Natural Disaster Awareness of Social Studies Teachers After the Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes in Turkey

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate whether social studies teachers (SSTs) in Turkey have sufficient awareness of natural disasters within the context of the elementary social studies curriculum following the two major earthquakes that occurred in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023. The research group consisted of 20 SSTs working in the province of Hatay during the 2022-2023 academic year, a region significantly affected by the earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş. A case study design was employed in this research. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form consisting of fifteen open-ended interview questions. Content analysis and descriptive analysis methods were employed to analyze the data. The findings revealed that SSTs had deficiencies in their knowledge of types of disasters, their ability to translate disaster-related information into action was low, and they exhibited insufficient awareness of natural disasters.

Keywords: Educational awareness, disaster awareness, disaster education, disaster management, social studies teachers.

Türkiye'deki Kahramanmaraş Depremleri Sonrası Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenlerinin Doğal Afet Farkındalığı

Öz: Bu araştırma, 6 Şubat 2023'te Kahramanmaraş'ta meydana gelen iki büyük depremin ardından, Türkiye'deki sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin (SBÖ) doğal afetler konusunda ilköğretim sosyal bilgiler müfredatı bağlamında yeterli farkındalığa sahip olup olmadığını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu kapsamda, araştırma grubu, 2022-2023 eğitim öğretim yıllarında Kahramanmaraş merkezli depremleri yaşamış olan Hatay ilinde görev yapan 20 SBÖ'den oluşmaktadır. Araştırmada durum çalışması deseni kullanılmıştır. Veriler, on beş açık uçlu görüşme sorusundan oluşan yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme formu kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi ve betimsel analiz yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, SBÖ'lerin afet türleri konusundaki bilgilerinde eksiklikler olduğu, afetle ilgili bilgileri eyleme dökme yeteneklerinin düşük olduğu ve doğal afetler konusunda yeterli farkındalığa sahip olmadıkları tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim ve farkındalık, afet farkındalığı, afet eğitimi, afet yönetimi, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri.

Geliş tarihi/Received: 17.10.2024 Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 20.09.2025 Makale Türü: **Araştırma Makalesi**

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Atıf için/ To cite: Bozkaya, H., & Kuzey, M. (2025). Natural disaster awareness of social studies teachers after the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes in Turkey. *Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Journal of Education, 22*(3), 749-770. https://doi.org/10.33711/yyuefd.1568987

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Introduction

Natural disasters are natural forces that lead to destructive events (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2006). Among natural disasters are volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floods, landslides, hurricanes, typhoons, cyclones, earthquakes, avalanches, heat waves, droughts, winter storms, and uncontrollable fires (Rodda, 1999). Natural disasters are considered inevitable due to their occurrence beyond human control (Weisaeth et al., 2002). They result in economic, physical, and social damage, causing loss of life (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998; Smith, 2003). Disasters are societal disruptions triggered by hazardous events that interact with capacity, vulnerability, and exposure conditions and affect human, material, economic, or environmental areas (United Nations, 2015). Historically, disasters have been classified as natural or technological (Shimizu & Clark, 2015). Therefore, societies must have the necessary knowledge, resources and equipment to protect itself from the harms of natural disasters. For example, Turkey, located on many fault lines, experiences numerous earthquakes that result in the loss of many lives. Therefore, individuals in Turkey should always be prepared for earthquakes (Varol, 2019). The consequences of being unprepared were experienced on February 6, 2023, when Kahramanmaraş, with its epicenters measuring 7.7 and 7.6 in magnitude, lost 53,000 citizens due to earthquakes (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı [AFAD], 2023).

Government officials, institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities, and educators play a crucial role in preventing natural disasters from turning into catastrophes. Since Turkey has a high risk of natural disasters, these stakeholders contribute directly to raising awareness and preparedness among students, establishing a safety culture in schools, fostering societal resilience and awareness, and providing psychological support in the aftermath of disasters. Additionally, since the social studies curriculum includes topics related to natural disasters, social studies teachers in Turkey's primary education programs need to have a strong awareness of natural disasters. As individuals' education and knowledge levels increase regarding natural disasters, the dimensions of the material and spiritual damage caused by natural disasters are reduced in line with changes in individuals' preparedness, attitudes, and behaviors (Koç, 2013). Therefore, in awareness-raising efforts, it is essential to instill in individuals the knowledge that they can take measures before potential disasters occur and protect themselves from the harmful effects of natural disasters, which requires educating individuals. Changing attitudes and behavior related to disaster preparedness requires long-term, continuous, comprehensive information and education efforts (Yakut, 2005). In other words, it is possible to minimize the destruction caused by disasters with disaster awareness. Indeed, awareness is a fundamental component in fostering societal disaster resilience (Değirmenci et al., 2019). This awareness that needs to be created in society should be instilled from childhood in all age groups in the community. After all, being afraid of disaster does not mitigate the harmful effects (Erkal & Değerliyurt, 2009). Global knowledge can be enhanced through increased awareness and cultural sensitivity toward natural disasters (Schnyder et al., 2016), as well as mutual learning and collaboration (Schnyder et al., 2017). Increasing the awareness level of the society about natural disasters, which an ongoing concern in Turkey, is essential for reducing the loss of life and property. Therefore, educational programs have essential responsibilities. The Social Studies Curriculum plays a pivotal role in fostering awareness of societal natural disasters (Ursavaş, 2016) because the social studies course holds a crucial position in creating awareness about natural disasters among students. Disaster education is primarily delivered through schools, with a focus on human-centered approaches. Effective disaster education for students can only be achieved by creating a safe learning environment (Arıcı et al.,

