, their study found that consumers perceive 3G mobile banking services to increase one’s self prestige hence reducing social and psychological risk. They also noted the advantage in using ZMET over traditional research because the “consumers’ voices are less constrained by the issues and questions framed by survey designers and focus-group moderators” (Lee et al. 2003, p.342).

Given all the advantages discussed above, coupled with the recent call for property researchers to adopt qualitative study in order to better understand real estate consumers, ZMET was deemed to be the most suited to meet the
aims of this research. As a research method, ZMET will be discussed in more
detail in Chapter Six.

4.7 Conclusion
Although the study of motives can be and has been applied in many
disciplines, this chapter began by reviewing the literature specific to the
discipline of residential real estate. The review identified a dearth of literature
relating specifically to pull motives in housing research (Sirgy, Grzeskowiak &
Su 2005) and highlighted the potential to understand more fully the
complexity of the home-buying process. The literature also recognised a
need to develop a comprehensive understanding of what motivated people to
buy what they did when they are presented with alternatives. Furthermore,
previous research on motives in housing choice has been mostly guided with
economic considerations whereby motives are viewed in terms of utilitarian
attributes and values. Although illuminating, this research has not been able
to uncover deeper motives to answer the “why” questions – why homebuyers
end up buying something different than what they initially set out to buy, why
they sometimes pay more than what a property is worth, why they buy after
viewing only a few properties, why they choose a particular house and not
another.

This chapter extends the discussion from the preceding chapter on the
experiential view, and establishes a conceptual framework from which the
study of hedonic motives for residential real estate purchases can be
investigated. It presents past studies on hedonic motives from the literature
of both consumer behaviour and real estate. While consumer researchers
have long ago begun to address the various issues, property researchers
have only just started to acknowledge the limitations of the rational man
approach, the shortcomings of studies focussing only on economic factors
and the drawbacks of employing quantitative methods. The literature review
in this chapter highlights that there is yet no overarching framework of
motives underlying consumer home choice. This suggests the need for a qualitative approach which attempts to uncover the factors that drive homebuyers to their choice. It is proposed that this is carried out using ZMET because it appears to be a comprehensive method that incorporates other qualitative techniques (photography, means-end chain theory, laddering, Kelly Repertory Grid, projective technique and aspects of ethnography) that have been used in past research to encourage people to talk about their deep seated motives.

This chapter has considered two different levels of motives (motives for why people buy and motives for what people buy), the bipolarity of motives (utilitarian versus hedonic) and the methodologies used for uncovering motives (quantitative and qualitative). It has guided the direction of this thesis – to investigate the hedonic motives underlying why people buy what they do by utilising a selection of qualitative research techniques.
CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Literature Review and Research Objectives

5.1 Introduction
This chapter reviews the literature presented in the three preceding chapters and outlines the research objectives stemming from this literature.

5.2 Summary of Literature
An understanding of consumer motives in their selection of a home is pertinent for the success of real estate marketing and residential sales strategies. Insights into the unique peculiarities of consumer motives and behaviour within this market also have important implications for housing practitioners such as designers, constructors and realtors. However, the literature reviewed in Chapter Two reveals that most property research is studied on a macro level with theories conceptually grounded in economics and finance. The main criticism is that many of these studies have overlooked the complexities of human behaviour and motive. Therefore, it is the primary aim of this thesis to understand the motives underlying consumers’ home choices from the consumer’s perspective rather than to test specific hypotheses or to impose pre-determined characteristics previously identified in the literature. The main question for this thesis stems from this aim and reads,

What are the motives underlying a consumer’s home choice?

To assist in answering the research question, a number of specific research objectives were identified. These were consequently, outlined in Chapter One
and repeating them here is an appropriate step towards explaining how they have been met thus far. The first specific objective of this thesis was to evaluate past and current approaches to the study of consumer home choice in real estate research. This objective was met in Chapter Two. The literature reviewed in this chapter emphasises the fact that property research has adopted a very simplistic economic assumption of universal human motives. A majority of these studies have assumed utility maximisation of housing consumers in their selection and choice of residential properties. A significant number of these studies also assume that housing choice will vary according to family life cycle and demographic variables. Not surprisingly, these assumptions provide most insights when applied to economic issues such as the determination of house prices and tend to lead to economic models and financial conclusions. Although a valuable approach within economics, these studies seem to have forgotten that the reasons homebuyers attribute to their home choices could also be non-economic and non-calculative. Thus, the main question for this thesis is extended to read,

**What are the motives underlying a consumer's home choice and how do hedonic factors, if any, impact on choice?**

In order to answer this question, the limitations of property research discussed in Chapter Two means literature outside the discipline of real estate had to be sought. This led to the second research objective, which was to examine and critique the relevant marketing literature relating to motives behind consumer choice. This objective was met by Chapter Three which detailed non-economic studies examining the complexities of home purchases through its discussion on the experiential view. The literature review found that increasing studies in this area in recent years have provided valuable insights into the relationship between housing, its consumers, their environment and the wider society. The consumer behaviour literature has also introduced the concept of non-utilitarian and less tangible factors such as feelings and emotion to the study of consumer
home choice, suggesting that homebuyers may not necessarily purchase
based on economic decision-making models. This means that they may not
necessarily go through lengthy information search and extensive information
processing before arriving at a choice. By addressing Objective Two, the
literature review on choice in consumer research has opened doors to the
possibility that consumer home choice can be constructed on the spot rather
than through calculative utility maximisation. The literature in Chapter Three
therefore, confirmed the need to understand the factors that motivate
homebuyers’ choices from a behavioural perspective.

The necessity to comprehend the motives that underlie consumer choice
demands that a literature review be conducted on consumer motives.
Chapter Four first looked at the different ways in which “motive” has been
treated. From this, it was evident that there is little consensus regarding the
differences between the terms “motives” and “motivation”. However, the
literature review helped to clarify that this thesis focusses on the needs and
reasons for choice, rather than the strength of drives. Review on the
classification of motives in the same chapter provided a theoretical
understanding of the dual characterisations of motives (push versus pull and
utilitarian versus hedonic). While push versus pull are motives characterised
as relating to two separate stages in the decision-making process – one
focussing on whether to buy or not to buy, the other on what to buy, utilitarian
versus hedonic are different motives at two ends of the scale relating to one
stage in time, and can be examined under both stages of the decision-
making process. The literature revealed that property attributes are
commonly applied as utilitarian motives and these are compared and
contrasted with studies that have operationalised personal values as hedonic
motives. Table 5.1 below illustrates the two dimensions from which the dual
characterisation of motives has been studied. Within real estate, the non-
shaded area shows the area where most studies have been conducted.
Table 5.1: Research Gap in Residential Housing Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>To Buy or not to Buy</th>
<th>What to Buy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Utilitarian</td>
<td>Utilitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedonic</td>
<td>Hedonic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lightly shaded area is where there is less academic attention while the darkest shaded area is what Smith and Munro (2008) refer to as the "black box" – areas that are largely ignored. It is hence the aim of this thesis to address the lack of research illuminated in the black box; to identify the motives that drive homebuyers to their ultimate home choice and to examine the links between these choice motives.

In order to address the aim of this thesis, the choice of method to be employed is pertinent, hence the third objective of this thesis was set to establish and apply an appropriate methodology to uncover motivational factors influencing consumer home choice. This objective was satisfied through a review of the approaches to studying motives in Chapter Four. The review discovered inherent difficulties in the approaches used in real estate research. First of all, the positivist orientation to motivation research that has dominated real estate literature has not been useful in addressing the question of why people chose the house they did. Study after study in real estate found mainly utilitarian motives underlying home choice. The focus on utilitarian factors is chiefly caused by the economic assumption that the studies adopted - the studies used computational analysis of dataset figures and were designed to find only economic motives. Even when non-positivistic research was conducted, there were numerous issues. The ranking and categorisation of utilitarian attributes have been criticised for overlooking hedonic factors that may have influenced the decision-making process. The use of the decision plan model in exploring buyers' motives is also attacked by critics because it implies that consumers always behave rationally and rigidly in their decision-making process. When the means end chain theory
was used, it was limiting because interviews started with utilitarian attributes generated by the researchers and not the respondents. Many of these studies were also problematic because they were based on hypothetical and not real choices. Accordingly, the real motives of real homebuyers was left uncovered.

Nevertheless, Table 5.2 reveals that a number of studies have indirectly examined hedonic motives underlying housing choice. Not all of these studies necessarily started out with a focus to uncover motives but the subject of motive was touched on in their investigations. Some studies have inadvertently uncovered motives when investigating the meaning of homes (Doyle 1992; Dupuis & Thorns 1996; Dupuis & Thorns 1998; Sixsmith 1986). Others have tested specific utilitarian motives such as location (Frew & Wilson 2002), good views (Rodriguez & Sirmans 1994), lucky property numbers (Bourassa & Peng 1999; Chau, Ma & Ho 2001), general property attributes (Park et al. 1981; Park & Lutz 1982) and a few have examined personal values as motives underlying housing preferences (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001; Coolen & van Montfort 2001; Lindberg, Gärling & Montgomery 1989; Lindberg et al. 1987).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Motives Uncovered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Bourassa &amp; Peng 1999)</td>
<td>To investigate the influence of luck as a motive for people paying high prices for their homes</td>
<td>Hedonic price analysis</td>
<td>House numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chau, Ma &amp; Ho 2001)</td>
<td>To establish if lucky floor numbers are motives for Chinese buyers pay more</td>
<td>Regression analysis</td>
<td>Apartment floor numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Coolen &amp; Hoekstra 2001; Coolen &amp; van Montfort 2001)</td>
<td>To explain preferences for housing attributes in terms of values and goals.</td>
<td>Means-end chain theory and laddering</td>
<td>Privacy, safety, order, tradition, enjoyment of nature, comfortable, pleasure, freedom, independence and the enjoyment of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Doyle 1992)</td>
<td>To investigate the meaning of homes for people in different stages of life</td>
<td>None (conceptual paper)</td>
<td>Meanings of homes are vast different, from utilitarian ones such as that of shelter to more hedonic ones like a symbol of achievement and a statement of values to the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dupuis &amp; Thorns 1996)</td>
<td>To investigate the meaning of homes for older people</td>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
<td>Family continuity and inheritance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dupuis &amp; Thorns 1998)</td>
<td>To investigate the meaning of homes to New Zealanders</td>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
<td>Personal (refuge and escape from the outside world); Social (enjoyment with family) and historical (nostalgia and memory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Frew &amp; Wilson 2002)</td>
<td>To estimate the impact of location on property value</td>
<td>Regression analysis</td>
<td>Location of the property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lindberg, Gärling &amp; Montgomery 1989; Lindberg et al. 1987)</td>
<td>To investigate the role of consumers' belief-value structures on housing preferences</td>
<td>Questionnaires, Likert scale</td>
<td>Specific utilitarian housing attributes (size of the house, distance to recreation and transportation facilities) have large effects on the attainment of comfort, freedom, and family.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 5.2, the non-shaded areas are studies conducted quantitatively while the shaded area highlights studies that were approached in a qualitative manner. The study by Park and Lutz (1982) is an exception as it adopts a mixed-method approach. Two points are evident from this table: 1) studies that explored motives behind consumer home choice were generally positivistic in nature and adopted a quantitative approach to research and 2) except for Coolen and van Montfort (2001), qualitative studies undertaken on homes and housing were actually investigations into the meaning of homes rather than studies focussing on the motives underlying home choices. The literature has shown that qualitative research can provide a crucial perspective not offered by the positivist perspective alone.

Given that property research on motives is mostly carried out quantitatively, studies outside real estate on methodological approaches to motives is assessed. The literature identified a few qualitative techniques that have been used to uncover motives: Projective techniques have been found to be valuable in providing a deeper understanding of what people truly think and feel about their choices whilst the KRG is another valuable tool for getting
people to reveal their intrinsic motives. Photography is also highlighted as a reliable method in capturing human thoughts. The means-end chain theory and laddering technique are also useful in getting underneath utilitarian and economic motives, expressed and defined by the respondents themselves. Most interestingly, these approaches are all found to have been integrated within ZMET. Given that ZMET utilises photographs and images generated by the respondents themselves, this qualitative technique is particularly practical in an attempt to understand the respondents’ world as they see it. This fulfils the third research objective that was set out; apply an appropriate methodology to uncover the motivational factors underlying consumer home choice.

The literature reviewed thus far indicates the need to derive an overarching framework that aids in understanding consumer home choice. This is in line with the fourth objective for this research, that is, to produce a theoretical model of the motives behind consumer home choice. It must be highlighted at this point that the literature was reviewed not with the goal of developing a causal model or a set of testable hypotheses but rather to mine for sensitising concepts that will serve as catalysts for the research questions and objectives.

The last objective for this research was to evaluate the implications of the findings on the residential real estate market. It is hoped that the employment of ZMET as a method will allow for an in-depth understanding of the motives underlying consumer home choice and will help uncover important aspects of non-economic motives as well as economic ones from the perspective of the homebuyers as expressed by the respondents themselves. The last two objectives will be addressed in Chapters Seven and Eight.
CHAPTER SIX

Methodology

6.1 Introduction

“We have added up numbers of people, and of pantries and of products, until we have amassed figures without any human side ... and as researchers we do not get “underneath” it very much”

(Britt 1950, p.671)

Britt (1950) made the above observation on consumer motives over five decades ago but his statement still holds true for real estate research today. The aim of this thesis is to get “underneath” the surface. To do this, the third research objective for this thesis was to apply an appropriate methodology to uncover the motivational factors underlying consumer home choice. Chapter Four concludes with the suggestion that a qualitative research methodology would be best suited for this study. The initial goal of this chapter is to set out the theoretical perspectives that underpin this research. The major paradigms for guiding social science research are discussed. Then, the appropriateness of an interpretivist approach is highlighted and how this in turn guides the selection of the most effective method for the study is presented.

This is followed by an introduction of the qualitative perspective that this thesis follows and justification is provided as to why it is the most suitable method of research and analysis for this study. Section 6.4.1 explains the rationale for adopting ZMET, a research method that employs the use of photography to represent human thoughts.
Next the stages of the research process are detailed. This is preceded by a discussion on the validity of qualitative research and the measures employed within the study to ensure credibility, dependability and conformability. Finally, a summary of the chapter is presented.

6.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is best termed as “the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontological and epistemologically fundamental ways” (Guba & Lincoln 1994, p.66). The chosen paradigm defines for the researcher the nature of reality and the nature of social beings (ontology); the fundamental goal of research, including values and ethics (axiology); and the relationship between the knower and what can be known (epistemology) (Hudson & Ozanne 1988). The two major paradigms for guiding social science research, positivism and interpretivism, are discussed in the following sections.

6.2.1 Positivism

Positivism, also referred to as logical empiricism, naturalism and behaviourism, sees scientific research as an "organised method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws" which can be used to predict future activity (Neuman 2000,p.66). Positivist researchers generally ascribe to the theory that human behaviour is determined, that the social world exists externally and that there is a "single apprehensible reality composed of discrete elements whose nature can be known and categorised" (Hudson & Ozanne 1988; Perry, Riege & Brown 1999, p.16); and measured objectively (Carson et al. 2001; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991) rather than subjectively. Positivist researchers see the
world as a “one way mirror” (Guba & Lincoln 1994, p.110) because the data they gather and the analysis they conduct are value-free.

Positivist studies therefore tend to test theory in order to increase the predictive understanding of certain phenomena (Myers & Avison 2002) for the purpose of generalisation. However, it is argued that besides being statistically meaningful, generalisations do not always apply accurately to individuals. Just because on average most homebuyers buy a three-bedroom property, it does not necessarily follow that a particular individual will start out wanting a three-bedroom home. Although both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately within any paradigm, positivist researchers tend to use quantitative methods such as surveys and experiments - the ranking of attributes and survey approaches using regression analysis presented in Chapter Four, are clearly grounded in the positivist paradigm. The theory proposed by researchers within this paradigm is focused on proving or disproving a hypothesis with less emphasis placed on the discussion of the process through which the hypotheses was developed. Thus, it takes no account of the meanings and purposes attached by human beings to their behaviour or of the context in which the behaviour takes place. This is because context has been treated in a variety of different ways by positivists. On the one hand, it is seen as if it were a constant black box that could be ignored when it came to analysing actual behavior. Alternatively, it has been viewed as an independent, exogenous variable that influenced dependent, endogenous variables such as motivation, cognition or choice behavior (Mitchell & Dacin 1996; Moorthy, Ratchford & Talukdar 1997). In other words, the variables investigated are variables “assumed” to be part of the context.

These assumptions of positivism are appropriate in natural science, as illustrated by an example given by Perry, Riege and Brown (1999): “every zoologist in the world will count the same number of bones in a dead kingfisher” (p. 17). However, the positivist view might be less suitable for
social science research that takes into account humans' real-life experience. In fact, Perry, Riege and Brown (1999) strongly advocate that social science researchers consider the complex nature of reality and the research problem, instead of seeking only to provide causal explanations within a closed system. In addition, Britt (1950) remarked that, "as marketing people, some of us have been so busy quantifying that we have forgotten about qualitative research. It is my contention that the great majority of market research questionnaires do not come reasonably close to finding out why and how people think and act as they do [italics in original]" (p. 671).

As highlighted in the previous chapters, property researchers have in the past, remained largely situated within the positivist paradigm. Studies in real estate have quantitatively measured independent facts to describe phenomena. Their data, based on what can be observed and measured, seeks to explain and predict what will happen by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its fundamental constructs. For instance, respondents are presented with researcher-generated lists of utilitarian attributes from which to choose from and rank according to preference or importance (Lindberg, Gärling & Montgomery 1989; Macoloo 1989; Park & Lutz 1982; Rossini 1998). On the grounds that each individual is unique, this thesis wishes to move away from the traditional method of inquiry adopted by past property researchers. Rather than approaching measurement with the idea of constructing a fixed instrument or set of questions, the primary aim of this research is to appreciate the underlying motives that influence consumers' home choices by allowing the answers to emerge from the point of view of the homebuyers themselves. The aim of this research is to capture the reasons for buying a particular home in its entirety, from the consumer's own voice, as they see them. For this reason, it is concluded that the interpretive paradigm is best suited to the main aim of the research.
The following section will elaborate on the ontological, axiological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the interpretivist approach taken in the primary research.

### 6.2.2 Interpretivism and Its Appropriateness to the Research Context

Some researchers have posited that the interpretive paradigm can be further divided into two other major alternative inquiry paradigms namely realism and constructivism (Perry, Alizadeh & Riege 1997). However, this thesis employs a general interpretive stance based on the search for understanding and meaning identified in its ontological, epistemological and methodological positions. Interpretivism, also known by other labels such as qualitative research (Van Maanen, Dabbs & Faulkner 1982) and humanistic research (Hirschman 1986), allows the focus of research to be on understanding what is happening in a given context (Carson et al. 2001). It can be described as “the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman 2000, p.71). Interpretive researchers therefore, seek to learn what is meaningful or relevant to the people being studied or how individuals experience their lives. Interpretive researchers study the purpose and meaning behind a behaviour and not just external or observable behaviour (Neuman 2000).

In contrast to positivism, interpretivism holds a relativist ontology; that is, there is no single unitary reality apart from our perceptions (Krauss 2005; Schwandt 2000b). Given that each of us experiences from our own point of view, each of us also experiences a different reality. Thus, the basic ontological stance of interpretivist research assumes reality to be only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible because it is constructed and influenced by political, cultural, social and historical values (Guba & Lincoln 1994; Hudson & Ozanne 1988). For an interpretivist researcher, reality is
socially constructed and deals with complicated social phenomena involving reflexive people (Healy & Perry 2000). The overriding goal of an interpretivist researcher is understanding and as Denzin (2000) notes, there is no single understanding from an interpretivist perspective. For an interpretivist researcher, the world is so complex and changing, which in turn results in the research being a continuing process of understanding and will not offer “the” understanding but “an” understanding. Interpretivists seek to understand the phenomenon and interpret the respondent’s experiences in their own terms. Given these assumptions, an interpretivist researcher would study people in their context and according to their perspective, not from the perspective of the researcher (Hudson & Ozanne 1988).

As highlighted by Easterby-Smith et al (2002), the relationship between research philosophy and research methodology is an important one because it allows the researcher to think about possible restrictions that may impinge on the research. It also helps the researcher make a more informed decision about what research approach to adopt. In other words, it is important to understand the epistemological and ontological standpoint of the researcher, because these influence the way the research questions are developed, how those questions are operationalised and the research carried out. Knox (2004) discussed the “elective affinity”, a relationship between research philosophy, methodology and methods that allows a researcher to recognise that one’s “ontological views do select, or lend themselves to certain research approaches and that being aware of these views in turn allows one to select what is best from the many tools available for a specific piece of research (p. 124). Given the ontological and epistemological philosophies of the interpretivist paradigm coupled with the limitations inherent in quantitative techniques which have already been discussed, this thesis argues that a qualitative methodology would be the most appropriate means to understanding consumer home choice. The contrasting characteristics of positivism and interpretivism are summarised and presented in Table 6.1 below.
Table 6.1: Contrasting Positivism and Interpretivism: Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axioms</th>
<th>Positivist Paradigm</th>
<th>Interpretivist Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of reality</td>
<td>Reality is single, tangible and fragmentable</td>
<td>Realities are multiple, constructed and holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to reality</td>
<td>Have direct access to the real world</td>
<td>No direct access to the real world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of social beings</td>
<td>Deterministic and reactive</td>
<td>Voluntaristic and proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of knower to the known</td>
<td>Knower and known are independent, a dualism</td>
<td>Knower and known are interactive and inseparable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships between reality and research</td>
<td>Possible to obtain hard, secure, objective knowledge</td>
<td>Understood through &quot;perceived&quot; knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of generalisation</td>
<td>Research focuses on generalisation and abstraction. Though governed by hypotheses and stated theories</td>
<td>Research focus on the specific and concrete. Seek to understand specific context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge generated</td>
<td>Time and context free generalisation (nomothetic statements) are possible</td>
<td>Only time and context bound working hypotheses (ideographic statements) are possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of causal linkages</td>
<td>There are real causes, temporally precedent to or simultaneous with their effects</td>
<td>All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of research</td>
<td>Focuses on description and explanation</td>
<td>Focuses on understanding and interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques used</td>
<td>Formalised statistical and mathematical methods</td>
<td>Primarily non-quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of researcher</td>
<td>Detached, external observer</td>
<td>Researcher wants to experience what they studying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aims to discover external reality rather than creating the object of the study</td>
<td>Partially and co-created what is studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strives to use rational, consistent, verbal, logical approach</td>
<td>Use of pre-understanding is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distinction between science and personal experience</td>
<td>Accept influence from both science and personal experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of values</td>
<td>Seeks to maintain clear distinction between facts and value judgements hence inquiry is value-free</td>
<td>Distinction between facts and value judgements are less clear because inquiry is value-bound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.2.1 The Assessment of Rigour and Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are terms more commonly associated with positivist research (Golafshani 2003; Morse et al. 2002). This thesis adopts an interpretivist perspective hence a discussion of trustworthiness and rigour of the data is more relevant (Carson et al. 2001). Although some may argue that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative studies, it has been acknowledged that qualitative researchers need to demonstrate that their studies are credible and that there should be some form of validity checks to do so. Although the perspectives of rigour and trustworthiness are different amongst many researchers, there is a general consensus that the routine techniques for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative data are member checking, triangulation, thick description, peer reviews and external audits (Creswell & Miller 2000; Lincoln & Guba 2000; Maxwell 2002). Nevertheless, many have developed their own concepts of quality, rigour and trustworthiness (Carson et al. 2001; Davies & Dodd 2002; Denzin & Lincoln 2005 2008; Lincoln & Guba 2000; Maxwell 2002; Miles & Huberman 1994; Moisander & Valtonen 2006; Morse et al. 2002; Patton 2002; Strauss & Corbin 2008; Wallendorf & Belk 1989).

However, Carson et al (2001)’s compilation of thirteen evaluation techniques for ensuring trustworthiness (see Table 6.2) particularly stands out from the above studies because they are undeniably more wide-ranging (Levy 2005). More importantly, the thirteen techniques are mapped out specifically for qualitative marketing researchers and are more relevant for this thesis. Each of these thirteen techniques will be assessed in the context of this study so that the study achieved the requirements of credibility, dependability and conformability. The assessment is presented in Section 6.7.

This section has argued the theoretical perspective for this study – the next section focuses on the justification of the appropriate method.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Techniques for Evaluating Trustworthiness of Qualitative Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Researching in the field that is in the natural setting of the phenomena, for example, a respondent's own surroundings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Using purposive sampling rather than statistically random sampling, for example where interviewees might be chosen more because of their relevance than because they were representative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comparing results across different contexts such as different user types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Depth and intimacy of interviewing, like one-to-one conversations/discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Prolonged and consistent observation, like observations of how consumers behaved across numerous/similar retail outlets and many time periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Negative case analysis, that is, asking questions designed to find exceptions to a rule in a theory that therefore invalidate the &quot;rule&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Debriefing by peers to help researchers search out in their minds what they have seen or heard, which helps guard against bias and produces new insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Maintaining journals or memos of what was done and thought throughout the research study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Triangulation of data from several sources, such as different interviewees and newspaper cuttings, from different sites, and from different methods of collection and analysis, for example using observations and interview data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Checks by members of the group, that is, asking respondents to comment on draft facts and their interpretations of those facts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Independent audits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Having a number of interviewees carry out interviews, followed by interviewers discussing the meaning and interpretations of the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Presenting the findings of the research study to the original respondents in a focus group meeting and then inviting respondents to comment and provide feedback and discussion in relation to the findings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Carson et al (2001)
6.3 The Research Method

The interpretivist research philosophy and qualitative methodology, together with consideration for the research question and objectives guide the choice of the most appropriate data collection method. Chapter Four outlined six qualitative methods used in consumer motivation research that are appropriate for the investigation of consumer home choice (projective techniques, photography, Kelly repertory grid, means-end chain and laddering, ethnography and ZMET). This has enabled the present study to consider alternative means of eliciting information from respondents. The same chapter concluded that ZMET appears to be the most practical method for studying consumer motives in residential real estate because it incorporates the other techniques within the method. This section now evaluates in greater depth, the applicability of ZMET in this study.

6.3.1 ZMET and the Reasons Why

The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) was first developed for marketing research by Harvard Business School Professor Gerald Zaltman and is the first patented marketing research tool in the United States (Catchings-Castello 2000). The primary objective of ZMET is to uncover consumer choice with an in-depth understanding by combining research and theory from neurobiology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, and art theory (Kelly 2002; Zaltman & Higie 1993).

ZMET is a ten step one-to-one interview based on images collected or taken by the respondents. Prior to the interview, participants are instructed to collect or take between eight and twelve photographs and/or pictures that will convey their thoughts and feelings about the topic under investigation (Zaltman 1997 2003; Zaltman & Coulter 1995; Zaltman & Higie 1993). A step by step guide to the interview process is detailed later but the interview
begins by asking the respondent to choose their first picture and explain how this image represents his or her feelings about the subject under study.

ZMET is built on the basis of nine premises about thought and communication. Zaltman outlined these nine premises in a 1997 article for the Journal of Marketing research. The nine premises are:-

1. Thought is image-based, not word-based
2. Most communication is nonverbal
3. Cognition is embodied
4. Metaphor is central to thought
5. Metaphors are important in eliciting hidden knowledge
6. Emotion and reason are equally important and co-mingle in decision making
7. Most thought, emotion and learning occur without awareness
8. Mental models guide the selection and processing of stimuli
9. Different mental models may interact.

In summary, these nine premises posit that people's spoken and visual metaphors are extremely important in learning their conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings about a topic. However, because most human meaning is shared nonverbally, ZMET uses visual images gathered and/or generated by consumers to elicit and probe the metaphors that represent their thoughts and feelings about any topic under study (Catchings-Castello 2000; Christensen & Olson 2002; Lee et al. 2003; Sease 2005; Woodside 2004). For this reason, ZMET is projective in nature because it seeks to draw out thoughts and feelings by getting participants to think and reflect in terms of metaphors. The idea is to use a less direct method to less obtrusively bring to surface the feelings and thoughts on the topic at hand. Quantitative methods that have been used in the past have not allowed for consumers' feelings and emotions to be tapped. Thus, ZMET as a projective technique, is particularly suited to the collection and analysis of data in a
study that seeks to elicit underlying motives that surpasses the physical attributes of a property.

Premise four and five postulate that these images are important units of analysis and are referred to by Zaltman as metaphors (Zaltman & Coulter 1995; Zaltman & Higie 1993; Zaltman & Zaltman 2008). A metaphor is the representation of one thing (a thought, feeling, behaviour, action) in terms of another thing (a picture of baby screaming, a tree, mountains, the sound of birds, etc) (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). An example given earlier was the dove being a metaphor for peace and freedom. In a past study on pantyhose wearing, a participant used an image of a telephone cord twisted tightly around a microwave oven to represent the hot, uncomfortable feelings she went through with the undergarment (Catchings-Castello 2000). Another example of this is provided by Zaltman and Higie (1993) in which a picture of a boy and dog were used to infer what financial success means. From the picture, the participant in the study expressed that financial success means being “able to have and support a family and have pets and to be able to spend time with them” (Zaltman & Higie 1993, p.16). In this sense, the pictures participants bring to the interview are metaphors that serve as entry points into their thinking process.

The concept of metaphor is a complex one and presents itself as one of the possible limitations of ZMET. First, there is the issue of ambiguity in metaphor – that is, there is no one metaphor that is capable of describing reality in an accurate manner. Additionally, metaphorical meanings are not always culturally and historically consistent hence researchers must have a degree of common understanding with their participants. Without this, any given metaphor may have the status of a foreign language resulting in the loss of its interpretive power.

Nevertheless, metaphors have been found to be effective at uncovering hidden knowledge (Glucksberg 1995). In fact, a number of psychotherapists
have discovered that the use of metaphors has helped their patients not only become aware of their unconscious experiences but communicate those unconscious experiences (Fussell & Moss 1998; Ingram 1994; Levitt, Korman & Angus 2000). Strong evidence exists that these verbal descriptions are far more complete and far more useful to practitioners because they were stimulated initially by these images or metaphors. The meanings generated from the photographs and pictures are then mapped and referred to as mental models in premises eight and nine. The term mental model is specific, to include not only cognitive structures but also feelings, emotions, symbols, actions and goals (Christensen & Olson 2002).

More than two hundred studies using ZMET have been conducted in more than thirty countries where corporate clients have included names such as Coca Cola, Proctor and Gamble, General Motors, Eastman Kodak, Bank of America and Nestle (Catchings-Castello 2000; Kelly 2002; Zaltman 2008). However, it is surprising that ZMET has not yet been widely adopted within academia, as only a handful of studies were found (Christensen & Olson 2002; Lee et al. 2003; Sease 2005; Vorell, Theses & Center 2003). This thus raises questions about the rigour of the method in terms of reliability and validity. Nonetheless, scholars who have employed ZMET in their studies have found it to be effective in helping consumers uncover hidden or tacit knowledge - understandings they did not know they had (Christensen & Olson 2002; Lee et al. 2003). This leads into another reason why ZMET is favoured as a method for the purpose of this research.

