

Public Perceptions of Small to-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in New Zealand - Implications for Policy Makers and Educators

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

THIS STUDY EXPLORES HOW OWNERS OF SMALL TO-MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs) INTERPRET EARTHQUAKE RISKS AND RESPOND TO MITIGATION. THE RESEARCH EXAMINED THE VARIATIONS OF PERCEIVED SEISMIC RISKS AMONG SMEs BUSINESS OWNERS CONDUCTING THEIR OPERATIONS IN EARTHQUAKE-PRONE BUILDINGS (EPBs), AND HOW THESE VARIATIONS AFFECT THEIR DECISION TO OR NOT TO PREPARE FOR A POTENTIAL EARTHQUAKE DISASTER.

THIS PROJECT FALLS UNDER THE FLAGSHIP THREE; EXAMINING SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS, AND EXAMINES AN OBJECTIVE UNDER THE PROJECT TITLED; "WHERE PERCEPTIONS AND POLICY MEET: UNDERSTANDING PATHWAYS TO IMPROVING MITIGATION FOR EARTHQUAKE PRONE BUILDINGS".

Project Objective

This study aims to provide recommendations that will help policy makers devise strategies to build disaster resilience of SMEs in New Zealand.

Research Method

Interviews were conducted with stakeholders involved in managing community earthquake risks and vulnerability, such as owners of SMEs, commercial property owners, local council officers, engineers, architects, real estate agents, property valuers and the local NGOs and trusts in Napier and Wanganui.

On-going Findings

- Existence of perceived variations of earthquake risks among the participants
- Factors affecting SMEs Perceived variations of Earthquake Risk
 - **Personal/human factors** - occurrence and severity of previous earthquakes, Earthquake experience, Gender and Age
 - **knowledge of disaster mitigation measures and survival actions**
 - **Local community factors**; size of local economy, population
 - **Business Characteristics**; size of business operations, financial viability and operational pattern
 - **Institutional factors** - Expectations of financial/moral support in a disaster event

CONCLUSION

THE RESEARCH IS ON-GOING, WITH AN EXPECTED OUTCOME OF INTERVENTIONS THAT WILL OFFER PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS, AND TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES ON KEY ENABLERS FOR BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF SMES IN NEW ZEALAND'S PROVINCIAL TOWNS.