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2023). An assessment of the relationship between earthquakes and migration (Yenilmez, 2023). The indispensability of online learning after an earthquake in Turkey (Yamamoto & Altun, 2023). Psychosocial Examination of the Effects of the Kahramanmaraş Pazarcık Earthquake (February 6, 2023) on Individuals (Tüccar & Yavuz, 2023). Effects of the February 6, 2023, Kahramanmaraş earthquake on structures in Kahramanmaraş City (Avcil et al., 2024). Arslan (2023) emphasized that courses on natural disasters should be included in school curricula to promote widespread awareness of natural disasters. Bakırcı (2023) stated that folk poets composed epic poems about the Kahramanmaraş earthquake, which deeply affected society, to raise public awareness of natural disasters and emphasized that these epics could be used as teaching materials in schools to raise disaster awareness. In their study, Demir Yıldız and Demir Öztürk (2023) found that the metaphors produced by participants related to earthquakes focused on concepts, such as fear, death, destruction, loss, abandonment, shaking, and belief.

In Turkey, a country prone to various natural disasters, the significance of the social studies course and the impact of teachers in creating awareness are crucial in drawing attention to natural disasters and instilling disaster awareness. Therefore, the need for more disaster awareness among teachers is identified as a significant problem in this study. Following the determination of the scope of the topic as 'disaster awareness,' the research's purpose, problem statement, sub-problems, and significance were established.

Natural disasters are major catastrophic events that threaten human life and the Environment. Correct interventions before, during, and after these events can minimize loss of life and material damage. Teachers' awareness levels regarding natural disasters play a significant role in preparation and response processes. The literature has discussed the importance of teachers' disaster awareness, including their ability to provide accurate information, support disaster education, and ensure students' safety during disasters. However, studies exploring the impact of teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward disasters on the education system remain limited.

The contribution of this study to the literature is the in-depth examination of teachers' awareness levels regarding natural disasters and the exploration of how this awareness affects educational processes. By emphasizing the need to enhance teachers' disaster awareness and preparedness, recommendations for school curricula and teacher training programs can be made. Additionally, the study will discuss how teachers' attitudes toward disasters influence students' attitudes toward such events.

The Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate whether social studies teachers (SST) have sufficient awareness of natural disasters, which remain a significant issue in Turkey due to their consequences.

Problem Sentence

How do Social Studies Teachers (SST) perceive natural disaster awareness?

Brief Issues

H1. How does SST define and interpret the concept of a natural disaster?

H2. How aware are SSTs of natural disasters?

H3. How does SST view pre-disaster preparations?

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H4. How aware are SSTs of natural disasters in their surroundings?

H5. How does SST evaluate teaching about natural disasters?

The Importance of the Study

Establishing societal awareness to take precautions against disasters and mitigate their impacts is paramount. Fundamental knowledge about what to do before, during, and after disasters can only be instilled in communities through education. The creation of this awareness should begin at the grassroots level. For imparting disaster awareness to students, the guidance of SSTs who have received disaster education and possess disaster awareness is crucial (Gülersoy & Akyol, 2024). Therefore, it is essential that SST, who undertakes a significant role, has natural disaster awareness. The awareness teachers possess will be one of the most influential factors in reducing the impact of natural disaster damage. In recent years, the increasing frequency of natural disasters in Turkey has highlighted the need to develop disaster education as one of the most effective measures to eliminate or reduce the consequences caused by natural disasters. Teachers with these qualities must transform disaster education, typically focused on acquiring knowledge, into attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the awareness of SSTs regarding natural disasters. In this context, this study contributes significantly to the field.

Method

Research Design

In the aftermath of the 7.7 and 7.6 magnitude earthquakes in Turkey, a qualitative research method known as the Basic Qualitative Research Design was employed to examine the natural disaster awareness of Social Studies Teacher Candidates (SST). This design emphasizes how individuals construct reality through their interactions within the social world. Therefore, it focuses on the extent to which individuals engage with the world they interpret and how they construct meaning from it. This study explores how individuals interpret natural disasters, construct their lives around such events, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. Consequently, this research was designed as a qualitative study (Merriam, 2018). The objective was to conduct an in-depth analysis of the subject matter.

Participants

The participants were selected using the purposive sampling method, specifically the criterion sampling approach. In this method, the observation units can be individuals, events, objects, or situations with specific characteristics relevant to the research. The study sample consisted of 20 social studies teachers who volunteered to participate and worked in Hatay province during the 2022-2023 academic year, having experienced earthquakes of magnitudes 7.7 and 7.6 centered in Kahramanmaraş. The demographic characteristics of these teachers are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1

Frequency Table of Teachers According to Different Variables

Gender		Female	Male		Total
	N	8	12		20
	%	40.0	60.0		100
Education Status		License	Postgraduate		Total
State	N	17	3		20
	%	85.0	15.0		100
Seniority		1-3	4-6	7 years +	Total
	N	1	3	16	20
	%	5.0	15.0	80.0	100

As shown in Table 1 above, 60% of the participants were male, 40% were female, and the majority (85%) had a Bachelor's degree. In addition, 80% of the teachers hadseven or more years of experience, indicating that the study involves experienced teachers. This demographic profile may provide an opportunity for in-depth knowledge of natural disasters, as professional teachers are likely to offer a broader and more informed perspective on the impact of disasters and their role in education.

