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Analysis of Homeowners' practices triggering housing retrofits: A practice theory approach

Panakaduwa, C., Coates, S.P. and Munir, M. M.

University of Salford, United Kingdom

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
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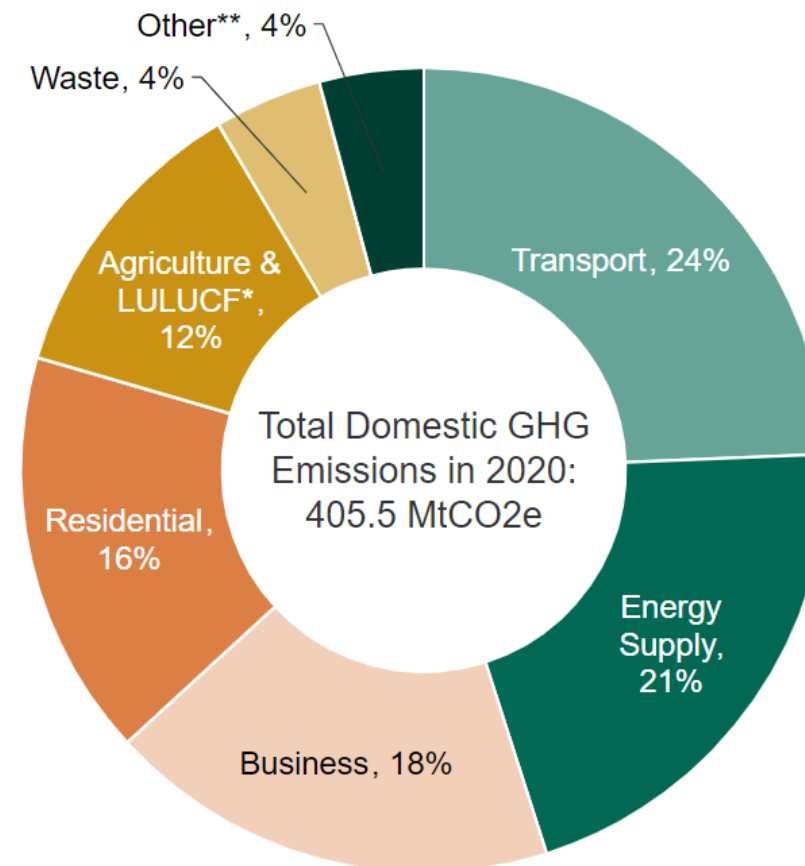
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Introduction

- Poor energy performance in the housing sector is a critical problem in achieving climate change goals in the UK.
- Operation of the housing sector is reported to contribute 16% of total UK emissions.
- Housing energy retrofits do not show satisfactory progress.
- One of the main problems is the poor interest of the homeowners, as they do not make the decision to retrofit the house.
- Studies suggest that awareness itself does not lead to action.



Importance of the homeowner

Homeowners play a crucial role in housing retrofit for several reasons.

- Homeowners are the primary occupants of a property, and have an interest in the comfort and energy efficiency of their homes.
- Homeowners can be motivated with the government initiatives and grants.
- Homeowners are the key decision-makers of the houses, which leads to retrofit or not to retrofit a house.



Practice theory

- The practice theory approach can be a useful framework for driving housing retrofit because it takes into account the social and cultural factors that influence day-to-day behaviour and decision-making.
- The practice theory approach recognises that housing retrofit is not just about technical solutions but also about social and cultural factors that shape behaviour.

