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## The Experience of School Administrators and Guidance Counselors on 6 February 2023 Kahramanmaraş Earthquake: Kahta Case\*

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### Abstract

In the study, it was aimed to examine the views of secondary school administrators and guidance counselors in Kahta district, which was one of the disaster areas in the 6 February 2023 Kahramanmaraş-based earthquakes. For this purpose, school administrators and counselors were asked to share the situation in the region regarding the earthquakes and their aftermath. Case study, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. In the spring semester of the 2023-2024 academic year, 17 people from school administrators and counselors working in Kahta voluntarily participated in the study. The data of the study were collected through semi-structured interview forms. Semi-structured interview forms were developed by the researchers and finalized after receiving expert opinion. The answers were received during one-to-one interviews in a quiet environment. Afterwards, the opinions of school administrators and counselors about the situation in question were analyzed and interpreted. When the research findings were analyzed, it was determined that the participants had negative life experiences both in their educational and personal environments due to earthquakes, and that both themselves and their relatives were negatively affected psychologically.


**Keywords:** Earthquake, School Administrators, Guidance Teacher, Kahta, Secondary Education


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Turkey woke up to a completely different morning than usual on 6 February 2023. Unfortunately, this awakening was not valid for all 81 provinces. Because when the time showed 04.17, the provinces faced with the earthquake disaster, which was encountered for the first time in the history of Turkey, which the people of the region called the apocalypse, had already woken up. According to AFAD data, the explanation of the situation was as follows:

"Due to the 6 February 2023 Pazarcık - Elbistan (Kahramanmaraş) Mw: 7.7 and Mw: 7.6 earthquakes, a state of emergency was declared in the affected provinces of Hatay, Gaziantep, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman, Osmaniye, Adana and Elâzığ, which was added as the 11th province, and Bingöl, Kayseri, Mardin, Tunceli, Niğde and Batman provinces were also declared as disaster areas with a later decision. According to official figures, 50,783 people lost their lives and 115,353 people were injured. 37,984 buildings were reported to have collapsed. These figures are higher than the losses we suffered in the 1939 Erzincan Earthquake (Mw: 7.9) and 1999 Kocaeli Earthquake (Mw: 7.6), which were the largest earthquakes that occurred in our country in the current century."

When the earthquake, which is defined as an earthquake, is analysed in terms of the destruction it has caused in our country and its effect on normal life with its sudden occurrence, it can be considered as an important psychological shock in human life. It is seen that the loss of life and property caused by the earthquake, the negative experiences seen after the earthquake, the effects of the earthquake affect social life for a very long time and deeply affect people's return to normal. Since psychological trauma is an event outside of normal human behavior, it has a structure that tests people in every way and creates a permanent change in the person (Güven, 2010). The effects of severe psychological trauma such as earthquake may not be seen at the same degree in all people. During the destructive violence of the earthquake, children, like adults, may be exposed to various frightening events. They may see their houses collapsed, family members damaged, injured or witness their deaths during the severe shaking. The sadness and fears of the people around them and their complaints about the losses may be traumatizing for children (Sabuncuoğlu, et al., 2003; Sarman, 2012). All of the education and training stakeholders in the disaster area are in the group of those who are negatively affected in this process. School administrators and counsellors after the earthquake.

- What are the activities carried out in their schools,
- What problems they face,
- The research was initiated to determine what kind of solutions were brought to their problems.

### **Method**

Qualitative research method was used in this study, which aims to determine the views of school administrators and counselors on the situation they experienced after the earthquakes with semi-structured interview forms. "One of the most important objectives in qualitative research is to reveal the perceptions and experiences of the individuals included in the research" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021, p. 41). In the study, a case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. With case study, a person, event, or institution is examined in depth (Ersoy, 2023). Case study is used in many research, especially in teacher

education researches (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). The descriptive nature of the research is because it aims to reveal the existing situation as it is, to reveal the characteristics of the process and to describe its characteristics.

### **Universe and Sample**

The population of this study consists of school administrators and guidance counselors in Kahta district of Adiyaman province and the sample consists of seventeen administrators and guidance counselors among the school administrators in secondary education institutions working in the district. While determining the study group, criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling types, was preferred. The criterion determined within the scope of the research is that secondary school administrators and counselors in Kahta district voluntarily share the realities they have experienced after the earthquakes.