It is found that stage four of ten in the ZMET process incorporates the Repertory Grid interview. The Repertory Grid, invented by George Kelly in 1955, is a way of getting people to reveal their own personal constructs (Reisenzein & Hofmann 1990). The term repertory is derived from repertoire, referring to the collection of constructs which a respondent develops over the course of the interview. The term “construct” is particularly well-chosen,
because it reflects the concept's dual role. On one hand, it represents the view one has *constructed* about the world as one experienced it. On the other hand, one's constructs indicate how one is likely to *construe* the world as one continues to experience it. Thus, one's construct system is the history and the predisposition to perceive (Kelly 1955). Kelly believed that human beings do not all have the same constructs and that each person has his or her own personal and unique repertoire of constructs. The most significant benefit of the repertory grid is that it allows respondents to describe their motives for their home choice in terms that are salient to the respondents, rather than responding to researchers' predetermined list of motives. As a technique of eliciting personal constructs, the validity and reliability of the repertory grid has been recognised (Shaw & McKnight 1992). The inclusion of Kelly Repertory Grid into the steps of the ZMET method strengthens ZMET as a powerful tool to address the research question in this thesis.

The suitability of ZMET as a research method for the purpose of this study is further enhanced when the ZMET interview integrates the laddering interview technique in order to elicit important concepts from participants and identify the connections between concepts. The ZMET Interviewer Guide (2003) provides training on how to conduct laddering probing. It reads: Typically, you should "ladder" whenever you hear the participant mention a personal consequence - something that they experience. "The Swiffer got my floors clean." We want to know what having clean floors "led" to? What happened then? Why are clean floors something valuable or important to the person? In short, what other ideas, concepts, and consequences are linked to "having clean floors?" (Zmet Interviewer Guide’ 2003, p.13). There is however, one limitation in ZMET adopting the laddering interview technique that must be discussed. Due to the systematic nature of questioning in laddering, each question is considered complete when the respondent can no longer articulate an answer to the "why is that important to you" cues. Therefore, the "end" in each ladder is expressed in the respondent's own words (an advantage in qualitative research terms) but does not necessarily reach the
level of a universal or terminal value, defined by Rokeach (1973) as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable" (p. 5).

The analysis section of ZMET results in a consensus map which is similar to the hierarchical constructs in means-end chain. The means-end chain and laddering method involves an in-depth interview using a series of probes, mainly asking ‘why is that important to you?’ (Mort & Rose 2004; Reynolds & Gutman 1988; Thyne 2001). The most usual research application of means-end chain consists of a set of methods for interviewing consumers about the motives behind their choices. The interviews are then interpreted in terms of the linkages between its outcomes resulting in hierarchical constructs that depict the relationship between product attributes and consumers' personal values (Gutman 1997; Mort & Rose 2004; Reynolds & Gutman 1988). The aim is to obtain the motives behind consumers' choices in real life hence the approach focuses on the elicitation of abstract attributes without neglecting the concrete ones. Since means-end chain and laddering strike a good balance between abstract and concrete attributes, they are assumed to yield a high number of relevant utilitarian and hedonic attributes. By utilising means-end chain and laddering into its interviewing techniques, ZMET is deemed to be the most effective method to address the research question in this study. This is because it probes the homebuyers to go beyond product attributes that define their own personal motives and examine the link to their home choice.

The final reason ZMET is deemed to be the best method for this research is primarily because it utilises photography and image-based research as an elicitation method. As noted in Chapter Four, Ernest Dichter, the father of motivation himself, has used photography to uncover people's motives to smoke (Dichter 1979). Since Dichter, other consumer researchers have used photographs as stimuli to elicit consumer's thought processes to develop theories relevant to their work (Heisley & Levy 1991; Holbrook 1987;
Wallendorf & Arnould 1991). Of late, there has been more support for the use of photography as a research tool (Lee et al. 2003) and its reliability and validity in representing human thoughts have been recognised (Harper 2002).

Given that houses are always thought of and marketed through coloured pictures and photographs, this is important because the use of respondents' own photographs and images represent a thought or feeling consumers have and act as a springboard for them (particularly if respondents find it difficult to articulate why they made their purchases) to begin their story of how and why they ended up choosing one house over other options. Due to the less tangible nature of the motives that this research aims to uncover; photographs and pictures provide another avenue to "enable consumers to express their feelings, thoughts and intentions not only in words but also through visual images" (Zaltman & Higie 1993, p.1). Even when the pictures are basic, "they are information-rich and attribute-laden and can be associated with multiple related higher-order constructs" (Zaltman & Higie 1993, p.6). When amplified by consumers' explanations during careful probing by an interviewer, the images provide a clear idea of what consumers really think and feel. Almost invariably the insights gained from combining verbal and non-verbal communication are far deeper and clearer than the insights to be gained from verbal discussions alone (Catchings-Castello 2000). Furthermore, by getting people to select their own images, the ZMET process allows participants control of the research stimuli and a greater sense of involvement with the interview topic. In preparation for the interview, participants spend a considerable amount of time locating appropriate visual images. As a result of this pre-interview work, the participants arrive for their interview at an advanced stage of thinking, having reflected on the topic and ready to discuss their thoughts and feelings. Thus, participants are able to represent their thoughts and feelings more completely and accurately than when responding to stimuli presented by the researcher.
The reason why one specific method such as the means-end chain theory or the Kelly Repertory Grid is not employed in the current thesis is because a multiple-method approach such as ZMET is a more commanding tool to surface relevant constructs in consumer decision-making, be they conscious, subconscious or unconscious. However, one of the strengths of ZMET may also result in its weakness. The multi-method nature of ZMET constitutes a weakness in that the method is dependent on many subjective decisions and interpretations that extend further from the original source material. Nevertheless, it is believed that ZMET is a hybrid method (Zaltman & Higie 1993) that could increase the likelihood of uncovering “hidden knowledge” (Zaltman 1997, p.425), particularly hedonic motives which underlie home choice. ZMET has even been classified as “non-traditional market research” (Catchings-Castello 2000, p. 8). Finally, as a qualitative research method, ZMET is befitting given recent encouragement for real estate researchers to adopt qualitative approaches to allow for a closer observation and deeper understanding of the buying behaviour of home purchasers (Levy & Lee 2006; Winstanley, Thorns & Perkins 2002).

Having established reasons why ZMET is most suitable for exploring motives in consumer home choice, the next section details the thoughts and considerations given to the research design.

6.4 Research Design Considerations

The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of both utilitarian as well as hedonic motives that underlie a home choice, and to see if hedonic motives (if any) impact on choice. In attempting to do this, the researcher was conscious to build on the limitations of past research. The intention was to move away from the stated and revealed preference approach. Stated preference examines hypothetical choice while investigations using revealed preference are typically conducted long after a home purchase. Therefore, it
was decided to capture the immediacy of the experience, minimising memory deficiency and unconscious adaptation.

It is acknowledged that many homebuyers start out with a checklist of attributes in their hunt for a home (Department of Building and Housing n.d.). Although it is this list that real estate agents rely on when helping clients find the right home, they often report it is not an accurate representation of the final home choice resulting in exasperated exclamations such “Buyers are Liars”. Thus, it was also decided that participants should be asked what they were looking for in a home at the start of the study. The purpose of this question was to later compare their thoughts and feelings about the house they wanted to buy as opposed to the house they actually bought. Disparity between pre-purchase wants and post-purchase motives would provide another avenue for questioning that might advance understanding of the reasons why people buy and the factors that have influenced their decision process.

6.4.1 The Researcher

In his book on qualitative methods, Gummesson (2000) highlighted the importance of the role of the researcher in any given research project. He noted the inherent problem that lied with researchers who are insufficiently aware of the problems they are investigating. Bruce Henderson, who is the founder of the Boston Consulting Group, also emphasized the researcher’s role in their data collection procedure. He noted that more often than not, “researchers are not exposed enough to the reality of real problems to visualise them as system effects and generalise conceptual insights from them” (Henderson 1984).

In this respect, one of the strengths of this research lies in the role of the researcher as an active property investor who has in-depth knowledge of the Dunedin residential real estate market. Having bought and sold more than a
dozen properties in the past three years, the researcher has been featured in the New Zealand Property Investor magazine (Appendix A). As such, the researcher brings with her, an understanding of the home buying process and invaluable access to the people and resources within the field of real estate. This is important tacit knowledge that will provide help to the researcher with resolving many “how” issues; “how to understand what is actually happening in the setting, how to get people to describe it, how to observe it, or how to experience it through the researcher’s own involvement” (Gummesson 2000, p.32). In fact, the researcher’s personal experience of the area of study is considered to be a scientific merit, and sometimes a requirement (Gummesson 2000).

6.4.2 Setting
Towards the end of 2007, the collapse of the United States sub-prime mortgage market was predicted to trigger a slowdown in the New Zealand housing market. However, throughout the data collection period (between July and December 2007), expert predictions on the performance of the New Zealand housing market remained ambiguous – while some were of the opinion that things will turn negative, others maintained that lending secured by housing was still growing at a quick pace (Ruth 2007b). Despite headlines in the press that cried doom and gloom (Harwood 2008; Hepburn 2007; Lewis 2007), the August 2007 median price was 12.9% higher than in August 2006 (Ruth 2007a). In fact, the numbers in many areas in New Zealand were still robust with many cities recording growth of between 12% and 34% (Ruth 2007a).

This study was carried out in Dunedin - New Zealand’s fifth largest city in terms of population. Dunedin is located on the southeast coast of the South Island of New Zealand. It is the second-largest city in the South Island of New Zealand and the principal city of the region of Otago, making it the centre of and gateway to Otago. Dunedin real estate has not had the same
explosive gains as seen in other centres in New Zealand, most notably Queenstown to the west and Nelson to the north. Nevertheless, the gains that have been seen have been strong and steady. In December 2007, figures from the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand showed that Dunedin ranked second in the list of cities where most houses were sold – with a total of 208 houses, Dunedin was only behind Hamilton City with 231 houses sold. In addition, the median house price in Dunedin was $260,000 in December 2007, an increase of 7% compared to the previous year and 124% compared to the previous 5 years. At 24.6% less than the average house price in the country but with the gentle gradient of gains made over the years means that, for many people, home ownership is still more accessible and attractive than in most other cities (Smith & Munro 2008).

The importance of residential real estate to the economy of the Dunedin city was highlighted when the City Council conducted its own housing research in 2007 in an attempt to understand the needs and wants of homebuyers (Dennis 2006). However, as discussed in section 4.3.1, the quantitative study conducted was grounded in positivism and only found twenty four basic utilitarian attributes which included the number of bedrooms, fenced yards, the age of home and the size of garage. Although it did offer some insights into motivation, it did not uncover any hedonic motives that might underlie the participants' home choices.

6.4.3 Sample Size
Patton (2002) recognised that there is a trade-off between breadth and depth. A larger number of shorter, less in-depth interviews may be required to reach saturation, whereas the same richness of data and saturation may be reached in a smaller number of more in-depth interviews. Nevertheless, it is data redundancy which is of the essence, rather than sheer numerical size of the sample. In fact, Patton (2002) argued that sampling is, “aimed at
insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalisation from a sample to a population” (p.40).

In this study, sample size was not determined in advance as theoretical redundancy or saturation was regarded as the most suitable criterion for sample size. Theoretical saturation is the point when the addition of further data yields no new categories, concepts or dimensions to the properties of the categories already developed, hence data analysis can reach closure when all categories are theoretically saturated (Strauss & Corbin 2008). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that interviews that are carefully selected will usually exhaust most available information after about a dozen and thus to include as many as twenty would definitely “reach well beyond the point of redundancy” (p. 235). The sample sizes employed in research using ZMET were reviewed and found that studies generally included samples of eight to sixteen (Christensen & Olson 2002; Lee et al. 2003; Sease 2005; Vorell, Theses & Center 2003). In addition, other qualitative studies utilising the laddering technique were examined and found to have used samples of similar sizes (Thyne 2001, Watkins 2006). In fact, validation studies of ZMET application indicate that four to five in-depth interviews that are focussed on identifying and understanding core themes can provide up to 90% of the potential information available from a larger set of interviews (Thompson 1997). Zaltman and Higie (1993) reported that 100% of retained constructs are captured after between seven and fifteen respondents.

Thus, while the sample size for this study was not determined in advance, the study stopped after the twelfth interview because repetition and redundancy of constructs were found from the eleventh interview onwards. Forty five constructs were already coded prior to the data analysis of the eleventh transcript (see Section 7.4.10) and even though data coding of this transcript yielded twenty two constructs, they were all repetitions of the list of forty five. In order to further confirm that theoretical saturation has been achieved, the twelfth interview was conducted and data analysis from its
transcript generated sixteen constructs but once again, all were repetitions of the list of forty five and no new construct was uncovered. When deciding to stop at twelve, Professor Gerald Zaltman himself was sought for advice to ensure that this fitted in with ZMET procedure. In an email from Professor Zaltman, he stated that Olson Zaltman Associates have some graphs from validation studies to confirm that interviews conducted with twelve people can generate reliable information, as long as the researcher goes deep enough into each one-on-one interview to get in an unbiased way the common denominators of thoughts and experience. Nevertheless, the possible limitation arising from the small sample size in this study is addressed in Chapter Eight.

6.5 Data Collection
This section explains the research decisions taken in this study, which were made with the research question and objectives in mind. It must be acknowledged however, that discussions and brainstorming sessions with fellow doctoral students have facilitated the decisions undertaken in this thesis. Ideas for data collection that were thought to best meet the research objectives were presented at two of the Department of Marketing's doctoral retreats (8-10 September 2006, 27-29 April 2007) and an afternoon PhD seminar (1 March 2007). Following these sessions, feasible ideas were then presented at local and international academic conferences for advice and feedback from senior academics within the fields of marketing and real estate (see Declarations section of this thesis, pages ii and iii). Therefore, the steps implemented here are those that have been largely accepted by many academics in the discipline.

6.5.1 Step One: Participant Recruitment
A range of homebuyers who were currently looking for a new home took part in the study. Participants were recruited with the assistance of four major real
estate agencies who agreed to have their agents hand out letters about the study to potential homebuyers during their open home promotion process. The letter (see Appendix B) informed homebuyers of the study and invited their participation. The letter also outlined the incentives to participate, which included prizes sponsored by a local home furnishing company: free underlay for new carpet, free drape-making and free colour consultation for their new homes. Further incentives included respondents going into a draw at the end of study, for more significant prizes including legal fee contribution, free home insurance, and vouchers for home improvements.

6.5.2 Step Two: Selecting Qualified Participants

Participants had to meet three criteria to be eligible to take part in this study. (1) They had to be buying a residential property for themselves, not an investment property; (2) they had to be looking to buy a home in the near future; (3) and they had to have access to a digital camera. Criteria one was based on the assumption that there will be different motives associated with investment and personal residential home purchases. Criteria two ensured that actual home purchase motives could be examined. Serious home purchases were identified through a brief interview asking about their intentions and whether they currently had the financial arrangements necessary for purchasing a home. Focussing on actual homebuyers rather than individuals who were still in the contemplative stage, overcomes limitations of past research that has been criticised for measuring either stated or revealed preference. Criteria three ensured that participants could meet the fundamental criteria of ZMET; providing images for the study.

6.5.3 Step Three: Gaining Access to Participants

After three weeks of real estate agents distributing the Call for Participation, the first initiative proved futile as no one responded to the advertisement. In order to increase the likelihood of getting suitable participants, an email was
sent around the School of Business at the University of Otago while an advertisement was placed in the Staff Bulletin published fortnightly by the Otago University, both calling for participation. At the same time, the researcher then contacted the agencies to request permission to attend open homes herself in order to approach potential homebuyers. In addition, the assistance of a local mortgage broker who deals with potential homebuyers on a daily basis was enlisted.

Eighteen open homes were visited by the researcher over two weekends to recruit potential homebuyers as participants. Three of the respondents in this study were selected from open homes. Before more respondents could be recruited from open homes, the number of respondents from other sources made up the required number of participants for this study. Six people responded from the email invitation and out of this, two were selected and interviewed for this study. A further five respondents were obtained from the advertisement in the Staff Bulletin. The mortgage broker referred five of his clients and two were selected for this study. Table 6.3 shows the number of participants enlisted from the different sources. As previously mentioned, participants were selected as long as they met the three research criteria.

The sampling method adopted here was merely to take advantage of available sources and to follow new leads during fieldwork. This sampling method is known as opportunistic purposive sampling in qualitative research (Patton 2002) and is detailed in the following sub-section.

### Table 6.3: Sources of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open homes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email invitation to colleagues in the School of Business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement in the Otago University Staff Bulletin</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage broker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5.3.1 Sampling Method

Given that this study was not interested in working out what proportion of the population gives a particular response, statistical sampling methods were ruled out. Instead, the non-probabilistic purposive sampling method was deemed to be apt because the purpose of this study was to identify specific groups of people who are buying their own homes. Therefore, the respondents in this study were selected on the premise that they would enable exploration of a particular aspect of behaviour relevant to the research (buying a home).

Non-probabilistic purposive sampling does not see the selection of participants specifically from the School of Business or Otago University as being biased because the institution is the biggest employer in Dunedin with 3,481 employees in 2007 (www.otago.ac.nz/about/quickstats.html#staff 2008). Furthermore, the seven respondents from the University consisted of two postgraduate students, a postdoctoral fellow, a research assistant, a secretary, a lecturer and a human resource executive. In addition, their annual incomes ranged from between $20,000 and $70,000 and this minimises the possibility of income bias.

6.5.4 Step Four: Pre-Interview Contact

Each time a participant was selected, they were asked if they had a checklist for the house they want to buy. As anticipated, all twelve respondents produced their checklists. Findings and discussions on these checklists will be detailed in Chapter Seven. After completing the checklists, participants went away in their search for a home. They were required to contact the researcher once they had placed an offer for a home or attended an auction for the purpose of bidding for a house. The researcher has also maintained
contact with participants throughout their search duration to maintain a watching brief on their progress and experience.

6.5.5 Step Five: Image Gathering

When a respondent contacted the researcher, they were asked to take and/or collect eight to twelve photographs and/or pictures that represented their thoughts and feelings about the house that they had chosen to purchase. These images could be photographs already in their own collection, images captured with their cameras or pictures cut out of any printed media. Participants were instructed not to bring images that explicitly illustrated their home choice (i.e. kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms) but represented metaphors of it. This is because metaphors, as discussed earlier, serve as the basis for the ZMET method. Metaphors are also of direct importance to the research question in this study. In order to uncover underlying motives that impact on consumer home choice, metaphors serve as a springboard for probing beyond the surface. As discussed in section 6.4.1., metaphors have been effectively used in the past to identify consumption reasons that even the consumers are not aware of.

Similar to those in other ZMET studies, the instructions given to participants were worded as follows:

*The next assignment involves collecting and/or taking between eight and twelve images (photographs and/or pictures) that symbolise your thoughts and feelings about the home you have chosen to purchase. There is only one condition for your images – they cannot be direct illustrations of the property, i.e. pictures of bathrooms, kitchens and gardens are not allowed. Just as the dove symbolises peace and freedom, your pictures should be representations of your thoughts and feelings about the house. Once you have done this, please get in touch with me and an interview will be scheduled.*

The number of images (between eight and twelve) to be brought in by the participants is stipulated in ZMET are not only duplicated in past ZMET
studies (Catchings-Castello 2000; Christensen & Olson 2002; Lee et al. 2003; Sease 2005; Vorell, Theses & Center 2003) but also confirmed through email communication with Professor Gerald Zaltman himself. He established that interviewers at Olson Zaltman use between six and eight pictures and that “more than eight is unnecessary. The pictures are simply devices to help people look inward and explore their own thinking more deeply.”

6.5.6 Step Six: Preparing for the ZMET Interview Process
After collecting images from the respondents, an interview approximately ninety minutes long was scheduled with each respondent. Meanwhile, the images were digitally scanned into the computer in preparation for the creation of the summary image. The images were also printed to facilitate the interview process described below. In the interview, nine of the ten core steps in implementing the ZMET procedure were followed. The tenth step entails data analysis and was carried out post interview.

6.6 The ZMET Interview Process
This section explains the ten core steps of implementing ZMET interview and gives details of how each of these steps are relevant to this study. The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Utilising the recorder is advantageous in that the researcher can pay close attention to the respondent and be alert to tone of voice, facial expression and body language. Riley (1996) considered audio taping favourable, noting the fact that taping adds credibility to the researcher’s views. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim.

The first stage of the ZMET interview is called storytelling, because participants are asked to tell the story behind each of the pictures that they had brought to the interview. Storytelling presents a good opportunity for uncovering relevant information about the topic. The researcher mainly
focuses on the reasons why the images were selected as well as the meanings behind each selected image. The ZMET Interviewer Training manual advocates starting off the interview with the following statement:

*I am going to be asking some seemingly strange questions, asking for clarification of your comments and explanations of ideas that you think should be obvious. Just imagine that I am from another country (or another planet) and I don't understand much about the topic or people. So I am going to ask a lot of questions. This is just part of our process, so please bear with me.*

Following this, the interviewer kicks off the first image with specific questions such as, "Could you describe this picture for me?, What is this picture about? or How does this image relate to your thoughts and feelings about X?" At this stage, the interviewer's goal is to take note of the most interesting metaphors and probe for further elaboration and understanding of the core meaning within each metaphor. At the same time, the interviewer must become aware, spot interesting and relevant concepts and probe for associations with other concepts. In order to ensure that probing is not biased, a random selection of interviews transcribed verbatim were sent to Professor Gerald Zaltman's associate at Olson Zaltman Associates in Boston, Massachusetts. She read through three transcripts and pointed out interview techniques that could have led to probing bias. One of her early comments upon reading the first transcript was to avoid telling the respondent that they were doing great, or "That was an excellent answer," or give other undue compliments. This is because some nervous participants may seek assurances that their true responses are what the researcher wants or needs.

The Olson Zaltman associate also highlighted answers that could have resulted in meaningful findings with further questions using the laddering technique. In addition, the ZMET Interviewer Guide and the ZMET Training Manual provided significant help on the laddering process including guidelines on what concepts to ladder, how to clarify a concept, how and
when to use specific laddering probes and how to identify main metaphors to further probe. Typically, the researcher should look for a personal consequence or something that the respondents experience to ladder, for example, "The Swifters got my floor clean." In this instance, ZMET is interested in knowing what having clean floors leads to? What happened then? Why are clean floors something valuable or important to the person? In short, what other ideas, concepts, and consequences are linked to "having clean floors?" Other candidates for laddering probes are concepts of focal interest to the client such as product attributes. It is of great interest to see what consequences are associated with product attributes. For example, when someone mentions that a house is chosen because it has a nice garden, then ZMET would want to know what it means to have a nice garden and why is it completely necessary. As such, the following questions are repeatedly used throughout the interview:

- Why is _______ important to you?
- Is _______ important to you? Why?
- What does _______ give you (do for you, lead to)?
- Why is _______ something you want to have/get/obtain?
- When _______ happens, what does it lead to?

This first step is complete when all the respondent's pictures have undergone the laddering probes. This stage is of significant importance to the study as it at the very core of the research objectives – to uncover all the motives that have driven the consumers to purchase the house they did, from the perspectives of the consumer. After the third transcript, the Olson Zaltman associate was satisfied with the researcher's interview techniques and range of questions. The researcher was left to carry out the rest of the interviews independently. However, a peer was enlisted for debriefing post interview – this is detailed later in section 6.7.7.

After all the pictures have been discussed, Step Two then involves the interviewer asking if there were any images that participants sought, but could not find. Alternatively, interviewers could ask if participants had any
thoughts or feelings about the topic that were not represented in the images already discussed, and then ask the participant what image would express that idea. When participants describe a missed image, interviewers should follow up by asking the participants to expand upon their thoughts and feelings, treating the missing image as any other storytelling episode. Descriptions attached to missing images also enable the respondent to expand on his or her thoughts and feelings as if the images were available. This step ensures that the potential of a missing construct due to the respondent’s inability to gain access to a particular image is ruled out.

In Step Three, the respondent is asked to sort the pictures into meaningful piles and to provide a label or description to the pile. This step is useful because it establishes constructs or themes that are relevant to the consumer. Stage Four is where a modified version of Kelly Repertory Grid is implemented. The interviewer selects three images to discuss with the aim of identifying new concepts, meanings, and distinctions. Three images are necessary according to Kelly Repertory Grid because this two-against-one question produces a bipolar scale for the identification of a construct. According to the ZMET Interviewer Manual, images can be selected randomly but interviewers can also choose to intentionally select images that have similar meanings. The interviewer then asks, “Now, tell me how two of these pictures are similar, yet different from the third...with respect to your thoughts and feelings about [the topic]?” If interviewers have probed a great deal during the first stage of story telling, participants may already have explored the selected images/constructs in detail. If so, the third step tends to provide redundant information, and the interviewer can move to the next step. However, if interviewers have missed probing and ladder ing with some pictures, this third step is an efficient way to explore elicited concepts in depth. If new concepts are elicited, the interviewer would continue to probe and ladder all new concepts.
After Step Four, the respondent selects the picture most representative of the house he or she had bought and provides reasons for the choice. Also included in Step Five is metaphor elaboration where the respondent is asked to imagine widening the frame of the picture in any direction or dimension to describe what would enter the picture that would reinforce the meaning for them. This step encourages the respondent to explore additional thoughts and feelings.

In Step Six, the respondent is asked to describe pictures that might depict the opposite of the task assigned. This study for example is concerned with the meaning of the perfect home for homebuyers. In this case, the respondent would be asked to describe pictures that do not reflect the idea of a perfect home. Step Seven is deemed to be powerful in bringing unconscious thought to a level of awareness at which verbal articulation can occur (Zaltman 1997). The respondent is asked to use other non-visual senses (taste, sound, smell, colour, touch and feelings) to convey what does and does not represent the topic under investigation. Given that the aim of this thesis is uncovering hedonic factors influencing consumer home choice, this step is of considerable significance as tapping into the senses will indefinitely simulate discussions on the hedonic aspects of choice such as fun, fantasy, pleasure et cetera (Zaltman & Zaltman 2008).

In Step Eight, the respondent creates either a mental map or a vignette, depending on the project’s focus. In order to create the vignette, the respondent is asked to imagine a short movie that describes their thoughts and feelings about the topic. In contrast, for the mental map, the respondent is asked to create a map using the constructs that have been elicited. In this thesis, the mental map is chosen over the vignette because “it is an easy and natural step for customers, regardless of education, occupation and other demographic factors” (Zaltman & Higie 1993, p.18). The mental map is also thought to be of more relevance to this thesis because the constructs in the mental map are similar to the hierarchical map in past studies identifying
consumer motives using means-end chain (the ZMET mental map). During the construction of the mental map, the respondent is asked to verify if the constructs recorded by the interviewer are accurate representations of what was said. The respondent then writes down each accurate construct and is asked to draw lines from one construct to another, showing how they are related. Here, the respondent’s viewpoint and confirmation is sought before a construct is identified in the map. Unlike the means-end chain hierarchical value map, the mental map in ZMET and the links between constructs are constructed by the respondents themselves and were hence instrumental in understanding key motives that drive the homebuyers to their home choice. This fits in with the overall intention of this study which is to focus on the voice of the consumers.

Using digital imaging techniques, Step Nine involves the respondent creating a summary image or montage expressing the topic at hand. The purpose for this step is to help the respondent stimulate and express thinking and not to develop aesthetically pleasing pictures (Zaltman & Higie 1993). The respondent’s images are scanned and brought up on a computer screen for manipulation. With the help of the researcher, the respondent decides on what picture to place where, what to crop in a picture, which picture to resize, to add colour, to change colour and so on until the respondent is satisfied with the summary image they have created. When the summary image is created, the respondent walks the interviewer through it. The relevance of a particular image editing decision could be valuable in providing a deeper understanding of their motives. Step nine is essentially a step to reaffirm the constructs that have been uncovered and to safeguard the potential of any construct being missed. Before ending the interview, the home criteria checklist created by the respondent at the start of their home hunting process was revisited. Any major disparity was discussed and clarified. Chapter Seven reports further on these disparities.
6.6.1 Data Analysis
Stage ten of the ZMET process is the data analysis and coding process. According to the analysis method drawn up by Zaltman, the researcher develops key constructs by capturing common ideas, themes, and concepts expressed by the participants of the study. The constructs represent important aspects of the participants' mental maps such as core values, feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas and themes. In this phase of the data analysis, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, read and reread. Audio files were listened to again and again until the researcher became highly familiar with the data before the coding began.

The coding of data was done entirely by hand. The researcher chose not to use computer software programmes such as Atlas, Nvivo or Nudist because it was felt that these systems do not take context into account and would be too rigid in the abstraction of the constructs. The decision to code data manually is also consistent with the interpretive research paradigm and allows the researcher to work with the data in the language of the homebuyers. Each interview transcript was systematically examined. Ideas mentioned by respondents were identified as constructs and coded. The number of new constructs elicited by each additional respondent was recorded. A peer acted as an independent coder to a quarter of the transcripts to ensure data reliability – she meticulously questioned each coded construct to ensure that it was interpreted accurately with evidence found in the actual statements of the respondents. This continuous comparative method of analysis is highly recommended by Strauss and Corbin (2008) as it forces the researcher to return to the data repeatedly hence adding rigour to the coding process. Criteria levels were set for frequency of emergence for each construct. Zaltman and Coulter (1995) do not consider a construct meaningful unless at least one-third of the participants cited it. This study follows closely the data analysis procedure in ZMET. Thus, only key constructs mentioned by at least one third of the participants were considered for analysis.
Following this, transcripts were read and reread while audio files, respondents' images, mental maps and the researcher's notes were scrutinised – this time, for construct pairs. A construct pair is found when respondents associate one construct with another. For example, a respondent might mention that his motive to buy the house was because of the view and the view was important for his peace of mind. In this case, the construct of 'view' will be paired with 'peace'. Each construct pair was coded, recorded and the frequency of each construct pair mentioned was tallied. Once again, to ensure data reliability, the help of a peer was enlisted to comb through any construct pair that might have been misunderstood or misinterpreted. As a rule of thumb, relationships indicated by one quarter of the respondents can be considered important enough to be included in the consensus map (Christensen & Olsen 2002, ease 2005, Vorell 2003, Zaltman & Coulter 1995). According to Zaltman (1995), a completed consensus map usually consists of approximately 25 to 30 constructs and represents 85% of the constructs expressed by any one participant. Hence, data from four or five participants, randomly selected, are generally required to generate all of the constructs in a consensus map. This is not surprising, considering the belief that the mind "grows from interpersonal associations and other interactions within a socio cultural world" (Bargh 1990; Gergen 1994; McClamrock 1996; Sperber 1994 cited in Zaltman 1995). The researcher analyses all the respondents' constructs collectively and constructs a consensus map highlighting common themes and threads. The interaction between significant constructs as given by respondents is assessed. The result is a consensus map that diagrammatically portrays the relationships among the elicited constructs. Figure 6.1 illustrates an example of a consensus map from a previous study.