Data Collection

Stewart and Clash (1985) define semi-structured interviews as a mutual and interactive communication process based on asking and answering questions previously determined and aimed at a severe purpose (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Within the scope of this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with SSTs who had experienced an earthquake. This study used an interview form consisting of open-ended questions as the data collection tool. Before developing the interview questions, a review of the relevant literature was conducted, and a question pool was created in line with the research objective. The question pool was sent to five teachers working in the earthquake-affected region to gather their opinions on whether the questions adequately captured their experiences or if there were any deficiencies. Based on the feedback received from the teachers, the question pool was revised. Subsequently, expert opinions were sought to determine whether the questions were suitable for data collection by the research objective. After incorporating the feedback, the final version of the questions was prepared. Teachers working in the schools were then contacted, given information about the research, and asked if they would be willing to participate. A meeting day and time were arranged with the volunteer teachers, and interviews were conducted according to the pre-scheduled appointments. These interviews aimed to assess the teachers' awareness of natural disasters. The data obtained from these interviews constituted the primary data source of this study.

Data Collection Process

In social sciences, researchers often conduct studies on human subjects. During the research design phase, the researcher must assess whether the ethical standards and measures for protecting participants are adequate. These standards encompass ethical elements, such as honesty, transparency of intent, respect for participants, confidentiality, the researcher's intent, and participants' willingness to voluntarily participate in the study (Berg & Lune, 2019). In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 SSTs. Before the interviews, ethical standards

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for protecting participants were considered, and the research's purpose and content were briefly explained to the teachers. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with those teachers who voluntarily agreed to participate in this study.

Data Analysis

The data obtained to answer the research questions were analyzed. The dataset under examination consists of responses provided by teachers through semi-structured interviews. These responses were analyzed systematically using the content analysis method. Content analysis is an approach that aims to identify concepts that can meaningfully explain the collected data and reveal the relationships between these concepts. This study examined data related to natural disasters systematically, and efforts were made to uncover implicit phenomena and meanings embedded within the data. The teachers' responses were grouped around similar concepts and themes, then organized and interpreted in a way that would be easily understandable for the reader (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

The participants' identities were kept confidential, and numerical identifiers, such as "Teacher 1," and "Teacher 2," were assigned to ensure anonymity. Each participant's responses to the questions posed under the sub-problems of this study were analyzed separately under the relevant sub-problem headings. Initially, coding was carried out based on the content of each sub-problem, and through a conceptualization process, these codes were categorized and transformed into themes.

During the coding process, meaningful units that best represented the events or phenomena expressed by the teachers were identified and assigned appropriate codes. Codes with similar content were grouped, and common patterns were identified. The similarities and differences between codes were analyzed, and related codes were merged to form more comprehensive themes.

Since the content of some teachers' responses to the semi-structured questions was evaluated under more than one category, the frequency numbers exceeded the total number of participants. This situation is directly related to the categories generated through content analysis. Following this process, the findings were presented in tabular format without interpretation. Finally, these findings were interpreted and contextualized by the researcher (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

Findings

Teachers' Views on the Concept and Types of Disasters

The first sub-problem of this research was defined as: "How do Social Studies Teachers (SST) define and interpret the concept of a natural disaster?" In order to address this sub-problem, two separate questions were included in the interview form. The first of these questions was: "What conditions do you think are necessary for an event to be considered a disaster?" The second question was: "What types of disasters are there?"

The first question was initially posed to the teachers during the interview process, and their responses were categorized through content analysis. As a result of the analysis, the opinions of the teacher candidates regarding this question were grouped under six categories: 'causing loss of life and property (20)', 'harming people' (14)', 'affecting a large area (5)', 'occurring due to human intervention (4)', 'resulting from natural causes (4)', and 'being unpreventable (3)'. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2

Teachers' Opinion Categories on Disaster Qualification Conditions

Categories	***f***	%
Massive loss of life	20	40.0
Causing harm to people	14	28.0
Affecting a large area	5	10.0
Resulting from human intervention	4	8.0
Occurring due to natural causes	4	8.0
Unstoppable	3	6.0
Total	50	100

(E.g., 20/50*100=40).

As seen in Table 2, 40.0% of the answers provided by teachers to the question 'What are the necessary conditions for an event to be considered a disaster?' are 'loss of life and property,' 28% were 'harming people,' 10% were 'affecting a large area,' 8% were 'occurring with human intervention,' 8% were 'occurring due to natural causes,' and 6% were 'unpreventable.' It would be more appropriate to explain the 'occurring with human intervention' category with quotations from the teachers' thoughts.

T10: *"Naturally occurring natural events are common things for the Earth, but human structures lead to these events being defined as disasters."*

T5: *"There must be loss of life and property, a threat to the lives of living beings, and the creation of economic and social problems due to natural causes."*

These statements suggest that teachers interpret disasters through environmental and socio-economic lenses, acknowledging the interplay between natural phenomena and human systems in the disaster process.

Within the scope of the first sub-problem of this research, the second question directed to the teachers was: "What types of disasters are there?" The responses to this question were evaluated using content analysis and organized under specific categories.

According to the analysis results, the opinions of the teacher candidates regarding types of disasters were grouped into eleven categories: earthquake (20), flood (20), landslide (12), fire (10), avalanche (10), natural disasters (9), tsunami (9), human-made disasters (6), erosion (4), volcanic eruptions (4), and drought (2). These findings are presented in detail in Table 3.

Table 3

Disaster Type Categories Derived from Teachers' Views

Categories	***F***	%
Earthquake	20	18.8
Flood	20	18.8
Landslide	12	11.3
Fire	10	9.5
Avalanche	10	9.5
Natural disasters	9	8.5

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Tsunami	9	8.5
Human-made disasters	6	5.7
Erosion	4	3.8
Volcanic eruptions	4	3.8
Drought	2	1,8
Total	106	100

As seen in Table 3, the question "What are the types of disasters?" was asked. The responses provided by the teachers are as follows: 18.8% earthquake, 18.8% flood, 11.3% landslide, 9.5% fire, 9.5% avalanche, 8.5% natural disasters, 8.5% tsunami, 5.7% artificial disasters, 3.8% erosion, 3.8% volcanic eruptions, and 1.8% drought. According to the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority [DEMA] (2019), the types of disasters observed worldwide are categorized into five types: geological, climatic, biological, social, and technological. It was observed that teachers did not express any opinions regarding disaster types, such as rock falls, mudflows, heat waves, cold waves, hail, tornadoes, lightning, hurricanes, typhoons, cyclones, tornadoes, blizzards, extreme snowfall, acid rains, fog, ice formation, air pollution, forest fires, epidemics, insect infestations, wars, terrorist attacks, migrations, and technological disasters.