### **Data Collection Tool**

While creating the data collection tool; firstly, the research topic was determined and literature research was conducted on the concept of earthquake, which is the subject of the research, examinations were made on its effects in educational environments and a data collection tool was developed to determine the situation in secondary education institutions. In the research, semi-structured interview forms were created to determine the thoughts of school administrators and counselors about teachers, students and school administration in their schools after earthquakes. The questions of this form were created by the researcher and the final version of the questions was clarified by taking expert opinion. The open-ended questions in the form are as follows.

- Immediately after the earthquake on 6 February (first month), what problems did you, your students, teachers, and you experience about shelter and nutrition problems and what solutions did you find for these problems?
- As a result of the 6 February earthquake, were there any casualties among your students, employees, or their first-degree relatives? Can you tell us your observations about the situation of these people in terms of loss of life?
- As a result of the 6 February earthquake, what are your observations on the transfer, school attendance, participation in exams and discipline of students from your school?
- After the 6 February earthquake, what kind of observations did you have about the students' perspectives on school (fear of staying indoors, fear of aftershocks, applying to the guidance service, introversion, etc.)?
- After the 6 February earthquake, was there any teacher movement (transfer, assignment, etc.) from your school due to the disaster situation? How did you compensate the displaced teachers until they were appointed?

### **Analyzing the Data**

The research consists of the findings observed in the schools of approximately 10 300 students affected by this process, who study in 17 secondary education institutions, two of which are private education institutions, affiliated to the Directorate of National Education in Kahta district of Adiyaman province.

**Table 1***Distribution of Schools*

<b>Affiliated General Directorate</b>	<b>General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education</b>	<b>General Directorate of Religious Education</b>	<b>General Directorate of Secondary Education</b>	<b>General Directorate of Special Education</b>
School Type	Vocational High School	Imam Hatip High Schools	Anatolian and Science High Schools	Private Anatolian High Schools
Number of Schools	3	4	7	3

**Findings**

When the data of the research are examined, the answers given in general can be generalized as follows:

"After the first hours of the earthquake, people started to search for a place to shelter and something to eat. In the first hours of the earthquake, people first took shelter in their cars and then those whose houses were damaged took shelter in public buildings. School hostels were the most ideal places to meet their shelter and nutrition needs. Some of the survivors travelled out of the province to get rid of the trauma and stress of the earthquake as soon as possible. However, life returned to normal, especially with the opening of schools. With the opening of schools, there has been a noticeable loss of motivation in students."

The answers given by the participants to the research questions are given below in the order in which they were expressed, in paragraphs without modification.

**Findings Related to Shelter and Solutions after the Earthquake**

The participants gave similar and close answers about their experiences related to the first sub-problem. The participants stated that they first waited for the earthquake to end in the earthquake that occurred on 6 February at 4.17 a.m., during this period, they applied the collapse trap tactic to minimize the target and put pillow-like objects on their heads to avoid getting hit. They stated that they stayed in the car with their families until dawn. They stated that they first went to the nearest petrol station when the day dawned, where they bought fuel for their cars and queued up at the petrol station for the wc need, which is a basic need with the shock of the earthquake. The participants stated that they went to Kahta District Governorate for permanent shelter on the first day of the earthquake and that they settled in single-storey kindergartens and school hostels with the instructions they received from there. Again, the participants stated that they rushed to help their close relatives who were trapped under the rubble in the centre of Adıyaman, and that rescue operations were carried out with local people for the first two days due to the lack of coordination on the first day and the fact that the extent of the event was not known by the authorities, and that they rescued some of their relatives alive and reached the bodies of some of their relatives. Some of the participants stated that on the first day of the earthquake, they travelled to their relatives outside the province with their own vehicles, and some of the earthquake victims travelled to the provinces directed by the Presidency for the earthquake victims in Adıyaman province. While some of the earthquake victims took shelter with their relatives in nearby villages, some of them took



shelter in vineyard houses etc. close to the city, and some of them took shelter in factories in organised and small industrial sites to meet their shelter needs. Some earthquake survivors stated that there were around 300 people in a kindergarten with classrooms and that people stayed in the corridors of the school in addition to the classrooms.