The ten steps discussed above are summarised and presented in Table 6.4. It is believed that each stage of the interview adds rigour to the one preceding and as the researcher completes each stage, she is a step closer
to understanding underlying consumer motives in consumer home choice. It is argued that ZMET is a powerful and most importantly, content-free procedure – that is, the interviewer sets up the session in order to answer the research question, but it is ultimately the respondent who provides most of the content. To this end, it is felt that the ZMET interviewing technique allows the researcher to cover the breadth and depth of the respondents’ motives underlying their home choices.
Figure 6.1: An example of a consensus map taken from a study on mountain bikers (Christensen & Olson 2002)

Figure 1. Mental model for highly involved mountain bikers. N = 15; Connections made by 4 or more respondents
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Storytelling. Participant describes the content of each picture they have taken or brought. The interviewer should refrain from interpreting pictures during interview.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Missed Images. Participant describes the picture(s) that he/she was unable to obtain and explains their relevance. Missed pictures may have important relevance too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Sorting Task. Participant sorts pictures into meaningful groups and provides a label or description for each pile. This helps to establish themes or constructs that are relevant to the participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Construct Elicitation. A structured interview where basic constructs and their interconnections are elicited using images as stimuli. This involves a modified version of Kelly Repertory Grid technique and the laddering technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>The Most Representative Picture. Participant indicates which picture is most representative and gives reasons for the choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Opposite Images. Descriptions are elicited of pictures that describe the opposite of the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Sensory Images. Descriptions are elicited of what does and does not describe the concept in terms of colour, emotions, sound, smell, taste and touch. Sensory thoughts are images too and hence important to capture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Mental Map. Participant creates a map or causal model using the constructs that have been elicited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td>Summary Image. Participant creates a summary image or montage expressing the topic under study by using digital imaging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 10</td>
<td>Consensus Map. Researcher creates a map or causal model involving the most important constructs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Zaltman 1997
6.7 Assessing Rigour and Trustworthiness in the Context of the Study

Section 6.2.2.1 discussed the issue of rigour and trustworthiness in qualitative research and outlined Carson et al. (2001)'s thirteen evaluation criteria. This section now addresses each of the thirteen techniques in the context of this study.

6.7.1 Researching in the field that is in the natural setting of the phenomena.

All participants go through actual house hunting and arrive at their actual home choice by putting in a real offer on an actual house (amongst all other houses on the market), based on their own financial capabilities and current situations. To the researcher's knowledge, no real estate study has attempted a longitudinal study that follows homebuyers through their house purchase process. As discussed in Chapter Three, past research exploring housing choice was based on intended or hypothetical choice (also known as stated preference) and observed market choices based on secondary quantitative data (also referred to as revealed preference).

6.7.2 Using purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is used to identify specific groups of people who live in unique circumstances relevant to the social phenomenon being studied (Patton 2002). As explained in sections 6.6.3., the type and number of respondents were chosen based on the scope of the research and the criteria set for the study. While the size of the sample was not determined at the beginning of the research, the study could only be completed when saturation was achieved and no new information was being gathered. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this sample selection as to the "point of redundancy" and the number of interviews can be deemed sufficient when the respondents are not providing any new data.
6.7.3 Comparing results across different contexts.
Whilst it is acknowledged that this study is necessarily bound to the context of home buying, participants were sourced from differing circumstances. These included letters through real estate agents, the researcher's attendance at open homes, email invitations within the School of Business, a notice in the University's staff bulletin and the assistance of a mortgage broker. As can be seen from the sample profile later in Chapter Seven, the model developed could be useful for understanding the underlying motives of different sets of homebuyers in varying situations and contexts.

6.7.4 Depth and intimacy of interviewing.
As mentioned earlier, an in-depth interview averaging approximately ninety minutes per participant was carried out with all participants. In addition, steps one to seven within the ZMET technique are rigorous probing designed to get participants to speak freely and to tell their story from their photographs and pictures. Step two is particularly instrumental in ensuring that any important constructs not represented by the respondents' pictures are not overlooked.

6.7.5 Prolonged and consistent observation.
Prolonged engagement demands sufficient time to understand the New Zealand home buying process and the motives that underlie a consumer home choice. The researcher can be considered to be thoroughly familiar with the research context – the researcher has been an active property purchaser for the past six years. In the last three years in New Zealand, the researcher has bought a total of sixteen residential properties, including one home for her own residence. In addition, the respondents' checklist gathered prior to their purchase was revisited at the end of the interview to see if there was any disparity between stated preference and actual choice. In this
sense, the research was designed to follow through the respondents' complete home buying process, to compare their pre and post purchase motivation states and to understand what goes behind homebuyers' choices. Finally, a personal, in-depth conversation with each respondent averaging ninety minutes was conducted.

6.7.6 Negative case analysis.
Negative case analysis involves asking questions to find exceptions to a rule in a theory that therefore invalidate the rule. The ZMET method supports negative case analysis as a criterion for evaluating trustworthiness and believes that while it is imperative to understand what is meaningful to the participants, it is also important to know what is not meaningful for them. Within the ZMET technique, step six is undertaken to cover this aspect.

6.7.7 Debriefing by peers to guard against bias and produce new insights.
Debriefing is intended to help guard against any researcher bias and to produce new insights. In debriefing, a researcher and an unbiased peer plan and conduct extensive discussions about the findings and progress of a study. These discussions include suitability of method and methodology, issues pertaining to data collection, preliminary analysis and findings as well as the concluding analysis (Spall 1998). For this study, the task of peer debriefing was largely undertaken by the supervisors who read, debated and questioned possible bias concerning a number of wide-ranging issues including sampling, logistics, legal, ethical, interpretive findings, and other developing issues. Furthermore, every stage of the research has been deliberately and consistently presented at doctoral colloquiums, academic conferences and academic journals to ensure that any preliminary ideas and preconceived thoughts are worthy of pursuing. Feedback, challenges and constructive criticism from senior academic members in the field have served
to minimise bias within the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). An associate from Olson Zaltman Associates read the first three transcripts and provided further tips and guidance on improving interview techniques. In addition, another marketing academic acted as an independent coder who meticulously went through one quarter of the transcripts, randomly selected, in order to ensure that the data coded by the researcher is reliable and unbiased. Finally, any doubts about the implementation of ZMET as the research method were referred to and clarified by Professor Gerald Zaltman himself.

6.7.8 Maintaining an audit trail.
In a qualitative study, the researcher should provide sufficient descriptive data to allow future researchers to determine the applicability and transferability of the research findings. In this study, the determination of reliable, factual and confirmable data was established through interviews that were recorded verbatim, interview tapes and methodology development information including journal and research notes recording data collection chronology, invitation letters, email communication with participants, schedules, participants' pre-purchase criteria lists and etcetera.

6.7.9 Triangulation of data from several sources.
Triangulation refers to the researcher collecting information from a various range of individuals and/or using a variety of methods (Sayre 2001). Data triangulation in this study was achieved by using not only verbal self-reports of participants but also their photographs and pictures as well as their self-constructed mental maps. Methodological triangulation was attained through the incorporation of Kelly repertory grid, projective technique, means-end chain and laddering. Interdisciplinary triangulation involves using other disciplines to inform the research process. This study on motives in residential real estate borrows theoretical concepts from psychology and marketing. It also utilises data collection methods from marketing which was
in turn based on concepts from a variety of other disciplines such as psychology, neurobiology, linguistics and art (Kelly 2002). It is suggested that the ZMET method is in itself a form of triangulation.

6.7.10 Checks by members of the group
Checks by members of the group involved asking respondents to comment on drafts and verify that the facts have not been misinterpreted by the researcher. This concern was resolved through steps eight and nine within the ZMET technique where participants themselves created the map and subsequently, a summary montage (see Figure 6.1). The final consensus map and summary image of each respondent were cosmetically enhanced using computer programme and then returned to respondents for feedback on accuracy before analysis. At this stage, participants were still able to add constructs that had not already been elicited and continued to make changes. Reasons for those amendments were also recorded.

6.7.11 Independent audits
As mentioned earlier, a fellow doctoral student was enlisted as an independent auditor to agree on themes for this study. She went through a random selection of three transcripts to ensure that constructs were coded accurately without bias. In addition, it was felt that the independent audits for this study were the respondents themselves - the themes and constructs generated from the interview were confirmed by the respondents in step eight of the ZMET method, prior to the construction of their own mental maps. These themes and constructs were then reiterated in the development of a summary image before a general consensus map was created by the researcher. Furthermore, when the preliminary findings of this research were highlighted in the local newspaper (Appendix C), this article was sent to the respondents to ask if the overall account was realistic and accurate. This strategy is supported by Creswell and Miller (2000) who noted that in this
way, “participants add credibility to the qualitative study by having a chance to react to both the data and final narrative” (p. 127).

6.7.12 Having a number of interviewers carry out interviews, followed by interviewers discussing the meaning and interpretations of the data. Having a number of interviewers conduct the interviews is a means of protecting the data from being misinterpreted. However, the researcher is reminded of the saying, “the research is only as good as the investigator” (Morse et al. 2002, p.10) hence it was felt that it was unnecessary to engage a second interviewer. As such, every care has been taken to always remain sensitive, creative, open and flexible. The researcher was also willing to abandon any ideas that were poorly supported despite the early excitement of the potential that they could provide the study. This strategy is not uncommon and has been referred to by Creswell and Miller as “disconfirming evidence” (p. 127).

6.7.13 Presenting the findings of the research study to the original respondents in a focus group meeting and inviting feedback.
To determine the credibility of a particular interpretation, one useful approach is for the researcher to submit the interpretation to the scrutiny of those individuals upon whom it is based, and seek their responses as to its authenticity. The findings of this research were published in the daily newspaper and as a result of this, the researcher has received numerous calls and letters by local homebuyers confirming the accuracy of the findings (Appendix D). The concern with quality and trustworthiness of qualitative study for this thesis has been considered and addressed in this section with specific reference to the thirteen criteria set out by Carson et al (2001). A summary of these thirteen criteria is presented in Figure 6.4.
6.8 Summary

Two basic rudiments guided the choice of research design for this study: The first is the research question of "What are the motives underlying a consumer's home choice, and how did hedonic factors, if any, impact on choice?" and the second was to gain enough understanding to allow for the construction of a theoretical model of underlying motives influencing consumer home choice.

Justification for the research design was explained and summarised as follows. The epistemology set out the underlying assumption about reality and was identified as interpretivism. The basic tenet of an interpretive paradigm is based on the premise that reality can be locally and specifically constructed (Lincoln & Guba 2000). An interpretive researcher thus seeks to learn what is meaningful or relevant to the people being studied and the social context of their action and behaviour as well as the purpose and meaning behind their action and behaviour (Neuman 2000). This theoretical perspective differs significantly from that of the majority of published literature on real estate research which tends to study external and observable behaviour, which in turn is positivistic in nature.

The interpretivist approach corresponds with the choice of methodology. The study is aimed to achieve in-depth understanding of what lies beneath a home buyer's choice during the decision-making process and a qualitative study was justified to fit this. This choice to conduct a qualitative enquiry also aptly highlighted the limitations found in the review of extant literature in real estate research on housing choice and preference.

Taking into consideration the research question, the objectives of the study, the interpretivist paradigm and the need for a qualitative methodology, ZMET was regarded the most effective method for this study. Webb (2000) cautioned against research using a single approach. As "no research method is without bias" (Webb 2000, p. 2), the incorporation of multiple methods
within ZMET gives it a competitive advantage over the available qualitative methods. Further rationales for why ZMET should be used are presented in section 6.4., followed by an outline of its ten step procedure, explaining why each step is important to this study.

A personal, one-on-one interview of approximately ninety minutes with each participant based on their photographs and pictures was designed so that the participants tell their story. As a research method, the use of pictures gives ZMET a leading advantage over the other qualitative techniques discussed. This is because the use of pictures serve as metaphors that not only enables those homebuyers who are not verbally articulate to express themselves more effectively but they allow the respondents to tell their own story using their own words and pictures that are relevant to them. Furthermore, requiring the participants to collect the pictures may increase the likelihood of uncovering important, but previously unconsidered home-buying issues.

In section 6.8., care was taken to address the rigour and trustworthiness of the findings of this study by addressing the thirteen techniques laid out by Carson et al (2001). Although this study does not concern itself with the issue of generalisation and the results are only indicative of what might be expected from similar studies under similar circumstances, the outcome of this research is an in-depth understanding of the home-buying process and the reasons behind a buyer’s home choice - one that has not been looked into by researchers in the discipline of real estate and housing choice.

The following chapters, Chapter Seven will present results of the data analysis and discuss the findings.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Findings and Discussions

7.1 Introduction

"When it comes to affairs of the heart, Robert Romano's newest romance is proving to be his most expensive ($2.1 million). The object of his affection — his wife, Regina, describes it as an obsession — is the couple's 1920s colonial style home, a house where Norman Rockwell lived and painted many memorable covers for The Saturday Evening Post."

(Brennel 2007)

Mr. Romano is not alone in falling in love with a house. This type of feeling in a home purchase situation is common in real life, yet has received little attention from researchers. To extend past housing research which has tended to focus on utilitarian factors or has relied on quantitative research to measure singular motivational factors driving home choice behaviour, the present study employed a qualitative methodology to explore factors motivating consumer's home choice from their own perspective. Findings revealed that a combination of utilitarian and hedonic factors drive home choice. Furthermore, findings from the consensus map suggest that hedonic motives underpin many of the utilitarian factors. For instance, home buyers often linked their desire for certain utilitarian attributes back to their earlier experiences as children. These findings suggest that hedonic factors are very influential in shaping home choice decisions. The significance of these findings is discussed further throughout the chapter.

The format for this chapter includes a brief description of the sample profile and the respondents' checklists, followed by a presentation of the findings from each step of the ZMET process. To illustrate how the analysis was
conducted, examples are included throughout the chapter. A full discussion of the implications of the current findings for realtors, consumers, and future researchers are also discussed.

7.2 Sample Profile

As set out in the previous chapter, this study was not concerned with data collection that could be generalised to the wider population. As such, it must be reiterated that the respondents in this sample were not chosen because they represent a specific population. Rather, they were selected because they were identified as homebuyers, going through the home buying process and making decisions on a specific home choice. They have key access to important sources of knowledge relevant to the aim of this research and are thus most suited to the phenomenon being studied.

The sampling method discussed in Chapter Six resulted in the selection of fourteen respondents for the ZMET interview. One of the criteria to be eligible for the study was a genuine commitment to purchasing a property, a criteria that all of the respondents met by placing an offer on a legal contract to purchase a home. Two of the respondents did not secure their property due to financial reasons; however, an understanding of their motives was still relevant to the study because they did intend to purchase the properties.

The sample profile in this study included a broad range of respondents ranging between twenty seven to fifty seven years of age. Table 7.1 illustrates the sample profile of this study. Four of the respondents were single people with no children and one was a single parent with two adult children. Two respondents were in a traditional family makeup of two parents and two children while five respondents were couples with no children. Most respondents were interviewed singularly, whilst two respondents (R4 and R8) were interviewed alongside their spouses, resulting in fourteen people being interviewed in total. However, because each couple went through the
interview together rather than as two separate interviewees, they were treated as one. Altogether, the sample consists of four male respondents and ten female respondents.

Table 7.1: Sample Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Medium of Recruitment</th>
<th>Successfully Bought</th>
<th>Household Makeup</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Otago Staff Bulletin</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Late twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Agents' Open Homes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Late twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Agents' Open Homes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Couple with no children</td>
<td>Late twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4a &amp; 4b</td>
<td>Male &amp; Female</td>
<td>Otago Staff Bulletin</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Couple with no children</td>
<td>Thirties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>School of Business</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Single with two children</td>
<td>Forties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mortgage broker</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Couple with two children</td>
<td>Fifties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>School of Business</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Late twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8a &amp; 8b</td>
<td>Male &amp; Female</td>
<td>Agents' Open Homes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Couple with no children</td>
<td>Late twenties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mortgage broker</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Couple with two children</td>
<td>Forties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Otago Staff Bulletin</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Fifties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Otago Staff Bulletin</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Couple with no children</td>
<td>Thirties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Otago Staff Bulletin</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Couple with no children</td>
<td>Thirties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is acknowledged that this study did not deliberately attempt to strike a balance between male and female buyers. This is because the intention of this study was to identify key motives that drive consumers to their ultimate home choice rather than to examine how these motives varied as a function of gender. Neither was the purpose of this study to investigate the influence of joint decision-making by couples in the purchase of their homes nor to identify the differences between individual and spousal decision-making as this has been undertaken in previous studies. However, past studies on couple, household and family decision-making are acknowledged. It has been found that spouses tend to review and revise their purchase decisions over time in order to maintain equity in their relationship (Holbrook & Corfman...
It is also assumed that when couples have perceived incongruent product preferences, they are more likely to go through the process of accommodation before agreeing on a product (Park & Lutz 1982; Su, Fern & Ye 2003). Studies specific to a home purchasing scenario have found that the joint decision process is generally typified as a muddling-through process – one that is iterative and cyclical (Levy & Lee 2000; Park & Lutz 1982). The studies confirmed that it is difficult to establish who has the most influence in the decision-making based on gender roles. What is more evident however, is that spouses rely on conflict-avoiding heuristics to arrive at a choice. Thus, it was felt that the decision to interview couples together was as appropriate as interviewing them separately. This would not alter the findings of this study as the goal was to conceptualise the experiences and world-view of the homebuyer's choice.

7.3 The ZMET Interview

As laid out in the preceding chapter, the ZMET Interview consists of a ten-step process incorporating a bundle of methods that allow respondents to express their thoughts and feelings. The following sections will reveal results from each step of the process, with sample excerpts from the respondents' transcripts.

7.3.1 Step One: Storytelling

Step One of the ZMET interview involved the respondents telling their story using the pictures that they had collected. They were asked to describe the content of each of the pictures that they had brought with them, expressing the reasons behind their home choice. A variety of photographs and pictures were used. The images varied from respondent to respondent but many included nature-based images such as trees, water views, hills, mountains, lawns and flowers. Other photographs comprised family members, buildings and items from their travel (such as foreign architecture and paintings) just to
name a few. Two pictures featured wine and wine glasses to depict the notion of relaxation. Other instrumental items included were some lipsticks, a matchbox and a lawnmower. Animals and pets were also popular amongst the respondents with images of an elephant, sheep, cats and dogs predominantly featured in the interview. Figure 7.1 depicts some of these pictures.

Figure 7.1: A Sample of Some of the Images Brought to the Interview
As each picture was described, the interviewer focused on the reasons why the images were selected as well as the meanings behind each selected image. R7 began the interview with a picture overlooking the Dunedin hills and bay (see first picture in Figure 7.1): “I’ll start with this one. Cos that’s the main thing I was looking for. So that’s actually the views, it’s taken from the house... it’s like the view you have from the – the deck... that’s the main thing I was looking for.” The following is an example of how the laddering technique was used during the interview to probe respondents to tell the story that underlies each picture.

When the question “Why is the view so important?” was raised, R7 replied,

I don’t know, when I wake up or when you – you know like when you’re – you’re in the house, I just like to breathe, like to have space and everything and – and if - you can have space in the house but if you don’t have space when you look outside the house it’s not as good.

When queried on the significance of having space, his response was,

I just don’t like to – to feel like, you know, you’re confined into that, you know, you’re trapped into a prison or something... I just need rooms that – that are made in a way that I don’t feel oppressed. I guess it also probably comes from my childhood or something, we always had space, I mean we always had big houses and stuff so uhm in Toroa (a University accommodation for international students) when I had that probably twelve square metre room I was feeling so bad.

The researcher prompted further by asking what he meant when he said that he always had space. The answer that came is quite revealing:

I don’t know, my bedroom (when he was growing up) was about twenty-two square metres... and I used to go on holidays – when I go to my grandparents, I mean they have a house that’s probably four hundred square metres... So you see it’s a – I don’t know – I just, you know, I’ve been brought up in space and stuff, so I guess now I just can’t go back.
One of the main findings to emerge from this stage is that the use of ladder ing and means-end chain on pictures drew out important feelings and past experiences that influenced homebuyers' decisions. In fact, the incorporation of the means-end chain within ZMET unearthed some important linkages - the attributes in products (the views) was linked to the consequences that the attribute provided for the consumer (space), which in turn was linked to personal values (feeling free/freedom). Figure 7.2 maps out this similarity to the means-end chain.

![Figure 7.2: An Example of the Means-End Chain](image)

It is not possible to detail the storytelling stage of all twelve interviewees due to the rich nature of the data hence only examples from one respondent are presented. This decision will be duplicated in the presentation of the remaining steps of the ZMET process, where one new respondent will be featured at any one stage of the interview. Attempts have been made to include all twelve respondents in the discussion. The following section presents highlights found with another respondent from Step Two of the ZMET interview.
7.3.2 Step Two: Missed Images

Step Two involved identifying any missed images and revealed further hedonic factors underlying home purchase decisions. After all of the pictures had been discussed in Step One, the researcher asked if there was any picture that the respondent had wanted to bring but could not find. Although many of the respondents did say that they managed to find all the pictures they wanted to represent their home choice, this step proved worthwhile in the case of R12. She admitted, “I thought about taking a photo of a map or something just to show – to sort of represent the location, cos I really like Mornington...” When prodded for more details, she continued, “I’ve lived there forever and maybe that comes back to a childhood thing...” When asked why buying a house in Mornington was important, she replied, “I grew up in Mornington... I live there now in my flat and now I’m just moving down the road so (yes).”

If this part of the interview was mapped out on a means-end chain, it would be as follows:

```
(Values)                  Nostagia (Growing up years)
                           ↑
(Consequences)            Familiarity (Currently staying there)
                           ↑
(Consequences)            Mornington (a Dunedin suburb)
                           ↑
(Attributes)              Location
```

The questioning reveals that underlying hedonic factors significantly influenced the reason for a home purchase. Although past studies have established that a property in a good location drives people to part with a large sum of money, the present findings offer an additional explanation as to why a specific location may be desired. For this respondent, the reason is
attributed to an affinity to her years of growing up in the suburb. The emotional attachment to the suburb has influenced her decision to pay five thousand dollars above the initial budget for the property – the findings suggest that hedonic factors such as nostalgia can trigger a homebuyer’s buy button.

A further example that supports the fact that home choice does not always follow a logical decision making process is evidenced by people altering their perceptions of the property they bought to more closely fit their ideal home. R12 explained that she and her partner have two cats so they did not want to look at any houses on busy roads hence the home they bought was deemed to be perfect as it was situated on a quiet street. However, upon further investigation, the researcher found that the house that they bought is on one of the main streets in Mornington. The home was actually a few doors away from a house that the researcher owns as an investment property, and is in the researcher’s opinion definitely not a quiet street. Thus, it seemed that R12 convinced themselves that their home choice met all of the attributes in their checklist, even though it had not. It is not possible to determine whether this altered perception of reality occurred pre-purchase or is a case of post-purchase dissonance where the respondent was trying to rationalize retrospectively in an attempt to justify their home choice.

7.3.3 Step Three: Sorting Task

Step Three involved participants categorizing their pictures. The findings from this phase of the study provide the first insights into the “This is it!” experience of home purchase behaviour, a factor that has not been explained through past research. Here, the researcher’s instructions were as follows:

*With the photos we have here, can I get you to put them into meaningful groups, groups that mean something? There is no limit on how many pictures you want to have in one group and there is no limit on how many groups you want to have.*
Many respondents grouped at least two pictures together, some had only one picture on its own. When the pictures had been grouped, the researcher asked the respondents to label each group according to what they stand for. One respondent had an interesting answer. R9 sorted the following two pictures together into one group – a rainbow and a bunch of flowers.

![Figure 7.3: R9's Sorting Task](image)

When asked what this category would be named, she replied, “...that one would be just vibrant, uhm, you know sort of feel of the house, probably the most abstract, do you know what I mean.” When asked to expand, she faced slight difficulty but unfazed, she continued,

*It’s not something you can just put your finger on, it’s just what you feel when you go in a house...it’s probably the whole thing, you know, it’s just everything...cos I mean like we went into three different houses yesterday and we went back to that one and it’s just – you go into them and you just, you know, feel.*

The above example demonstrates that motives for home purchases can be attributed to less tangible constructs such as emotions. This is consistent with contemporary marketing research on the experiential view and hedonic motives, where reasons for consumption have been owed to emotional factors such as freedom, sense of accomplishment, fun, self-transformation and excitement (Arnould & Price 1993; Schouten & McAlexander 1995). In a
study specific to home purchases, Coolen and van Montfort (2001) found that homebuyers' motives could be psychosocial including factors such as order, freedom, independence and enjoyment of life. However, this interview has revealed a motive more abstract than those uncovered by past studies. R9 described the factor to be an abstract feeling, an intuitive feeling that the house felt right. This provides evidence to the “This is it!” feeling in consumer home choice. The notion of the “This is it!” feeling will be discussed further in section 7.4.10.7.

7.3.4 Step Four: Construct Elicitation
The Repertory Grid employed in step four further identified the powerful influence of the childhood years in shaping people's home choice. Furthermore, it became evident that hedonic motives underpinned many of the utilitarian attributes desired in a property.

This step is based on George Kelly (1955)'s Personal Construct Theory which posited that people try to understand the world by building internal representations called constructs about things. ZMET uses the Repertory Grid to discover constructs by considering what is similar and different about a target group. It is called a “grid” because a matrix is used with the objects under consideration on one side and the similarity and contrast poles along another side. A group of three is the minimum necessary to make such comparisons (two to find similarities and a third to note the differences).

The following three pictures were randomly chosen for R3 during the interview.
From left to right, the first picture depicts an open-plan floor plan, the second is a nice kitchen while the third, a car to represent the garage that will accommodate the four cars R3 and her partner have between them. R3 chose the picture of the car as the odd one out. In the answer she provided, she said, “And they’re different from the car because I suppose those ones there are more about entertaining and that’s more entertaining people – that’s (the picture of the car) more about entertaining yourself.” When asked why the facility to entertain people is an important attribute of the house, she replied,

I think I’ve – I’ve always wanted to uhm – when I was younger I always – uhm like when I was through high school and stuff I always had all my friends over every weekend. Like mum always opened doors to everyone and since I’ve gotten a bit older and everyone’s gone into flats and things it’s all – you know you go to their houses.

Upon further prompting, she continued, “And so since I’m still living at home I missed out on having all the people around and I want that back. I want people to come to my house and not have to always go to theirs.”

A simple repertory grid to illustrate the above excerpt from the interview with R3 is provided in Figure 7.5.
One of the findings related to the method is that the Construct Elicitation stage is another powerful step towards uncovering deep motives through pictures or metaphors. Should this stage be missed, this construct of entertainment would not have been discovered. This therefore, supports the rationale for integrating a few techniques within the ZMET method rather than relying on a singular technique such as the means-end chain.

Once again, the findings reveal a strong relationship between people’s past memories and reasons for their home choice. R3 linked the construct of entertainment to what she was used to when she was young. Like R7 (quoted in Step One) who wanted space because he had grown up in big places and R12 (quoted in Step Two) who bought the house because the suburb reminded her of her growing up years, R3 wanted a home where she could relive her years of having friends in her house. The findings also show that nostalgia and memory underlie many of the utilitarian attributes identified in the interview (in R3’s case, the utilitarian attributes are open floor plan, kitchen and a garage for their cars).

### Figure 7.5: Simple Repertory Grid Illustrating R3’s Elicited Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarity Pole</th>
<th>Pictures for Comparisons</th>
<th>Contrast Pole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining</td>
<td>Open floor plan, Kitchen, Car</td>
<td>Entertaining Oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other People</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: • indicates similarities

7.3.5 Step Five: The Most Representative Picture

Step five again built on the identification of deep motivational factors driving home choice behavior, already surfaced through the first four stages. Furthermore, although respondents often offer utilitarian attributes as their initial motives for their home, further reflection provided through step five reveals that these attributes are underpinned by hedonic factors. A utilitarian
attribute often represents far deeper hedonic motives that are harder to articulate. The utilitarian pre-purchase checklist may represent but does not fully explain what an individual is searching for, helping to explain why consumers’ final home choice does not always match their original list of utilitarian attributes.

Step Five involved asking respondents to choose the picture that best represented their home choice. Returning to R12's interview, the picture that was most representative of her home choice was a picture of an ornate ceiling. Using it, she explained, "This is what I love about it (the house) the most...it is the feel of it and age and the character of it that I really loved." Upon further investigation, she continued her story about the ceiling, saying that the picture was a photo taken from a room in the house she was renting at the time of the interview. She exclaimed,

There's a room in the house that has the same ceiling, the same pattern, which is a similar pattern to the ceiling in my bedroom growing up. And I don't know what it is, whether it's a thing about the style of house that kind of make it feel more like home to me...

If a means-end chain was constructed for R12's interview, it would look like the following:

(Values)                        Nostalgia (Growing up years)
                                  ↑
(Consequences)                   Familiarity (Similar pattern to the ceiling in current house)
                                  ↑
(Consequences)                   Style and Character
                                  ↑
(Attributes)                     Ornate ceiling

The findings show that utilitarian attributes are easier to articulate than hedonic ones. The ceiling which is a utilitarian attribute of a property, was
verbalised as a motivational factor for purchase. However, upon further probing the causal reason, namely, familiarity to earlier childhood experiences was revealed. The deeper understanding provided by the additional probing demonstrates the strength in using a qualitative approach such as ZMET for investigating consumer motives. It is not possible from this study to determine whether a respondent is aware or unaware of their underlying motives but what did become obvious is that respondents do not spontaneously articulate their deeper motives without the reflection tools provided through such a tool as ZMET.

The findings thus far reveal that home choice may not necessarily follow a deliberate, logical decision-making process. Consider the examples provided from R12 so far, this respondent chose Mornington as the preferred location because she had grown up in the area all her life, she altered her perceptions of the property to fit her wants, arguing that it was a quiet street when in reality it is a busy main street, and she paid five thousand dollars above her maximum financial threshold. Past experiences seem to have driven R12s decisions more so than any logical decision making process.

7.3.6 Step Six: Opposite Images

Individuals are both attracted to and deterred from different properties. An important phase of the ZMET interview accomplished through Step six was to identify what deters an individual from a property. This phase again identified hedonic factors for consumer home choice.

At this juncture, respondents were asked to think about and describe a picture that would not reflect their home choice. The rationale for this is based on the premise that while it is crucial to know what draws someone to a property, it is equally essential to know what motivates people away from a property. For R11, this exercise proved worthwhile because it surfaced another important construct. The image that she conjured was that of “a
Japanese house in the middle, in the crowd of middle of several other house” (Note: this respondent is not an English native speaker). With further queries, more was revealed – that the reason they bought the house they did was their neighbours were not too close to them: “They are not too close and we don’t have any neighbours in front because we have a bush here. So it was the other thing we like not to have close neighbours.”

For another respondent, the image of a cave was evoked because of its association with dampness. It was important that the house she and her husband bought did not have this aspect of the cave. At this stage of the interview, she said, “you’d never have the sun and you’d never get rid of the dampness and you know what I mean. No matter how much you did to it you’d never get rid of that crap, you know (R8).”

The findings have proven yet another time that ZMET has encouraged the respondents to talk freely about factors influencing their choices. At every step of the process including this one, caution was taken so as not to miss out any important information that could be pertinent to the study. By asking the participants to talk about what is not meaningful to them, it broadened and confirmed other constructs that were important to them.

7.3.7 Step Seven: Sensory Images
Step Seven is a novel step in the ZMET process where the respondent was asked to use the sense of taste, smell, colour, sound, touch and feelings to describe their home choice, revealing intangible aspects motivating home choice decisions. When asked to describe the house in terms of sound, R2 said,

I suppose it’s a sort of soft roar sort of sound, you know, sort of farmyard – not loud, sort of very muted sort of farmyard type noises. I mean, you know, animals but sort of you know birds in the trees or maybe a chicken or something but you know a very sort of quiet sort of farmyard sounds.
This was closely linked to his answers for the remaining senses. For taste, he described,

\[I\text{ sense sortof a bready flavour... it's a real wholesome sort of down-to-earth kind of flavour. It's kind of related to the farm sort of thing.}\]

For smell, he described "a sort of earthy...very country, cottage-y kind of smell..." while for touch, he said he could imagine a "sort of mossy turf, I suppose you could say. That's it, again, the earthy, farmyard theme, I think that's really something that stands out about this place to me. Which is kind of odd given that it's not in the earth – not in a rural setting..."