Consequently, the findings revealed a need for more comprehensive disaster education encompassing a broader array of hazard types, including natural and anthropogenic threats.

Teachers' Levels of Disaster Awareness

The second sub-problem of this research is defined as: "What is the level of disaster awareness among Social Studies Teachers?" Two different questions were directed to the teachers to address this sub-problem. The first of these questions was: "What do you understand by disaster awareness?" The responses given by the teachers to this question were evaluated using content analysis and categorized under specific themes.

As a result of the analysis, the opinions of the teacher candidates regarding disaster awareness were grouped into four main categories: being conscious (20), taking precautions (18), knowing what to do during a disaster (9), and knowing what to do after a disaster (3). The findings obtained from the analysis are presented in detail in Table 4.

Table 4

Content Analysis of Teachers' Views Regarding the Concept of Disaster Awareness

Categories	***f***	%
To be conscious	20	40.0
To take precautions	18	36.0
To know what to do during a disaster	9	18.0
To know what to do after a disaster	3	6.0
Total	50	100

As seen in Table 4, 40.0% of the responses given by teachers to the question "What do you understand by disaster awareness?" were related to being conscious, 36.0% were about taking precautions, 18.0% pertain to knowing what to do during a disaster, and 6.0% were about knowing what to do after a disaster.

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The question "What are the factors influencing disaster awareness for teachers?" was asked. In this context, some noteworthy opinions are as follows:

T20: "*Some people believe they can be saved by praying, so education is effective."*

T9: *"Not only children but also adults tend to flee during a disaster; this indicates a lack of awareness."*

These insights suggest that disaster awareness encompasses knowledge and preparedness and cultural and psychological factors that may affect individuals' responses to emergencies.

The second question directed to the teachers was: "What factors influence disaster awareness?" The responses given by the teachers to this question were evaluated using content analysis and categorized into five themes: education (20), experience (17), media (10), economic level (8), and technology (5). The analysis results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Teachers' Views on the Factors Affecting Disaster Awareness

Categories	*f*	%
Education	20	33.4
Life experience	17	28.3
Media	10	16.6
Economic level	8	13.4
Technology	5	8.3
Total	60	100

As seen in Table 5, the responses provided by teachers to the question 'What are the factors that affect disaster awareness?' were as follows: 33.4% conscious awareness, 28.3% personal experience, 7.0% media, 16.6% economic level, and 8.3% technology.

Attitudes Toward Pre-Disaster Preparedness

The third sub-problem of the research was determined as: 'How do Social Studies Teachers evaluate pre-disaster preparations?' Four questions were directed to the teachers to address this sub-problem. The first question was: "What are the natural disaster risks in your area, and what precautions do you take against these risks?" The responses given by the teachers to this question were evaluated using content analysis, and their views were categorized into six main categories: earthquake (20), flood (15), landslide (12), drought (5), avalanche (5), and fire (3). The analysis results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Teachers' Views on Natural Disaster Risks in their Area

Categories	*f*	%
Earthquake	20	32.8
Flood	15	24.6
Landslide	11	18.2
Drought	4	6.5
Avalanche	4	6.5

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Fire	3	4.9
I am not taking precautions	4	6.5
Total	61	100

As seen in Table 6, the question 'What are the natural disaster risks in your region and the measures taken against these risks?' was answered by teachers as follows: 32.8% mentioned earthquakes, 24.6% mentioned floods, 18.2% mentioned landslides, 6.5% mentioned droughts, 6.5% mentioned avalanches, and 4.9% mentioned preparations for fire disasters. It should be noted that the frequencies in the table should be distinct from the disaster risks mentioned by teachers, as they may not have taken precautions for all of them.

Another finding from this question was that 6.5% of teachers said they did not take any precautions. The reasons for not taking precautions fall into two categories: 4.9% mentioned not taking precautions despite the possibility, while 1.6% mentioned the absence of possible precautions. The views of teachers regarding the precautions they have taken against these risks are as follows:

T13: *"Unfortunately, I have not taken any precautions. We should, but despite having theoretical knowledge, I have shortcomings in practice."*

T7: *"I do not take any precautions because there is no necessary action for me."*

T14: "*Floods occur at certain times of the year; I take precautions against them by placing a barrier at the edge of my house."*

T8: *"I have prepared an earthquake kit."*

T4: *"I have chosen flood-resistant housing."*

T9: *"I have done afforestation."*

T18: *"I have practiced water conservation."*

T20: *"I have avoided areas with avalanche risk."*

T7: *"I have kept a fire extinguisher."*

T3: *"I have not taken any precautions."*

These findings highlight a varied awareness and engagement level among Social Studies Teachers regarding pre-disaster preparedness, emphasizing the need for targeted educational interventions to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical precautionary measures.

As part of the third sub-problem of the research, the second question posed to the teachers was, "Are you knowledgeable enough about the natural disaster risks in your environment?" The responses given by the teachers were evaluated using content analysis and categorized into two main groups: "I am knowledgeable enough (13)" and "I am not knowledgeable enough (7)." The analysis results are presented in detail in Table 7.