They stated that the nutrition problem lasted for two or three days. These earthquake victims stated that the markets and bakeries were closed for the first 3 days and that they could not eat hot food during this period and that they were fed with biscuits, cakes, etc. From the 3rd day onwards, they stated that the bakeries and markets were open and that they could not enter the house and that they solved the problem of nutrition from the places where food was issued and distributed by the district governorship because the natural gas was closed. They stated that they took shelter in detached houses at the end of the first week and most of the time 3 or 4 families had to stay together in these houses. During this period, they stated that both food and clothing aids were delivered to the earthquake zone from all over the country and that those in need benefited from these aids.

With the 6 February earthquake, thousands of truckloads of living materials (food, beverages, clothing, heating equipment, etc.) arrived in the earthquake zone from all over the country. There was a need for a strong authority and discipline in receiving, storing and distributing these aids in a healthy way. Failure to do so would have led to looting and unfair distribution of the incoming aid. This task was undertaken by the Turkish Armed Forces in the region. The incoming aid was accepted in a systematic manner and distributed in a systematic manner.

The participants mentioned the sleep problem that would indirectly affect the school motivation of the students affected by the earthquake. They stated that there was a major disturbance in the sleep patterns of the students after the earthquake, and that this sleep disorder had been present for a long time and continued. It was determined that some students could not sleep until the morning, especially on the night when the first week of the earthquake was completed, and the reason for this was that the earthquake was on the night connecting Sunday to Monday and they could not sleep on the first Sunday night after the earthquake in case the earthquake recurred.

Some of the students said that on the night of the earthquake, Adiyaman and Şanlıurfa Governorships cancelled the schools for one day due to cold weather and icing, and that they were awake until the time of the earthquake and witnessed the first seconds of the earthquake and woke up their families by themselves. When these students heard the decision of the presidency to holiday the Monday after the election in the 2023 elections, they likened it to the decision to holiday during the earthquake and were worried. Because of this anxiety, they had difficulty falling asleep, and the reason for this was the similar holiday decision before the earthquake.

### **Findings Related to Observations on Loss of Life after the Earthquake**

The first 3 days of the earthquake were a chaos. The identities of the deceased could not be determined, their relatives could not be reached, the bodies were kept in the hospital for a long time and then buried by the municipality authorities as anonymous. In addition, the relatives of young children who survived from the rubble in the first week of the earthquake but lost their parents and all their relatives could not be reached. The photos of these children

were shared on social media accounts and their relatives were searched for. It was difficult to reach the cars and relatives of those who survived the earthquake with severe injuries and were transferred to hospitals in metropolises such as Istanbul and Ankara, who were in shock and unconsciousness. Especially for those who died in 4 provinces (Adiyaman, Hatay, Malatya and Kahramanmaraş), which were severely affected by the earthquake, single graves were not dug due to both the high number of deceased and the lack of sufficient authorized personnel, and they were buried side by side. The participants stated that there were people who lost their lives in the 6 February Earthquake in our district and that the students who lost their lives were withdrawn when they came to school. The participants stated that they did not leave the people who lost their relatives alone in order to make them forget their pain, and that they helped them with shelter and nutrition. However, they stated that the feelings of pessimism about life intensified in those who lost their first-degree relatives, they were reluctant to participate in socializing environments, and they had sleep problems. They also stated that they felt very sad when they saw earthquake victims who survived the earthquake but lost a limb in the earthquake. In addition to efforts to ensure a quick start to education, MoNE also focused on psychosocial support programs for students. Psychosocial Support Intervention Teams consisting of guidance teachers and psychological counselors were assigned in 10 provinces in line with the needs and started working in the field. MoNE announced the Post-Earthquake Psychological Support Action Plan on 10 February 2023. Psychological first aid (PIY) documents, psychoeducation programs on earthquake and loss and grief, brochures, story books, presentation contents, Psychological Resilience in Family and School after Traumatic Life Events books, which are included in the action plan and prepared to be implemented in the field, were shared on the website. Guidance counselors, psychological counselors and special education teachers started to provide support to children in psychosocial support centers established in the earthquake zone. Psychosocial support kits and brochures on Earthquake and Psychological Trauma were sent to the event tents. Psychological First Aid Program was provided to students and their families who were placed in dormitories, hostels and hotels in other provinces. As of 28 February, 418 psychosocial support tents were set up with 4,720 guidance teachers/psychological counselors. Seminars on "loss and mourning process in children and adolescents" and "post-disaster mental health" were prepared through the MoNE Teacher Information Network (TIN). In addition to MoNE, Disaster Child Civil Coordination Team prepared a Teacher's Toolkit in the Post-Earthquake Period for teachers and school psychological counselors in order to facilitate them to support their and their students' well-being after the earthquake. For children in need of special education support, it was announced that work was carried out with volunteer special education teachers and counselors/psychological counselors in special education support tents and areas.