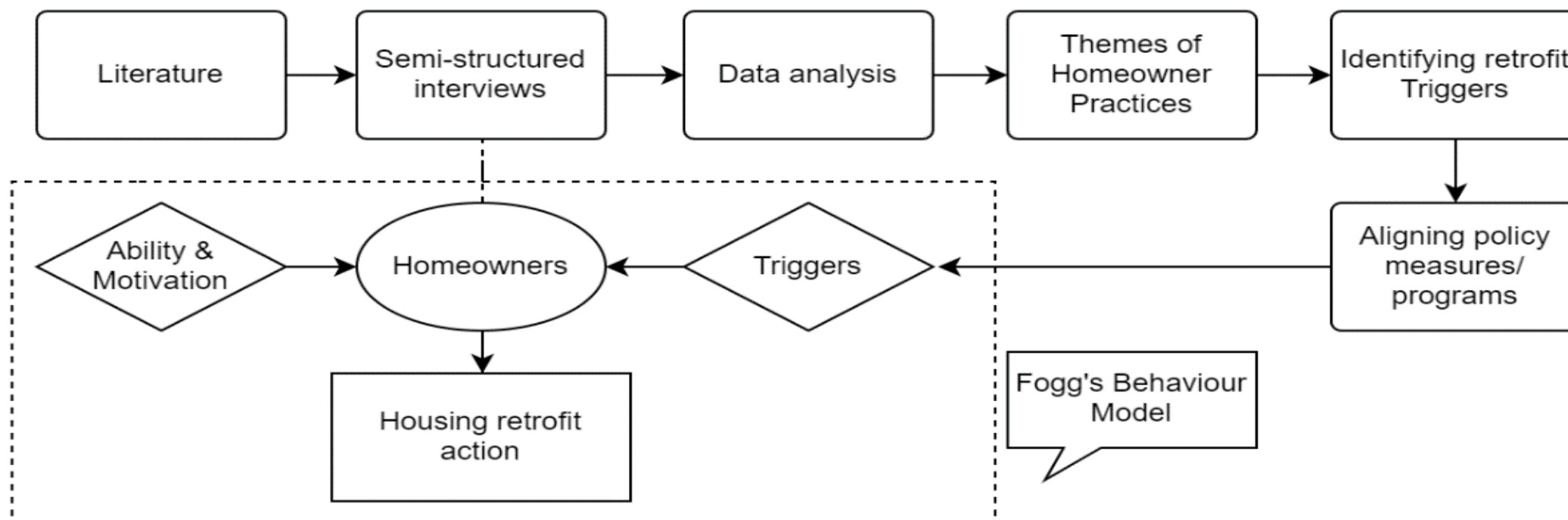


Awareness itself
does not lead to
action.

People know
smoking is injurious
to health, but they
keep smoking as a
practice.

Objective of the study

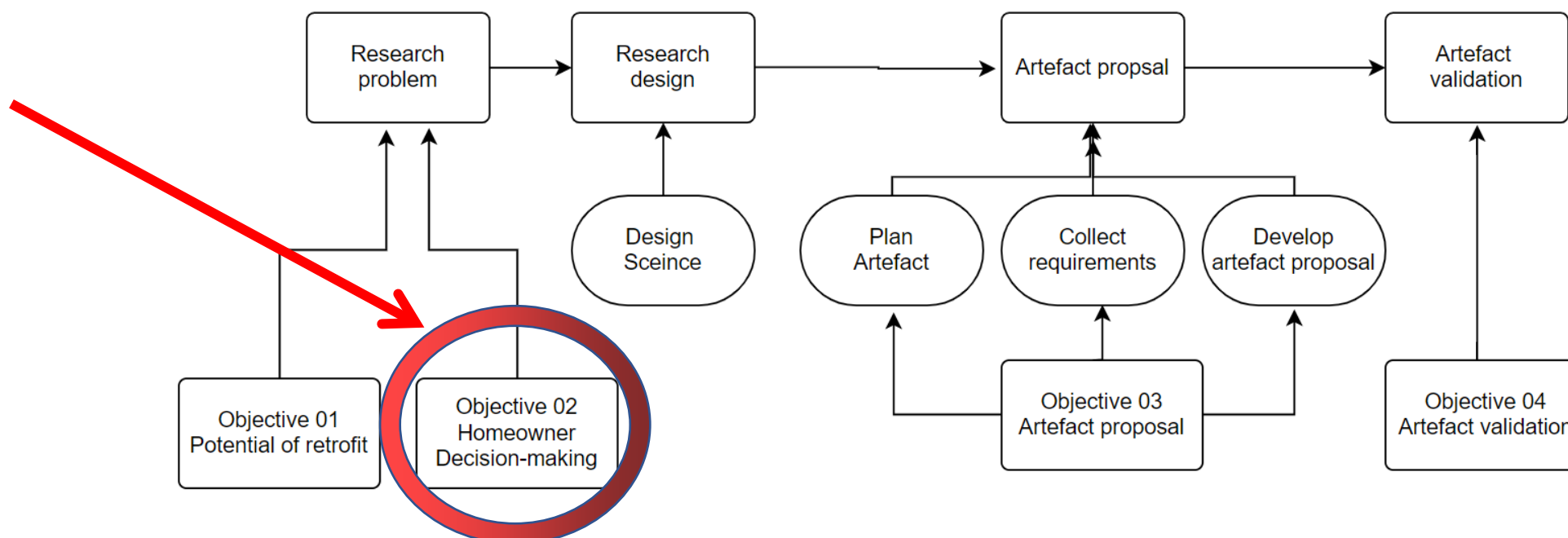
To identify and analyse the practices of homeowners that trigger housing retrofit decision-making.