Table 7

Teachers' Self-Assessment of their Knowledge About Local Natural Disaster Risks

Categories	***f***	%

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I have enough	13	57.5
I do not have enough	7	42.5
Total	20	100

As shown in Table 7, 57.5% of teachers stated that they were knowledgeable about natural disaster risks in their Environment, while 42.5% indicated that they needed to improve their knowledge.

As part of the third sub-problem of the research, the third question posed to teachers was, "What are the institutional measures that need to be taken regarding natural disaster risks in your environment?" The responses given by the teachers to this question were evaluated using content analysis and categorized into five main groups: "educational activities (20)", "earthquake-related (18)", "flood-related (8)", "landslide-related (3)", and "avalanche-related (1)". The analysis results are presented in detail in Table 8.

Table 8

Teachers' Views on Institutional Measures for Specific Natural Disaster Risks in their Environment

Categories	*f*	%
Education studies	20	40.0
Earthquake-related	18	36.0
Flood-related	8	16.0
Landslide-related	3	6.0
Avalanche-related	1	2.0
Total	50	100

As seen in Table 8, in response to the question, "Teachers' Views on What Institutional Measures Should Be Taken Against Natural Disaster Risks in Your Environment," 40.0% of the participants suggested that disaster education should be taught as a course, 36.0% emphasized the importance of inspecting the durability of buildings, 16.0% highlighted the need for cleaning sewage systems, 6.0% mentioned afforestation efforts, and 2.0% proposed building retaining walls to prevent avalanches.

In more detail, educational efforts were categorized as "Teaching as a course." Earthquake-related measures were primarily identified as "Inspection of the durability of buildings." “Cleaning of sewage systems" was recommended for flood-related risks. "Afforestation efforts" were emphasized among the suggested precautions for landslides. Finally, avalanche-related measures included "Preventing avalanches with a retaining wall." The teachers' example statements regarding the measures that institutions should take are as follows:

T12: *"Inspection is necessary, and riverbeds should not be opened for construction."*

T9: *"There should be specialized institutions and sufficient experts in areas of regional disasters."*

T16: *"Unfortunately, there are no individuals with sufficient knowledge about disasters."*

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These findings underscored the multifaceted institutional approach required to effectively manage natural disaster risks, emphasizing education, infrastructure safety, and expert involvement.

As part of the third sub-problem of this research, the fourth question directed to teachers was, "Do you find your preparations for natural disasters sufficient?" The responses provided by the teachers were evaluated using content analysis and categorized into two main groups: "insufficient (17)" and "sufficient according to the geographical location I live in (3)." The analysis results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Teachers' Views on the Adequacy of their Natural Disaster Preparedness

Categories	*f*	%
Not Sufficient	17	85.0
Sufficient	3	15.0
Total	20	100

As seen in Table 9, when asked, "Do you find your preparations for natural disasters sufficient?" 85.0% of the teachers answered "insufficient," while 15.0% answered "sufficient according to my geographical location." The following are example statements from teachers on this matter:

T17: *"My preparations against disasters need to be sufficient."*

T13: *"I find the precautions I have taken according to the geography I live in sufficient."*

These findings highlight a prevalent sense of inadequacy in disaster preparedness among Social Studies teachers, while acknowledging that a minority consider their measures appropriate to their local risk profiles.

Environmental Disaster Risks and Public Awareness

The fourth sub-problem of the research was defined as: "What is the level of awareness of natural disasters in the environment according to social studies teachers?" To address this sub-problem, five different questions were directed to the teachers. The first question was: "Are the people in your environment prepared for natural disasters?" The responses given by the teachers to this question were evaluated using content analysis, and it was found that all the teachers answered "not prepared (20)." The analysis results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Teachers' Views on the Unpreparedness of People in Their Environment for Natural Disasters

Categories	*f*	%
Not prepared	20	100
Total	20	100

Table 10 shows that 100% of the teachers agreed with the statement "not prepared" in response to the question.

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The second question directed to the teachers regarding the fourth sub-problem of the research was as follows: "Are there any environments around you that you think are not resilient to natural disasters? If so, what are they?" The responses given by the teachers to this question were evaluated using content analysis. The results were categorized into the following five categories: "buildings not resilient to earthquakes (18)," "flood risk (15)," "houses in areas at risk of landslides (7)," "my surroundings are resilient to disasters (7)," and "roads (2)." These analysis results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Teachers' Views on Vulnerable Environmental Factors to Natural Disasters in their Surroundings

Categories	***f***	%
Earthquake-vulnerable buildings	18	36.7
Flood risk	15	30.6
Houses in areas prone to landslides	7	14.2
Environmentally disaster-resistant	7	14.2
Roads	2	4.3
Total	49	100

As seen in Table 11, in response to the question, "Do you have any environments around you that you think are not resilient to natural disasters? If so, what are they?" 36.7% of the teachers answered with "buildings not resilient to earthquakes," 30.6% with "flood risk," 14.2% with "houses in areas at risk of landslides," 14.2% with "my surroundings were resilient to disasters," and 4.3% with "roads." In this context, some notable quotes from the teachers are as follows:

T16: *"Sometimes, even a light rain can create a flood risk in my surroundings."*

T15: *"People are not adequately prepared. They only show interest in education when it is made mandatory."*

These responses highlight the perceived spatial vulnerabilities and the critical need for enhanced community awareness and preparedness regarding environmental risks.