The validity period of the support education reports of students in need of special education in the region was extended by one year. Thus, students' access to support education services from special education and rehabilitation centers was prevented from being interrupted due to report renewal processes. In 71 provinces that were not directly affected by the earthquake, Earthquake Psychoeducation Programs prepared for students at all schools and levels started to be implemented as of 20 February. It was shared that the programs will be carried out in six stages for students, parents, teachers and other individuals within the framework of the Psychosocial Support Action Plan Implementation Principles.

## **Findings Related to Observations on Students' Situations at School after the Earthquake**

On 6 February 2023, the impact of the Kahramanmaraş-based earthquakes was extremely severe for children and education. On the day of the earthquake, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) set up a crisis desk within the Ministry to ensure coordination of activities. In the crisis desks in the provinces, MEB general directors and department heads as well as national education directors of some provinces that were not affected by the earthquake were assigned. The second term of the 2022-23 academic year was postponed across Turkey and the mid-term holiday was extended by two weeks. Education in 71 provinces outside the earthquake zone started on 20 February. The 10 provinces in the region (Şanlıurfa, 5 6 Gaziantep, Adana, Diyarbakır, Hatay, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, Adıyaman, Osmaniye and Kilis) were categorized into three different categories according to their earthquake-affected status. It was decided that the transition to education in these provinces would be carried out on a district and school basis, and that education would start according to the robustness reports of school buildings. In Diyarbakır, Kilis and Şanlıurfa, which are in the first category, education started on 1 March. In Adana province, which is in this category, the opening of schools was postponed to 13 March due to the current conditions. In Gaziantep and Osmaniye, which are in the second category, it was decided to start education on 13 March, and in Adıyaman, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş and Hatay, which are in the third category, it was decided to start education on 27 March. Schools with boarding houses, teacher centers, practice hotels, schools and sports centers that were not damaged in the region.

The very next day after the earthquake, many earthquake victims from the earthquake zone left the district and travelled to safer areas. On the first day, many people left the earthquake zone by road by choosing roads that were not closed. However, on the 2nd and 3rd day of the earthquake, entrances and exits to some provinces were closed. In this case, the return process started with the airplanes bringing search and rescue teams to the region. Earthquake victims who wanted to leave the region were evacuated from the region free of charge. However, there were earthquake victims waiting for 36 hours at the airport to leave the earthquake zone. Moreover, this waiting was under difficult conditions. For the students who did not leave the earthquake zone, support and training courses were quickly opened for the 8th and 12th graders. For all other students, they started face-to-face education on 27 March 2023 in Kahta District, which was less damaged by the earthquake. As a result of the MoNE's decision that students' absences would not be recorded in the system and that students were free to attend school or not, the attendance rate of students did not reach 60 per cent in secondary education institutions. In addition, schools all over the country were suspended for two weeks after the earthquake. With the completion of these two weeks, education started face to face in the whole country except the earthquake zone. Many parents who were sensitive to their children's education travelled to the host provinces, which were matched by the presidency, just so that their children would not fall behind in education. In these provinces, some of the students were admitted to private education institutions. In accordance with the decision taken by the Ministry of National Education after the earthquake, all students in the earthquake zone and the earthquake victims who went to other regions in the exams held for the 2nd Term of the 2022-2023 Academic Year, if the exam score of the student in the 2nd Term is low, the exam scores of the 1st Term of the 2022-2023 Academic Year will be valid. The Ministry of National Education did not approach the earthquake zone,



