


Chapter 11

Social, Psychological, Motivational, and Educational Effects of 6 February Earthquakes: A Qualitative Study on Teachers

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ABSTRACT

As a result of two earthquakes with magnitudes of 7.7 Mw and 7.6 Mw in Kahramanmaraş on 6 February 2023, 11 cities in Turkey were severely damaged, and over 50,000 citizens lost their lives. This study aims to explore the social, psychological, and motivational effects of these earthquakes on teachers and their impact on educational activities. A qualitative phenomenological design was used, with 46 teachers from Elazığ, Malatya, and Diyarbakır, areas declared disaster zones, participating. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview form and analyzed through descriptive and content analysis. Results revealed that the earthquakes negatively impacted teachers socially, psychologically, and motivationally, leading to trauma-related disorders, phobias, and reduced professional motivation. Some female teachers, however, noted increased solidarity and empathy. The findings also showed disruptions in educational quality, decreased academic performance, increased absenteeism, and a negative shift in school climate.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters are unpredictable events that occur suddenly, have multidimensional effects, and cannot be prevented by humans (Hutton et al., 2011). Disasters have varying effects based on their type and strength. In addition to physical damages, they can cause psychological and social traumas as well as physical damages since their timing cannot be predicted in advance (Raschky, 2008). Earthquake, as a type of natural disaster, can be physically very destructive in proportion to its severity and its effects can spread over a long period of time although they last for a short time. Earthquakes, one of the most destructive types of natural disasters, are characterized by their sudden onset and brief duration, yet their physical destruction can be immense, particularly in areas with high seismic activity (Bilham, 2004). The degree of destruction caused by an earthquake is closely related to its magnitude, depth, and the population density of the affected region (Kanamori & Brodsky, 2004). In addition to immediate physical damage to infrastructure, homes, and roads, earthquakes can lead to long-term disruptions, including displacement of communities, loss of life, and economic instability (Olshansky et al., 2012). The aftershocks that often follow a major earthquake can further exacerbate the damage and prolong recovery efforts, making earthquakes particularly challenging in terms of both immediate disaster response and long-term recovery and resilience planning (Reid, 1911).

Earthquakes cause negative effects on both living and non-living beings. These effects may be in the form of damage to the lives, belongings, as well as short and long term psychological problems as a result of the earthquake being placed in people's subconscious (Köknel, 1987; Watt, 2002; Öztürk, 2013). Earthquake, which is a commonly experienced natural disaster, brings out feelings of shock, confusion, anger, helplessness, powerlessness, loss of confidence, loss of control and fear of death. The homes of people, which mean the safest place for everyone, no longer have this meaning and start to carry a meaning based on fear, anxiety and insecurity (Sivri, 2023). Therefore, earthquakes have short, medium and long-term effects on people and the environment.

Since Turkey is prone to earthquakes, it has experienced this disaster many times in the historical process. As a result of two earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.7 Mw and 7.6 Mw in Kahramanmaraş on 6 February 2023, 11 cities were severely damaged and more than 50 thousand citizens died. As a result of the earthquakes, many families experienced loss of life and property (Abay & Abay Çelik, 2023), forced internal migration was carried out, and psychological traumas were faced (Aydın & Özüdoğru, 2023). As a result of the earthquakes, the education sector was also damaged to a great extent, and face-to-face education was temporarily terminated and the distance education process was initiated. After the Kahraman-

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