All of his answers pointed to the notion of a farmyard; hence the next logical question was on the significance of this. To this question, his reply was the following: "I did grow up on a farm so perhaps that has something to do with it...."

The findings demonstrate that emotions and feelings do intercede the step-by-step decision-making process to influence home choice. Although R2's checklist stated the desire for a sunny aspect, the property he ended up buying was actually in Ravensbourne - a suburb known to get the least sun. His list also stated size and bigger houses but the ultimate home choice was actually a small two-bedroom cottage. The discrepancies between his pre-purchase checklist and the actual home choice may have been caused by the "This is it!" feeling upon identifying its similarities to those of a farmyard.

The findings suggest that this step was powerful in bringing unconscious thought to a level of awareness at which verbal articulation occurred. At the risk of sounding repetitive, childhood or growing up years once again underlie this respondent's home choice. The eight criteria in R2's pre-purchase checklist at first appeared to be very utilitarian and economic in nature. However, as evidenced from the above interview, there are some deeper hedonic motives that underlie these utilitarian attributes – the rural aspects of
the house had struck a chord within and reminded him of his growing up years on a farm.

7.3.8  Step Eight: Mental Map
Step Eight in the ZMET process was the first culmination point of the interview process, where respondents' constructed their own mental maps to show any relationships between the motives identified in the earlier phases. This step was conducted for two reasons: one, it was thought to be an important step to help minimize any researcher bias. During this phase constructs elicited during the interview were read back to the respondents for confirmation – any inaccuracies or misinterpretations by the researcher were clarified. All accurate constructs were written down by the respondent. They were then asked to draw lines from one construct to another, to show the relationship between the motives. Secondly, as will be explained later in the data analysis stage, the constructs in these maps were useful to confirm and add to the mining of construct pairs and the building of the consensus map.

Figure 7.6 depicts an example of the mental map produced by R1, the remaining eleven mental maps are included in Appendix F. Each map is different in terms of layout, the way constructs were clustered and the way arrows were used to show the linkages between motives, because each map is specific to each respondent. Some maps also appeared more complex than others but all maps illustrated relationships between motives.
The construct maps reveal the inextricable interweaving of hedonic motives and utilitarian attributes. The mental maps also closely resemble the means-end chain, which starts with a basic hierarchy of product attributes that leads to consumption consequences and personal values. Like the means-end chain, the consumer's mental maps seek to understand human actions – in this case home choices – as a means of satisfying different level of needs.

Although Zaltman never recommended data analysis at this stage, a preliminary investigation was carried out because it was felt that the mental maps can provide first insights into understanding key motives behind consumer home choice. Initial findings based on this analysis were published in the Pacific Rim Property Research Journal - see Appendix G (Khoo-Lattimore & Thyne 2008). Based on the twelve mental maps, the article highlighted the top three motives that influence homebuyers' choice. Specifically, the determining factors were identified as warmth, potential and memories. These motives are non-calculative reasons that past researchers in housing choice have failed to consider. The article also concluded that a customer's defining memories can be used to construct effective
advertisements as a powerful means of connecting properties for sale to potential homebuyers. These findings were only preliminary but the top three motives identified from Step Eight did resurface during Step Ten. Therefore, Step Eight was instrumental in the sense that it played a role in triangulating data for the study.

7.3.9 Step Nine: Summary Image

In Step Nine of the ZMET process, respondents created a montage or summary image of the reasons that drove them to their home choices. The purpose for this step was to help the respondent reflect and gain insight into their thought processes. Through the process, many of the respondents reported that they had gained insights and a new awareness into their decisions that they themselves found amazing. Although all of the images were used in the interview, not all were included in the summary image because respondents could decide what to include or exclude. The most cited reason for excluding certain pictures from the summary images was redundancy (another picture was already selected to symbolise the same thing) but other reasons included aesthetic (they saw a picture as cluttering the entire summary image) and fit (the picture did not belong to any specific group in the summary image).

The construction of a summary image was an important process on its own. When their pictures and photographs were brought up on a computer screen, the respondent constructed their montage. In the process, they made editing decisions such as cropping, resizing and colouring. As respondents described the inclusion of each image and the relevance of each editing decision, insights could be drawn. For example, when asked why she chose to separate the two images of mountains in her summary image (see Respondent 1 in the following page), respondent R1 explained,

so it's on top of the foundations, on top of the Moeraki Boulders, but in the construction site still ... so not all the way on top. Cos it
... just signifies the steps to success, so they're slow and they're hard and they're at the bottom like I can see them, you know, I... can see how I can get up there... But once I'm at the top, see and this is where the wine comes above that mountain, I can enjoy it and I can relax...

The construction site is a metaphor for a house needing much work while the mountains in question are symbolic of the hard work that she will need to put in. She likened the completion of the renovation work to being at the top of the mountain hence the picture of the mountain was strategically placed at the top. Then, a picture of a wine bottle and glass was deliberately placed above the picture of the mountain. This is representative of enjoyment and relaxation, in her own words. In R1’s case, her response reflected a summary of a multitude of constructs elicited earlier throughout the interview but sometimes, new constructs were elicited at this stage. The following figures (Figure 7.7 to Figure 7.18) depict the twelve summary images along with their descriptions, as generated by respondents.
Summary: The boulders were deliberately placed at the bottom to represent the solid foundation that the house has. The construction site represents all the work that the property needs before it can become habitable. The picture of the old man shows that the house is indeed old but it has character. The picture of the mountain above the rocks signifies that the project will be hard work, similar to that of mountain climbing. However, at the end of the project, a reward will be waiting hence the wine bottle and glass. It is at the top of the mountain (the completion of the renovation work) that this respondent will be able to enjoy the views (represented by all the photos at the top) and relax.
Summary: The background picture was chosen to represent the balance between the house and its section. The picture of the brick wall blends in with the sky as much as possible to represent harmony. The tree while showing character of the house, was deliberately placed to look as if it is one of the trees in the background picture, again to represent harmony. The cat represents character while the ship is included in the summary image to represent a house that has been well-engineered and designed. The pane of glass at the bottom of the image symbolises cleanliness.
Summary: Only four photos were selected by R2 to be included in her summary image. The photo on the left represents the vast, open space inside the house while the hammock represents the open space outside the house. The sun of course, represents the sunny and warm aspects of the house while the flower bush was chosen to represent the park-like area that the property is situated in.
Summary: This summary image is separated into three distinct sections and the respondent made sure that the photos were arranged and cropped squarely so that each picture is in line with the others. This was important to show how tidy the house is. Two big pictures dominate the summary image, the night views and the deck with daytime views. The construct of views was dominant for why the house was bought. The three pictures in the middle represent space for a vegetable garden, space to entertain friends and the overall feeling of warmth in the house.
Summary: The background colour was selected to represent the warm, sunny aspect of the house while the main picture symbolizes the tight-knitted family members who will live and grow up in the house. The photo of the elephants serves two purposes, to represent family as well as the solidity of the property.
Summary: The picture of the snow-capped mountain takes centre stage as it is the main aspect of the house which caught the respondent’s attention – it represents the wide open space surrounding the house. This space according to the respondent, allows her family members to indulge in the things that they like, mainly outdoor activities. The image of the sheep and its lambs signifies the farm that this respondent and her husband grew up in – the house that they bought is located on a section that resembles the farm.
Summary: This summary image is probably the most comprehensive amongst all interviewees. R7 has chosen to include all eight of his photographs in his summary image. The bottom images were chosen to signify the close proximity of the property to his workplace. The images at the top, from left to right were chosen to represent the view from the house, the open space, the sun and the warm feeling associated with it and the modern aspects of the house.
Summary: This summary image is split into two – the bottom images represent openness of indoor space while the top images represent the space outside the property. A photo of a dog was placed on the couch to represent the dog that they will now be able to get because this house has the space and section for one. A small picture of herbs in pots was chosen to sit in the midst of the garden because the respondent had always wanted a herb garden and this house will have one. Pictures of the garden and bush show that the house is surrounded by nature, another desirable feature for this respondent and her partner.
Summary: The picture of the car crash at the bottom of this summary image was deliberately made smaller. This is because although the house is an old house that requires work, it is not seen as an undesirable attribute. Instead, the nature and peacefulness that surrounds the house (represented by the big pictures of the yacht and tree) were attributes that have urged this respondent and her husband to purchase. The fox emphasizes the wilderness and nature. The sky and rainbow represent the open space and sunny aspects of the house respectively. And most importantly, the bright flowers were used to express the intuitive, “This is it!” feeling that she and her husband experienced when they saw the house for the first time.
**Summary:** This summary image is also divided into two main sections – inside and outside the house. Pictures of cupboards are important for this respondent because she requires a lot of storage space even though she lives alone. This is attributed to her years of growing up on a farm where everyday items in the house are stock in bulk. Pictures of views at the top of the summary image are also likened to the views that she had growing up. The picture of a fence was repeated to run across the lawn to represent this important choice factor – a fenced section for her dog. She had grown up with a dog and will not look at properties with a fenced section for her dog.
Summary: The background photo was selected to represent the space the house has which was important to accommodate visiting family and friends (represented by a photo of a bedroom) and also to cater to a future family (represented by a photo of a child and dog). The photo of boxes stacked up emphasizes the notion of space - this picture indicates that the respondent and her husband never had space in their old house in Tokyo hence most things were stored in boxes. The two photos at the bottom right are illustrative of the close proximity between the property and their workplaces. The picture of the hot bath and light take centre stage as warmth is an important factor for their home choice. The picture of the chair was chosen to reflect the beautiful views they get from the house, which was also a big push factor.
Summary: The main motivating factor for her home choice is the picture that she has chosen to be enlarged as the background picture. The ornate ceiling in the house brought her back to her childhood days. Pictures of the wine glass, couch and lawnmower signify relaxation associated with the low-maintenance of a refurbished house. The picture of the lipsticks represents the aesthetic aspects of the house. These are the factors that have motivated this respondent and her husband to their home choice.
Step Nine really gave the respondents an opportunity to summarise the whole interview in their own terms – each summary image is a master image which reflects an aggregate view of one respondent’s primary feelings about his or her home choice. The researcher took notes of the constructs that were repeated but also picked up on new constructs that emerged so that new questions were framed to ladder more specifically on any new idea that could guide findings. During this part of the process, many of the respondents were amazed at how they came to know what they did not know - this suggests that the creation of the summary image was most valuable at uncovering unconscious motives underlying consumer home choice. Consumer research has shown that the reasons for purchase are not always apparent because when first asked why they purchased a product, consumers naturally answer in simple, superficial ways. These responses sound right to the consumer but they reveal little about the reasons for the purchase. These responses more often than not describe attributes of the product, as evidenced in the homebuyers’ pre-purchase checklists but quick responses only scratch at the surface and are often not the real reasons for purchasing a product. This is because consumers are often not even aware of these reasons. At the end of the interview, a few respondents expressed astonishment and satisfaction at how their overall feelings about their home choices came into sharper focus at the sight of their digitized master image.
7.3.10 Step Ten: Consensus Map

The consensus map is constructed by the researcher as a final stage in the ZMET process to culminate the constructs identified by individual participants into one theoretical model. The details of this procedure were presented in section 6.7.1. but to summarise, ideas mentioned by respondents in the transcripts, mental maps and summary images were identified as constructs and coded. At this stage, a total of forty five constructs were generated. These constructs were then narrowed down for significance. As suggested by Zaltman, only constructs mentioned by at least one third of the participants were considered for analysis. This resulted in twenty four constructs, each of which will be detailed below. The next step involved identifying the relationship between constructs by generating construct pairs. What emerged was a consensus map that diagrammatically portrays the relationships among the elicited constructs. The content and relevance of the consensus map is presented here in this chapter.

The final list comprised twenty four constructs. Modelled after the table layout in Chapter Four on utilitarian versus hedonic motives (Table 4.1), these constructs are illustrated in Table 7.2 showing the number of respondents who have mentioned them. As espoused by the means-end model, utilitarian attributes are usually linked to more deep-seated values. As will be seen later in this chapter, the ZMET method allows for these linkages to be made for a deeper understanding of consumer choice but the immediate section will first describe the constructs individually.
Table 7.2  Key Motives for Homebuyers Choosing the Home They Did

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Utilitarian</th>
<th>Motive/Values</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Autobiographical memories</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nature</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Space</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Potential</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Intuition</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobby</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Views</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Done up</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aesthetically-pleasant</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spick and span</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Outside living</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personalising the home</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Solidity</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Half-finished project</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Low maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that the aim of this thesis is to understand unsolicited motives underlying consumer home choice, it is important to note that most of the names given to these constructs were not changed and are applied as mentioned by the respondents. When a construct was labelled by the researcher, it along with the reasons why, are explained. Eight constructs were mentioned by at least three quarters of the respondents and warrant elucidation - the following eight sections (Section 7.3.10.1 to Section 7.3.10.8) now describe these eight constructs in further detail, supported by
the pictures used by respondents and direct quotes from the transcripts. Following this, Section 7.3.10.9 briefly presents the other sixteen constructs in the form of a table incorporating direct quotes from respondents.

7.3.10.1 Autobiographical Memories

One of the most interesting findings coming out of the interviews is how the respondents' past memories have significantly influenced their decision-making process. More specifically, childhood memories seem to be the dominant trigger for most respondents when arriving at their home choices. An article published in the Journal of Consumer Psychology refers to these memories of past personal experiences as autobiographical memories (Baumgartner, Sujan & Bettman 1992) hence the label for this construct. Others have broadly defined autobiographical memories as memory for information related to the self (Baumgartner 1992; Brewer 1986), personal memory (Brewer 1996) and episodic memory (Tulving 2002).

This theme of autobiographical memories is recurrent throughout the respondents' transcripts. In the mental maps, this construct was identified as past influences, childhood, childhood years and growing up years. Apart from those who were already mentioned in the earlier sections, another respondent, R9, echoed a similar affection for a particular aspect of a house that transports one back to their young and carefree days. She reflected that the hunt for a house that has windows made of rimu wood was most probably due to the growing up years:

*I suppose it's because Jayden (her husband) is probably – his mother – his mother's an artist and she's very – everything's very naturalistic for him, and it probably always has been, and I sort of grew up in a house that was – you probably don't know the designer – but he's an American designer that was a Frank Lloyd Wright house and Frank Lloyd Wright's sort of architecture went on the theory of taking things from the outside in the inside. So our house, that I grew up in, was like that, it was like*
everything was brick on the inside, everything was wood, you know what I mean. It was all sort of that – behind that theory.

Pet friendly home and section were also a main criterion guiding consumer's choices because of their earlier experiences. More than a quarter of the respondents also took into account facilities for animals, particularly dogs, in their search for their new home. R10 talked about the compulsory criterion her new home must have for her relatively new puppy:

...our family's always had dogs. But uhm I've never had a – a dog of my own so-to-speak. No. But our family's always had pups and dogs and Labradors and all sorts of – terriers, schnauzers – yeah the lot. So yeah that is a pretty big thing for me. But uhm I wouldn't get rid of him (Ziggy, the dog) to buy a house that's for sure" (R10).

Thus, a fenced section largely dominated her summary image, with Ziggy taking centre stage. Whilst a fenced section is a utilitarian attribute, the motive for wanting a dog was hedonic and tied back to the dogs she once had when growing up on the farm. The link between wanting a home to accommodate a dog (whether or not they already have one) was traced back to autobiographical memories.

Other respondents also talked about their home choices being able to accommodate the dog that they did not yet have:

…it is a big thing, I've always wanted one since I was little, I had one when I was younger uhm and we had to get rid of it, I'm really sad and I've just always wanted one ever since. And my partner is the same, he had one when he was little and it had to leave, under the same kind of circumstances..." (R3).

Another respondent ended up with a house she had no intention of buying. The property was a lifestyle block which brought her and her husband back to the time when they were young:
...for me and my husband, it's probably – goes back to when we were young. He was brought up on a farm... yeah and I was...my mum was brought up on a farm and my uncles and cousins and that, some of them had farms, so we spent a lot of time there (R6)

Her summary image included a picture of a family of sheep surrounded by her own family members (see Figure 7.12). She was the only respondent who brought a picture that specifically represented childhood memories. All other respondents' answers on autobiographical memories were elicited through the laddering interview.

From this, it is clear that non-calculative motives such as emotions evoked by childhood memories and experiences are important motives in influencing a consumer's home choice. This is consistent with the the findings from Dupuis and Thorns' (1998) study, which showed that the meanings of home for people are linked to a deep psychological need such as memory and nostalgia. Studies have shown that when autobiographical memories are evoked, information processing of product is decreased (Baumgartner 1992; Baumgartner, Sujan & Bettman 1992). This motive could help to explain why consumers home choice behaviour does not always follow a logical decision making process, as espoused by the information processing model discussed in Chapter Three.

7.4.10.1 Warmth

Eleven out of the twelve respondents specifically mentioned warmth and ten of them included it in their mental maps as a major reason for the choice of their home over its competing options. Moreover, warmth was used to describe both the physical characteristics of the house as well as a less tangible feeling of 'warmth' associated with a property. These findings highlight the need to explore both the utilitarian and hedonic motives shaping home choice. Figure 7.19 is a compilation of pictures that were used by respondents to signify this construct.
Given the cold climate in Dunedin and the notorious reputation of New Zealand's poorly insulated houses, a respondent summed up the importance of warmth, "...so the sun is important uhm cos it - it's warm, and cos New Zealand houses aren't insulated..." (R1).

Some respondents even looked for homes in areas that are perceived to be warmer areas such as the case of R3: "...we were looking in Abbotsford, Sunnyvale, Green Island, cos it's real – it's nice and sunny out there, uhm it's warm, it's that little bit warmer....definitely the warmth out there was a big one..."

Respondents also described the availability of multiple sources of warmth as the motive for their choice. A respondent who was living in Japan before she moved to New Zealand commented, "And another very important reason was it was a warm place...And in the house we have the DVS system, the fireplace and a heat pump. The first thing we check, it was to have
something warm...” (R11). The importance of warmth to this respondent is also evidenced in her summary image where she placed the image of a Japanese hot spa pool in the centre. This motive is apparent not only with foreigners but also amongst the locals as evidenced in the case of R8, a young couple born and bred in Dunedin:

...we definitely wanted somewhere warm with two lots of heating. So we wanted somewhere with a heat pump, or we were going to put one in ourselves. But that was another thing for us, it had a fire in the kitchen, a big fire, and a heat pump as well. And, yeah, that's definitely something we wanted in a house and that does cost a lot to put in (R8a)

Warmth is also articulated as being more than just heat and temperature – it is expressed as an indefinable feeling of affection. For instance, R8a went from discussing warmth to talking about Christmas, linking the two together. Following on from their description of heating in their new house, R8a said, “And then I kind of see Christmas in this one as well.” Her partner, R8b confirmed with, “Christmas at your own house.” They then expressed warmth in the notion of “a family outside the house... and just being warm...and inviting...it's sort of how I want our house to be.” R11 referred to a picture of a cat as, “it's a sort of photo that makes me feel cosy and warm...a warm fuzzy feeling I guess.” Whilst warmth could arguably be a utilitarian motive, the revelation of warmth as an obscure feel good factor suggests that it is also a significant non-calculative factor that determines people’s home choices. Research focusing on utilitarian factors would miss identifying the emotional factors that are associated with warmth. Therefore, warmth encompasses more than mere economic utility.

7.3.10.1 Nature
Nature, a construct labeled by the researcher bundled the varying elements of nature mentioned by the respondents. These elements were important factors influencing the choice for a home for many of the respondents. All but
one respondent indicated the importance of nature in their decision choice. Furthermore, nature encompassed a wide variety of features that varied across respondents. For instance, aspects such as a bush, garden or a park, were linked to respondents’ preferred home choice. R8 commented, “I guess the garden was a big thing for me as well. We were lucky that this house we’ve bought has a quarter acre section and it has wee sort of waterfalls and rock gardens and things as well.”

Like R8, having elements of nature within the parameters of the house was an important deciding factor for R11. Before buying the house, R11 said she and her husband,

walk a lot around the house and checking the garden and I think now there was a nice garden because the previous owner was nice, they maintained the garden of course... actually quite a big section but it’s a bush included in the house, so we have the garden and the bush – is the bush that protected our house from the wind, so they make our house much more warm.

Even if the house itself does not feature nature, it might suffice if its neighbourhood does. In the case of R3, “the other thing I did want was a park in the area... about three doors down it’s a huge Sunnyvale park, so that’s nice to have that just there”.

In addition to the data in the transcripts, eleven of the summary images featured some form of nature, whether it was a tree, a bush, a garden, potted plants or flowers. The image of a tree formed a dominant aspect of R9’s summary image. She used the tree to describe the house she and her husband were looking to buy as having a nice section for the children to run around, to “have the area be sort of woodsy, you know, earthy like.”

These are all quite different examples of nature but they all refer to the natural physical world of plants and landscapes nevertheless. Figure 7.20
illustrates some of the pictures used by the respondents when talking about nature.

![Figure 7.20 Examples of Respondent's Pictures Representing Nature](image)

### 7.3.10.4 Space

Space, an important motive mentioned by ten of the respondents also exemplifies how a utilitarian feature can have a vast array of meanings and is often associated with feelings and other hedonic factors such as socialising. R4 described the space she wanted in the new living room:

> ...being enough space for people to sit quite cosied up... we had ideas of things we could do with the space, as in renting rooms out and I sometimes teach students that live with us and I could have had more students living with us.

A similar desire was expressed by R2: "I like a house with a bit of room to do what I like."

Even though only a two bedroom, R5 used a picture of her grand daughter when she was three years old to symbolise how the house she bought had space for future expansion, "This is a concept of growing, like opportunity for development in the future. It depends on my children of course like later on, so I took this picture showing opportunity of growing in the future."
Space inside the house is also associated with hedonic reasons such as to have fun – fun derived from socialising and having people around the house. R12 commented,

one of the things I really wanted in a place was to have a big lounge and a dining area sort of open plan, so that I could have – when I have people over uhm it's just a lot – a lot better. Cos my current lounge, if I have three guests, it's crowded you know so. What I really wanted was to be able to entertain and have people over for drinks or just, you know, whatever.

This hedonic motive was reverberated by R8 who said,

it'll be cool we can have people come to our place...we've never had somewhere that we'd feel comfortable having our parents come around for dinner and things like that, whereas now we're going to have a nice place of our own that we can invite people into for dinner parties.

Space is also likened to that of liberty and breathing space. When asked what would be the opposite image of the house that he had just bought, R7 conjured the image of a prison. He observed, “I just need rooms that are made in a way that I don't feel oppressed...you know, the light and space ... it's like you feel free.”

Space is also not only limited to areas within the walls of the house but also outside. R6 used images such as the beach and the bush outside her house to convey, “just wide open spaces... just room to do things.” She described the house as being situated in a large piece of land where members of her family can spread out and do the things they like. She mentioned that her son goes motor-crossing on a track nearby and the family often goes fishing by the river just outside the house.

Finally, having outside space also means having privacy from the neighbours and the outside world. R4 noted that “a lot of the houses in Dunedin are very close together...we are actually in a house which is very close to it's
neighbours, but it's close either side but there's actually no one in front and there's very - there's no one behind. So you don't really see the neighbours."

In short, space in the context of this study, is more broadly defined as an expanse of a surface or three-dimensional area. However, its definition also covers that of sufficient freedom from external pressure to develop one's needs, interests and individuality, as in the need for personal space. Some of the pictures used by respondents to symbolize space are demonstrated in Figure 7.21.

Figure 7.21 Examples of Respondents' Pictures Representing Space
7.3.10.5 Potential

Although in varying degrees and nature, a property with potential was a major utilitarian motive for many homebuyers in this study. Figure 7.22 depicts sample pictures that respondents used to denote potential.

Homebuyers who bought properties that needed repair work actually stated that they saw potential in their choices. Using a picture of an old man with wrinkles, a respondent described her home choice as "...old and you can see it's been – hasn't been looked after well or something but it's still got enough potential to make it really nice. So all he needs is a couple of facelifts..." (R1). Another who bought a house that needed various repairs used a picture of icy grass to depict potential. He described the house in the following way, "...there's some things going on here. Uhm they look - they look kind of cold dead in this photo but, you know, it's – it's alive, it's – it's, you know, livable..." (R2).
Although it might seem evident that buyers see potential to add value in deteriorated houses, respondents also mentioned potential in relation to newer properties. R5 who bought a modern two-bedroom house saw potential to add another bedroom in the future when she needs it should her family decide to live with her. Armed with a picture of her granddaughter, she described the picture as portraying, "...a concept of growing, like opportunity for development in the future. It depends on my children of course like later on, so I took this picture showing opportunity of growing in the future" (R5). Another homebuyer who also bought a house that required no further building work commented on the potential she saw in the garden: "I've always wanted to have a good vegetable patch and we've got potential for a really good vegetable patch if we get working hard at it" (R4).

It is interesting to note that potential signifies many different things to different homebuyers. It is not only houses needing repair work that could be marketed as having potential. Given that this was a popular motive for homebuyers albeit it being a utilitarian one, successful marketing strategies could incorporate strategies to help homebuyers see potential in all aspects of all properties.

7.3.10.6 Family

Not surprising, family featured highly as a key motive for people when considering the right home to buy. This motive provides support for Sixsmith's (1986) study on the meaning of homes (see section 3.3.1) who found that the home is where relationships with friends and relatives are enjoyed.

As described earlier, R5 talked about the potential for future expansion for her growing family. In addition, she went further by using a photo of weaved flax to portray, "kind of a family thing. It's a family tie? That we grow
together? It's going to be for me but it's also for family that we get together. A nice environment that family can get together”.

This construct overlaps with that of space as many respondents bought with the consideration of family members who were away but would potentially visit. R1 said, “then I have two bedrooms for friends and family to come and stay... especially family, cos when they do come from Germany there’s, yeah, it's just nice.” At the same time, for R11:

It was one of the reason we didn’t – we saw some places we liked it was just two bedroom and we decided not to buy this because it was just two bedroom. So for us it’s very important to have a place for the friends and family. My family probably is coming next year and I would like to have my family at home not in a hotel.

The family construct seems to also function more as a push motive for some respondents. In the case of R8, I don’t know. I’m just thinking like future and, yeah, like family and settling down and things and buying a house and yeah. That’s probably what I’d think of more as to why we bought it but, yeah, that’s a few years down the track yet.

R6 bought a lifestyle block close to the beach, with a stream at the back of the house and a dirt track for motorcycle crossing with her family in mind. She said, “everyone in our family likes fishing and those sort of things...it’s somewhere for them to come where they can do stuff.”

Figure 7.23 highlights some of the pictures used by the respondents when discussing the family construct.
7.3.10.7 Intuition

Intuition was a further common hedonic motive driving home choice behaviour emerging out of the interview process. In fact, the intuitive feeling that a property was ‘the right property’ was a strong driving factor that motivated respondents to pay more than they originally anticipated spending on a house. This finding again helps to explain why home buyers initial list of attributes that they are seeking in a property often does not reflect the property that they actually buy. Past researchers have defined intuition as a clarifying idea that comes suddenly to mind (Beveridge 1950) and a vision which precedes, motivates and guides analytical thinking (Schumpeter 1994). The respondents in this study described this experience differently in their own terms. However, the common thread of their description is that intuition was something that happens suddenly, something that jumps out with the suddenness of a revelation. Therefore, it is hoped that the term intuition has captured the overall meaning expressed by the respondents.

Nine out of the twelve respondents interviewed reported accounts of the “This is it!” feeling – the sudden realisation that they need not search any further, that the house they are looking at is right for them. R8a and R8b enthusiastically reported:
I didn’t think we’d buy one in Green Island but I’d never looked out there either, I’ve never really been out there much. But it was just we went and seen the house, we had the quickest look around it and decided: yep we want to put an offer on it, we want this house. Good that we agree because most people have huge arguments looking for a place but we both just got the feeling about it when we were there. We had the quickest look around the house when we got there, he (the real estate agent) was closing the open home and we were like: oh no. And then we ran through and then that night – we – we were in there for like five minutes – that night we made an offer on it and that night we got it. Yeah. We’d only looked in it for a minute It just – like we both went our separate ways and ran into all the rooms, cos we knew we had to be quick, and...you could just tell it was sort of everything we were looking for.

R9 described intuition as an abstract feeling, a perceptive insight in fact. In the interview, she noted,

This house, I don’t know how to explain it, but all the other houses that we sort of gone through, like none of them except for this other one in Opoho that we put a bid in and it sold and I cried, but anyway it’s not every other house, yeah every other house that we sort of gone through doesn’t smile at us, like it’s not a real warm feeling. A lot of the houses we’ve gone in just haven’t had that feeling, that sort of bright, you know, feeling and like this house has that, it’s real sort of, yeah, just when you go in it... Just sort of like happy, you know, sort of a happy house...I don’t know, that’s a real sort of vague thing.

When overtaken by the intuitive feeling that the house is right, buyers often pay more than what they were initially prepared to pay. R7 confessed that, “I probably paid ten thousand too much, I could have got it, you know, for less...” but the three hundred and thirty six thousand dollars he paid was thought to be worth every cent because,

when I saw that house the first time I just knew it’s – it’s – it’s a good house. I really think that house’s worth way more than that. I would have seen that house for four hundred, I wouldn’t have been, you know, it would have looked okay to me. So that’s the thing, you know, I could have bargained and everything but inside of me I – I just feel that house is, you know [right].
More such testimonies were reported by another respondent who ended up with a house fifty thousand dollars above her initial budget. One of the reasons for this is described as follows, “yeah right that’s why I feel so this is it...this is it, this is what I want” (R5).

Only one respondent used a picture to talk about the “This is it!” feeling and this picture is illustrated as Figure 7.24. For other respondents, intuition was elicited through the laddering technique.

![Figure 7.24 R9's Picture Representing Intuition](image)

Past real estate studies have not considered the role of intuition in consumer home choice. The present findings extend past research by showing that intuition is an important factor that moves people to part with a large sum of money, including money that they have not set aside for. The possible reasons why these homebuyers feel the way they felt about a particular house will be addressed in Section 7.6 but at this juncture the present findings contradict the information-processing theory that argues consumers go through a lengthy and calculative decision-making process when making a choice that involves a utilitarian product.
7.3.10.8  Hobby

One of the main reasons why people chose to buy a particular house is the ability to indulge in their passions within the boundaries of the home. Whether it was gardening or cooking, the hobby theme surfaced in the transcripts of nine respondents. R3 brought in numerous images of cars and during the course of the interview, it was discovered that she and her partner own four rotary cars and occasionally attend car shows: “they’re rotary cars, so whenever there’s a show on for that type of car my partner likes to get them out and, yeah, get them going and stuff”. In the sorting task during the interview, she labelled a group of images “car enthusiast”. Another comment made was, “I suppose Rory (her partner) was sold on garaging underneath and just a quiet street, cos having the cars as well it’s – you don’t want everyone to know where you live...”.