which was effective in 11 provinces, in terms of education in the first stage. Especially in the first month after the earthquake, school buildings and student hostels were used for the accommodation of earthquake victims. Again, in the first month after the earthquake, school administrators and volunteer teachers actively took part in receiving and distributing the aid, setting up tent cities, etc. before the schools started teaching. Schools and school gardens were allocated to the teams that came to the region to overcome the traumas of primary and pre-school students before the start of education activities in the earthquake zone. The first step after the earthquake was the opening of courses for students preparing for exams. The shortage of teachers in these courses was filled by educators coming voluntarily from other provinces. The Ministry of National Education has narrowed the scope of the High School Entrance Examination. For Grade 8 students, the Ministry of National Education limited the exam subjects to the first semester acquisitions and the second semester subjects were not included in the exam. In the Higher Education Institutions exam, Field Proficiency (AYT) and Foreign Language Test (YDS), the subjects related to the second semester of the 12th grade were excluded from the scope of the exam. Grade 5 to Grade 11 students will take the State Boarding Without Pay and Scholarship Examination, the second semester subjects are also excluded from the scope of the exam. The exam, which is held in June every year, is planned to be held in September.

As part of the financial support for students, it was decided to increase the 3% scholarship requirement for private schools to 10% and to use 7% of the quota for students transferring from earthquake-affected provinces. Private schools in Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Adana have also increased their quotas, making it possible for both students leaving the region and students staying in the region to benefit from this regulation. The Private Schools Association of Turkey (TÖZOK), the Association of All Private Education Institutions (TODER), the Association of Private Education (ÖZDER), the Association of Private Education (ÖZDEBİR), the Association of Private Education Institutions (ÖZKURBİR), the Ankara Education Platform and the Association of Private Schools of the Aegean Region initiated a "guest student" project. These organizations opened 33,596 quotas in 3,100 private schools in different provinces of Turkey. Students living in 10 provinces in the earthquake zone will be able to receive education in these schools with full scholarships by covering the costs of education, food, and books until the end of the second semester of the 2022-23 academic year. It was also announced that students at all levels who lost their parents or guardians due to the earthquakes will receive monthly education support if they continue formal education. If students studying with scholarships are placed in boarding without pay in school hostels in the same province or in another province or transferred to private education institutions, the scholarships paid within this scope will not be cut until the end of the 2022-23 academic year. In addition to these supports, many NGOs have also started to offer scholarships to students from the earthquake zone.

### **Findings Related to Observations on Students' Perspectives on School after the Earthquake**

After the 6 February 2023 Kahramanmaraş and Pazarcık earthquake, people stayed away from buildings and multi-store buildings. Especially considering that most of the buildings were damaged, people had a fear of closed spaces. Even months after the earthquake, people felt like an earthquake was happening even if there was no earthquake. After the earthquake, people switched to non-multi-store houses after a while. Especially single store



houses were highly preferred. People living in the most developed high-rise buildings of the city took shelter with their relatives living in single-store houses in the suburbs after the earthquake. Immediately after the earthquake, people had to stay overnight in their cars for a few days. Cars were safer places than houses during this period. After the 3rd day of the earthquake, people moved to undamaged houses. Especially at night, people slept by keeping items such as car keys and mobile phones that are useful in emergencies either by their bedside or in their pockets. They had to always keep a few blankets in the cars and a coat for the children. The first few nights in the cars, they slept by parking the cars away from high-rise buildings. In the first few days, there were serious problems in providing fuel for the cars. With the severity of the earthquake, people wanted to get more than they needed. They went beyond their needs while fueling their cars, buying bread from the bakery and oil from the market. For this reason, in the first week of the earthquake, bakeries and fuel stations set a quota in sales.

