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Understanding Resilience Mechanisms in Turkish Earthquake Survivors: Preliminary Insights from a Constructivist Grounded Theory Study

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Abstract

All over the World, natural disasters resulted in big losses and damage. Earthquakes are among the natural disasters that can lead to psychosocial consequences. Turkey is one of the countries worst affected by earthquakes and at greatest risk of being affected by them in the future. Turkey and Turkish emergency medicine must bear this reality in mind in all present and future planning (Gündüz, A. et al., 2013). While extensive research exists on disaster-related psychological outcomes, culturally specific resilience mechanisms among earthquake survivors remain understudied, particularly in Turkey. Turkey's geographic vulnerability to earthquakes, combined with its cultural characteristics, provides a critical context for a deeper understanding of how survivors make meaning of traumatic experiences and develop adaptive capacities. This ongoing study uses Constructivist Grounded Theory to explore resilience processes among survivors of the February 6, 2023, earthquakes in Turkey. This study presents the preliminary findings and a preliminary overview of the content of a doctoral thesis research conducted using grounded theory.

Following Charmaz's constructivist approach, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 earthquake survivors from affected provinces (Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Malatya, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş...). Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling to ensure demographic diversity. Interviews explored post-earthquake experiences, coping mechanisms, and meaning-making processes. Data collection and analysis proceeded iteratively, with constant comparative analysis and memo-writing throughout.

This thesis will search for the answer to this research question: 'What are the factors that can cause earthquake survivors to redefine the post traumatic experience in relation to the psychological resilience?' A multi-level research questions provides information from micro to macro level

knowledge; an individual experiences give the understanding of families and communities mechanisms behind the trauma, which creates the collective trauma experience and knowledge itself. That's a significant point of the subject's and methodology's concurrence.

These preliminary findings suggest that resilience among Turkish earthquake survivors operates through culturally-embedded mechanisms that differ from Western resilience models. The integration of spiritual coping and community-based support appears central to adaptive processes.

Keywords: Natural Disaster, Trauma, Resilience, Qualitative Research, Grounded Theory