R10 talked about her hunt for a house that needs to have a big kitchen and enough cupboard space in the kitchen because she,

enjoy(s) getting in the kitchen and putting on some music and giving Ziggy (her dog) the bowl.... I make stuff for people and take it round when they’re sick and stuff...I’m a bit of a baker and a bit of a jam maker and – so I tend to have accumulated a lot of stuff that maybe – I don’t know maybe I could throw it out but I seem to use it all....I’m also a storage hoarder.

R12 shared the same passion as R10 and the following excerpt summed up the theme of hobby as a motive for buying:

I took a photo of my pantry because I love cooking and I don’t do it very much cos our kitchen in our flat is the original from the nineteen-thirties and it’s just not a nice kitchen to work in. And this new house has, you know, the kitchen’s less than five years old, there’s heaps of bench space, there’s, you know, dishwasher and all the rest of it and heaps of pantry space. And it’s just – I’m really looking forward to the cooking side of things cos I love food and, yeah, it’s just going to be really cool.
The transcripts also indicate that a buyer may be more inclined to buy a house that will allow them to engage in their favourite activities. R7 talked about his motive for buying a house with his favourite activity in mind:

\[ \text{This is on the golf course and that's also why I have a house in Dunedin. You know, it's – it's not why you buy the house, it's not important, but to choose where you buy a house is important because if there was no golf course in Dunedin I would not even think of buying a house.} \]

For nine out of the twelve respondents, a home that accommodates one's leisure needs seems to be a significant motivating factor for their purchases. This motive is hedonic in nature, in which homebuyers considered their own feelings and fun when deciding on a choice. The pictures that were used to represent this construct are shown in Figure 7.25.

7.3.10.9 The Remaining Sixteen Constructs

The remaining seventeen constructs are presented in Table 7.5. A brief description of the constructs is also included in Appendix E. Except for three,
all constructs were labelled as quoted by the respondents. The three constructs labelled by the researcher were aesthetically-pleasing, spick and span and personalising the home. 'Aesthetically-pleasing' was labelled to include two words used by six respondents – beauty/beautiful and pretty. ‘Spick and span’ was used to categorise ideas of neat, clean and tidy. Finally, “personalising the home’ was utilised to capture the notion of making the property one’s own possession.

On first viewing, the construct of ‘quiet’, peaceful' and ‘privacy’ may look the same but they are in fact, different. When respondents mentioned ‘privacy’, they referred to the state of being away from the company and observation of other people. This construct is dissimilar to ‘quiet’, which was used to mean freedom from noise and sound. ‘Peaceful’ on the other hand, was used to express a mental state of tranquillity and calm. Table 7.4 below presents all sixteen constructs supported with verbatim quotes by the respondents.

It was interesting to note however, that the frequency of the constructs as mentioned by respondents varied slightly in Step Eight and Ten. Table 7.3 illustrates some examples of these variations.

Table 7.3: Comparison of Construct Frequency in Step Eight and Ten

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<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Step Eight</th>
<th>Step Ten</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warmth (10)</td>
<td>Autobiographical Memories (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential (10)</td>
<td>Warmth (11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical Memories (9)</td>
<td>Nature (11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing (7)</td>
<td>Space (10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space (7)</td>
<td>Potential (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxing (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences identified here may be attributed to a more thorough and comprehensive analysis undertaken in Step Ten – it not only assessed the mental maps but also closely examined the transcripts and took into account the respondents’ summary images. Therefore, the constructs identified in Step Ten are deemed to be more holistic, accurate and important. The findings from this step of the ZMET revealed the redundancy of the mental
maps hence future researchers employing ZMET may want to consider eliminating altogether the construction of mental maps. It is recommended however that during this step, the elicited constructs be read back to the respondents for clarification purposes. This will ensure that the data collected is triangulated and that researcher bias in data interpretation is minimized.
### Table 7.4: Verbatim Quotes from Respondents to Illustrate the Remaining Sixteen Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Views     | "...this one was to explain the view because our house has ocean view. So it's one – I think it was the emotional first reason because we decided to buy the house when we saw this stunning view from the kitchen and one of the bedrooms have the view to the ocean. (R11)"
|           | "This one here is my dream spot because I want a view. I think that a view is happier to the disposition of one's mental health. Really feel – firmly, firmly, firmly believe that...uhm I sort of call it a moving picture, cos it's just really nice to sit and watch and you know weather and people and – one of the houses I lived in, you know, we had town view and then we had a rural view, at the same spot, this kitchen there and then you worked there, and it's out at Mosgiel, it's on a hill, and it was lovely cos you saw sheep and horses and cows. You know everybody got moved and horses got ridden and you know calves were born and then you had town, you know, so it's just a nice moving picture. And I really like them. (R10)"
| Relaxation| "I just wanted somewhere that you could relax... in you know like just somewhere where you feel totally comfortable. (R3)"
|           | "...our bathroom’s already been done up we've got a spa as well and, yeah, I don't know it just looked so relaxing, like such a nice bathroom that you'd want to have... (RB)"
| Peaceful  | "This is harmony and love and peaceful environment, neighbourhood. In Christianity, it expresses peace. (R5)"
|           | "It's a very peaceful and serene kind of place. I mean as you see by these pictures, they're all essentially a perception of those two, they're all stills" (R2)"
| Quiet     | "I wanted to find a – a picture to express umh – how do you say? Uhm like you don't have anyone there, it's like, you know, quiet. (R7)"
|           | "this one is quiet, I liked that one cos I thought it was quiet. (R9)"
| Done Up   | "It's ready-made, I don't want to do a lot of work. It's tidy, it's done I just move in maybe a bit of work but not too much.(R5)"
|           | "it was just a real, very compact, neat, tidy, don't-need-to-do-anything-with-it bungalow. (R10)"
| Privacy   | "Yeah well it's got three bedrooms at one end that are all quite close, so you've got bedroom, bedroom, bedroom but then you've got hallway, lounge, kitchen and then another bedroom here. So we're right, we can go in that room and be right away from everyone else...yeah perfect room for us to still have that privacy. R3)"
|           | "it's not bad for privacy and no one can see in the windows...and that was important as well and I – I don't know whether that privacy is worth a mention here but it's certainly something...quite important. (R4)"
| 7 | Friends | We've got a lot of friends out there as well, so we were pretty much looking out there. (R3) It was one of the reasons we didn't—we saw some places we liked it was just two bedroom and we decided not to buy this because it was just two bedroom. So for us it's very important to have a place for the friends and family...and also for the other friends that are thinking to come. So it's—it's something I—it's—for me in Italy it's quite common to have my friend at home when they came visit me...(R11) |
| 8 | Aesthetically-Pleasant | ...it's showing like a beach and a tree and it's quite rough, weather-wise, but it's really beautiful. So I thought it reflects the house a lot because the house itself—I mean you can sort of see that it's beautiful, you know, sort of like this beach—I mean well all you see is a big brick thing...but that to me is valuable because it's stable and it's something potentially beautiful but when you get in—so it's like the stormy beach—it's really rough. (R1) It's kind of a beauty thing cos I think the house is really pretty and it has a lovely look from the outside and so much different to all the brick and tile—all the other brick and tile places that we looked at, it's: oh it's brick and tile. I guess they started to look really generic after a while. And this is really unique and has character...it's-the windows have that leadlight stuff on it, so that kind of makes it look a little cuter I guess. (R12) |
| 9 | Spick and Span | And I find, for me personally, when I move into a house as long as things are working and it's reasonably clean and neat I don't mind if they're out of date cos I just—I get used to it. (R4) I'm big on clean cos actually I don't renovate, so if someone else has done it for me it's great. But apart from that also it's amazing just—I open up people's cupboards and ovens and I, you know, railings in between, you know, windows and things and I—bathrooms, the to—toothpaste and I just think: what are these people doing? Why haven't they cleaned their house before they have an open home? (R10) |
| 10 | Outside Living | That's probably one of the things, yeah, that we definitely thought about the house is it is good for entertaining, it's got a big huge deck off the lounge... (R8) ...there's this outdoor patio area, paved area for you know entertaining and stuff, so it'll be really cool when we get a barbecue and...yeah I can't wait. (R12) |
| 11 | Comfort | ...somewhere where you feel totally comfortable. (R3) ...being comfortable in the house and...enjoy just staying there. (R11) |
| 12 | Personalising the home | "I just love putting my mark on it." (R1) I mean I'd like a house that I can, you know, potter around with, you know, get my—swing a hammer at and, you know, do something—just—make it—make it my house. (R2) |
| 13 | Exciting | "...it had the views, it was a project, it was exciting." (R1)  
...it's exciting, it's frightening at the same time because of course you are - you are doing a mortgage for the first time. (R11) |
| 14 | Solidity | And oh yes here comes my Moeraki Boulders, so photo number one. I guess it shows sort of the house is sort of like one of the Moeraki Boulders, it's a big rock, it's quite solid, cos it's three-bedroom brick. Uhm and it has been a bit damaged by the sea - uh not the house, but you know sort of like the sea damaging the rocks, sort of weathering them away. The house hasn't been looked after, so it's been neglected a bit and it needs a paint and it needs a new roof, all that sort of thing. But underneath it's still solid, you know, it won't fall down if we have an earthquake. (R1)  
This one is just solid, a solid, robust, you know, you can drive a car into this one and the car will break and not the wall. (R2) |
| 15 | Half-Finished Project | I think it was because it's half finished. Cos the other ones have been done ...Whereas this one, it's half finished, which means there's some projects for me left to do. (R1)  
I didn't really know how to get one of it - and it was of just like uhm because the house - the house itself needs work done to it and my husband's a builder, so it was also that for him uhm being able to make it better than what it is, you know, and sort of renovate it and - and do things. So I would have had that if I could of, but yeah I couldn't find it. (R6) |
| 16 | Low Maintenance | There's not much maintenance - not much work needs done on the place. (R8)  
...the lawn...was small, manageable, it was handkerchief size you would call it. (R10) |
Thus far, this section has presented and discussed twenty four constructs that were identified as important motives for why consumers bought the homes they did. These constructs were uncovered through the rigorous steps of the ZMET interview process, a projective technique incorporating aspects of means-end chain, laddering, photography and the repertory grid. Although these constructs in themselves provide meaningful insights, the real importance of the constructs lies in the relationship between them. The meanings behind each construct can be ascertained through its association with other constructs (Zaltman 1997). In order to complete the tenth and final step of ZMET, a consensus map was constructed by the researcher based on the relationship between the twenty four constructs. The following section reports details of how the consensus map was developed.

7.4 Construction of the Consensus Map

As part of the process of determining inter-related constructs, the first step in developing the consensus map involved tracing the relationships between every pair of constructs mentioned by all of the respondents by going back to the transcripts. To provide an example from the data, R1 said, "I'm a keen gardener and there's a lot of garden with that one, just a lot of lawn, high grass sort of, yeah it's a lot of work but for me that's outside living". This would be coded as three construct pairs –

i. Hobby $\rightarrow$ Outside Living (gardening as a hobby gives the respondent more opportunities for outside living);

ii. Nature $\rightarrow$ Hobby (access to nature in the form of a garden means the property will allow her to indulge in her hobby);

iii. Nature $\rightarrow$ Outside Living (the garden in turn means she can enjoy her outdoor space and living).

The relationships seen in this example are very similar to that of the means-end chain. The three construct pairs are the layers of attributes, consequences and values that form the means-end chain. To demonstrate,
the following presents R1’s statement above in the form of the means-end chain.

- **(Values)**
  - Outside Living
  - Gardening, Hobby
  - Nature
  - Garden

Similar to the means-end chain, the arrows in the consensus map are positioned according to the order in which they were linked. At this stage, it must be acknowledged that there is a certain level of subjectivity when coding construct pairs. Therefore, an independent coder coded three randomly selected transcripts to reduce researcher bias. The independent coder went through each construct pair to make certain that the researcher had not misinterpreted the relationships mentioned by respondents. Any disparity between the researcher and independent coder was discussed and clarified. When an agreement could not be reached on the relationship between a construct pair, it was excluded from the data. Nine construct pairs were discussed and out of these nine, only two were discarded as misconception.

The analysis identified one hundred construct pairs. However, after considering Zaltman’s rule of thumb that only those relationships mentioned by one third of the participants can be used to form the map, the end result was a consensus map built from twenty nine construct pairs which also incorporated nineteen out of the twenty four key constructs. The twenty nine construct pairs are listed as follows:
1) Views ------ → Relaxation
2) Views ------ → Space
3) Views ------ → Peaceful
4) Views ------ → Privacy
5) Views ------ → Nature
6) Views ------ → Autobiographical memories
7) Half-finished project → Potential
8) Half-finished project → Personalising (the home)
9) Space ------ → Family
10) Space ------ → Privacy
11) Space ------ → Potential
12) Space ------ → Friends
13) Space ------ → Autobiographical memories
14) Space ------ → Hobby
15) Quietness ------ → Peacefulness
16) Potential ------ → Family
17) Done up ------ → Relaxation
18) Done up ------ → Low maintenance
19) Nature ------ → Peacefulness
20) Nature ------ → Quietness
21) Nature ------ → Privacy
22) Nature ------ → Autobiographical memories
23) Nature ------ → Hobby
24) Warmth ------ → Family
25) Warmth ------ → Relaxation
26) Warmth ------ → Comfort
27) Warmth ------ → Autobiographical memories
28) Outside living ------ → Friends
29) Outside living ------ → Hobby
These pairs are then linked one by one. To illustrate from the construct pairs above, 'views-space' (construct pair numbered 2) is linked to 'space-potential' (construct pair numbered 11). They are connected by the construct of 'space', as it appears in both pairs of construct. This forms a longer chain, resulting in:

\[
\text{Views} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Space} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Potential.}
\]

Construct pair number 4 ('views-privacy') will be added as a branch to this chain, resulting in:

\[
\text{Views} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Space} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Potential.} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Privacy}
\]

It is seen in construct pair number 10 that space is also linked to privacy, hence this link will be added, resulting in:

\[
\text{Views} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Space} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Potential.} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Privacy}
\]

This continues until all construct pairs are linked. These links eventually form a large picture, known as the consensus map. The map is illustrated in Figure 7.26 and reflects the thoughts and feelings of homebuyers' choice for a home.

The next section presents findings based on the map - section 7.5.1 discusses three central constructs in the map. Section 7.5.2 presents the overall end construct, to which all other major constructs are linked.
Figure 7.26: Consensus Map of Why People Buy Homes

- N = number of respondents interviewed, N=12
- Connections are made by four or more respondents
- The number to the left of the hyphen in the bottom set of numbers shows the number of times this construct was an origination point in a relationship with another construct
- The number to the right of the hyphen shows the number of times this construct was a destination point in a relationship with another construct
- Size of constructs bears no significance, they're merely for logistics purposes of fitting in their labels
7.5.1 Interpreting the Consensus Map Part 1: Central Constructs

The first step to interpreting the consensus map is to identify the central constructs. Central constructs are the main constructs that mark the kernel of a larger thematic organisation that frames the respondents' motives for buying the homes they did. As a general rule, these central constructs are connected by most other constructs. They are primarily starting points from which other constructs are linked from. In Figure 7.26, the three central constructs are shaded for easy identification. Space, nature and views are significant start points controlling a constellation of related motives revolving around them. The subsequent sections present these three constructs in further detail. A discussion section on the central constructs follows soon after.

7.4.1.1 Space

Space is a major motivating factor behind respondents home choice decisions, underpinning six other motives namely, family, friends, potential, hobby, privacy and autobiographical memories. It is also underpinned by views - having good views was associated with the perception of space. The relationship between space and the other constructs is illustrated in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5: Sample statements illustrating the link between space and other constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Pair</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Illustrative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Space – Family</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>“then I have two bedrooms for friends and family to come and stay....Especially family, cos when they do come from Germany there’s, yeah, it’s just nice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R4</td>
<td>It’s got quite a flat garden in front of it so we could extend if we’re here long enough and if we have family and all of that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space-Friends</td>
<td>R4</td>
<td>“we’ve already had a lot of friends visit us from the UK and family, so umm we wanted to have space for people to stay and space to have people round for dinner”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R8</td>
<td>“you’ve got heaps of open area to have people ...yeah friends and family...cos we quite like socializing...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.5 (cont): Sample statements illustrating the link between space and other constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space — Potential</th>
<th>R11</th>
<th>“we don’t need three bedrooms at the moment but the reason was for the future child”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R5</td>
<td>“This is a concept of growing, like opportunity for development in the future. It depends on my children of course like later on, so I took this picture showing opportunity of growing in the future... I don’t need a big house just a two-bedroom house a tiny one, but in the future who knows? There is a flexibility there.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space—Hobby</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>“I’m a keen gardener and there’s a lot of garden with that one, just a lot of lawn, high grass sort of”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R12</td>
<td>“I took a photo of my pantry because I love cooking and I don’t do it very much cos our kitchen in our flat is the original from the nineteen-thirties and it’s just not a nice kitchen to work in. And this new house has, you know, the kitchen’s less than five years old, there’s heaps of bench space, there’s, you know, dishwasher and all the rest of it and heaps of pantry space.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space — Privacy</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>kind of a possibility for me and Rory to have space and still have flat mates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R9</td>
<td>On why having space was important, R9 answered, “I suppose just for us... being far away from everyone, that it’s just important to us to have just our own sort of space... probably not so much me but more my husband, he wouldn’t... I don’t know it’s hard for him to imagine being right next door to anybody, if you know what I mean.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space — Autobiographical memories</td>
<td>R11</td>
<td>“our problem in Tokyo was that some — some of our stuff, books and clothes, just stayed in boxes because we hadn’t had the space, so we need anytime to open the boxes to check... And I don’t want no more of something like that. “</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R7</td>
<td>it probably comes from my childhood or something, we always had space, I mean we always had big houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views-Space</td>
<td>R7</td>
<td>On why having views is important, R7 said, “you can have space in the house but if you don’t have space when you look outside the house it’s not as good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R4</td>
<td>&quot;but there was one house we looked at which you just felt that even though you had the view you were really— you know you could see houses everywhere and that wasn’t — that didn’t quite hit us where we wanted to be hit.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.1.2 Nature
The link between nature and other constructs demonstrate that feelings, pleasures and other hedonic components are frequently paired together to trigger consumer home choice. Nature was linked to privacy, peace and quiet, hobby and autobiographical memories. In general, the findings show
that hedonic motives are often veiled behind the stated utilitarian motive. More specifically, the results reveal that emotional responses (mood effects such as peace and affective reactions such as happiness linked to autobiographical memories) may function as a motives for consumer choice. Later sections in this chapter will address the role of emotions in consumer choice in more detail. Table 7.6 illustrates the relationship between nature and the other constructs.

Table 7.6: Sample statements illustrating the link between nature and other constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Pair</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Illustrative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature – Privacy</td>
<td>R6</td>
<td>“Yeah is in the country... Okay so it was – it had a few acres and that, so there's lots of room and it's - room for people to stay and run around, do whatever they want...and it's not affecting anyone else... you can do your own thing and... you can make noise it's not affecting neighbours, it's just - yeah. Just all that sort of thing, just do what you want and it's not a problem with anyone else.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature – Peace</td>
<td>R8</td>
<td>“but definitely we were interested in somewhere with a view, we didn't want to be looking at - into another person's house or something, yeah. I guess that's where the trees and things come into it too, wanted privacy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature – Peace</td>
<td>R4</td>
<td>“It's been very peaceful when we've been there before, you can't hear that...No we don't hear any traffic...But...the other thing that we don't – we're not so fond of is that there's not many native bird sounds, there's not that many trees in the area compared to where we are just now.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature – Quiet</td>
<td>R8</td>
<td>“…we've got two wee ponds in our place and...it is peaceful, it's a tranquil look, like yeah. I like water, I think that's why the sea as well, like it's a...calming thing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature – Quiet</td>
<td>R7</td>
<td>“It's like, you know, quiet, calm and there's no neighbour, you can't see any house around and it's like in a garden, like the – the gardens in Dunedin...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature – Quiet</td>
<td>R9</td>
<td>“This one is quiet, I liked that one cos I thought it was quiet. You know peace and quiet. Like that's what we'd like to have, that's where we sort of think, you know, Port or out here, one of the bays, cos we just – well obviously the Port is not probably that quiet with the train going by and everything else, but it is kind of a more peaceful place than being right in town.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.6 (cont): Sample statements illustrating the link between nature and other constructs

| Nature – Hobby | R1 | “Then my outdoor living photo. I will be outdoors working on the garden or, you know, sitting in the sun. And there’s the sun that comes with the outdoors. That’s important. And the cabbage tree, that is also sort of garden and yeah New Zealand, nature.” |
| Nature – Autobiographical memories | R6 | “This one here, sort of because it’s, you know, trees, shrubs, garden, just room to do things... it’s in the country but it’s not too far away from, yeah, beach and the rivers and things like that... everyone in our family likes fishing and those sort of things.” |
| | R2 | “I mean, you know, animals but sort of you know birds in the trees or maybe a chicken or something but you know a very sort of quiet sort of farmyard sounds... I couldn’t say exactly why the farm theme is significant. I did grow up on a farm so perhaps that has something to do with it the farm also has associations with freshness and space both things that are important to me.” |
| | R5 | “So when we saw this house, we saw – yeah my – my daughter – I – I knew it straight away when we saw the backyard, I was like: oh like our villa (back in Jakarta), you know.” |
| Views – Nature | R1 | “I just sum it up as nature cos there’s my views and my hills.” |
| | R4 | “…the kitchen table was right where this wonderful view of fields and hills…” |

7.4.1.3 Views
The third central construct in the consensus map was views. In section 7.4.10.9, harbour view was cited as a good view by R4. Interestingly, R7 had a very different notion about harbour view. He said, “if the house was, you know, looking at South Dunedin, you know, you would have a view on – on South Dunedin, that would be ugly. But I don’t see the – the industries and everything, the only ugly part I see is ...the harbour yeah.” Figure 7.27 illustrates some of the pictures used by respondents to indicate what they perceive as a desirable view from their newly bought property.
Views was mentioned by eight respondents and its relationship with other constructs such as space, nature, peace, privacy, relaxation and autobiographical memories was uttered twenty one times. An award-winning paper by Rodriguez and Sirmans (1994)'s concluded that a good view increases property price by 8%. This thesis extends the study of Rodriguez and Sirmans (1994) in that it reveals what constitutes a good view for the consumer. From the evidence in table 7.5 and sections 7.4.10.9. and 7.5.1.3., a good view is subjective – it can comprise the ocean, the harbour, the hills, the garden, the town or the countryside. Most importantly, the elements that make up a good view differ between individuals and should be an important consideration for future quantitative studies. The issue raised by this finding is not to argue the value of views, but to highlight the multitude of meanings which have not been captured in past research by employing a single utilitarian word ‘views’. It is argued that there is a pressing need to elicit the underlying motives and associations behind the term in order to
truly understand what a consumer means by views. This new understanding will assist real estate players to market their portfolio more effectively.

The connections between views and nature and views and space are illustrated in Tables 7.5 and 7.6. Table 7.7 provides the connections between views and peace, privacy, relaxation and autobiographical memories.

Table 7.7: Sample statements illustrating the link between views and other constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Pair</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Illustrative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views - Peace</td>
<td>R5</td>
<td>&quot;...green (referring to the garden) would be fine for peaceful.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views - Privacy</td>
<td>R10</td>
<td>&quot;I had to live in a place that didn't have a view I'm hoping that it'll be out in the country. So you know as in – you know like Mosgiel's got some nice little spots that are reasonably – like they're flat but they're rural. And so that's – gives me peace.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views - Privacy</td>
<td>R7</td>
<td>&quot;that picture you can tell, if you're standing here there's not many people to bother you. So these are related to that point of view.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views - Privacy</td>
<td>R9</td>
<td>On why they chose to live by the bay, R9 commented that, &quot;it's just important to us to have uhm, yeah, just our own sort of space. And Jayden - probably not so much me but more my husband, I don't know it's hard for him to imagine being right next door to anybody, if you know what I mean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views - Relaxation</td>
<td>R4</td>
<td>&quot;...it's you know the views, the being able to socialize with people in a relaxed way...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views - Relaxation</td>
<td>R6</td>
<td>&quot;beach and the rivers and things like that...I don't know, just – just the relaxing&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views - Autobiographical memories</td>
<td>R4</td>
<td>&quot;I was brought up on a farm where I had a beautiful through all my childhood we would – the kitchen table was right where this wonderful view of fields and hills and I think that !, for me particularly, I don't want to settle for less than that, you know, I'm used to having a nice view...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views - Autobiographical memories</td>
<td>R10</td>
<td>&quot;...one of the houses I lived in, you know, we had town view and then we had a rural view, at the same spot.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.2 Discussion on the Central Constructs
A superficial analysis of the initial reasons provided by respondents to explain their home choice would suggest that utilitarian factors were driving home choice behaviour, but careful assessment revealed that many of these utilitarian factors were underpinned by hedonic motives. Space, for instance,
embodies a calculative, economic factor because it is typically used to refer to the expanse of a surface of a three-dimensional area such as the size of the property, the number of bedrooms and garage space. However, through closer examination the underpinnings of space were found to be generally hedonic such as to entertain friends, to have room to indulge in their favourite activities, to retreat into privacy, to relive what they had had in the past as well as to secure what they did not have in the past. It is evident in this study, that the motives for home choice are hedonic and represent a drive in support of higher-order goals such as the desire to be peaceful, to be relaxed and to enjoy their privacy.

One of the unique contributions of the present study is that the identification of space as a construct led to the revelation of family and friends as strong motivesal factors for home choice. A strong connection between home choice and family is recognised in three ways: to provide lodgings for visiting friends and family members, to accommodate the potential of a growing family and to entertain friends and relatives. This is in accord with many of the theories discussed in Chapter Four: Maslow’s affective need to belong; McClelland’s and McGuire’s need for affiliation; Tauber’s social need for communicating with others; and Kahle’s list of values specifying warm relationships with others. More specifically, the influence of family members on house purchase decisions have been noted by a few authors (Levy & Lee 2000; Levy, Murphy & Lee 2008) but family as a motive for consumer home choice has not been discovered until the current study. Part of this study’s contribution is thus that it demonstrates some social factors underlying home choice – those that revolve around the family and kinship. This inclusion of the social dimension in the consumption of homes is an important step forward as to date, neither the marketing nor real estate literature has acknowledged the role of social motives on consumer home choice.

The predominant theme to emerge from the ZMET process with homebuyers in this study is that the motives for home choice were essential to the
respondents' inner sense of being. That is, the homebuyers' choices are largely driven by an evaluation of how well the property fits the self. For example, the underlying motive for the construct of 'nature' was associated with the desire to be comfortable, to have fun, to seek solace, to have privacy, to indulge in the things they like to do and to just be themselves. The findings illustrate that a relationship exists between people's houses and themselves and the homebuyers saw their home choice as a symbol that reinforces the way they wanted to live. Hints of this idea can be found in the work of McGuire (1974) and consumer researchers such as Belk (1988, 1989, 1995). Consistent with McGuire's need for expression as an affective preservation motive, Belk proposed that many of the products we buy are like extensions of our inner desires, wants, and beliefs about ourselves - this study extends Belk's theory to include empirical evidence that the house people buy is an extension of who they are and what they want. Further evidence of self-related motives can be found when the ability to personalise the home was cited as a reason for purchase. Five homebuyers in this study saw the opportunity to "put their mark" on the property as an important symbolic reason for their home choices relative to the self. They place self-identity construction as the reason why they chose a particular property over others. These self-related motives for purchase represent higher-order goals associated with experiential consumption. As discussed in Chapter Three, decision theories shaped by the information-processing model have tended to ignore the role of the self as motive for choice. The findings in this study argue that 'the self' is a significant hedonic motive underlying choice.

The value of nature in residential real estate has been studied with investigations being carried out on the impact of landscaping and green areas on house prices (Des Rosiers et al. 2002; Luttik 2000; Morancho 2003). These studies confirmed that a property surrounded by nature will result in a higher house price hence the value of nature is utilitarian in nature because it can be quantified into dollar figures. However, an understanding of the reasons why is also important. This present study indicates that there is a
relationship between the utilitarian and hedonic aspects of nature and identifies five hedonic motives for home choice which underpins nature (privacy, peace, quiet, hobby and autobiographical memories). In other words, the need for nature is closely related to psychological comfort. For one, people's motive for purchasing a property surrounded by or with aspects of nature is attributed to the perception of privacy and tranquillity. This then suggests that current property without the aspects of nature may still be able to attract similar appeal and demand if it embodies the idea of privacy and tranquility in other forms.

In short, this analysis has demonstrated that demand for the utilitarian attributes of a property such as having views, the allowance of space and being surrounded by nature are driven by some very deep-seated hedonic motives. The three central constructs reveal that the choice of home appears to be a central physical and emotional reference point in a respondent's life. In general, the factors that are found to influence a consumer's home choice reflect Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) experiential view theory in consumer research. That is, they appear in the form of sensory enjoyment that a consumer considers and anticipates when making his or her choice.

7.4.3. Interpreting the Consensus Map Part 2: Overall End State
Another important feature of the consensus map is finding out the overall end state, which is a construct that serves as a destination point for most other constructs in the map. This could be likened to the "values" level of the means-end chain. In this study, the major overarching goal as can be seen in Figure 7.26, is autobiographical memories. It is an overall end construct that four other constructs are linked to – three of which are central constructs discussed above. Every home buyer, to lesser or greater degrees, indicated that they bought a home because fundamentally, it was related to what they had or did not have in the past. This means that the construct autobiographical memories is bipolar in nature, that is, both positive and negative memories drive people to their home choice in the present. The fact
that autobiographical memories is an overall end state also suggests that autobiographical memories may be a deep-seated motive that underpins many of the other motives mentioned by respondents. Table 7.8 below illustrates explanations made by respondents behind each construct pair linked to autobiographical memories.

Table 7.8: Sample statements illustrating the link between autobiographical memories and views, nature, space and warmth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Pair</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Illustrative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views – Autobiographical memories</td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>&quot;It should be sunny and has a – have a view and those hills are quite important to me cos I grew up on a hill, so I've always had it. So living on the flat to me is like: oh that's boring.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R4</td>
<td>I was brought up on a farm where I had a beautiful view through all my childhood we would – the kitchen table was right where this wonderful view of fields and hills and I think that I – I, for me particularly, I don't want to settle for less than that, you know, I'm used to having a nice view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature – Autobiographical memories</td>
<td>R9</td>
<td>&quot;I suppose it's because Jayden (her husband) is probably – his mother – his mother's an artist and she's very – everything's very naturalistic for him, and it probably always has been, and I sort of grew up in a house that was – you probably don't know the designer – but he's an American designer that was a Frank Lloyd Wright house and Frank Lloyd Wright's sort of architecture went on the theory of taking things from the outside in the inside. So our house, that I grew up in, was like that, it was like everything was brick on the inside, everything was wood, you know what I mean. It was all sort of that – behind that theory.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R5</td>
<td>&quot;But the garden somehow, you know like we feel: oh this is what we used to have, we have a backyard. so I said to my daughter: remember when you were a kid, you know like, you like play in the garden, you know, so it'd be nice if Angelina (grand daughter) has the same thing, you know.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space – Autobiographical memories</td>
<td>R7</td>
<td>&quot;...it probably comes from my childhood or something, we always had space, I mean we always had big houses and stuff...and I used to go on holidays – when I go to my grandparents, I mean they have a house that's probably four hundred square metres...&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | R11 | "the other important reason because we choose the house was they had a lot of storage...we needed a place with some storage because in Japan we have so small apartment now we – we have a lock up place where we kept all our stuff there.... it's storage not just for the things, storage for the food, the uh – some places – our problem in Tokyo was that some - some of our stuff, books and clothes, just stayed in boxes because we hadn't had the space, so we need anytime to open the boxes to check." |

| Warmth – Autobiographical memories | R1 | "[I] had boyfriends and stuff ... and in their houses if there’s no sun it's just so much colder than to my flat, which isn’t insulated or anything, but it’s got sun and as soon as the sun streams in the window it warms it up." |

| | R12 | "our current flat is really, really cold in winter, so I’m looking forward to being warm." |

"Integral to a sense of who we are is a sense of our past" (Belk 1989, p. 148). This statement is quite true in the case of all twelve respondents in this study. The main reasons for home choice, i.e. the central constructs of space, nature and views were all linked back to historical memories of the past. For each of the respondent, the most frequently given explanation for valuing these utilitarian attributes was their recollection of other people, places, events and relationships (See Table 7.9). This finding suggests that the underlying motive for consumer home choice is historical - past memoirs seemed to have formed the foundations from which other motives stem from. Where the home was bought as a place that will allow the entertainment of friends, R3 admitted that,

when I was through high school and stuff I always had all my friends over every weekend. Like mum always opened the doors to everyone and since I’ve gotten a bit older and everyone’s gone into flats and things it’s all – you know you go to their houses. And so since I’m still living at home I’ve missed out on having all the
people around and I — I want that back. I want people to come to my house...

