



FIGURE 7. IMPACT PERCEPTION RESPONSES.

5. Visitor perceptions of impacts

Perceptions of 29 specific impact items were surveyed, covering social impacts, physical impacts, and impacts associated with the facilities and services (refer Appendix 1, Question 5). Visitors were asked to respond to each item using the options of not experiencing the impact, experiencing it but not being bothered, being bothered a little, and being bothered a lot. The complete list of responses, as summarised in Figure 7 (and Figure 8), shows that in the main most visitors did not experience most of these impacts. This may be because the impacts did not occur, or because they were not noticed by the visitor.

The most prominent impacts reported here are indicated through combining the responses of those who were 'bothered' by impacts, and those who simply 'noticed' them. These 'impact aware' responses often represented a majority of the visitors. The main examples of these more prominent impacts, which were noticed by over 70% of visitors, included "Uncertain water hygiene" (83%), and "Track trampling/widening" (72%). Other impacts noticed by over 40% of visitors were "Track trampling/shortcuts" (50%), "Seeing litter around huts" (50%), "Inadequate toilet facilities" (45%), "Seeing too many in huts" (44%), "Inadequate water supply" (43%) and "Seeing litter along the track" (41%). These were the most prominent impacts noticed on the Lake Waikaremoana Track, although it should be remembered that there is a clear distinction between the impacts being "noticed" and tolerated, and being seen as "negative". What contributes to the progression from noticing and tolerating an impact, to becoming bothered by it (e.g., it becomes negative) represents an important question for future research.

The most negative impacts, representing those which most 'bothered' the visitors, appear to emphasise physical impact perceptions associated with water hygiene, litter, and track damage. The most prominent of these was 'Uncertain water hygiene', which bothered over half (56%) of the visitors. It was a response to the statement 'Uncertainty about the water always being safe to drink'. From consultations with managers, it can be concluded that this response most often represents general caution about water quality, rather than being a direct reaction to hygiene problems experienced on the visit. It was not clear if this caution was related to all water sources on the trip, or just those in trackside streams. Litter around huts (40%) and on the track (32%) bothered many visitors, while trampling damage leading to track widening and shortcuts, perceptions of inadequate toilets and water supply, and seeing toilet paper/waste each bothered around 20% of visitors. Social impact issues were not prominent among those specifically bothering visitors.

When visitors did notice impacts, many were not bothered by them. This response could be considered 'tolerance' of the impacts. For example, while 72% of visitors noticed trampling damage leading to track widening, only 23% were bothered by it. The remaining 49% noticed the impact but were not bothered by it (e.g., indicating tolerance). It is clear from Figure 7 that many other impacts were noticed but were tolerated, including for example "Too much development of huts", which was noticed by 40% of visitors of whom

most were not bothered by it (36% tolerated *vs* 4% bothered). However, when most of those noticing an impact were bothered by it, it could be considered to show high ‘intolerance’ and unacceptability of the impact source. From Figure 7, impacts indicative of inappropriate behaviour by others appeared least acceptable to visitors (also see Figure 8). The main example is seeing litter around the huts, where 50% noticed the impact, but only 10% were not bothered by it. Other examples include littering along the track, litter at campsites, litter on the water/beaches, seeing toilet paper and waste, and woodcutting damage. However, while these appear to represent the least acceptable types of impacts, with the exception of litter around huts and on the track, they were not highly reported here.

5.1 EFFECTS OF AGE, GENDER, NATIONALITY, AND CROWDING PERCEPTION

5.1.1 Background to analyses

Additional analyses were required to assess whether these impact perceptions varied significantly according to age group, gender, nationality and crowding perception. Figure 8 and Table 3 show the impact perception scales which were created for these analyses (refer Section 4.1.1).

TABLE 3. SUMMARY SCALES FOR SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL IMPACT PERCEPTIONS (REFER APPENDIX 2).

SCALES	DESCRIPTIONS
Physical damage	Waste/toilet paper, vegetation damage, track trampling/damage, litter at huts, campsites, track and beaches
Hut congestion	Insufficient bunks, too many in huts, noise, rush for bunks, big groups
Over-development	Excessive level of huts, tracks, signs, campsites
Camp congestion	Too many at camps/on track, noise, rush for campsites, guided groups
Water/toilet/hygiene	Inadequate water supply/toilet facilities, water hygiene doubts
Boat disturbance	Disturbance by boats at huts, camps and on beaches

(extra individual items—plane noise, seeing where informal campsites have formed)

Continue to next file: Sfc073d.pdf