After the earthquake, some noticeable differences were observed in secondary school students' perspectives and attitudes towards school. Some of these attitudes are visible increases in shyness behaviors, difficulties in expressing themselves verbally, preferring to be alone, having difficulty in social adaptation, not being able to socialize, withdrawal, etc. Secondary school students have developed some prejudices against earthquake. In the development of these prejudices, parents constantly talk about both the 6 February earthquake and the earthquake experiences they have experienced before in the presence of children and young people. Especially the parents who had experienced two earthquakes themselves compared these earthquakes and the sharing left a permanent mark on the young people. Another attitude developed in secondary school students towards earthquake was the fear of experiencing the earthquake again. It was observed that the constant mention of new earthquake areas by experts in the media created a pessimistic atmosphere on the students. After the 6 February earthquake, the number of aftershocks occurred. Because after the 6 February earthquake, a total of 7 thousand 242 aftershocks, 41 between 5-6, 450 between 4-5, were experienced. In addition, the number of deaths in the earthquake was 50 thousand 783 and more than 122 thousand people were injured. Secondary school students stated that the information about the earthquake they learnt before the earthquake did not come to their minds during the earthquake. However, they stated that the results of the earthquake taught them a lot about how they should behave during the earthquake. The Ministry of National Education reported that there was a total of 20 thousand 868 school buildings in 10 provinces in the earthquake zone and only 24 of these buildings collapsed. Again, the Ministry of National Education stated that they saw that the most robust buildings were school buildings. The Ministry of National Education stated that some school buildings were heavily damaged in the aftershocks and that some school buildings were actively used by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health after the earthquake.

### **Findings on Teacher Mobility and Filling of Classes in the School after the Earthquake**

In the first month after the earthquake, teachers working in the earthquake zone were given the right to transfer for apology (health problems of any family member, etc.). The health board reports, which were given by the health board before the earthquake, became given by a single physician due to the density of hospitals, lack of doctors, etc. This situation increased the number of teachers who wanted to be transferred. When the teachers who turned this situation into an opportunity asked for a transfer, there was a great shortage of teachers in

Kahta District. While there was a very intense teacher transfer from the earthquake zone to the outside, there were a partial number of transfers from the earthquake zone to the earthquake zone. This situation turned into a big problem with the start of education on 27 March 2023 Monday. Although this situation turned into a crisis in schools in a short time, the teacher shortage was eliminated by hiring paid teachers and class branch merging. In the 6 February Kahramanmaraş - Pazarcık earthquake, no school in the district was destroyed. However, there was a need for schools in the district due to the demolition decision of 2 schools and 1 student boarding house which were heavily damaged and the repair of two school buildings with medium damage. As a short-term solution to this need, it was decided to switch schools to dual education. Secondary education institutions have 8 lessons a day. With the decision of the school to have dual education, 16 lesson hours were planned in one day.

Due to the 6 February Earthquake, earthquake compensation was paid for 6 months to all public employees working in 8 provinces, especially Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Adıyaman, Osmaniye, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Malatya and 5 districts of Adana, 6 districts of Diyarbakır and 6 districts of Elazığ. The Ministry of National Education has introduced an education support package to sustain the private schools serving in the earthquake zone and to provide financial support to the students attending private education institutions in the earthquake zone. With this package, the levels of schools that will receive education and training support, the number of students to be supported, the amount to be supported, the applications of schools for this support, the issues regarding the school preferences of students, the evaluation criteria, and the work and procedures to be carried out by parents and schools were included. Parents of students studying in public/private schools across the country who want to benefit from this education and training support that will provide added value will be able to apply for support by applying to the school where the students are enrolled. The placement scores of the students will be formed on e-School according to the criteria in the annex of the Guideline, in line with the numerical data entered based on the document. For students in private education institutions to benefit from this support, they must be enrolled in private education institutions (private schools) in the provinces of Adıyaman, Malatya, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş and two districts of Gaziantep province, or they must be enrolled in these schools by requesting transfer within the scope of the support. With this support, a total of 40 thousand students will be provided with education support of 12 thousand 800 TL for 4 thousand students studying in pre-school education institutions, 15 thousand 400 TL for 10 thousand students studying in primary schools affiliated to private education, 18 thousand TL for 10 thousand students studying in secondary schools affiliated to private education institutions and 18 thousand TL for 16 thousand students studying in private secondary education institutions. Private education institutions wishing to apply for education support and students studying in private education institutions who want to benefit from the support will make their applications by performing their transactions through the system between 04-29 December 2023. Those who are entitled to receive support will be announced on 15 January 2024. Transfer and registration procedures to private schools will be carried out between 05-09 February 2024, and the process will be completed with additional placement on 16 February 2024.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