She also thought that this notion of enjoying the company of friends in one's own home came from observing what her mother did as an adult, "I think just cos I've always grown up in St Clair and there's always been — I mean my mum's best friend lives in the house behind us and her other best friend lives about six houses down in the next street..."

Autobiographical memories do not necessarily have to span throughout childhood. For R12, her past memory of living in a rented flat without appropriate space for entertaining has pushed her to choose and buy a property that will allow her to do just that. She did not want her past experience with the rented flat repeated:

One of the things I really wanted in a place was to have a big lounge and a dining area sort of open plan, so that I could have — when I have people over uhm it's just a lot — a lot better. Cos my current lounge, if I have three guests, it's crowded you know so. What I really wanted was to be able to entertain and have people over for drinks or just, you know, whatever.

Not being able to enjoy the company of family in the past also motivated respondents to buy the home they did in the present hence autobiographical memories pose as a significant determinant of a buyer's current home choice. R1 noted,

I mean last Christmas my parents came and my little brother came and I had to stuff them into one bedroom because my flat mate thankfully was away. So I could — but you know it would be easier if I had two bedrooms, so my little brother doesn't have to sleep with my parents... So yeah and you can have friends staying and you can have a spare room or an office and a spare room for people to stay...

Very interestingly, autobiographical memories proved to be an enormous underlying motive for R5's home choice. She wanted the house so much that
she paid an additional fifty thousand dollars for it. The reason why she did it, according to her was,

so I said to my daughter: remember when you were a kid, you know like, you like play in the garden, you know, so it'd be nice if Angelina (her daughter's daughter) has the same thing, you know. So I'm not sure. It's like...I don't know the – the mind works probably with fam – familiar things. You know it's more associated with familiar or for the past or for whatever we've done in the past. So when we saw this house, we saw – yeah my – my daughter – I knew it straight away when we saw the backyard, I was like: oh like our villa (back in Jakarta), you know.

The desire for views and nature and their association with privacy, peace and quietness were linked back to times in the past. R2 summed this up with his account of how his past experience taught him to buy what he did today:

I lived in territory for a while, which is Northern Australia, and you get a lot of these houses with these incredibly tiny windows and the whole house is focused in on itself and this kind of represents the idea that the house is well, out there. You know you feel like you've got almost a long – long distance, you know, you're not surrounded by buildings that are twice as high as you. And that was one of the real downsides in the houses I looked at other places, you know, you look out the window and there'd be the wall of the neighbours' house and it was all you could see and the window just served for light. Up here I mean all the windows you know, they look out on useful – reasonable views or they let in sunlight or you get a bit of air coming into the house quite nicely.

7.4.4 Discussion on Overall End State
Illustrative comments in Table 7.9 have already highlighted that generally, people who wanted views were people who grew up with views and people who cited nature were people who are already familiar with similar aspects of nature from their past. These reasons overshadow functional, economic explanations for their home choices. Research in psychology has shown that understanding people's earliest memories and defining memories provide insights to their judgment process (Bruner 2003; Mosak & Di Pietro 2006;
Consumer researchers have taken this further by examining the effect of consumer's past memories on the consumer-brand relationship (Braun-LaTour, LaTour & Zinkhan 2007; Braun, Ellis & Loftus 2002; Sierra & McQuitty 2007) but its influence in the decision-making process for the consumption of homes have not been identified until this thesis.

Braun-LaTour, LaTour and Zinkhan (2007) proposed that consumers' autobiographies can provide marketers with memory stories that are insightful for understanding consumers' thoughts and feelings about a product and brand. Their proposal was based on four logical premises: (1) autobiographical memory is central to identity and contains memories of experiences that are the foundation for the self-concept; (2) autobiographical memory holds information about products and the meanings that have added to consumers' lives; (3) only a fraction of a lifetime of experiences is retained thus those that are remembered hold special meaning and (4) the earliest and more repeated experiences are likely to reveal symbolic meanings about products. The current study demonstrates that a home choice carries with it, the homebuyer's autobiographical memories which are symbolic in meaning and subjective in nature.

Baumgartner, Sujan and Bettman (1992) demonstrated that increased retrieval of autobiographical memories changes the content of consumers' thoughts because, "thoughts are more focused on the autobiographical episode and thoughts about the product features become less accessible" (p. 423). The findings from this study suggest that the construct autobiographical memories acted as an intervening response system in the decision-making process of the homebuyers in this study. This is evidenced when even though all respondents started out with checklists that contained utilitarian housing attributes (such as price) as criteria for the home that they wanted to buy, there exists a discrepancy between attributes listed in their checklist and their actual purchase. R12 fell in love with her house because it was located in a suburb she grew up in and lived all her life, the house also had ornate
ceilings which reminded her of her bedroom during her childhood days – she made a decision to quickly purchase the house after having seen sixty others prior, and paid five thousand dollars more than her budgeted price. R7 admitted that he had probably paid too much for the house that he bought, "I bought the house to live in it as well because I like it and everything, you know. And I probably paid ten thousand too much..." but bought it anyway because the space in and outside the house allows him to continue living the way he had in the past. As an experienced investor of the Dunedin residential real estate (Ferris 2008), the researcher believed that the price R7 paid was in fact, above market valuation. Therefore, one significant aspect of this thesis is the demonstration that the retrieval of autobiographical memories changes homebuyers' thought processes so that there is more concentration on personal memories and their associated affect and reduced analysis of the product information. This study thus extends existing theories on hedonic consumption by introducing autobiographical memories as a significant variable into the experiential view model.

The elicitation of this construct as a motive for consumer home choice suggests that choice is a culmination of homebuyers' past experiences and the feelings that they associated with those experiences. One's past experiences and memories are evoked by certain features or attributes within a property resulting in feelings of nostalgia and pleasure. Although it remains to be tested, these feelings induced by autobiographical memories seem to have activated the 'buy button' for the respondents in this study - this is the only motive out of the twenty four that was mentioned by all twelve respondents. While the property literature emphasizes utilitarian value, the outcome from this study offers additional insights by suggesting that consumers do place value on products based on emotions. Past studies have assumed abstract characteristics of a property (i.e. views and fengshui) to be another utilitarian home attribute and data for research was mostly collected in a quantitative, mathematical formula (Benson et al. 1996; Des Rosiers et al. 2002; Luttik 2000; Morancho 2003; Rodriguez & Sirmans
1994). Emotion was not mentioned in these studies but it is clear from the respondents in this thesis that positive emotion is evoked with the presence of nature and beautiful views, be they of the ocean, harbour, mountain or hills. Homes with views have emotional value linked to history of the past, memories of previous experiences and exciting potential for fun, comfort and refuge. As evidenced from the analysis of data in this study, views and the elements of nature may also suggest the idea of outdoor living, entertainment and the enjoyment of other people's company hence the home now contains emotional social value. The main underlying motive for consumer home choice was identified as autobiographical memories. The emotions and feelings that emanate from nostalgia were reasons strong enough to drive homebuyers to purchase - the stronger the emotion, the more intense was the desire to purchase.

With the exception of the recent publication by Munro and Smith (2008) and Khoo and Ndubisi (2008), emotion has been excluded from property studies perhaps on the general assumption that emotions are irrational, commonly associated with being out of control, inaction and irresponsibility. This assumption is however unfounded as many studies on emotion have proven otherwise (Damasio 2000; Mellers, Schwartz & Cooke 1998; Pham 1998 2004 2007). For example, one study concluded that emotion is a necessary tool for decision-making because it supplements our limited computational abilities (Hanoch, 2002). This is proven when patients with brain damage in some specific spots in the prefrontal cortex areas experience a decrease in emotional feelings thus leading to severe impairment in decision-making even though they continue to have intellectual abilities and general knowledge (Damasio, 2000). Further evidence suggests that the role emotions play in decision-making is much more significant than has previously been acknowledged as emotions can help to prevent our decision calculations from becoming so complex that decisions would be impossible (Zhu, 2002). The findings and discussions thus far have established that the home is bought for the sake of intrinsic enjoyment and sensory pleasure.
hence there is no doubt that emotion plays an integral role in the hedonic consumption of homes. This study has also extended the notion of rationality to include consideration for the role of emotions in motivating consumer home choice and highlights the fact that choice encompasses rationality and emotions. It also contends that being emotional does not mean being irrational – the consensus map as well as the discussion above has provided many examples of why the rational choice for a home can be hedonic and emotional.

Related to the topic of emotion is the "This is it!" feeling when having arrived at a home choice. Regardless of the number of properties they have looked at and compared, nine of the twelve respondents in this study displayed this intuitive decision-making characterised by a clear, instructive idea that comes abruptly to mind. As seen in Section 7.4.10.7., the respondents in this study could not give an account of the process of the decision-making nor how they judge it to be correct. Further support were in the form of statements such as,

- "when I saw that house the first time I just knew it's – it's – it's a good house" (R7);
- "we had the quickest look around it and decided: yep we want to put an offer on it, we want this house" (R8);
- "we were in there for like five minutes – that night we made an offer on it and that night we got it" (R8);
- "every other house that we sort of gone through doesn't smile at us, like it's not a real warm feeling" (R9) and
- "I feel so this is it…this is it, this is what I want" (R5).

Despite this, the reports they gave seemed to reflect great confidence in their intuitive decision. This is consistent with a proposition made by John Locke, the famous English philosopher. He contended that intuition occurs when the mind perceives a relationship (or lack of one) between two ideas immediately, directly and with a sense of certainty such that proof is not
required (Shirley & Langan-Fox 1996). This study thus extends the economic view by way of integrating intuition into the choice process of homebuyers. There is a consensus that logic or reason, as advocated by the information processing model and the rational man theory, is not enough and that intuition is needed (Bastick 1982; Sauter 1999; Sinclair & Ashkanasy 2005). The information processing model posits that logical processes are when goals and alternatives are specified, as are the costs and benefits of the alternatives. Given that the individual cannot give an account of the choice process or how they can judge the decision to be correct, intuition in consumer choice has been deemed illogical or irrational. However, in psychology, intuition has been recognised as a pre-analytic cognitive action which supplies the raw material that precedes, motivates and guides analytical thinking vision (Schumpeter 1994).

The information processing model is a step-by-step decision-making process. The speed of the intuitive process as demonstrated by the respondents, makes intuition appear sudden in relation to the time that might be needed to reach the same result using a step-by-step analysis. However, Bahm (1960) explained that intuition is perceived as immediate because the incubation time has not been considered. Bastick (1982) concurred and considered that intuition occurs after a prolonged incubation period. The perceived suddenness is also related in part to the apparent disconnection between the incubation period and the situation in which intuitive decision occurs. In fact, studies in other areas have found that intuition can greatly enhance the effectiveness of decision-making (Dijksterhuis et al. 2006; Hayashi 2001; Henden 2004; Kardes 2006; Khatri & Alvin 2000; Sauter 1999). This may explain why the respondents reported great confidence in their intuitive decision – none of the respondents, except for R8, felt the need to obtain an official valuation report before putting in their offer for the house they bought. When R7 was asked what if the house he bought was valued under what he paid for, he said, "I would change the valuer." In fact, R3 reported the following,
Looking back, my partner and I certainly bought our home with our hearts (not that our heads didn't agree!!) but I'm sure if we had wanted to, we could have found something cheaper, in a different area etc, we loved the street as soon as we drove down it, and both the house and the street are so far living up to our expectations. We have no regrets!! Great things have happened so far since the purchase, we got an awesome wee puppy who brings the house to life, and we got engaged.

This suggests that the intuitive decision can lead to highly satisfactory choices. This information is important for homebuyers who may feel guilty when they purchase a home with the assistance of the “This is it!” feeling, mainly because they perceive their intuitive decision to be rash, emotional and irrational. This study and in particular, the theoretical model for consumer motives underlying home choice suggests that it is the interaction between emotional motives and economic rationalisations that has given rise to the “This is it!” feeling. Whether autobiographical memories directly trigger the “This is it!” feeling for homebuyers will be an interesting future study for consumer researchers and property academics alike.

Finally, the review in Chapter Four noted the suggestion made by Dupuis and Thorns (1998) that “memories and nostalgia were an intrinsic component in the way (the respondents) understood homes” (Dupuis & Thorns 1998, p.38). This study extends the conceptualisation of autobiographical memories as a meaning for home to a motive for home choice. As demonstrated in the consensus map, an autobiographical memory is an underpinning for the major motives impacting on home choice.

Thus far, this chapter has reported findings on the twenty four key motives that drive consumer home choice. The links between these constructs and their importance were discussed. These were then charted onto what is
known in ZMET as a consensus map. Following this, three central constructs and the overall end state generated from the consensus map were presented and discussed with reference to thick and rich descriptions provided by the respondents’ statements quoted verbatim. In order to address the research question (What are the motives underlying a consumer’s home choice, and how did hedonic factors, if any, impact on choice?) and the fourth objective (to produce a theoretical model integrating the effects of these influences on residential home choice), the following section will analyse the thematic substructure of utilitarian versus hedonic motives, based on the consensus map.

7.5 Thematic Substructure: Utilitarian versus Hedonic Motives

One premise underlying this study was the concern regarding whether or not property attributes can be considered motives for consumer home choice. Two separate streams of research identified from the literature review in Chapters 3 (the information processing model versus the experiential view) and 4 (the classification of motives) provided evidence that attributes can in fact qualify as utilitarian motives. On one hand, real estate researchers contend that consumption of houses and properties are economic in nature and reasons for home choices are governed by utilitarian attributes which can be quantified by dollar figures. A smaller body of research proposes that products and services can be purchased for their symbolic and emotional values. Research has not, however, considered hedonic motives that may influence consumer home choice. The aim of this thesis was to bring these research strands together because the relationships between utilitarian and hedonic motives are central to advance current understanding of homebuyers’ behaviour in the real estate industry.

In the preceding sections, it was shown that the consumers’ pictures and stories can reveal different types and levels of insights into consumer
thoughts and feelings about their motives for their home choices. Many of the constructs that form the consensus map discussed above encompass both utilitarian and hedonic motives. This section discusses the utilitarian and hedonic motives that have emerged from the data. Figure 7.28 depicts the relationship between utilitarian and hedonic motives.
Figure 7.28 Model Showing Utilitarian versus Hedonic Motives for Consumer Home Choice
7.5.1 Discussion on Thematic Substructure

The fourth objective for this thesis was to produce a theoretical model integrating the effects of motives on residential home choice. The consensus map in this section addresses this objective by conceptualising the link between utilitarian and hedonic motives.

Eight constructs were identified and categorised as utilitarian motives whilst the remaining eleven were identified and categorized as hedonic. The eight utilitarian constructs include: done up, potential, project, warmth, views, space, outside living and nature. Done up and project are bipolar, in that they are opposites. Potential although highly related to the house as a project, was also mentioned by respondents who bought done up properties with the plan to expand and add value. Potential therefore, is viewed as an economic factor. From the consensus map, it can be seen that except for potential which doubles as a start point as well as an end point, all eight constructs are beginning points leading onto other constructs. This means each of the eight constructs is utilitarian in nature because each was chosen with the intention to accomplish a functional or practical task. The utilitarian value of these constructs have already been confirmed by past property researchers. More specifically, the impact of these utilitarian constructs on house prices has been analysed. For example, properties with views have been studied in comparison to properties without and it was found that good views do fetch higher prices (Bourassa, Hoesli & Sun 2003; Rodriguez & Sirmans 1994). The economic value of nature such as landscaping, trees and green areas have also been calculated and established (Des Rosiers et al. 2002; Luttik 2000; Morancho 2003). A house that is done up, upgraded or renovated is undeniably more expensive than houses that are not as the outlay for renovation would have been factored into the sale price. Likewise, the cost of insulation or heating appliances for warm houses, a deck or a patio for outside living, additional rooms and floor space can be estimated and priced accordingly.
What is harder to financially value however, is the other eleven constructs that these utilitarian motives point to in the map. All eleven constructs refer to aspects of enjoyment, pleasure and fun. It would be difficult to justify what friends and family are worth. Similarly, it would be tricky to estimate the cost of comfort, peace, privacy and relaxation. These are symbolic motives, otherwise known as hedonic motives and many of them can be placed in the context of the needs and values discussed by Maslow (1943), McClelland (1953 1987), McGuire (1974), Tauber (1972), Rokeach (1973), Kahle (1983) and Schwartz (1992 1994) in Chapter Four. For example, R1, R6, R8 and R11 talked about wanting space in the house to accommodate, entertain and enjoy the company of their friends and family. This finding is in support of Maslow’s theory on the human need to feel belonged and lands itself on the same platform as McGuire and McClelland’s theory on the need for affiliation. It also confirms one of Schwartz’s three basic needs (that of social interaction) and Tauber’s list of social motives which includes communication with others and affiliating with reference groups. The comfort, relaxing, peace, privacy and quiet motives relate to two terminal values in Rokeach’s list: a comfortable life and inner harmony. The hobby motive where respondents seek an enjoyable and leisurely life describes the terminal value of pleasure in Rokeach’s list and confirms Kahle’s internal values, which states that individuals are motivated by internal values that relates to the self. The need to personalise the home fits in with Winstanley, Thorns and Perkins’ (2002) findings where decisions on residential mobility were attributed to humanistic factors such as the need for a sense of self and identity. This could also translate to the need for growth and self-actualisation as espoused by Maslow and McClelland. As can be seen, these hedonic motives mostly conform to the theories on needs and values within consumer research and adds to the small body of research that has applied these theories to home choice (Coolen and van Montfort, 2001 and Linberg et al, 1989). The findings discussed so far are similar enough to those previously drawn that one could argue they were revealing the same motives but in different ways. The difference is, however, that this study has chosen not to
impose the motives from the literature onto the respondents but to allow them to talk freely about what motivated their home choice. As a result of this, the constructs uncovered included a wider spectrum of motives than those found in extant literature.

Of particular importance, one motive in the consensus map was found not to fit in with any of the theories discussed in Chapter Four - autobiographical memories which was mentioned by all twelve respondents. For example, R7 bought his spacious house because he has always lived in big houses, including at his grandparents when he was a young boy. R2, R6 and R9 had lived on a farm and the houses they bought either reminded them of a farm or had qualities of a rural lifestyle. R3 and her partner deliberately searched for a house with a good section in order to allow them to have a dog because they had always wanted a dog when growing up. R11 was reminded of the house that she and her husband had lived in many years ago and constantly compared their new house with the specific intention to avoid their past experience. This underlying motive is a significant one for consumer home choice yet cannot be found in any of the lists of values developed by Rokeach, Kahle and Schwartz. Autobiographical memories could translate into nostalgia, memories or connection to the past as an extension of the existing lists of values.

The respondents in this study have shown that the home is bought for hedonic purposes. Reasons given were already discussed earlier, some of which included the enjoyment of the company of friends and family, the refuge they seek from the outside world, indulgence in one's own passion and reliving good, positive memories. All of these have been plotted as end goals in the consensus map. This finding has answered the second part of the research question, "How did hedonic factors, if any, impact on choice?" The map has demonstrated that although consumer motives comprise both utilitarian and hedonic factors, it seems as if hedonic motives were a more dominant trigger for home choice. All utilitarian motives in the consensus
map ultimately lead to a hedonic motive. This reflects the means-end chain model where attributes are shown to eventually fulfill terminal values.

Out of the eight utilitarian constructs identified in the model, space, potential and project are closely connected. This connection suggests that the motives for a home choice are partly attributed to the economic potential to improve the value of the home. This is particularly relevant to New Zealanders - Winstansley, Thorns and Perkins (2002) have already pointed out that “the pastime of home improvement is deeply embedded in New Zealand culture” (p. 825). Existing property studies tend to interpret this motive based on economic theory using life cycle models. They have attributed reasons for space and expansion of space to economic reasons such as expansion of family members (Kendig 1984). This thesis extends the economic view and argues that the underlying motives for space and the potential expansion and alteration of space are to create a sense of identity (through the opportunity to personalise the home and to indulge in one’s hobby and activity); to enjoy the company of friends and families; to replicate past experiences (the construct of space is linked to autobiographical memories) and to create a sanctuary for themselves (through having privacy, peace and quiet). The economic value of space and potential should be recognised alongside its hedonic worth because the latter has a wider appeal. The model generated by the consensus map is by no means universal but its results provide a richer understanding of an important purchase in the consumers' lives.

Studies on experiential consumption and hedonic motives within marketing have covered a range of consumption experiences including candy bars (Dhar & Wertebroch 2000); extraordinary experiences such as white river rafting and sky diving (Celsi, Rose & Leigh 1993); playful consumption such as the consumption of video games, professional baseball matches (Holbrook et al. 1984; Holt 1995) and experience goods such as going to the movies, hairstyling and having restaurant meals (Neelamegham & Jain 1999). Research on hedonic consumption however, has not yet been
conducted on homes. This could be partly attributed to the view that the house is an economic tangible product, and that the consumers would be highly rational and logical when making choices of what to buy. This thesis extends the study of experiential and hedonic consumption to include the complex consumption of homes. Given the broad range of products and services that have already been categorised as hedonic, it is important to identify other aspects of hedonic products that influence the consumption process. The hedonic constructs identified in this thesis can be used to better describe and organize the varied forms of hedonic products in the literature.

Finally, it is also important to note that the consensus map highlighted the interdependencies among the motives. This suggests that the home purchase experience is a complex one and further builds on Holbrook and Hirshman’s (1986) Thought-Emotion-Activity-Value model which assumes that consumption is an experience that is multifaceted.

7.6. **Final Observation: The Respondents’ Checklists**

When a homebuyer was selected as a qualified participant in this study, they were asked if they had a checklist that they use when going through different property options. All twelve respondents had a checklist, some longer and more comprehensive than others. Table 7.9 is a compilation of all twelve checklists as they were given to the researcher, who then compared each criterion with the home the respondents actually purchased. Any differences between the criteria in the pre-purchase checklists and the actual homes are noted in the third and fourth column of the table.

A common thread amongst these checklists was that they all contained utilitarian attributes of the ideal property. Amongst those criteria in the lists included was the material of the home (what the house is made of), number of bedrooms and proximity to amenities. Given that finance is often the determining constraint for a purchase this large, eleven respondents
invariably listed their price range, unprompted by the researcher. This is not surprising as the literature has already highlighted the significance of price as a determining factor time and time again.
Table 7.9: Comparison of Respondents’ Pre-Purchase Checklists and Actual Home Purchased

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Criteria in Checklist</th>
<th>Actual Home</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brick but okay with wooden</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Bought a wooden house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$160K pre-approved</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location: Opoho/North East Valley/Pine Hill/Garden</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>The house was in Normandy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Value: Not prepared to overpay no matter how flash</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location: Must be easy distance from CBD, and not in South Dunedin, St Kilda, Caversham or an area that’s dominated by students</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Although the house is in Ravensbourne, which is not exactly close to the CBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Livability: No matter how much money it is, I don’t want to have to spend too much on it to make it habitable</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>The subject of livability is subjective. The researcher visited the property and it required substantial capital outlay for renovation work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Size: Bigger houses have more rental potential and give you more options indoors</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Bought a small house with two small bedrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section: Bigger sections are good because you can subdivide them/build bigger houses on them</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Section was not big enough for subdivision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aspect: Sunny aspects are good, houses facing south are bad.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Ravensbourne is notorious for being a shady part of the Dunedin city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views: Looking at the back of other houses is not nice, ditto for motorways and power lines, sea views are good along with rural and mountain views.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>No power lines nor motorways but no sea, rural nor mountain views either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of surrounding houses: Don’t want best house in bad street</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Not on a bad street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.9: Comparison of Respondents' Pre-Purchase Checklists and Actual Home Purchased (con’t)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Criteria in Checklist</th>
<th>Actual Home</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Internal access</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>House does not have internal access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern kitchen</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern bathroom</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New carpet preferred</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not new but good enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dishwasher</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heatpump</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire preferably on wetback</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brick and tile with tin roof</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lots of sun</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low maintenance garden</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widespread for privacy when getting flatmates</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deck</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>The house does not have a deck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open-plan</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4a &amp; 4b</td>
<td>Price: $200,000 - $500,000. Target price $350,000</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open plan living</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uninterrupted north, northwest views with windows fully utilising views</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A level of privacy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not ideal as window looks out to neighbour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opoho/North East Valley/Waverly (with view of harbour, Roslyn, Maori Hill, Highcliff, Upper Junction (possibly St Clair for lifestyle block)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>House is in Opoho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decking</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wood burner</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fully insulated</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>They ended up buying one without full insulation nor double glazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Double glazed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Car port</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Established garden</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not too big or big enough to be separated into 2 units</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>Criteria in Checklist</td>
<td>Actual Home</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>2-3 bedroom (70-100sqm) for myself and visiting family members/friends</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good/safe construction</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunny side, especially in the afternoon</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dry, not damp</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relatively modern (refurbished), especially bathroom and kitchen</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ready to use</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manageable section size (low maintenance)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Backyard for family get-together (Playground)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relatively flat (safe for children)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Section is on a slope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residential area</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safe, very low (no) crimes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hard to establish, but the street borders that of a suburb with low socio-economic status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet and friendly neighbourhood</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relatively not too far from city</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public transportation access</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not too close to high-way or major public (busy) areas, such as stations/airport/sport stadium</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price range: $150,000 – 200,000</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>The house she bought costs $250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>Price: Affordable</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Vague as to what is affordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can be improved on</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Has not specified area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not too closed in like South Dunedin</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country like</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7.9: Comparison of Respondents’ Pre-Purchase Checklists and Actual Home Purchased (con’t)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Criteria in Checklist</th>
<th>Actual Home</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Modern kitchen</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern bathroom</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Bathroom is tidy but dated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nice views without power lines. I want water in the front, hill on the back</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impression of space in the living area</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heatpump</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Gas fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bedrooms have to be of good size</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open plan kitchen</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not too far from town</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part of the house that can be turned into a studio</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Found out later that building consent for the studio could not be secured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least two bedrooms</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good neighbourhood</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling of warmth</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big section to sub-divide</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not sub-dividable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A garage</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A sunny deck</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close to schools and shops</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8a &amp; 8b</td>
<td>Big section</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Although all the criteria in this checklist were fulfilled, an additional twenty four constructs were uncovered during the interview. To name a few, views, aspects of nature (waterfall and rock garden) and having the space to socialise were instrumental in their choice for this home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privacy (St Clair’s houses are too crowded)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big bedrooms</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 2 bedrooms</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price ($200,000 - $250,000)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.9: Comparison of Respondents' Pre-Purchase Checklists and Actual Home Purchased (con't)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Criteria in Checklist</th>
<th>Actual Home</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>a warm house, with sun</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>The interview uncovered additional criteria for her home choice. For example, ample space outside the property, rural outlook, peace and privacy are some of the constructs that should be in this checklist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 bedroom</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a nice size section</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not wanting it to be finished to someone else's liking, do it ourselves</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>good schools for kids</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hard to establish if schools are good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>My budget ($220,000)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fenced</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>The property does have a garden and lawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No garden</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No lawn</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No handyman work</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 or 3 bedrooms</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most areas are considered</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A view</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11</td>
<td>Price up to $250,000</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunny</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brick home</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close to bus route</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not too old</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>The house was built in the 1930s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ready to live in house (good condition)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 garage</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open plan kitchen/living area</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sloping garden</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate toilet</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toilet not too close to kitchen</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ocean view</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Although only a snippet from the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate shower/bathtub</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.9: Comparison of Respondents' Pre-Purchase Checklists and Actual Home Purchased (con't)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Criteria in Checklist</th>
<th>Actual Home</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R12</td>
<td>3 bedrooms, or 2 bedrooms plus study/office</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smallish, easy to maintain section, preferably flat</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large living space, preferably open plan with dining and kitchen</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brick or like material</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>It is an old wooden villa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garage (Single is fine)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Log burner or multi fuel burner for heating</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Heatpump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Built in wardrobes and plenty of storage space</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not near a busy road (we have two cats)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>The house is on one of the main roads in the suburb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separate toilet</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No major defects</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than $250,000</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$255,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laundry in house (not under the house in some little outside shed type thing)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Located in one of the hill suburbs (except Brockville)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Near a bus stop (within 5 minute walk)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good exposure to light/sun</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the main findings of the present study is that these checklists did not accurately reflect the respondents' home choices. There is no wonder then that real estate agents often find themselves frustrated with "fickle-minded" buyers who end up purchasing a house so different from the list they had started out with. For instance, although respondents often listed a set price range, this was often overlooked in the final home choice. R5 and R12 spent fifty and five thousand dollars more than their maximum thresholds respectively. This discrepancy between the factors respondents listed concerning what they were looking for and what they actually bought suggests that there are other factors outside their checklists that may have prompted their decision to purchase. The present study reveals that these checklists may not be an accurate depiction of what a consumer is actually looking for. This finding is of particular importance to real estate agents who often use consumer's checklists to guide, refine, and limit the number of properties that they present to the consumer. Findings from this study, as will be demonstrated later, will help to understand the factors that cause this inconsistency in consumer behaviour and provide insights into the motives that underlie people's home choices.

The examination of the checklists also revealed that home buyers do not always have solid criteria and in fact are often unaware of exactly what they want. R4a and 4b for example, cited seven suburbs spread across Dunedin, from the north to the south as their ideal location. While they did spend within their budgeted price, their price ranged between $200,000 and $500,000. From this analysis, it is suggested that while homebuyers do have an idea of what they would like, this is not concrete and may vary. The lack of solid attributes driving consumer's home choice provides further evidence that other factors may be guiding home choice behaviour. Some of these factors may be unconscious to the homebuyers themselves, hence the reason why they are not present in the checklists.
Another finding based on the checklists is the possibility that buyers may be aware of the motives underpinning their choices but had difficulty articulating what they are. This is not surprising considering the subjective, deep-seated nature of the hedonic motives identified in this research.