The third question directed to the teachers regarding the fourth sub-problem of this research was: "Do you try to raise awareness about natural disasters among people in your environment?" The responses given by the teachers were analyzed using content analysis and categorized into two groups: "I am trying to raise awareness (16)" and "I am not trying to raise awareness (4)." The results of this analysis are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Teachers' Efforts to Raise Awareness about Disasters among their Peers

Categories	***F***	%
I am trying to raise awareness	16	80.0
I am not trying to raise awareness	4	20.0

As shown in Table 12, 80% of the participants stated that they were trying to raise awareness about natural disasters in their Environment. In contrast, 20% indicated that they were not making any efforts. Teachers trying to raise awareness mentioned that they aimed to start with

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the family unit, raise awareness about water conservation, and highlighted the issue of earthquakes. On the other hand, teachers who stated that they were not trying to raise awareness explained that people are unconscious and are unaware of this issue. One teacher's example quote is as follows:

T14: *"There is not even a topic in my social environment to discuss this."*

These findings revealed a predominant commitment among teachers to foster disaster awareness, alongside recognized barriers that hindered such efforts in certain contexts.

As part of the fourth sub-problem of this research, teachers were asked the fourth question: "Are awareness activities related to disasters being carried out in your environment?" The responses provided by the teachers to this question were analyzed through content analysis and categorized into two main groups: "no activities are conducted (16)" and "activities are conducted (4)". The analysis results are presented under the relevant categories in Table 13.

Table 13

Teachers' Views on the Presence of Disaster Awareness Activities in their Environment

Categories	*f*	%
No activity is taking place	16	80
Activity is taking place	4	20
Total	20	100

As shown in Table 13, 80% of the teachers stated that such activities were not being carried out. In contrast, 20% indicated that these activities were taking place. The example quotes from the teachers are as follows:

T11: *"It was done when I was in elementary school."*

T14: *"The municipality organizes activities related to these matters."*

These findings suggest that, while disaster awareness initiatives exist in certain contexts, they are generally perceived as insufficient or absent in the environments where most teachers work.

As part of the fourth sub-problem of this research, teachers were asked the fifth question: "Who should primarily be responsible for raising awareness about disasters? Why?" The responses provided by the teachers to this question were analyzed through content analysis and categorized into seven main groups. These categories were: "government (8)," "teachers (3)," "civil society organizations (2)," "families (2)," "municipalities (2)," "role model individuals (2)," and "authorities (1)." The analysis results and the categories and their justifications are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Who Should Primarily Be Responsible for Raising Public Awareness About Disasters, According to Teachers?

Categories	*f*	%
State	8	40
Teachers	3	15
Non-Governmental Organizations	2	10
Family	2	10

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Municipalities	2	10
Role models	2	10
Authorized individuals	1	5
Total	20	100

In Table 14, in response to the question, "Who should primarily be responsible for raising public awareness about disasters?", 40% of the teachers stated that this responsibility should lie with the government. Additionally, 15% believed teachers should take on this role, while 10% pointed to non-governmental organizations, 10% to families, 10% to municipalities, 10% to role models in society, and 5% to authoritative figures.

The following are the example quotes from the teachers:

T11: *"The state is the only structure capable of bringing people together under one roof."*

T4: *"This responsibility should belong to teachers because it must start from the youngest age groups; children who receive this education at school pass it on to their families, thereby spreading awareness."*

T10: *"The responsibility of raising public awareness should be entrusted to experienced civil society organizations like AFAD."*

T5: *"For individuals to gain this awareness, families must first reach a certain level of consciousness."*

T17: *"Since municipalities can guide society, this responsibility should primarily lie with them."*

T12: *"This responsibility should belong to individuals society looks up to."*

T8: "*All authorities in various institutions should bear responsibility in this regard."*

These findings highlighted a multifaceted understanding among social studies teachers regarding the distribution of responsibility for disaster awareness, underscoring the prominent role of governmental bodies while recognizing the complementary functions of educational, civil, familial, and municipal stakeholders.

Addressing Disaster Topics in the Social Studies Course

The fifth sub-problem of this research was determined as "What are the opinions of social studies teachers regarding the teaching of natural disasters?" As part of this sub-problem, the teachers were asked two questions. The first question was, "Do you find the topics related to natural disasters in social studies textbooks sufficient?" The teachers' responses to this question were analyzed through content analysis, and their views were categorized into two main groups. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Teachers' Views on the Adequacy of Natural Disaster-Related Topics in Social Studies Textbooks

Categories		*f*	%
Insufficient	Shallow	10	50.0
	Limited activities	6	30.0

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Sufficient	Adequate	4	20.0
Total		20	100

As seen in Table 15, the responses from teacher candidates were divided into two main groups: "Insufficient (16)" and "Sufficient (4)." Among those who found the content insufficient, 50% described it as "superficial," while 30% mentioned a "lack of activities." Some example quotes from the teachers are as follows:

T7: *"The textbooks should be more sufficient; more extensive coverage should be given to disaster diversity."*

T1: *"More emphasis should be placed on practical applications and activities."*

T4: *"The books provide enough information on this topic."*

These findings suggest a predominant concern among social studies teachers regarding the depth and engagement level of natural disaster content in textbooks, highlighting the need for more comprehensive and activity-based instructional materials.

As part of the fifth sub-problem of this research, teachers were asked the second question: "How would you address the topic of natural disasters if you were to prepare social studies textbooks?" The teachers' responses were analyzed through content analysis. Their views were grouped into five categories: "activity-oriented approaches (18)," "detailed theoretical information (15)," "visuals (8)," "current news (4)," and "interviews with individuals who have experienced disasters (2)." The analysis results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Teachers' Suggestions for Addressing Disaster Topics in Social Studies Textbooks

Categories	*f*	%
Activities for Application	18	36.0
In-Depth Theoretical Information	15	30.0
Visuals	10	20.0
Current News	5	10.0
Interviews with Individuals who have Experienced Disasters	2	4.0
Total	50	100

As shown in Table 16, 36.0% of the teachers responded with activity-oriented approaches, 30.0% with detailed theoretical information, 20.0% with visuals, 10.0% with current news, and 4.0% with interviews with individuals who have experienced disasters. The teacher's example expression is as follows:

T8: *"I would present it by adding current news and visuals to show students that it has real-life implications."*

These findings suggest that teachers favor a multifaceted approach combining practical activities, theoretical depth, and contextualized content to teach natural disasters in social studies curricula effectively.

