

Article review: Rufat et al., - Surveying the surveyors to address risk perception and adaptive behaviour across cross-study comparability.

Overall assessment

This paper seeks to review how risk perception studies are conducted and which theoretical frameworks are applied across a range of disciplines. As the paper states, current risk perception studies adopt a variety of theoretical frameworks (or none at all), meaning they become difficult to compare and contrast. This paper seeks to assess the extent to which this occurs, and to present some recommendations and suggestions to increase replicability and enable cross-validation. The study adopted the use of a survey distributed to the risk perception research community, with 150 responses. The participants were largely from Europe (the target area of the study) and with a strong skew towards those working in flood risk. The study presents a series of trends drawn from the survey responses, including the principle domains explored in perception studies, how explanatory variables are sought and used to explain context, and the effect of regional variance on responses. At the end of the paper, the authors present a series recommendations on how replicability can be enhanced in the field between studies.

The paper is both interesting to read and presents a step forward in increasing the robustness of studies in the field of risk perception. The piece is well written and structured, and presents a clear progressive narrative through the research. I recommend this piece for publication, subject to some minor corrections, detailed below.

General comments

- The introduction, for me, doesn't hit on the significance of comparability of studies enough. It's quite a brief introduction and could be expanded to demonstrate the importance of this study more. E.g. why is comparability and transferability important? What is the impact of not doing this? Why is there a crisis of comparability? And, how is that played out in the broader risk perception literature?
- Much of the literature referred to in the text, and indeed the text in Section 8.1 linking the significance of this research to the existing literature focuses on flood risk perception. This suggests that the breadth of the risk perception literature is not as broad as it could be. Also, with 8.1 so heavily linking the study to flood risk perception literature, I'm surprised to not see this mentioned in the introduction at all. It currently feels like it started as a flood risk perception paper and was turned into something more broad, and this needs to be cleaned a bit to be stronger either one way or the other. I'd expect either some acknowledgement of the potential bias towards flood risk perceptions or a heavier inclusion of other risk perception literature to ensure this is truly representative across the field of risk perception.
- Additionally to the comment made above, the majority of respondents (61%) of participants studied flood risk perceptions, over other types of risks. This suggests a bias in your participants perhaps as a result of the snowball sampling method which should be acknowledged in the text. Also a consideration should be made of whether you think your sample is representative of the field.
- Your study looks at the different risk domains that people study but does not explore the severity of the risks they cover. I wonder if you think the severity of the risk studied (e.g. a risk that may cause damage to infrastructure vs. a risk that has a high probability of loss of life), may change the methods employed to assess the perceptions of those risks?
- Section 7 – not sure if you collected the data, but would have been interesting to have gauged the level of significance of the impact of COVID-19 on perception research, rather than just a yes/no response. Also, a lot of the responses are of the impact on researchers directly, but did any respondents detail a change in their approach or methods to their study designs?

More specific comments

- 82 - "This in turn, hinders comparability and transferability... and hampers recommendations for and risk management" – how so? Would like to see an extra sentence or two on the actual impact that the lack of comparability might have.
- 124 – Here you describe interdisciplinary researchers as a minority at 28%, but that's higher than the number of people that identified as geographers (your highest group) at 25%.
- Figure 6 – some of these categories seem to overlap? For example, 'from the literature' and 'from other studies' and 'discussions with colleagues from my field' must have significant overlaps with 'discussions with people in my country' and 'discussions with people in different countries'. Can you make the differentiation of categories clearer?
- 248 – "Socio-demographic characteristics...." Needs reference(s).
- Figure 8 – Might be a formatting thing in review, but the title of the left graph has been cut slightly.
- 458 – Can you add the figure in here for "As a substantial share of studies...".