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## Who is protecting tourists in New Zealand from severe weather hazards?: an exploration of the role of locus of responsibility in protective behaviour decisions

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# Who is protecting tourists in New Zealand from severe weather hazards?

An exploration of the role of Locus Of Responsibility  
in protective behaviour decisions

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# Content

- Climate, weather and tourism in New Zealand
- The weather as a risk for tourists
- Severe weather information seeking
- Locus of Responsibility
- Tourists with internal, mixed and external LOR
- Conclusions

# Climate, weather and tourism in New Zealand

- Variable weather pattern: 4 Seasons in 1 Day
- NZ as an outdoor tourist destination
- Weather impact on satisfaction limited, but evident on tourist activities and itinerary of tourists
- Adaptation and coping with the weather → preparedness
- **Severe weather:** *Any type of weather that can pose a risk to personal safety or property, including thunderstorms, tornadoes, freezing rain, heavy rain, wind, dust storms, blizzards, heavy snowfalls, frost, fog and wind chill (Silver & Conrad, 2010)*

# ‘Experiencing’ weather



# The weather as a risk for tourists

- Extreme weather events in New Zealand
  - ✓ Floods, extra-tropical cyclones, fog, tornados, snow storms
  
- Consequences
  - ✓ Track closures, road blocks, flash floods, landslides
  - ✓ Hypothermia, getting lost, traffic accidents
  - ➔ Risk in terms of tourist safety but also tourist itinerary/activities
  
- Vulnerability of tourists due to
  - ✓ Unfamiliarity
  - ✓ Disconnected with local communities
  - ✓ Language
  - ✓ Traffic rules
  - ✓ Tourist attractions: remoteness
  
- ➔ Who is responsible for protecting tourists?

# Information seeking as protective behaviour

- Information seeking? → Part of communication process aiming at increasing knowledge/risk awareness
- Individual as *active* receiver and processor of risk information
- **RISP:** The Risk Information Seeking and Processing model (Griffin, et al., 1999; Griffin, Neuwirth, Dunwoody, & Giese, 2004)
- **FRIS:** Framework for Risk Information Seeking (ter Huurne, 2008)
  - ➔ Adaptation of RISP model to environmental risks

# Information seeking

- Information seeking is directly influenced by:
  - ✓ **Worry:** 'An emotional response to less acute hazards'  
Risk as feelings (Loewenstein, 2001; Slovic, 2004)
  - ✓ **Informational Subjective Norms:**  
What you think that *others* think about you
  - ✓ **Issue Involvement:**  
'Personal interest stemming from a perceived relevance of situational circumstances for one's own life and wellbeing'
  
- Indirect relation with:
  - ✓ **Protection Efficacy**  
'Perceptions of being able to protect oneself against adverse consequences from risky situations'
  
- Also: **Information Sufficiency:**  
Actual vs needed information: the information gap



