

Perceptions of Disasters Associated with Travel in the Pacific Rim. A New Zealand Perspective.

Tina Shaw – *Graduated 2000*

Abstract

Perceptions of risk that traveller's hold of Pacific Rim countries can be influenced by many factors. The purpose of this study was to determine the potential affect perceptions of risk associated with travel in the Pacific Rim might have on travel behaviour. The Pacific Rim as a region is a prime example of an area of holiday destinations that are effected by a variety of disasters, including a number of atmospheric, geological and other extreme events.

Events that occurred in Fiji, in May 2000, highlight the need for research in this area. The attempted coup and subsequent hostage situation has shown the underlying political instability that continues to threaten this popular tourist destination. Ethnic tensions and continuing land disputes contributed to this situation which may potentially lead to a significant decrease in tourist arrivals to Fiji (New Zealand Press Association 2000). These issues and others like them are common in the study area.

The primary aim of this thesis was to evaluate the level of perceived risk associated with Pacific Rim holiday destinations as influenced by natural and man-made disasters. This was accomplished through the implementation of a mail questionnaire administered to a sample of the New Zealand population. Data gained was then analysed using statistical data analysis, specifically frequency and cross tabulation procedures.

Major findings of this study determined that political instability was perceived to be a concern for travellers choosing to travel within the Pacific Rim. The main Pacific Rim countries considered to be 'risky' and to be avoided were determined to be Indonesia and Colombia. An unwillingness to take risks with personal safety and subsequently travel arrangements was determined to be a significant factor in destination choice. Travel within the Pacific Rim was determined to be associated with a degree of perceived risk that may potentially have a negative impact on travel behaviour.