Damage assessment of school buildings in the earthquake zone was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Ministry of



Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change. According to the 13 February statement, out of 20,868 buildings belonging to MoNE in the region, 24 were destroyed and 83 were heavily damaged. Damage assessment reports will be completed by the end of February and education will not start until all schools have received their reports. According to the Chamber of Geological Engineers, 4,159 schools across Turkey are in high-risk areas of fault lines. JMO recommends that the Ministry of National Education urgently rank and review these schools, move the school buildings in risky areas to safe areas, and conduct earthquake performance analyses of school buildings across the country and share the results with the public. On 18 February, the evacuation of risky schools started in 71 provinces outside the earthquake zone. It was announced that there were 93 risky schools in Istanbul and students enrolled in these schools would be transferred to safe schools. It was stated that after Istanbul, risky schools in other provinces will also be evacuated and students will receive education in different schools. As of 6 March 2023, some schools in Izmir, Manisa, Muğla, Tekirdağ, Kayseri, Aksaray, Hakkari, Mersin, Bursa and Mardin were evacuated due to earthquake vulnerability.

Before the earthquake, 209,719 permanent and 11 contracted teachers were working in the earthquake zone. In January 2023, it was reported that 12,289 paid teachers were working in the region. The Minister of National Education, after a meeting with representatives of the Union of Educators' Unions, Türk Eğitim-Sen, Education and Science Workers' Union and Eğitim-İş, announced that it was decided to increase the right to make excuse transfers from two times a year to three times a year due to the earthquake. In addition, it was stated that in the provinces where the State of Emergency was declared due to the earthquake, the affected MoNE personnel will be able to apply for relocation. The demolition of heavily damaged school buildings and boarding houses and the decisions to repair light/medium damaged buildings have caused the need for schools to arise in the district in a short period of time. It was not possible to meet this need in a short period of time, so schools switched to dual education upon the instruction of the Ministry of National Education. However, considering the sunrise and sunset times in schools that switched to dual teaching, it was difficult to teach 14 hours a day in secondary schools and 16 hours a day in high schools. To solve this problem, MoNE reduced the class hours from 40 minutes to 30 minutes in schools with dual teaching. Monitoring the situation of children who were out of education before the disaster and identifying the children who will be out of education after the disaster should be among the prioritized practices of education policies in the disaster period. It is important to determine the risk of dropping out of education for the groups of children affected by the disaster; for example, children whose houses were destroyed, who lost their relatives or whose income decreased may be at high risk of dropping out of education. Similar situations also exist for migrant children. For this reason, follow-up and support mechanisms should be established in the provinces of migration and in the earthquake zone to ensure access and continuation of education for children from vulnerable groups. The Centre for Sociology and Education Studies (SEÇBİR) offers suggestions to teachers for participatory and inclusive classroom environments for returning to school after the earthquake. In this context, measures that support interaction among students and aim to create a safe community are emphasized.

### **Suggestions**

Since psychological shocks are unexpected events during life, the reactions to these events can be considered as normal reactions to an unusual situation. However, it should be noted that the reactions to an abnormal situation are accepted as normal. In this context, it is



useful to be extremely careful when studying these behaviors. Although the reactions of people to abnormal disaster-like events are similar in almost many people who have experienced the disaster, they can be accepted within the limits of normal behavior. What is not normal is that these behaviors manifest themselves as the same or more of these behaviors even long after the psychological trauma. Psychological reactions such as an intense state of panic, anxiety, hopelessness and unhappiness can be seen as the manifestations of disasters in human life (Kurt, Gülbahçe, 2019). School administrators who observe these situations in their students or teachers can receive support through various training activities within the ministry within the scope of re-improvement. The 6 February earthquake caused a great trauma in students and this trauma caused some changes in their daily lives. At the beginning of these changes, there were disturbances in the sleep patterns of the students after the earthquake. As a result of these findings, to improve this situation in students and other educational staff, a cooperation protocol can be signed with physicians to conduct improvement seminars and practical workshops in schools regularly every month.

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#### **Ethics Committee Decision**

There is no ethics committee approval. The research was conducted within the framework of the Declaration of Helsinki. Participants were volunteers and all of them were informed in advance and their consent was obtained.