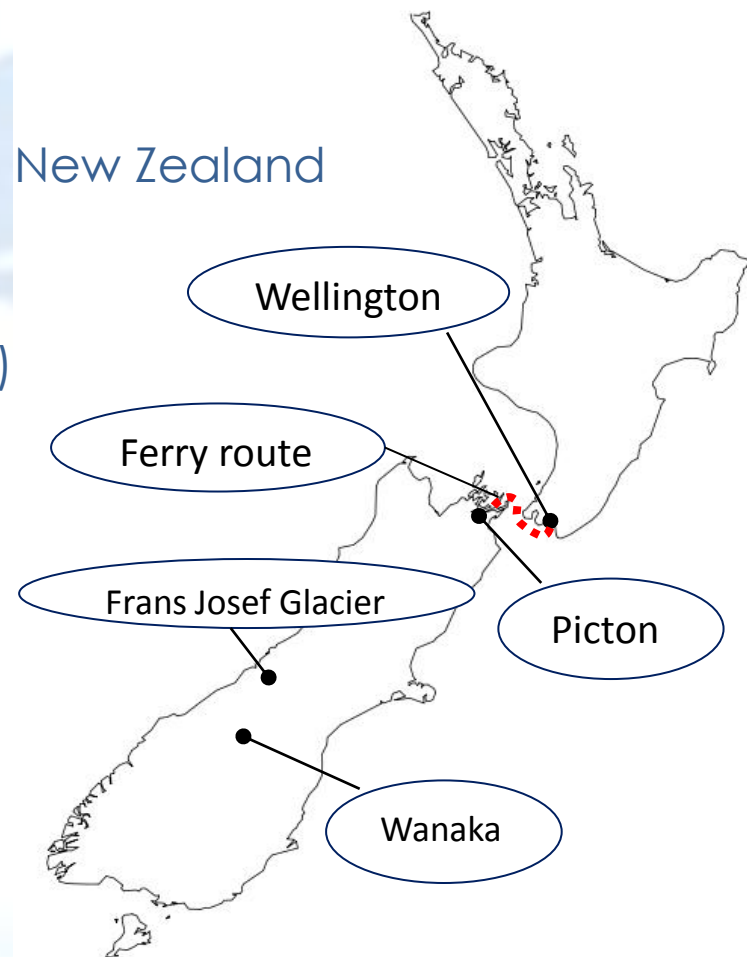
# Locus of Responsibility

- Who is responsible for protecting tourists to stay safe during their holiday?
- Responsibility for informing vs. Responsibility for protecting
- Perceived Locus of Responsibility (LOR):
  - ✓ internal (self) vs. external (others)  
e.g.: government or other authorities (Lalwani & Duval, 2000; Terpstra, 2010)
  - ✓ Internal LOR: controllable risks
  - ✓ External LOR: uncontrollable risks
  - ➔ Subjectivity of what is controllable



# The study

- Printed survey ( $n=391$ )
- Mid-November to early December 2010
- Sample: international tourists travelling in New Zealand
- Survey Locations
  - ✓ Interislander ferry crossing
  - ✓ Carpark at Franz Josef Glacier (DoC)
  - ✓ Lakeside carpark Wanaka (i-Site)



# Three Loci of Responsibility

1. Internal LOR ( $n=126$ )
  - Higher score on Protection Efficacy
  - Higher score on Information Sufficiency
2. Mixed LOR ( $n=208$ )
  - Higher score on Worries (still little worries)
  - Higher score on Protection Efficacy
3. External LOR ( $n=57$ )
  - Lower score on Information Sufficiency
  - Higher score on Worries (still little worries)
  - Lower score on Protection Efficacy

**BUT: no differences between groups on Information Seeking Intention**

## Three Loci of Responsibility

	Locus of Responsibility <sup>1</sup>						F	p	$\eta$
	Internal		Mixed		External				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Information seeking	3.42	.76	3.53	.90	3.42	.81	.62	n.s.	
<b>Worry</b>	<b>2.38<sup>a</sup></b>	.72	<b>2.52<sup>ab</sup></b>	.66	<b>2.62<sup>b</sup></b>	.65	3.58	<b>.03</b>	.14
Inf. subjective norms	3.35	.73	3.38	.69	3.25	.68	.60	n.s.	
<b>Info. Sufficiency</b>	<b>3.32<sup>a</sup></b>	.76	<b>3.14<sup>a</sup></b>	.81	<b>2.82<sup>b</sup></b>	.79	9.40	<b>.001</b>	.22
Issue Involvement	3.24	.75	3.30	.70	3.30	.68	.37	n.s.	
<b>Protection Efficacy</b>	<b>3.06<sup>a</sup></b>	.69	<b>2.98<sup>ab</sup></b>	.68	<b>2.82<sup>b</sup></b>	.60	2.74	n.s.	

1. Means with different superscripts are significant at  $p < .05$  (LSD). Items measured on scales from 1-5, higher item scores indicate higher perceived importance

# Summary

1. The majority of tourists feel responsible for their own safety (Internal LOR)
2. Small group of tourists attribute responsibility for protection to external sources (Government and other authorities)
3. Tourists with external LOR
  - a) are less satisfied with their level of information about severe weather and related risks
  - b) worry about what they might be confronted with
  - c) see themselves as relatively unable to protect themselves
4. No link between LOR and Information seeking
5. Intention to seek Information is generally high among all groups

# Implications

1. There are tourists who may need more information about severe weather and who feel unable to protect themselves
2. They may rely on external sources for protection
3. Task for authorities: increased information provision:
  - Role of authorities (DoC, i-Site, Government?)
  - Role of tourists (self responsibility)
  - Protection advice (what to do and what *not* to do)
4. Research gap 1: Do tourists with internal LOR actually differ from those with external LOR?
5. Research gap 2: Which factors influence attribution of responsibility for protection in the context of natural hazards ?
6. Research gap 3: Are there differences between locals and tourists when it comes to attribution of responsibility?



Thank you! Any questions?



Lincoln  
University

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