Methodology of PhD research

The problem of research of the PhD study of the candidate is “How to motivate UK homeowners to retrofit their houses?”

- In order to answer this problem, solutions from different angles were reviewed.
- One approach to the problem is tried with the use of practice theory.
- Accordingly, this conference paper is to evaluate the use of practice theories for retrofit decision-making by the homeowners

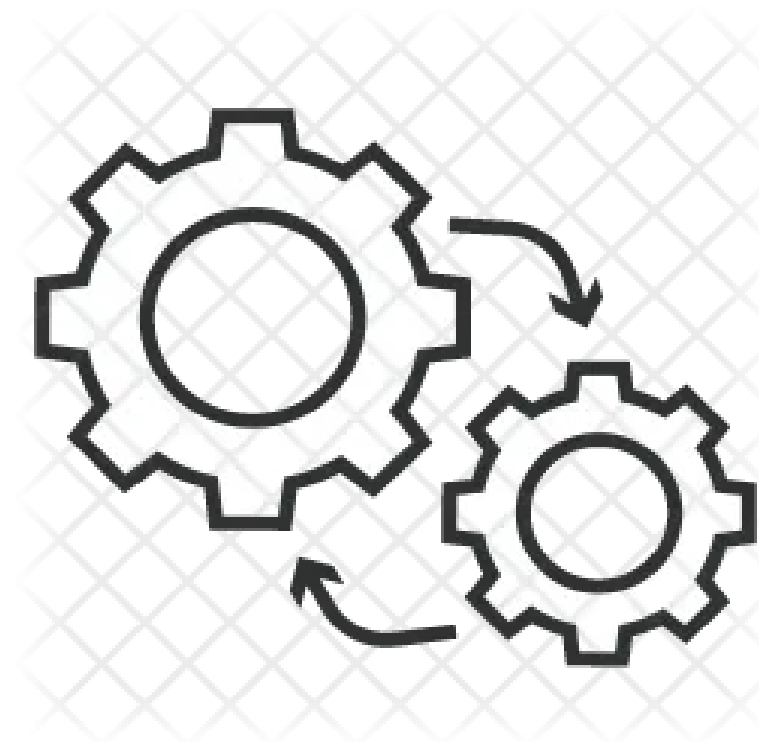


Methodology

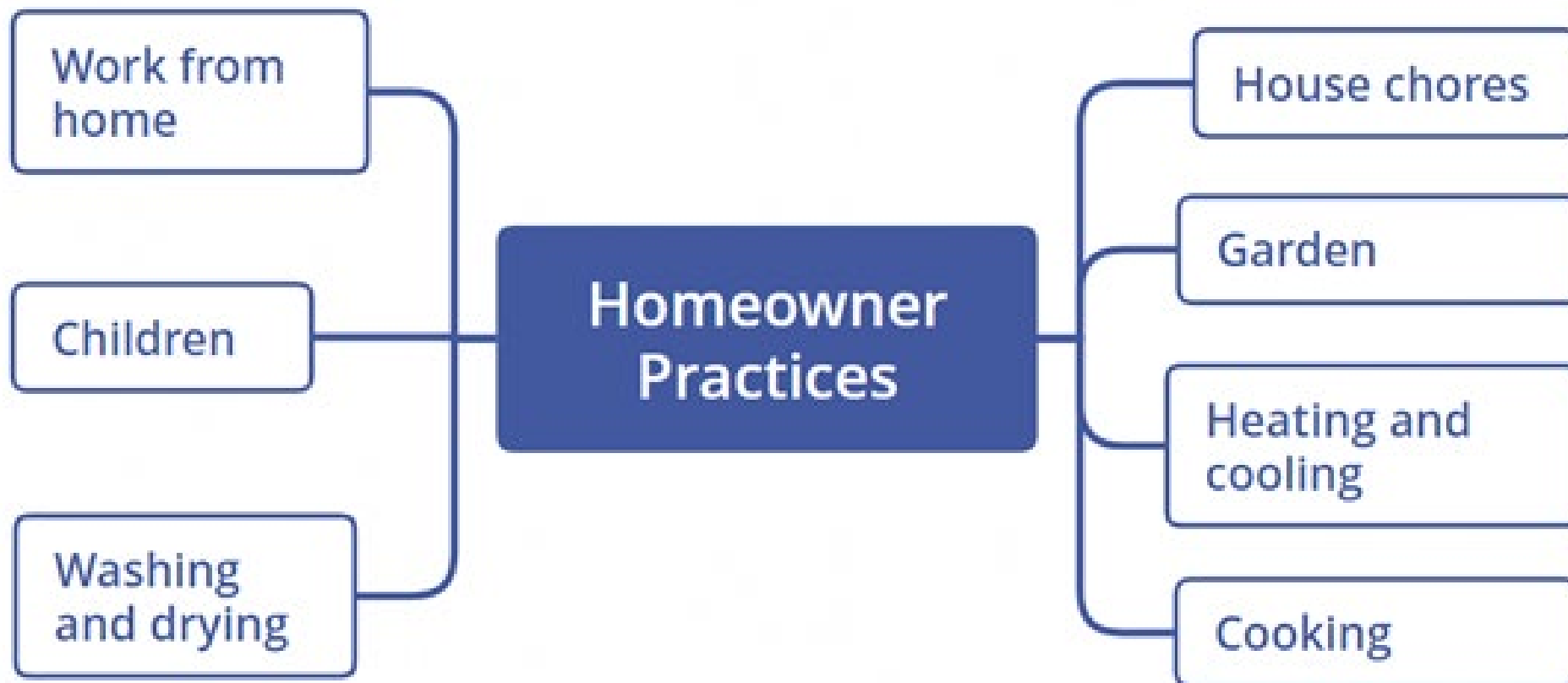
Data collection	- Semi-structured interviews
Population	- Homeowners in the UK
Sample	- Five
Sampling	- Convinient
Data analysis	- Qualitative data analysis

Theoretical point of departure

- Bourdieu's theory of practice
- Schatzki's theory of social practices
- Giddens' theory of structuration
- Fogg's behaviour model