Conclusion and Discussion

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This study assessed teachers' awareness and preparedness levels regarding natural disasters. The findings revealed that teachers' knowledge and preparedness levels varied based on multiple factors.

This study explores how teachers perceive the concept of natural disasters in the aftermath of an earthquake. Teachers define disasters as events that result in loss of human life and property and affect people negatively. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Şahin and Sipahioğlu (2002). However, it was observed that the teachers did not sufficiently recognize some types of disasters specified by AFAD (2023). This situation suggests a deficiency in the teachers' understanding of disaster types. It is acknowledged that the teaching faculty have a particularly vivid recollection of the seismic event, particularly in light of the dual major seismic events that occurred on February 6, 2023, centered in Kahramanmaraş. This suggests that teachers' perceptions of disaster types are influenced by personal experiences and environmental context.

This program aims to promote disaster awareness and educate the public on the appropriate response to significant incidents. Teachers' disaster awareness reflects a broad perspective encompassing multiple stages of disaster management. However, only one pre-service teacher referred to the post-disaster recovery process. This situation demonstrates that teachers do not evaluate disaster awareness in a way that covers all stages of disaster management. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated a correlation between disaster awareness education and disaster experience. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Uşak et al., which also emphasized the impact of media on disaster awareness. This perspective is further substantiated by studies (see Demiröz, 2020; Koç, 2013).

Personal preparation for disasters is an imperative that cannot be overstated. Certain members of the teaching faculty asserted that adequate measures had not been implemented to ensure the safety of pupils in the event of a disaster. This situation demonstrates that teachers' knowledge about disasters is inadequate at the behavioral level. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Şahin et al. (2018). The extant literature emphasizes the necessity for increased research in the field of disaster education studies (Aksoy, 2013; Akyel, 2007; Başbuğ, 2007; Büyükkaracığan, 2016; Karakuş & Önger, 2017; Kırıkkaya et al., 2011; Mızrak, 2018; Özgen et al., 2011; Şahin et al., 2018).

Teachers in this study reported that individuals in their immediate vicinity were unprepared for disasters. This finding suggests that teachers perceive a lack of preparedness on the part of buildings in their Environment in the event of a disaster. Furthermore, teachers asserted that.

Recommendations

Based on these findings obtained, the following recommendations have been proposed.

The quality of disaster education should be improved, and the community should be educated through practical training to raise awareness of disasters.

Efforts should be directed toward accurately understanding disasters and associated terminology.

Disaster awareness training should be integrated across all levels of education.

Community-focused educational programs should be designed to enhance public awareness of natural disasters.

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To prevent disaster education from remaining at the level of knowledge, the number of activities, such as seminars, conferences, and drills should be increased.

The power of the media should be harnessed to create disaster awareness.

Ethics Committee Permission Information: This study was conducted with ethical approval obtained by the Bayburt University Rectorate Ethics Committee decision numbered 125 dated 30.04.2024.

Author Conflict of Interest Information: This study has no conflict of interest, and no financial support has been received.

Author Contribution: The authors declare that they have contributed equally to the article.

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Geniş Özet

Giriş

Bu araştırma, 6 Şubat 2023'te Kahramanmaraş merkezli meydana gelen iki büyük depremin ardından Türkiye'deki sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin (SBÖ), doğal afetler konusunda ilköğretim sosyal bilgiler müfredatı bağlamında yeterli farkındalığa sahip olup olmadıklarını incelemeyi

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amaçlamaktadır. Depremlerin yarattığı büyük yıkım ve toplum üzerindeki etkileri, özellikle eğitim alanında afet farkındalığının önemini bir kez daha ortaya koymuştur. Türkiye'nin çok sayıda fay hattına sahip olması nedeniyle deprem ve diğer doğal afetler açısından yüksek risk taşıdığı, bu nedenle sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin bilgi, tutum ve farkındalık düzeylerinin öğrencilerin afete hazırlık davranışlarında kritik rol oynadığı belirtilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, araştırmanın problem durumu, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin doğal afetleri nasıl algıladıkları, ne ölçüde farkında oldukları ve bu farkındalığı eğitim süreçlerine ne derece yansıtabildikleri üzerine odaklanmaktadır.

Araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda beş alt problem belirlenmiştir: SBÖ'lerin doğal afet kavramını nasıl tanımladıkları, afet türlerine yönelik bilgi düzeyleri, afet öncesi hazırlık süreçlerine bakışları, çevrelerindeki afet risklerine dair farkındalıkları ve doğal afetler konusundaki öğretim süreçlerini nasıl değerlendirdikleri. Çalışmanın öneminin, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin afet farkındalığı düzeylerinin toplumun afetlere hazırlıklı olmasında belirleyici bir unsur olması nedeniyle arttığı vurgulanmaktadır. Doğal afetlerin yıkıcı etkilerinin en aza indirilmesinde eğitim programlarının ve sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin kritik rolüne dikkat çekilmekte; özellikle sosyal bilgiler dersinin, öğrencilerde afet bilinci oluşturma açısından merkezi konumda olduğu belirtilmektedir.