In short, although these pre-purchase checklists are valuable for real estate agents trying to gauge the needs and wants of their customers, they do not provide a comprehensive list of all the motives that will impel a homebuyer to purchase a specific property. The findings at the end of this chapter will suggest that in order to sell more effectively, real estate agents need to uncover the motives underpinning the utilitarian factors described in a consumer’s checklist.

7.5 Summary

This study was motivated by several objectives. Foremost was the aim of attaining a better understanding of how homebuyers make decisions on what to buy. A related aim involved describing any hedonic motives that could have influenced their choices. This chapter has thus far, presented the main findings from each step of the ZMET process along with a discussion of the significance of these findings.

The findings dispute the views of those who claim that home purchases are a result of calculative decision-making based on the utilitarian benefits of housing attributes. Motives for home choice comprise a set of interactions between hedonic and utilitarian factors and are deep-seated in one’s past experiences with people, places and events. The output from the analysis is a consensus map displaying a means-end hierarchy of motives (attributes – consequences – values) in two separate layers – hedonic and utilitarian. Whilst it is not intended for the model to be definitive, it has illuminated understanding of consumer choice that occur within the home buying context and to interpret the phenomenon that surrounds the lives of real homebuyers.
Most of the literature in housing choice has a cognitive emphasis but this thesis has stressed the affective factors. In doing so, it is not the intention of this study to negate cognitive influences or to minimize the importance of utilitarian factors in consumer home choice. Utilitarian factors are significant determinants of home choice but it is argued that in themselves, they do not always tell the whole story. The extent to which hedonic factors can be influential and its implications for our understanding of consumer home choice will be discussed further in the following chapter.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

"House is a material object, but home is a relation... home is an emotionally-based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and the dwelling places"

(Karjalainen 1993, p.71)

8.1 Introduction

Where a home purchase is one that requires substantial financial outlay, it is only logical to assume that buyers do consider all things economic. In fact, the respondents' checklists at the start of their home hunting process recognized that utilitarian and physical attributes are the means by which home choices were mostly articulated. This study was initiated out of the researcher's personal and theoretical curiosity as to whether home choice is arrived at after sequential and analytic processing of information based on an economic appraisal of the purchase situation. At the same time, a question was raised as to whether quantitative methods commonly used in real estate research were able to capture the full richness of the homebuyer's choice experience. This concern arose because such studies imposed criteria for choice rather than allowing homebuyers to express freely their thoughts on the choices they made.

Reviewing existing research relating to housing choice revealed a number of areas of investigation. It was noted that studies into housing choice have tended to assume that homebuyers arrive at a decision following a logical and rational decision making process. These studies have also tended to focus on physical housing attributes and other economic factors as indicators of choice. Existing literature on consumer choice and motivation revealed that although the experiential view and hedonic consumption have been
espoused, there appeared to have been little direct research on the motives
that drive consumer home choice.

The literature review identified a number of areas where there was little or no
existing work: the motives that drive consumer home choice, the interplay
between utilitarian and hedonic motives and the emotions and feelings that
are commonly associated with home purchases. In addition, one of the main
criticisms of property research is that it is often limited to the collection of
standardised data on consumers that fails to go beyond statistical or verbal
description. This research therefore used an interpretive methodology based
on the decision that an emergent design was needed to encourage real
homebuyers to talk freely of the choices they made in order to develop a
comprehensive model of motives underlying consumer home choice. The
ZMET method adopted in this thesis allowed respondents to identify for
themselves, the factors that were important and relevant to their home
choices. The interviews provided answers to the questions raised, and the
analysis led to the development of a new model which describes and
explains the motives that drive consumer home choice.

8.1.1 Key Findings and Contribution
The research question concerned the identification of the motivational
factors, both utilitarian and hedonic, underlying consumer home choice. Initial
analysis of the homebuyers’ pre-purchase checklists found that their lists of
characteristics mainly consisted of utilitarian attributes of their ideal property.
In particular, house prices featured significantly with eleven out of the twelve
respondents stating their budget for the house they wanted to buy. The
research found that the checklists did not reflect the respondents’ home
choice either because the reasons were too subjective to articulate or the
homebuyers themselves were not aware of the reasons that drove them to
their choice.
This study has shown that there are twenty four motives that influence consumer home choice and identified the three central constructs as nature, views and space. These constructs were found to be underpinned by a whole range of higher order motives relating to the self. Specifically, the respondents stated hedonic motives such as to entertain friends, to accommodate family members, to indulge in the things they like to do and to retreat into physical comfort and psychological solace. In addition, the study also revealed that the overriding motive for the respondents' home choice was their emphatic connection with their history. All twelve respondents linked their reasons for home choice to aspects of their past, whether it was to avoid an unpleasant event in former times from recurring or to relive the positive memories of bygone days. The homebuyer's reminiscences were found to have direct impact on their home choice but given the intangible and subjective nature of this motive, autobiographical memories had not been exposed as a motive for home choice until now.

A further significant insight offered by this study is that consumers do make choices based on emotions. The revelation of autobiographical memories as a motive suggested that the feelings associated with memories and nostalgia were a significant driving force behind consumer home choice. Further support was found from nine of the respondents who experienced the intuitive "This is it!" feeling and bought their homes based on this feeling.

One of the main contributions of this thesis is arising from the consensus map is the theoretical insight into the link between the rational information-processing model and the experiential view of hedonic consumption in home purchases. This study has shown that a specific set of utilitarian and deep-seated hedonic factors interrelate to culminate upon one’s home choice.

This study also trialled an innovative methodology for examining consumer home choice. During data analysis, disparity between the frequency of identified constructs in Step Eight and Step Ten was sighted (see Table 7.3).
It thus raises the question about the validity of the method on the whole and specifically Step Eight. The differences could be attributed to the more inclusive analysis during Step Ten, taking into account not only the mental maps but also the transcripts and the respondents' summary images. Step Ten, therefore, covered a wider array of the respondents' constructs than did Step Eight. Despite this limitation, the utilisation of photographs was helpful because it facilitated the exploration of the homebuyers' internal construction of their home choices by exploring factors that home buyers could not easily articulate. The photographs triggered thoughts in the respondents and elicited meanings that otherwise might have been dormant in a face-to-face interview, gaining insights on consumer motives from the consumer’s point of view. The central premise and the importance of using images as metaphors have provided pivotal in extracting some very deep-seated meanings from the homebuyers themselves. In short, ZMET appears to have offered a sound methodological framework for developing an understanding of the implicit attitudes and emotions that occurs during the decision-making process for a home purchase.

In sum, this study has contributed to knowledge in this area in a number of ways:

- It has identified lacunae in the literature, notably a dearth of research examining motives in consumer home choice.
- It has revealed that pre-purchase checklists used by homebuyers and real estate agents are inaccurate representation of consumer home choice.
- It has demonstrated the influence of three central constructs (space, nature and views) on consumer home choice and highlighted the fact that autobiographical memories underpins many of the motives to impact on choice.
- It has provided a model which maps out the utilitarian and hedonic motives, and demonstrated that these motives interact to evoke a network of feelings, sensations and emotions in shaping consumer home choice. In
doing so, it has explained why consumer home choices can sometimes be seemingly intuitive.

- It employed an innovative methodology incorporating the analysis of stories and pictures of real homebuyers in actual purchase situations to extend the typically more quantitative and limited methodologies employed in past research.

Finally, in recounting the implications of this thesis to knowledge and practice, it is now appropriate to revisit the specific objectives set out at the start of this thesis. The five objectives were:

1. To evaluate past and current approaches to the study of consumer home choice in real estate research;
2. To examine and critique the relevant marketing literature relating to motives behind consumer choice;
3. To establish and apply an appropriate methodology to uncover motives influencing consumer home choice;
4. To produce a theoretical model of the motives behind consumer home choice;
5. To evaluate the implications of these motives on the residential real estate market.

Objectives One and Four relate to issues of theory and are addressed in the following section, 'Implications for Real Estate Research'. Objective Two is also theoretical in nature and is attended to in Section 8.3 'Implications for Consumer Research'. Objective Three is methodological in nature and discussed in Section 8.4 'Implications for Methodology.' Finally, Objective Five relates to 'Practical Implications' and is addressed in Section 8.5.

8.2 Implications for Real Estate Research

This research draws attention to the gap in housing choice research – virtually every real estate theory looked at why people buy at the need
recognition stage, that is, the motives that have pushed people to consider purchasing a home. This thesis extends the literature by investigating the second stage of motivation when homebuyers are actually looking to buy, that is, the directive motivation for the choice of the house.

At a theoretical level, economic underpinnings and the rational choice theory have limited what housing choice research can achieve. This thesis has moved away from the assumptions of the rational choice theory by adopting the framework of the experiential view discussed in Chapter Three. As a result, this thesis contributes to the understanding of consumer home choice by providing an explanation of the impact of hedonic and utilitarian motivational factors as expressed by the actual homebuyers during their home buying process, an area of research which appears to have been neglected in the literature to date. The theoretical contribution of this thesis is a model in the form of a consensus map for conceptualising the relationship between utilitarian and hedonic factors that determine one's home choice. The model identifies the determinants and antecedents of homebuyers' motives and their impact on consumer home choice. This model gives future researchers a framework to access meanings necessary for understanding homebuyer choice. In a larger context, this model will also allow researchers closer examination of the mechanics of these influences on the housing market and its demands.

8.3 Implications for Consumer Research

Chapter Three highlighted the expediency of the experiential view in laying the foundation for a more robust model of decision-making. Although the experiential view of consumer behaviour provides a conceptual base for choice research involving hedonic products, decision researchers have concentrated on certain types of products and consumption experiences that are posited to engage feelings, to be rich in symbolic meanings and to encourage the construction of a desired subjective reality (Arnould & Price
1993; Belk, Sherry Jr & Wallendorf 1988; Celsi, Rose & Leigh 1993; Schouten & McAlexander 1995). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) suggested that this is particularly relevant to such products as entertainment, leisure-oriented offerings and the performing arts. Given the huge financial commitment, residential real estate is often treated as an economic product enlisting objective, calculative decision-making. As such, studies on experiential consumption have included an array of products and services but have missed housing and homes. This thesis has extended the experiential view to include home purchases. It has demonstrated that a residential property offers a range of utilitarian benefits of shelter, lodging and space to the symbolic, emotional and hedonic benefits embedded in the homebuyers’ autobiographical memories.

Previous research had indicated that products are typified as either hedonic or utilitarian and that the motives to purchase depends on the type of the product. The motives for purchasing utilitarian products were said to arise directly from the consequences of the consumption while the motives to purchase hedonic products were linked to a need to fulfill an individual’s deep-seated values. This thesis integrates the hedonic and utilitarian aspects of the home as a product type. It advocates that the home cannot be categorised as either hedonic or utilitarian, not one or the other. Rather, this thesis adopts a more holistic view of the home - the consensus map presented in this thesis explains that while the house is an economic tangible product, home choice is encapsulated in the individual’s hedonic yearning to relive their past. Therefore, this thesis offers an alternative approach to research in hedonic and experiential consumption, one that considers the consumption of utilitarian products. The integration of these theories addresses more fully why consumer choices regarding expensive and highly-involving products can be seemingly hasty and emotional.
8.4 Implications for Methodology

Chapter Two pointed out the research restrictions when property research is dominated by the positivist paradigm - the major concern was the absence of the consumer's own voice which in turn resulted in a loss of understanding of consumer home choices. Chapter Four highlighted the methodological issues in real estate studies investigating consumer motives. More specifically, the need to adopt approaches other than stated and revealed preferences was called. The stated preference approach might have been able to generate conclusive findings but these findings may not be readily applied to actual behaviour – this is mainly because the choices it observes are merely hypothetical. The revealed preference approach is subject to bias and error, causing results to be inaccurate. Then, there were issues related to the ranking and rating of attributes in questionnaires that neglect important contextual and situational elements.

This study has distanced itself from using hypothetical choice, the revealed preference approach and the quantitative method of ranking and rating attributes. Instead, it sought to understand consumer home choice by utilising a humanistic approach to gain access to the homebuyer's own voice. The value of conducting this research on actual homebuyers provided access to the lived reality of individuals. Each homebuyer was interviewed before they bought their house and immediately after their purchase. This ensured that the meanings embodied in the words of the people under study were captured fresh to avoid meanings that may be lost by memory. Moving away from the practices of past housing research that used the stated and revealed preference approach is a key component of data generation for this study and valued as such, because it is a means of discovering an unknown phenomenon (motives underlying consumer home choice) by helping to identify a key feature (autobiographical memories) that was previously obscure or unexplained. The research findings allow a fresh and non-stereotypical look at why people buy the homes they do and offer insight into the key motives that underlie a homebuyer's choice. The research design for
this study, and the significance it implies, therefore holds implications for research methodology.

From a method point of view, the use of the respondents' photographs as metaphors within ZMET has proven to be particularly valuable in engaging the respondents to begin talking about the reasons, be they conscious or unconscious, for their home choice. Data collection and analysis centered on the text and photographs of a dozen respondents, who recounted their home buying and choice experiences in a depth interview known as ZMET. It is important to note that many of the constructs were not apparent for a majority of the respondents at the start of the interview. For example, except for R8, none of the respondents' pictures was brought to directly represent autobiographical memories. The insight on this very important construct was only elicited through the steps in the ZMET process. For some respondents, this construct became evident from the laddering technique at the ‘Storytelling’ stage while for others, the construct surfaced during the construction of the summary image. Either way, the photographs seemed to have provided a unique way for respondents to communicate the dimensions of their lives, and their choices. More importantly, using photographs taken by the respondents themselves added depth to the research because data from findings are a ‘more true’ reflection of constructs important to the homebuyers. This contrasts greatly from using researcher-generated constructs in surveys and questionnaires where the voice of the consumers is not captured. By combining nonverbal images with verbal communication, the insights gained from this study are argued to better resemble consumers’ thoughts, emotions and behaviour toward their choices. This is because pictures evoke certain intangible constructs that are otherwise difficult to articulate. The inability to articulate is also sometimes attributed to unawareness, that is, the homebuyers themselves are not conscious of the motives that have driven them to their home choice.
A further implication for future research employing ZMET involves a time factor. Step Eight of the ZMET is a lengthy and time-consuming process yet this research has found that the constructs uncovered during this stage is not as comprehensive as the ones revealed in Step Ten. It was deduced therefore, that Step Eight could be eliminated altogether, saving both the respondents and researchers time.

In summary, this research has served three methodological purposes. First, it provides empirical information concerning the limitations of stated and revealed preferences. More specifically, it draws attention to the issues associated with the quantitative approach of ranking and rating of attributes. Finally, it directs future researchers to a more efficient qualitative method in an effort to fully appreciate and understand the consumer’s voice in any given real estate issue.

8.5 Practical Implications
The practical implications of the findings from this study cross several domains. An appreciation of how and what homebuyers choose what they did is advantageous to practitioners in predicting accurate property demands and value. Residential real estate agents are often heard to say, “Buyers are liars.” A statement such as this is the result of practitioners’ observations that homebuyers often ask to be shown properties reflecting an array of specific economic characteristics and criteria list such as the size of the property, the number of bedrooms, the location, the condition and the age of the property. Yet when they did buy, more often than not, they end up buying a house that does not fulfill the criteria in the checklists. This phenomenon has left many real estate marketers perplexed and frustrated. Thus, for real estate management and property marketers that are already devoting considerable resources promoting their housing stock, this new understanding of the most compelling reasons for why people choose to buy a particular home can be useful to devise new and quicker ways to sell a property.
Relatedly, in a personal selling context, real estate agents could expand on the homebuyer's checklists by asking questions on the positive aspects of their past dwellings, including properties that they have grown up in. Questions such as, "What is special about the house you're living in now?" or "What are the nice things about the house you grew up in that you would like in your new house?" By using these types of questions, real estate agents will not only obtain useful information that will help in matching a property to a homebuyer's hedonic needs, but the agent will also prime emotional as opposed to analytical processing. The study has also suggested that priming emotional processing redirects attention away from price and other objections. However, at present real estate agents are often trained to begin sales encounters by qualifying the client with questions about budget levels, number of bedrooms and other utilitarian attributes.

Valuation of residential properties is important to appraisers, investors, tax assessors and other real estate market participants, including buyers and sellers. However, when evaluating and estimating the value of real estate, the focus of value has always been in the application of product settings. This conceptualisation usually adopts an economic approach where a property's value is notably determined by its utilitarian attributes such as age, land size, location and number of bedrooms. Gibler and Nelson (2003) have already warned that a valuation of property based on solely physical attributes may fail to capture the value buyer places on the ability of the property to satisfy non-financial and non-physical needs (Gibler & Nelson 2003). This study contributes by examining the value of residential property from the perspective of consumer behaviour and argues that underlying motives such as human emotion can significantly disrupt the many long-established models of property value assessments commonly used in today's market. This thesis has demonstrated that although a house may bring economic benefit of capital gains, it is the underlying hedonic benefits of these utilitarian attributes that consumers value. Thus, the subjective nature of value should
be recognised and equated with the overall assessment of worth considering all relevant evaluative criteria. This thesis argues that residential property valuation should take into account non-economic benefits from the consumer’s perception. This study has stressed the impact of human and emotional factors in residential real estate valuation. It suggests that the most valued property may not always have the most number of bedrooms, generate the most rent nor be centrally located in the city – people may be willing to pay more because of positive feelings and ideals that they associate with a property; people also assume that they will have a certain way of life if they buy a property.

Finally, for homebuyers themselves, this study provides an understanding that an emotional buy does not necessarily equate an irrational buy. Conventional wisdom holds that it is more advantageous to engage in thorough conscious deliberation before choosing because it leads to good decisions and the "right" choice. This idea applies more so to products that are complex and expensive such as that of a house. This study has aided in the understanding that an intuitive decision can happen for home choices and that an intuitive decision is an equally rational and valid way of making choices. This study confirms that people can make the right choice when the choice is guided by internal images and deep-seated motives derived from many years of past experience. In particular, what is deemed to be the right choice is something beyond the cognitive self.

8.6 Limitations
A number of limitations with this research are evident and should be taken into consideration when contemplating the main findings and implications.

This thesis has only taken into account choices of residential real estate purchasers, who are buying a home for their own consumption rather than for instrumental purposes such as investment. Purchases of residential property
investors and purchase of secondary residential properties (for the purpose of renting them out) have therefore been precluded from this study.

It is acknowledged that the reliance of ZMET on photographs is more likely to explore the manifold ways in which memories and history are linked to the respondents' home choices. This means that the use of photographs may have lead participants to talk about past experiences and therefore influenced the discovery of autobiographical memories as a motive. The relationship between autobiographical memories and the other constructs suggests, however, that autobiographical memories is a valid construct.

This thesis is based on a small sample size. Although the model that has been developed provides a good explanation of the underlying reasons for a home choice, a quantitative study would be required in order to generalise the model to a substantially larger number of consumers.

In relation to sample size, the number of male respondents for this study was limited to four out of fourteen. It is possible that there are different motives behind men and women's home purchase behaviour that were not captured.

The location where the research was carried out (Dunedin, New Zealand) may have limited identification of other emotional factors underpinned by culture and cultural values. However, the respondents in this study represented nationalities other than New Zealand. The sample profile included an Indonesian, a French, an Italian married to a Japanese and an American.

It is acknowledged that a certain level of subjectivity exists during data coding and the construction of the consensus map. However, every care has been taken to minimize researcher-bias with the employment of an independent coder who examined the coded data at two separate stages of the analysis process.
8.7 Future Research

There are a number of future research suggestions arising from this thesis.

The model for consumer home choice, in the form of the consensus map, would benefit from wider testing. The model should be replicated across a range of consumers, in order to gain statistical generalisation. Therefore, the model should be tested across a range of people of different ages, income groups, household makeup and gender. This quantitative study should focus on confirming the basic structure of the model and identifying any other specific situational factors that are relevant to different groups of people. Each of the key construct identified in the model could be translated into survey questions on a Likert scale. For example, the construct autobiographical memories could be phrased into a question concerning a motive for home purchase, "I bought the house because it had attributes that reminded me of my past." Respondents would be required to agree or disagree on a scale of 0 to 9. The questionnaire would be distributed to recent homebuyers identified through Quotable Value Limited New Zealand, the largest information company which has access to information on the most recent property purchases. The data could be factor-analysed to study the interrelationships among constructs and to reduce the constructs into fewer factors. The same data could also be subject to cluster analysis as it would be interesting to see the similarities and differences between homebuyers' motives for choice. Findings from the cluster analysis could be used to identify more efficiently the type of homebuyers there are and to tailor selling strategies specific to each type. This new study would ask a different set of questions, and would need to be approached from a different research paradigm – the philosophy behind this thesis is poles apart from the rationale for the quantitative study. However, the potential contribution of the new study to knowledge and understanding is of great interest to the researcher.
hence it is the researcher's aim to undertake this study post doctorate should financial and situational circumstances allow.

Findings from the present study could also be employed to examine real estate brokers understanding of what drives consumer home choice. It would be interesting to ascertain whether practitioners in the area identify similar motives to those found in the present study. In particular it would be interesting to see whether they were aware of the three central constructs. Real estate agents could be given a list of fifty potential motives driving home choice, twenty four of which would be those identified in the current study, and asked to rank how important they believe each motive to be. Another more interesting study would be to analyse the language used in property advertisements and to see if words are used efficiently to sell what homebuyers want - it would be particularly interesting to examine if real estate agents do use words that evoke autobiographical memories. Findings from the above two studies could be used to inform practitioners in order for them to better match the language they use in their property listings to the motives driving consumers home choice.

Whether the relevance of the findings in this paper will apply to real estate investors who buy residential properties based on yield and capital gains, is as yet a matter of conjecture. One suggestion is to duplicate the present study with property investors. Their motives for residential property purchases could be compared and contrasted with those from homebuyers. The insight from this study could be valuable when selling properties. If the motives for property investors and homebuyers are similar, it could mean that strategies for selling do not need to differ at all and that an agent selling a property will be able to attract both homebuyers as well as investors. On the other hand, if motives are found to be vastly diverse, then not only do strategies need to be altered but agents selling investment properties may need to branch out to establish an independent product line.
Given that different cultures attach different meanings to homes, it has also been suggested that the model be tested in a different cultural context. In countries where one apartment or condominium unit is similar to another in the block, how do homebuyers choose? A similar question applies in countries where identical houses are built rows after rows - what factors drive homebuyers to one particular house over another? Do the motivating factors identified in this thesis apply to the homebuyers from these countries or are there other motives left to be uncovered? ZMET would once again be an appropriate tool to approach the question from a cultural context.

Given that the employment of photographs may have predisposed participants to talk about their history and therefore influenced the discovery of autobiographical memories as a motive, future research will need to validate this finding using alternative methods.

Finally, our understanding of the linkage between housing choice, the meaning of homes and consumer behaviour is not yet advance. Evidently, there is a need for an amalgamation of the marketing literature and literature from other disciplines such as sociology, psychology and languages in an effort to better conceptualise the complexities of a home purchase.

8.8. Concluding Remarks

In the movie, “Are We Done Yet?”, Nick and Suzanne have tied the knot and the couple is now looking for a home in which to raise their family. When they are shown a house in the suburbs, both Nick and Suzanne fall in love with the property despite it being obvious to the audience and to them, that there are structural flaws. Suzanne sees a claw foot bath in the bathroom and proclaims, “I've always wanted a claw foot bath!” while Nick sheds tears (literally!) as he realizes that he could finally have a separate, private toilet - something he had always wanted but never had. Emotions take over, they try to rationalize their purchase and buy the house on the same day without a
building inspection. When they move in of course, they realise that the suburban dream does not come cheap. The find dry rot in all the walls, rust in the plumbing, major faults with the electrical wiring, leaks in the ceiling and problems with the foundations.

The above story is more than just a Hollywood family comedy. It symbolizes a type of emotion-charged decision situation that occurs in a real life home purchase situation. This study set out with research questions intended to discover from actual homebuyers, the motives that drive them to their home choice. It aimed to avoid the assumptions that homes are bought based on rational economic calculations and lengthy decision-making processes. It stayed away from imposing the views of past studies on the participants and steered clear of research methods that do not measure real-life purchases. By doing so, this study has investigated the impact of both utilitarian and hedonic factors on consumer home choice, and how these factors relate to the homebuyers themselves. It has demonstrated the utility of the ZMET method in gaining an understanding of real homebuyer's motives and actual experiences in the housing decisions they made. It has presented a model to describe the complexity of the interactions between hedonic and utilitarian with the self, the people around them and their own personal past. Finally, it has suggested a number of theoretical, research and practical implications arising from the findings.

It has been demonstrated that there is a great degree of interplay and connection between the different motives that have been uncovered and that a home purchase can be conceptualised as an experiential product. The fusion of tangible attributes and intangible dimensions – symbolic, historical, emotional and hedonic benefits, is what makes the purchase complex, deserving of an in-depth investigation. Perhaps the following statement by Abbot (1955, p. 40), in (Holbrook 1987) is the perfect summary:

*Here lies the connecting link between man's inner world and the outer world of economic activity. People want products because*
they want the experience-bringing services which they hope the products will render.
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Appendix A

New Zealand Property Investor Magazine
February 2008
Featuring the Researcher
Buy well, earn more

Even on a rising tide, property can give good returns. Just look at what Lyndon Lattimore and Catheryn Khoo have done.

Dunedin-based Catheryn Khoo, 33, and Lyndon Lattimore, 35, each bought their first property in 2005 during the recent boom and then went on to buy and renovate 13 more over the next two years. They still have 10, own a block of four units and are aiming bigger yet.

Using a strategy they apply to property, Khoo and Lattimore are set to launch an online gift business in their ultimate quest for higher yields through commercial property. Not that residential returns are to be sneezed at. Despite last year’s gloom, when some investors bemoaned yields of 5%, Khoo and Lattimore have never dipped below 9.5%. Their position is driven by number crunching and adding value to every property they buy.

Both owned houses before they met — only under different circumstances. Khoo — originally from Malaysia and here on a work visa at the time — never believed in renting and aimed to buy within six months. Uncertain of her future in New Zealand, however, it wasn’t until she secured a scholarship to study her PhD in marketing at Otago University that she went looking — 12 months after arriving.

Focused on price, not location, Khoo found a tidy two-bedroom brick and tile home for $160,000 but negotiated the deal for $135,000. The twist was a sleep-out and Khoo wasted no time in renting that for $80pw, plus the second bedroom, also at $80pw.

Lattimore came via the roundabout. With long-time investors for parents and studying accountancy, he had a handle on reasons ‘why’. Lattimore knew better and wanted the flash car first. The year was 2001 — his parents were telling him to buy while property was cheap. Instead, Lattimore bought a Subaru WRX sports car. Houses would always be there, he figured. What are another few years?

When he did turn his attention to housing, prices were rising. Lattimore also bought early in 2005 — not actively looking, but with $10,000 savings, he was open to options and scored the ‘deal of the week’. It was a $205,000, three-bedroom brick and tile house, with two living areas plus a one-bedroom unit on the same title. His mother’s eagle eye had spotted the ad and, despite a grotty photo, the family trooped round to have a look.

“We were blown away with what it was and thought it was probably worth around $230,000. It was a dump, but in a good area.”

Lattimore snapped up the property the next day, putting in a $20,500 cash deposit (10%). Helped by his parents, he spent the next two months renovating — outlaying $5000. When he bought, the property was drawing rents of $190pw for the house and $100pw for the unit. After the revamp, Lattimore scored $275 for the house and $165 for the unit — almost an 11% yield. A few months later the property was revalued at $280,000.
In July 2005—about the time Lattimore and Khoore met—Lattimore bought a three-bedroom "roughie" in Dunedin's student zone for $180,000. It was a roughie in "very sene—roughcast and "extremely original", according to Lattimore. His parents weren't impressed and the project was to be Khoore's "induction by fire into DIY."

"It was in bad condition," recalls Lattimore. "Scrin on the walls and groty scrin at that, plus threadbare carpet. But it was in a good location, had sun and was 15 minutes' walk to uni."

Lattimore admits he was concerned about how he would get top value—existing rents were $75 per room. Luckily, his father has CAD design experience and redesigned the floor plan—adding a fourth bedroom and replacing an outside shed with an ensuite unit. With a small window of opportunity to secure students for the following student year, Lattimore found a builder.

Renovations cost $70,000, which Lattimore financed by borrowing funds secured on the first property after it was revalued at $280,000, plus "recycling" his original $20,000 deposit from that same property. To purchase the second property he borrowed 90% on the house itself and the balance of $18,000 was also secured over the first property.

By now, serious about each other and where they were headed, the pair became serious investors. Their strategy throughout is to ensure each property will be positive cash flow. Apart from initial deposits and savings, they've never put in their own money. Every property has positive cash flow and brings a return of at least 9.5%.

Properties are sourced through local papers and The Property Press. Both scan the price, calculate rental to cover both purchase and renovation costs, then they simply work backwards. If the numbers don't stack up, they don't buy and hunt the next deal.

After that first "roughie", Kho and Lattimore switched their attention to family rentals around Dunedin. There is obviously a high demand for property in the student zone but there's a need to be savvy about the type of student tenant. The other downside is the timeframe—given that students secure their accommodation at year's end, as they prepare for the next, timing is everything. The roughie was a huge learning curve, a negative; they turned it into a positive (explained later).

Throughout 2006, the couple bought aggressively—six two-bedroom buying four in one month. They had begun looking only at brick and tile but introduced weather-board villas to their portfolio—realising it wasn't about "type". Now they seek location, price and return. Everything must have potential for added value, a simple formula they refuse to budge from. The property must pay or they walk away.

Even when people were telling them not to buy as prices rose, the couple were unfazed. "By the end of 2006 we wanted 10 properties, but we got nine," says Lattimore.

The "roughie" that returned $140,000

Opho Rd is on Dunedin's fringe student zone. Lattimore's "roughie" was a three-bedroom, roughcast in bad repair, costing $180,000 bringing $75pw per room.

With CAD experience, Lattimore's father redesigned the floor plan to include another bedroom. The house was gutted and an old shed demolished and replaced with a semi-self contained one-bedroom unit with a bathroom but no kitchen. The project took two months and cost $70,000. New valuation was $230,000 with five bedrooms offering rental potential for $510pw.

It was let as a five-bedroom flat for the first year but, when they were unable to secure students within the key letting period for the following year, Lattimore and Khoore revamped the property into five studio rooms. They spent $5000 furnishing these, including fridges, microwaves and kettles. Let individually, the studios produced $140,000.
Lyndon Lattimore & Catheryn Khoo

Khoo. Slightly tongue-in-cheek she recalls a pact - when they reached 10 properties, they would get married. Somehow, it's taken a while.

That said, the couple is well on track, marriage plans in hand, other options under way and new structures in place. Travel is a big factor. Property has been kind, says Lattimore, allowing them to spend eight weeks overseas last year alone. And more is in the wind. Khoo, who included real estate consumer behaviour as part of her PhD, will present her thesis this year and is also to speak at a seminar in Europe, so an extended trip is planned around that.

Lattimore reigned from his position as a chartered accountant last year - despite only working part-time. He found private clients though and will dedicate one day a week to accounting, while focusing on property. Khoo finishes school this year and will concentrate solely on their business. This will soon include another income stream from their online gift business - www.theboxshop.co.nz - due for launch next month and targeting the executive market.

"It's an idea we got through property - creating more cash flow," says Khoo. While all their property is positively geared, income isn't sufficient and Khoo says they needed something they could only derive through a business opportunity, applying the same principles they use through property.