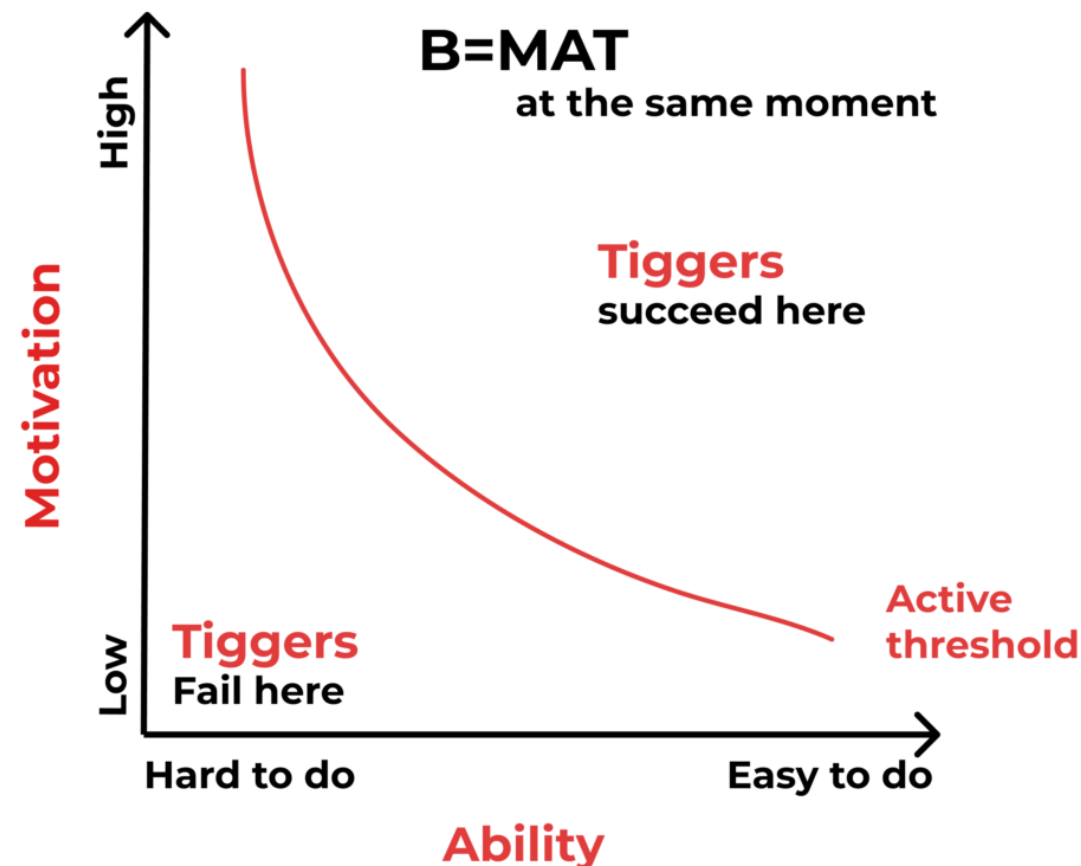


Key themes identified from homeowner practices



Fogg's Behaviour model

- There are three things required a behaviour to happen.
- They are motivation, ability and triggers
- By making them aware about the potential of housing retrofits, it can create motivation for them to retrofit their house.
- While the ability is mainly related to the financial capacity and time availability, triggers in homeowners' practices will also play a key role in influencing the homeowner decision-making for housing retrofit.



Conclusion

- The study was able to find that the main themes of homeowners' practices are in the themes of cooking, heating, washing/drying, garden, working from home, children and house chores.
- The data analysis has further elaborated what are the identified practices and potential triggers in these themes.
- The study wishes to conclude that by aligning the characteristics of retrofit programmes with the practices that trigger housing retrofits can be more productive.

- Eg.

In terms of triggers for housing retrofit, heating and cooling can be the main point of trigger. Especially, when there are children around, parents try to keep the house warm and cosy. However, the cost of energy bills challenges this requirement. The idea of an energy plus house can be the most influential trigger point in housing retrofit.

Recommendation

- Current retrofit programmes are mainly technical driven.
- This has become one of the reasons why these retrofit drives are not successful.
- The recommendation of this study is to focus on socially driven retrofit drives by focusing on homeowners' practices and trigger points of these practices.
- Retrofit programmes such as government grants, policy making, institutional campaigns or marketing campaigns by retrofit contractors can make use of these findings for their initiatives.



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