Yöntem

Araştırmada nitel yöntem benimsenmiş ve temel nitel araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Bu desen, bireylerin sosyal dünyayı nasıl algıladıklarını, yaşadıkları deneyimlere nasıl anlam yüklediklerini ve afetleri nasıl yorumladıklarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Katılımcılar, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme ile seçilmiş ve araştırma grubunu 2022–2023 eğitim öğretim yılında Kahramanmaraş merkezli depremleri doğrudan yaşayan Hatay ilinde görev yapan 20 sosyal bilgiler öğretmeni oluşturmuştur. Katılımcıların çoğunluğunu erkekler (%60) ve lisans mezunları (%85) oluşturmaktadır; ayrıca sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin büyük bir bölümü (%80) yedi yıl ve üzeri mesleki kıdeme sahiptir. Bu durum, deneyimli bir grup üzerinden afet farkındalığının derinlemesine incelenmesine olanak sağlamıştır.

Veriler, on beş açık uçlu sorudan oluşan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Görüşme soruları, literatür taraması ve sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinden alınan geri bildirimlerle şekillendirilmiş, daha sonra uzman görüşü doğrultusunda son hâlini almıştır. Gönüllü öğretmenlerle önceden belirlenen tarihlerde yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmış ve katılımcıların kimlikleri gizli tutulmuştur. Araştırma sürecinde etik ilkeler doğrultusunda gönüllü katılım, bilgilendirme, gizlilik ve dürüstlük ilkeleri gözetilmiştir.

Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi ve betimsel analiz yöntemleri birlikte kullanılmıştır. Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin elde edilen yanıtlar önce kodlanmış, ardından benzer kodlar sınıflandırılarak temalar oluşturulmuştur. Bazı yanıtların birden fazla temada yer alması nedeniyle frekanslar toplam katılımcı sayısını aşmıştır. Veriler sistematik biçimde çözümlenmiş, bulgular tablolar hâlinde sunulmuş ve daha sonra araştırmacılar tarafından yorumlanmıştır.

Bulgular

Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin doğal afetler konusunda çeşitli eksikliklere sahip olduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Öğretmenlerin bir kısmının afet kavramını tanımlamada zorlandığı, olayın "afet" olarak nitelendirilebilmesi için gerekli koşullar konusunda bilgi eksiklikleri bulunduğu belirlenmiştir. Benzer şekilde, afet türlerini sınıflandırma ve tanıma konusunda da öğretmenlerin önemli bilgi açıkları olduğu görülmüştür. sosyal bilgiler

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öğretmenlerinin büyük bölümünün deprem, sel, heyelan gibi sık karşılaşılan afetlere aşina olduğu; ancak diğer afet türlerine yönelik bilgilerinin sınırlı olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Araştırma bulguları, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin afet öncesi hazırlık süreçlerine ilişkin farkındalıklarının da düşük olduğunu göstermektedir. Katılımcıların önemli bir kısmı, afetlere yönelik hazırlık yapmanın gerekliliğini kabul etmekle birlikte, bu hazırlıkların nasıl yapılacağı konusunda yeterli bilgiye sahip olmadıklarını belirtmiştir. Bu durum, afet eğitiminin yalnızca teorik bilgi düzeyinde kaldığını ve uygulamaya yeterince dönüştürülemediğini göstermektedir.

Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin çevrelerinde yer alan risklere yönelik farkındalıkları da yetersiz bulunmuştur. Katılımcıların bir kısmı yaşadıkları bölgelerdeki olası afet tehlikelerinden haberdar olmadıklarını ifade etmiş, bazıları ise riskleri bilmekle birlikte bu riskler karşısında alınması gereken önlemler hakkında eksik bilgiye sahip olduklarını dile getirmiştir. Bu bulgu, afet farkındalığı ve hazırlık düzeyi arasındaki ilişkiyi güçlendirmekte, farkındalığın bilgi ve eylem boyutlarında bütüncül ele alınması gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Doğal afetlerin öğretimine ilişkin bulgular ise sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin afet konularını işlemekte zorlandıklarını göstermektedir. Katılımcıların bir kısmı müfredatta yer alan afet konularının öğretimi için yeterli materyal, içerik ve pedagojik desteğin bulunmadığını belirtmiştir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin büyük bölümü, afet eğitiminin genellikle bilgi aktarımı düzeyinde kaldığını, davranış geliştirmeye yönelik etkinliklerin eksik olduğunu ifade etmiştir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Tartışma bölümünde, araştırma bulgularının mevcut literatürle uyumlu olduğu görülmektedir. Literatürde, Türkiye'de afet eğitimine yönelik farkındalığın artırılması gerektiği, özellikle sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin afet bilinci konusunda daha kapsamlı eğitimler almasının zorunlu olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Araştırmanın bulguları, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin doğal afetlerle ilgili bilgilerinin sınırlı olması, bilgilerini eyleme dönüştürme konusunda yetersiz kalmaları ve çevresel risklere ilişkin farkındalıklarının düşük olması nedeniyle afet eğitiminde istenen düzeye erişilemediğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bağlamda araştırma, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin afet farkındalığına yönelik daha kapsamlı ve uygulamalı eğitim programlarına ihtiyaç duyduğunu göstermektedir.

Sonuç olarak, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin doğal afet farkındalığının istenen düzeyde olmadığı, afet türleri konusunda bilgi eksiklikleri bulunduğu, afet bilgilerini eyleme dönüştürme konusunda yetersiz kaldıkları ve çevresel risk farkındalığının düşük olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin afet konularını öğretirken çeşitli zorluklar yaşadıkları, materyal eksikliği ve pedagojik sınırlılıklar nedeniyle afet eğitiminin etkisinin azaldığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu nedenle araştırma, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerine yönelik afet bilinci ve afet pedagojisine ilişkin kapsamlı eğitim programlarının geliştirilmesini önermektedir. Ayrıca müfredatta yer alan afet konularının daha uygulamalı, davranış odaklı ve öğrencilerin günlük yaşamla bağlantı kurabilecekleri şekilde yeniden yapılandırılması gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır.

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