This will provide leverage to invest in commercial property, as they search for better prospects. Lattimore expects to look wider afield to invest commercially but says they will stick to Dunedin for housing and envisages owning between 15 and 20 quality properties.

"Our strategy is less of a figure, more on the quality of the houses. Our first strategy was to buy as many as we could - no matter the location, as long as it gave cash flow. Our next strategy is to upgrade our portfolio, sell off some and buy in better areas." While not intending to revisit students, Khoo and Lattimore saw added value in multi-units and, at the end of last year, bought a complex of four, which they will rent to senior students.

Real estate agents haven't figured too much - apart from one. Both find agents tend not to understand property investment. And, while they use a property manager to source tenants for them, along with TradeMe, they handle property management themselves - though this might change in future.

"Our strategy is less of a figure, more on the quality of the houses""}

"If you move with it and change with it you will adapt."

Reading wise, they began with the usual line-up: Rich Dad Poor Dad among others by Robert Kiyosaki. Another favourite is Olly Newland's The Rascal's Guide to Real Estate. Then there are books by Martin Hawes, Brad Sugars - "basically anything else we can get our hands on".

Google is an eternal source of rich gems and Lattimore particularly recommends books like Napoleon Hills' Think and Grow Rich and The Secret by Rhonda Byrne.

With his mother passed away, Lattimore also credits both parents for their investing knowledge of over 40 years.

"My mother was one of the original members who helped establish the Otago Landlords as it was known then and was awarded life membership before she passed away in late 2005."

Lattimore maintains family tradition as secretary of Otago PIA and says he and Khoo haven't attended any seminars other than those. Khoo, of course, has learned enormously through her studies. Then there's the networking.

"Most knowledge has come from chatting to people and reading anything that comes our way," says Lattimore. "The OPIA has a library which we trawl through regularly."

He categorises investors into two types.

There are those who look at property, put in cheap offers and renovate to create a big chunk of equity," he says. They are the ones who create 30-40% equity by adding value and buying right.

The second type still buys on price but is happy if it's already been renovated. They buy equity, they don't create it, says Lattimore, ultimately squeezing the gap between profit and loss in hard times.

"They have a long-term goal but they're not the savvy investor. They'll be the ones who are more likely to get caught and suffer."

Lattimore and Khoo advise: always do the figures, buy property with potential to add value and have passion.

"You must have passion for property," says Khoo.
Appendix B

Call for Participation
Qualitative Inquiry into Consumer Home Choice
Call for Participation

Introduction
This project is being undertaken as part of my PhD research at the University of Otago. The purpose of my research is to investigate the intrinsic, non-tangible, non-economic and non-calculative rationales behind one home choice over another. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide not to participate, there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and I thank you for considering this request.

Thank you
If you decide to participate, I thank you and as a token of our appreciation for your time and willingness, I will be presenting you with vouchers you can use for your new home. These include the services of a colour consultant (valued at $100) and free underlay and drape-making courtesy of Carpet Court (valued at $500). In addition, all participants will automatically be entered into a draw for more prizes which amongst others, include free legal fee for the purchase of your new home courtesy of Ross Dowling Marquet Griffin and the cost of your house insurance covered by Crombie Lockwood. Due to the limited number of participants, chances of winning are very high!

The Research Process
First, you will be asked to draw up your criteria for selecting a home. Next, you will be asked to take photographs and/or collect pictures that represent your thoughts and feelings about houses that you have short-listed. This task of taking photographs and collecting pictures ends when you decide to put in an offer for a house or to attend an auction for the purpose of bidding for a house. Following this, an interview based on your pictures will be scheduled. This interview will take approximately ninety minutes. Finally, you may be invited to a focus group discussing the findings of the study.

Criteria for Participating
To qualify as a participant in this study: (1) it is expected that you are looking to buy for yourself and/or your family and not solely for investment purposes; (2) you must be seriously considering purchasing a home and are looking to buy in the near future; and (3) you must have access to a digital camera.

Ethical Issues
I would like to reassure you that as a participant in this project, you have several rights. First, your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. Secondly, you are free to refuse to answer any question at any time and you are also free to withdraw from the study at any time. However, if you choose to do so, you will not be entitled to the prizes offered to participants of the study. Finally, your pictures/photographs and the interviews will be kept strictly confidential, your identity will only be known to myself. Transcripts of the interviews and the images from this study may be submitted as part of my PhD, but under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics be included in either the thesis or any resulting academic publications. Your own individual data file will of course be open for you to visit.

If you can participate in this project or have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, please contact either me:

Catheryn Khoo (ckhoo@business.otago.ac.nz) (Mobile: 021-988232 or A/H: 4774504)

or my supervisors:

- Professor Phil Harris (pharris@business.otago.ac.nz)
- Dr Maree Thyne (mthyne@business.otago.ac.nz)

Department of Marketing, School of Business, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin. Tel: 479 4873.
Appendix C

Research Findings Gain Media Attention

Otago Daily Times, 18 April 2008, p.8
Getting to the heart of the matter

Childhood memories influence choice

by SAM STEVENS

A DUNEDIN academic says, when it comes to buying property, the "heart" may win out over the "mind" more often than commonly thought.

University of Otago postgraduate marketing student Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore, of Dunedin, will present findings from her research at the European Real Estate Society's 13th annual conference in Krakow, Poland, in June.

Her postgraduate thesis — "Consumer home choice as a social and historical shared experience" — is a qualitative study of the emotional factors which affect people's decision to buy homes.

"I think studies often look at sales statistics... and ticking boxes on buyers' requirements in terms of numbers of bedrooms or resale values. But this study is an in-depth look at what prompts people to buy, and the influence of emotional factors. People may break the piggy-bank and justify the decision by saying 'but it's in a quiet location' but, really, they are already in love with a home," she said.

Her initial findings show "autobiographical memories" — those derived from childhood experiences — are very important in shaping house selection.

The research may be of interest to those involved in the real estate industry and associated retailers, and she had been pleased in the past to have received sponsorship from several Dunedin businesses to attend real estate seminars.

Preliminary findings from her research were presented at the Pacific Rim Real Estate Society conference, held in Freemantle in January, and the Asia Pacific marketing conference in Malaysia last year.

Her experiences in property investment led her to study marketing and, in the future, she would like to lecture on the topic in relation to real estate, she said.
Appendix D

Notes from the Public following Media Attention
21 April 2008.

Gladys Goodman ② 4550151
86 years old

called to pay how right my findings are — she couldn't even afford the house, it was beyond her price range but as soon as she walked in

"I knew it was what I wanted — I just wanted to let you know how right you are."

5 Claremont Street,
Nadie Hill.
Dunedin.
18th April 2008.

Dear Catherine,

I was interested to read about your project in the C.D.T. today and totally agree with your comments on Real Estate.

If you have any time to spare and would like a chat — perhaps you would like to come to my house and compare notes!

Marjorie Croft.

Phone (03) 4672282.
Appendix E

A Brief Description of the Seventeen Constructs
A Brief Description of the Seventeen Constructs in Table 7.5

Views - Many of the respondents expressed a longing for water views. However, it was not always water views that were deemed desirable – rural and other views were also wished for.

Relaxation – This construct is taken to mean freedom from tension and stress.

Peaceful - Depiction of the house as a peaceful retreat was also a popular theme amongst respondents in the study. To be peaceful is a mental state of tranquility and calm.

Quiet - was uttered by respondents to mean freedom from noise and sound.

Done Up - This construct refers to a property having gone through renovation and refurbishment work and where buyers have either minimum to do or nothing to do.

Privacy – is to be shielded from other properties and their neighbours and to be isolated from other people outside the property but also from the occupants within the property.

Friends – This construct is self-explanatory. This construct was initially combined with family in the mental map but on closer examination, it was found that they are two different constructs. This is because not all respondents who have mentioned family as a motive mentioned friends and vice versa. The question arose as to whether this construct was related to age groups. Seeing that this was mentioned by respondents who were in their twenties, thirties and fifties, friends did not seem to be an age-specific motivation.

Aesthetically-pleasing - was labelled to include two words used by six respondents – beauty/beautiful and pretty.

Spick and Span - was used to categorise ideas of neat, clean and tidy.

Outside Living - This denotes the notion of outdoors dining and living

Comfort – refers to the physical well-being and is synonymous with words such as snug, warm, cosy, and homey.

Personalizing the Home - the ability to personalise a property to become what is theirs.

Excitement - is a feeling of cheerful joy commonly associated to a house that ultimately became the choice for the respondents.

Solidity – refers to the strength and stability of a property.

Half-finished Project - This construct is the opposite of being done up, that is, the house is in need of work.

Low Maintenance - This construct was expressed to mean having little or no progressive work to do on the property.

Airiness - This construct characterises the attributes associated with good ventilation such as brightness, freshness and light.
Appendix F

Mental Maps of Respondents Two to Twelve
Mental Maps of Respondents Two to Twelve

**Mental Map: Respondent 2**

- Space
- Functional
- Practicality
- Purposeful
- Solid
- Balance
- Character
- Cleanliness
- Peaceful
- Quiet
- Style

**Mental Map: Respondent 3**

- Quiet
  - Peaceful
  - Relaxing
  - Personal well-being
  - Comfortable
  - Warm
  - Welcoming
  - Childhood memories
  - Entertaining
  - Park-like feeling
  - Happy
Mental Map: Respondent 6

- Purposeful
- Freedom
- Space
- Friends
- Relating
- Family
- Fun
- Functional
- Potential
- Law maintenance

Mental Map: Respondent 7

- Potential
- Modern
- Space
- Views
- Location
- Calm
- Quiet
- Warmth
- Privacy
- Relaxing
- Well-being
- Lifestyle
Mental Map: Respondent 8

Pride

Inviting

Open

Privacy

Security

Socialising

Friends

Family

Warmth

Respect

Space

Pretty

Lifestyle

Relaxing

Achievement

Potential

Bonding

Done Up

Family
Mental Map: Respondent 9

- People
  - Peaceful
  - Quietness
  - Natural
  - Space

- Family
  - Potential

- Vibe
  - Character
  - Warmth
  - Past Influences

Mental Map: Respondent 10

- Character
  - Quirky

- Warmth
  - Sun

- Low maintenance
  - Peaceful

- Storage
  - Large-ish

Growing up years

- Views
  - Nature

Clean
Appendix G

Refereed Journal Article

ABSTRACT

Despite the huge importance of the residential real estate market to New Zealand’s economy, our knowledge of the non-calculative reasons that drive home buyers’ choices is limited. This interpretive study sought to identify and understand the motives that underlie actual home choices through ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique). This paper focuses on Step Eight of the ZMET interview process where respondents have created mental maps using constructs that have been elicited throughout the interview. It identifies twenty key motives underling home choices, presents three of these motives in detail and discusses their implications for academics and practitioners. It then concludes with a contribution to existing housing choice literature – that consumers’ choice for a home can be driven by non-economic, non-calculative and less tangible factors.

Keywords: Real estate research, qualitative research, buyer motivation

BACKGROUND

The purchase of a residential home is one of the most important decisions most people will ever make, fraught with not only the high financial risk, but also substantial physical disruption and much emotional investment. This is because each residential unit is characterised by a combination of unique attributes including its neighbourhood, transport and community amenities, structural design and its accessibility to work, schools, leisure and entertainment.

In New Zealand, residential real estate is a growth industry and is largely fuelled by the strong encouragement given to home ownership by New Zealand public policy (Dupuis & Thorns 1998). With a total market value of between NZ$450 and NZ$500 billion, New Zealand’s residential real estate market is the largest investment asset class in the country (DTZ 2004) and accounts for almost 50% of the total assets of the New Zealand population (de Bruin & Flint-Hartle 2003). At any one time, there are an estimated 50,000 houses for sale throughout New Zealand (Gibson 2006a). Given the complexity of the purchase and the importance of the residential real estate market to an economy such as New Zealand’s, it is not surprising that housing choice has been and still is a focus of many housing research projects. However, because real estate is often treated as a
financial asset, most academic study on real estate is based on neoclassical economics with a primary focus on finance. A significant amount of real estate research focuses on figures and numbers, with an emphasis on appraisals, valuations, market analysis, investment analysis and brokerage studies. Only recently has there been an increased interest to understand the behaviour of real estate decision makers from a consumer marketing perspective (Black et al. 2003; D'Arcy & Kaleva 2003; Dupuis & Thorn 1998; Gibler & Nelson 2003; Levy, Murphy & Lee 2008; Winstanley, Thorn & Perkins 2003), with the emphasis being placed on housing preferences and housing choices (Bates & Kane 2003; Black & Diaz 1996; Crews & Dhyrberg 2004; DTZ 2005; Findsen 2005; Jameson 2004; Reed & Consisbee 2005; Susilavati 2001; Watkins 2005). With the exception of Coolen & van Montfort (2001) and Timmermans & van Noortwijk (1995), most of these studies are based on choice processes from comprehensive models of complex consumer decision making. In doing so, these studies have not considered suggestions that purchases do not always involve decision-making and that some purchases are subconscious and emotional.

Research has shown that a non-decision purchasing behaviour does happen even for very expensive products (Allen 2002). Anecdotal evidence has also suggested that the choice for a home can be significantly influenced by an intuitive “This is it!” experience. Property researchers have largely ignored these non-calcultative (emotional and intuitive) motives that drive home buyers’ choices. The absence of real estate research from the consumer perspective is an issue, because an understanding of the factors that underlie consumer home choice will benefit key stakeholders in developing more effective promotional strategies when marketing a residential property. Insights into why home buyers buy what they did provides practical value as marketing efforts that prompt the appropriate consumption emotions will hopefully result in purchase and profitability. Already, property researchers are encouraged to “consider all aspects of non-financial decision factors” and to “examine the human influences that real estate consumers have on real estate demand” (Gibler & Nelson 2003, p.63).

In order to do this, there is a call for real estate researchers to find new ways of looking at the housing field as there is a convincing lack of focus on the voice of the home buyer (Black et al. 2003). An important article was published in 2002 by David Clapham highlighting the methodological problems in housing research. In it, he noted that “all of the approaches are positivist in that they assume the existence of a world of social facts to be uncovered by researchers using quantitative and empirical research methods. The housing field is portrayed as an objective reality, which is perceived in uniform ways by the participants in it and is not contentious (Clapham 2002, p59)”. Of late, there has been more acknowledgement in the real estate literature of the limitations of applying quantitative methods based on utilitarian attributes (Diaz & Hansz 2007; Winstanley, Thorn & Perkins 2002). There is encouragement for real estate researchers to adopt qualitative approaches to allow for a closer observation and deeper understanding (Levy & Lee 2006) of the buying behaviour of home purchasers.

This paper begins to address this call by identifying various non-economic reasons for why people chose the house they did through a qualitative method known as ZMET. These reasons were elicited from the respondents’ own mental maps created in Step Eight of the ZMET process (there are ten steps altogether - see Appendix A for details on each step). Step Eight is the first culmination point of the interview process, resulting in the respondents’ own mental maps and so is the ideal stage for discussions to be based upon. The rest of this paper explains the rationale for using ZMET and discusses findings based on the respondents’ mental maps.

**ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique)**

The aim of the research is to identify and understand the non-calcultative motives that underlie actual home choices, hence finding a suitable method is pivotal. As a response to the call for researchers to gain more in-depth understanding from the consumer’s point of view, the method employed in this research needs to allow respondents to express themselves in their own language, revealing deep-seated motives behind their choices.

Given that houses are always thought of and marketed through colours, pictures and photographs, ZMET is deemed to be the most ideal method for this research, primarily because it utilises photography as an elicitation method. This is important because the use of respondents’ own photographs act as a springboard for them (particularly if respondents find it difficult to articulate why they made their purchases) to begin their story of how and why they ended up choosing one house over other options. Due to the less tangible nature of the motives that this research aims to uncover; photographs and pictures provide another avenue to “enable consumers to express their feelings, thoughts and intentions not only in words but also through visual images” (Zaltman & Higie 1993, p.1). There has been support for the use of photography as a research tool (Lee et al. 2003) and its reliability and validity in representing human thoughts have been recognised (Harper 2002). Another reason why ZMET is favoured as a method for the purpose of this research is its focus on eliciting and mapping consumers’ meaning about the personal relevance of a topic (in this case, it is the choice of their home). It does this by including the components of the Kelly Repertory Grid. The Repertory Grid, invented by George Kelly in 1955, is a way of getting people to reveal their own personal models (Reizenstein & Hofmann 1990). As a technique of eliciting personal constructs, the validity and reliability of the repertory grid has been recognised (Shaw & McKnight 1992). In addition, ZMET integrates the laddering technique - an in-depth interview using a series of probes, mainly asking ‘why is that important to you?’ (Reynolds & Gutman 1988; Thyne 2001) in order to elicit hierarchical constructs that depict the relationship between product attributes and the personal values (Veludo-de-Oliveira, Ikeda & Campomar 2006). Furthermore, ZMET also incorporates in its ten core steps, the visual projection technique and a range of qualitative data-processing techniques, such as categorisation, abstraction of categories, comparison of instances within the data and dimensionalisation of the data (Spiggle 1994).
As such, ZMET is a hybrid method (Zaltman & Higie 1993) that could increase the likelihood of uncovering “hidden knowledge” (Zaltman 1997, p.425) – in this instance, the non-calculative reasons which underlie home choice. Considering its multiple-method approach, ZMET is believed to be a powerful tool to surface relevant constructs in consumer decision-making, be they conscious, subconscious or unconscious (Woodside 2004). Finally, as a qualitative research method, ZMET is befitting given recent encouragement for real estate researchers to adopt qualitative approaches to allow for a closer observation and deeper understanding of the buying behaviour of home purchasers (Levy & Lee 2006; Winstanley, Thorns & Perkins 2002).

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The respondents were twelve potential home buyers who were sourced from open homes by real estate agents, mortgage brokers and an advertisement placed in the Staff Bulletin at the University of Otago. The sample sizes employed in research using ZMET were reviewed and found that studies generally included samples of eight to sixteen (Christensen & Olson 2002; Lee et al. 2003; Sease 2005; Vorell, Theses & Center 2003). In addition, other qualitative studies utilising the laddering technique were examined and found to have used samples of similar sizes (Thyne 2001; Watkins 2006). Thus, while the sample size for this study was not determined in advance, a minimum of twelve interviews were planned in consultation with Professor Jerry Zaltman himself.

Two conditions were set to qualify home buyers as participants in this study: (1) the home buyer must be looking to buy a home as residence for themselves; that is, they are not buying a property as an investment; (2) the home buyer must be looking to buy in the near future; that is, they are seriously considering purchasing a home. The first criterion is set to draw the distinction between home buyers and investors as the two groups of consumers will have very different motivations which will in turn influence their decision-making processes and choices. It also sets the boundaries of the research and precludes investors’ decision-making from this study. The second condition will warrant genuine home buyers whose actual housing decisions and choices can be observed during the decision-making process until an offer or a sale is complete. Although this criteria is difficult to ascertain, a quick interview with participants in regards to their goals for purchasing a home and their arrangements for financing would provide a close guide to selecting participants.

Participants were asked to contact the researcher when they had placed an offer for a home or attended an auction for the purpose of bidding for a house. After placing an offer for a home, the respondents were then asked to take and/or collect eight to twelve photographs and/or pictures that represented their reasons for the choice of the house that they had chosen to purchase. The number of images (between eight and twelve) to be brought in by the participants is stipulated in ZMET, duplicated in past research (Catchings-Castello 2000; Christensen & Olson 2002; Lee et al. 2003; Sease 2005; Vorell, Theses & Center 2003) and confirmed through email communication with Zaltman. The photographs vary from respondent to respondent, but many have included nature-based images such as trees, water views, hills, mountains, lawns and flowers. Other photographs comprised family members, pets, buildings and items from their travel just to name a few. These photographs are then used in an in-depth interview lasting between sixty and ninety minutes. During the interview, the ten core steps in implementing the ZMET procedure were followed (Step Ten takes place after the interview).

The first tangible output from the interview is in Step Eight, where the respondents generate their own causal models or mental maps (see Appendix B for a sample of these maps). The next section presents findings based on these maps.

**FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Given Zaltman’s recommendation (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995) that at least a quarter of participants must mention a concept for it to be considered meaningful, only constructs mentioned by at least three people were acknowledged - twenty such key constructs are identified and attached as Appendix C. The top three reasons for why home buyers chose the home they did were attributed to warmth, potential and autobiographical memories, referring to “memories of past personal experiences” (Sujan, Bettman & Baumgartner 1993) and these are discussed in more detail in the following section.

**Warmth**

Ten out of the twelve respondents specifically had warmth in their mental maps as a major reason for the choice of their home over its competing options. Given the cold climate in Dunedin and the notorious reputation of New Zealand’s poorly insulated houses, a respondent summed up the importance of warmth, “...so the sun is important cos it - it’s warm, and cos New Zealand houses aren’t insulated...” (R1, see Appendix B).

Some respondents even look for homes in areas that are perceived to be warmer areas such as the case of R3: “we were looking Abbotsford, Sunnyvale, Green Island, cos it’s real – it’s nice and sunny out there, it’s warm, it’s that little bit warmer....definitely the warmth out there was a big one...”

Respondents also described the availability of multiple sources of warmth as the motive for their choice. A respondent who was living in Japan before she moved to New Zealand commented, “And another very important reason was it was a warm place...And in the house we have the DVS system, the fireplace and a heat pump. The first thing we check, it was to have something warm...” (R11, see Appendix B). This motive is apparent not only in foreigners but also amongst the locals as evidenced in the case of R8, a young couple born and bred in Dunedin:

“...we definitely wanted somewhere warm with two lots of heating. So we wanted somewhere with a heat pump, or we were going to put one in ourselves. But that was
another thing for us, it had a fire in the kitchen, a big fire, and a heat pump as well. And that’s definitely something we wanted in a house and that does cost a lot to put in” (R8).

Whether or not this deciding criterion applies only to homebuyers in Dunedin where the climate is mostly cold, would make an interesting future research agenda. However, what is more important is the revelation of warmth as a significant factor that determines people’s home choices. Warmth is one non-calculative reason that past researchers in housing choice have failed to consider.

Potential
Although in varying degrees and nature, a property with potential is a major deciding factor for many homebuyers in this study. Homebuyers who bought properties that needed repair work obviously see the potential in their choices. Using a picture of an old man with wrinkles, a respondent describes her home choice as “…old and you can see it’s been – hasn’t been looked after well or something but it’s still got enough potential to make it really nice. So all he needs is a couple of facelifts…” (R1, see Appendix B). Another who bought a house that needed various repairs used a picture of icy grass to depict potential. He describes the house in the following way, “…there’s some things going on here. They look kind of cold dead in this photo but, you know, it’s – it’s alive, it’s – it’s, you know, livable…” (R2).

Although it might seem evident that buyers see potential to add value in deteriorated houses, R5 who bought a modern two-bedroom house sees potential to add another bedroom in the future when she needs it should her family decide to live with her. Armed with a picture of her granddaughter, she describes the picture as portraying, “…a concept of growing, like opportunity for development in the future. It depends on my children of course later on, so I took this picture showing opportunity of growing in the future” (R5). Another homebuyer who also bought a house that requires no further building work commented on the potential she sees in the garden: “I’ve always wanted to have a good vegetable patch and we’ve got potential for a really good vegetable patch if we get working hard at it” (R4).

It is interesting to note that potential signifies many different things to different homebuyers. It is not only houses needing repair work that could be marketed as having potential. Given that this is a popular deciding factor for homebuyers, successful marketing strategies should incorporate strategies to help homebuyers see potential in all aspects of all properties.

Autobiographical memories
One of the most interesting finding is seeing how the respondents’ recollective memories have significantly influenced their decision-making process. More specifically, childhood memories seem to be the dominant trigger for most respondents when arriving at their home choices. One mentioned how the space in the house was an important deciding factor because, “…it probably comes from my childhood or something, we always had space, I mean we always had big houses and stuff... and I used to go on holidays – when I go to my grandparents, I mean they have a house that’s probably four hundred square metres…” (R7). Another respondent who looked at sixty houses prior to buying one because it is not only located in the neighbourhood where she grew up but “…there’s a room in the house that has the same ceiling, the same pattern, and – which is a similar pattern to the ceiling in my bedroom growing up. And I don’t know what it is, whether it’s a – a thing about that style of house that kind of makes it feel more like a home to me…” (R12). More accounts of the “This is it!” feeling were reported by another respondent who ended up with a house NZ$50,000 above her initial budget. One of the reasons for this is described as follows, “…we didn’t really search for particular house with particular garden but it just happened that we saw this garden and then we said, wait it’s similar to our villa (back in Jakarta). It’s like- yeah right that’s why I feel so this is it…this is it, this is what I want.” (R5)

More than a quarter of the respondents also take into account animals, particularly dogs, in their search for their new home. The link between wanting a home to accommodate a dog (whether or not they already have one) is traced to autobiographical memories. R10 talks about the compulsory criterion her new home must have for her relatively new puppy: “…our family’s always had dogs. But I’ve never had a – a dog of my own so-to-speak. No. But our family’s always had pups and dogs and Labradors and all sorts of – terriers, schnauzers – yeah the lot. So yeah that is a pretty big thing for me. But I wouldn’t get rid of him (Ziggy, the dog) to buy a house that’s for sure” (R12). Other respondents also talk about their home choices being able to accommodate the dog that they do not yet have: “…it is a big thing, I’ve always wanted one since I was little, I had one when I was younger and we had to get rid of it, I’m really sad and I’ve just always wanted one ever since. And my partner is the same, he had one when he was little and it had to leave, under the same kind of circumstances…” (R3). Another respondent ended up with a house she had no intention of buying. The property was a lifestyle block and which brought her and her husband back to the time when they were young (“…for me and my husband, it’s probably – goes back to when we were young. He was brought up on a farm… yeah and I was…my mum was brought up on a farm and my uncles and cousins and that, some of them had farms, so we spent a lot of time there”) (R6).

Real estate researchers should now be aware that while utilitarian factors (such as number of bedrooms and the amount one has to spend on a property) are important, other non-calculative factors such as emotions evoked by childhood memories and experiences are equally important. For real estate practitioners, understanding the role residential properties have played in the consumers’ past will be advantageous to understand what buyers want in the present. In addition, a customer’s defining memories can be used to construct effective autobiographical advertisements as a powerful means of connecting products (the properties) to customers (the potential homebuyers).
IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the growing literature that calls for in-depth research that examines the human factors behind real estate needs and demands (Gibler & Nelson 2003; Levy & Lee 2006). One of the criticisms of property research is that it is often limited to the collection of standardised data on consumers that fails to go beyond statistical or verbal description (Black 2003). By combining nonverbal images with verbal communication, the insights gained from this study are argued to better resemble consumers’ thoughts and emotions toward their choices. The ZMET method employed in the research allowed respondents to express themselves in their own language, revealing the deep-seated motives for their respective home choices; hence providing better explanations for consumer home choice. The findings give insight into the key motives that underlie a homebuyer’s choice. This new knowledge of how and why homebuyers choose what they did is valuable to practitioners in predicting accurate property demands and value.

Successful real estate players may well already understand this, but this paper raises questions for future research; for instance, if more research is required to determine practitioners’ understanding of the most compelling reasons for why people buy. Whether the relevance of the findings in this paper will apply to real estate investors who buy residential properties based on yield and capital gains, or whether the data will be the same in an international context is as yet a matter of conjecture. All the same, this research has contributed to the understanding that the functional attributes of a property no longer solely drive consumers’ home-buying behaviour.

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### Appendix A

#### Core Steps in Implementing ZMET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td><strong>Storytelling.</strong> Participant describes the content of each picture they have taken or brought. The interviewer refrains from interpreting pictures during interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td><strong>Missed Images.</strong> Participant describes the picture(s) that he/she was unable to obtain and explains their relevance. Missed pictures may have important relevance too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td><strong>Sorting Task.</strong> Participant sorts pictures into meaningful groups and to provide a label or description for each pile. This helps to establish themes or constructs that are relevant to the participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td><strong>Construct Elicitation.</strong> A structured interview where basic constructs and their interconnections are elicited using images as stimuli. This involves a modified version of Kelly Repertory Grid technique and the laddering technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td><strong>The Most Representative Picture.</strong> Participant indicates which picture is most representative and gives reasons for the choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td><strong>Opposite Images.</strong> Descriptions are elicited of pictures that describe the opposite of the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td><strong>Sensory Images.</strong> Descriptions are elicited of what does and does not describe the concept in terms of colour, emotions, sound, smell, taste and touch. Sensory thoughts are images too and hence important to capture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td><strong>Mental Map.</strong> Participant creates a map or causal model using the constructs that have been elicited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td><strong>Summary Image.</strong> Participant creates a summary image or montage expressing the topic under study by using digital imaging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 10</td>
<td><strong>Consensus Map.</strong> Researcher creates a map or causal model involving the most important constructs from the interview transcripts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from: Zaltman 1997*

### Appendix B

#### R11’s Mental Map

- **Security**
  - **Relaxing**
  - **Warmth**
  - **Solidity**

- **Space**
  - **Convenience**
  - **Functionality**
  - **Potential**

- **Comfortable**
  - **Quiet**
  - **Family**
  - **Familiarity**
  - **Easy maintenance**
  - **Part influence**

#### RI’s Mental Map

- **Views**
  - **Childhood**
  - **Potential**
  - **Solidity**
  - **Security**
  - **Safety**
  - **Fun**
  - **Achievement**
  - **Charisma**
  - **Passion**
  - **Nature**
  - **Sun**
  - **Walth**

*Note: Constructs identified by respondents. These maps display how these constructs are intertwined and interrelated. For example, when RI discussed warmth as an important reason for her home choice, she linked this with the concept of being relaxed and the subjective feelings of warmth within the family.*
Appendix C

Key Motives for Home Buyers Choosing the Home They Did

Note: Motives are presented in decreasing order of frequency as they appear in the individual mental maps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Autobiographical memories</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Relaxing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Space</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Friends &amp; Family</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Character</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Low maintenance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>View</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Solidity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY VALUES AND MASS TRANSIT SERVICE IN BRISBANE

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University of Queensland

ABSTRACT

The paper reviews the relationship between mass transit service and property values in Brisbane. The results indicate a clear preference in terms of observable price premiums for mass transit among attached housing markets, but results in the traditional detached housing market are less clear-cut. Median income housing consumers are another market segment clearly prepared to pay a premium for mass transit access.

Keywords: Public transport, Brisbane property markets, integrated land use/transport, transit oriented development, TOD, locational theory

INTRODUCTION

Evolution of urban form

Australian cities in the colonial period were based around horse and pedestrian transport, while suburban tramways and railways served a commuting public as the population grew (Troy, 2004; Forster, 2004).

A movement began to re-locate middle class Australia from the overcrowded, unsanitary and dangerous inner city locations, into semi rural locations, accessible by rail or tramway and containing adequate provision for the spatial needs of large homes, gardens and sanitary on-site sewage treatment. Hamnett and Freestone (2000: 10) discuss the desire at that time for "healthy" lifestyles in suburban environments. They indicate that combined transit and suburban development approaches were an innovation that served cities and residents well.

Mumford (1961: 491) looked at this phenomenon in an international and socio-cultural context. He suggests that in England, and in other locations where rail-led "Garden City" or "Garden Suburb" development was adopted, land values climbed in the areas that offered better rail access and were more accessible.

Peacetime existence after the second war saw a population boom, necessitating the expansion of new suburbs, but also creating a situation of scarcity in public resources that