

CHAPTER 3

FACTORS RELATED TO EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS BEHAVIOR¹

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INTRODUCTION

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) (2008) defines disasters as “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources”. One of the most prevalent natural event based disasters is earthquakes. Earthquakes are natural, sudden, unpredictable, uncontrollable and short-lasting natural events with destructive effects (Gunes, 2001). In order to reduce the devastating effects of earthquakes, earthquake preparedness behaviours (EPBs) are necessary.

Preparedness is ensuring the readiness of a society to disasters, taking precautionary measures and responding to an impending disaster. Disaster preparedness includes any pre-disaster action that can improve the safety and effectiveness of a disaster response (Edwards, 1993). Adoption of preventive or protective actions and providing knowledge about disasters should be considered as an effective strategy to cope with disaster related stress. Because expectations of future disasters cause a considerable source of stress that needs to be coped with.

Although, earthquakes and other disasters frequently cause devastating damage all over the world, people, at risk, often fail to prepare for them. There are number of psychological factors contributing to people’s failure to prepare for disasters (Karanci, Aksit & Dirik, 2005). Understanding psychological factors related to preparedness is central to the efforts to reduce the negative effects of disasters. The role of earthquake preparedness studies has very important implications

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8. Limitations of the Study

In the present field study, it is questionable that the participants represent a random sample of whole population of İstanbul. Therefore, the findings can be generalized only to the samples which have similar characteristics.

Due to the period of time elapsed since the 1999 Marmara Earthquake, at the time of the study it was not so clear that sources of distress related to earthquake resulted from past earthquake experience or the possibility of a future earthquake.

The most important limitation of the present study was its cross-sectional design. Longitudinal research is needed to examine which factors related to earthquake preparedness behavior after victimization across time. Longitudinal studies are needed to investigate the variables in the current study.

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