

Chapter 18

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AMONG THE 1999 DÜZCE EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS: POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH

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1. INTRODUCTION

The current study aimed to examine a potential positive outcome of the Düzce Earthquake experience, namely posttraumatic growth (PTG). In order to examine PTG, environmental factors, system factors, event-related factors, earthquake specific coping and cognitive appraisal factors, and general ways of coping responses, factors were examined. Variables that may be related to PTG was examined after earthquake victimization by using a model, which was the Model of Life Crises and Personal Growth (Schaefer & Moos, 1992).

1.1 Model of Life Crises and Personal Growth

Schaefer and Moos (1992) incorporated the possible roles of environmental, individual, and event-related factors, cognitive processing, and coping in explaining subsequently on growth reactions. They suggested a conceptual framework, namely “life crises and personal growth model” to explain PTG as an unintentional change model.

According to the model, environmental and personal factors influence life crisis and their aftermath and influence appraisal and coping responses, which in turn influences personal growth. Growth is based on enhanced social resources, personal resources, cognitive appraisals, and coping responses. Environmental and personal system factors interact with event-related factors (e.g., severity, duration, and timing of a crisis and its scope), which determine cognitive processes and coping and subsequently, their aftermath, which in turn affects resources (see Figure 2).

Therefore, what determines the situation after the traumatic experience (Panel III) is the combination of one’s personal (Panel II), and environmental (Panel I) resources and how it is appraised and dealt with (Panel 4). Thus, according to the model for PTG (Panel 5), crucial factors are:

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portant factors, future studies can measure some other factors that might influence the positive outcomes, such as self efficacy (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998b; Tedeschi et al., 1998), introversion- extraversion (Sheikh, 2004), optimism (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998b), and hopefulness (Tennen & Affleck, 1998).

Finally, apart from experiencing a severe disaster, it was possible that many of the survivors in the present sample had traumatic events in their lives. As a recommendation for future studies, the occurrence of other stressful events might be examined with a traumatic event checklist to determine the relationship between other stressful events for earthquake survivors and positive outcomes.

The present study can be replicated with other samples after different types of disaster victimization, such as survivors of flood in order to figure out their psychological distress and PTG levels and understand relationships between resources, PTG and disaster preparedness. Obtaining findings from different samples exposed to different types of disasters, provide more broad-spectrum support for the Person Relative to Event (PrE) Model (Mulilis & Duval, 1997) and Model of Life Crises and Personal Growth (Schaefer, & Moos, 1992).

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