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**TURKISH ADULT'S GRIEF AND GRIEF RITUALS
AFTERMATH IN THE OF AN EARTHQUAKE**

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TURKISH ADULT'S GRIEF AND GRIEF RITUALS
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ABSTRACT

TURKISH ADULT'S GRIEF AND GRIEF RITUALS AFTERMATH IN THE OF AN EARTHQUAKE

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The aim of this study is to examine the grief and grief ritual experiences of individuals who lost one or more of their loved ones due to the earthquake that occurred in Turkey on 6 February 2023. The study adopted a phenomenological research design. The sample consisted of ten (seven women, three men) adults aged from 20 to 51 who experienced the earthquake in Kahramanmaraş province, the epicenter of the earthquake. Data were collected with a semi-structured interview form and analyzed by using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Participants were asked: "How do you define loss?", "What rituals did you perform for your loss?"

In this study, the grief experiences and grief rituals of adult individuals who experienced loss were examined. The results revealed that, grief rituals have an important role in accepting and adjusting to the loss. Performed rituals facilitated individuals' acceptance of death and were found to be effective as a coping mechanism in the grief process. Individual rituals performed by individuals for their special relationships with the people they lost were found to have a supportive role in continuing the bonds of the bereaved individuals with the deceased. Rituals that are

not performed after the loss may cause difficulty in accepting the deceased of a beloved one. The obtained research findings were discussed in light of the literature in the context of the Meaning Making Theory and the Continuing Bonds Theory.

Keywords: *grief, grief rituals, earthquake-related disaster, meaning-making in grief, continuing bonds with the deceased*



ÖZ

TÜRK YETİŞKİNLERİN DEPREM SONRASI YAS VE YAS RİTÜELLERİ

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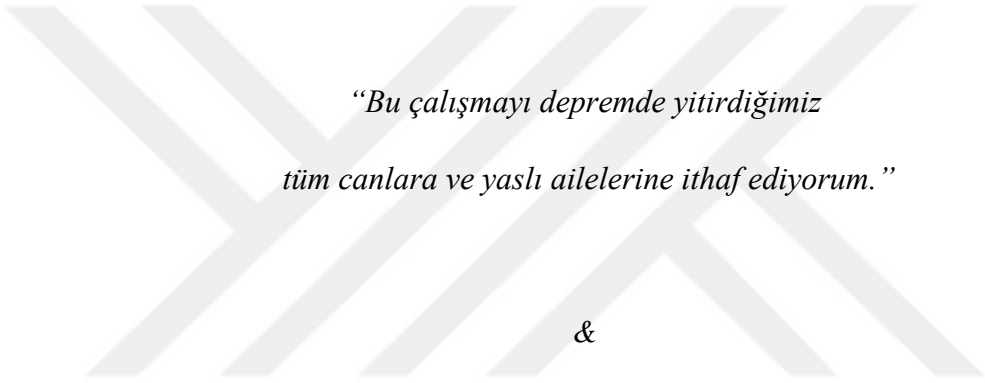
Bu çalışmanın amacı 6 Şubat 2023 tarihinde Türkiye'de gerçekleşen deprem yüzünden yakınlarını kaybeden bireylerin yas tutma ve yas tutma ritüellerine ilişkin deneyimlerini incelemektir. Araştırma depremin merkez üssü olan Kahramanmaraş ilinde depremi deneyimlemiş 10 yetişkin ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcıların yaş aralığı 20-51 arasında değişmektedir. Nitel bir çalışma olarak gerçekleştirilen araştırmada yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılara “Kaybı nasıl tanımlıyorsunuz?”, “Kaybınıza yönelik hangi ritüelleri gerçekleştirdiniz?” gibi sorular sorulmuştur.

Bu araştırmada kayıp yaşayan yetişkin bireylerin yas deneyimleri ve yas ritüelleri incelenmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre yas ritüelleri, kaybın kabul edilmesinde ve deneyimlenmesinde önemli bir role sahiptir. Yapılan ritüellerin bireylerin ölümü kabul etmelerini kolaylaştırdığı ve yas sürecinde bir başa çıkma mekanizması olarak etkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Bireylerin, kaybettikleri kişilerle olan özel ilişkileri için gerçekleştirdiği bireysel ritüellerin, yaşlı bireylerin ölen kişiyle bağlarını sürdürmesinde destekleyici bir rol oynadığı görülmüştür. Yapılmayan ritüeller, kişinin ölen kişiyi kabul etmede zorluk yaşamasına neden olabilir. Elde edilen araştırma

bulguları Anlamın Yeniden Yapılandırılması ve Sürdürülen Bağlar Teorileri bağlamında literatürdeki bulgular ışığında tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *yas, yas ritüelleri, deprem kaynaklı afet, yas sürecinde yeniden anlamlandırma, vefat eden kişiyle devam eden bağlar*





*“Bu çalışmayı depremde yitirdiđimiz
tüm canlara ve yaslı ailelerine ithaf ediyorum.”*

&

*“I dedicate this work to all the souls we lost
in the earthquake and their grieving families.”*

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[TR for my parents] Son olarak kıymetli ve eşsiz anne ve babam... Bana hep inandığınız, attığım her adıma sorgusuz güvendiğiniz ve beni sonsuz sevginizle sarıp sarmaladığınız için minnetarım. Sizin sevgiyle iç içe olan desteğiniz olmasaydı bu başarıyı elde edemezdim. İyi ki sizin kızınız olmuşum. Sizi çok seviyorum ve tüm emekleriniz için teşekkür ediyorum.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the background of the study and the purpose of the study were presented. Afterwards the definition of the terms of the study were explained. Lastly, the significance of the study is presented.

1.1. Background of the study

Disasters disrupt the daily routine of individuals or societies. Floods, earthquakes, and landslides are examples of natural events that may turn into disasters when they endanger the health of individuals, cause loss of life and property, or damage all kinds of functioning of a community. Disasters that result in multiple losses, including loss of life, underscore the importance of studies in the field of loss and grief. Earthquakes are examples of these events where multiple losses occur. In earthquake-related disasters, individuals lose both their loved ones and their homes. For instance, Japan is a country that has been struggling with earthquakes for centuries, and they have established systems that prevent earthquakes from turning into disasters. However, all systems were inadequate in the 9.0 magnitude earthquake in 2011. As a result of this earthquake, 400,000 houses were destroyed and more than 20,000 people lost their lives (Rathnayake & Clarke, 2021).

Türkiye is one of the most seismically active regions in the World due to its location of tectonic plates. Over the years, Türkiye has developed various strategies and measures to handle earthquakes, focusing on preparedness, response, and recovery because some are turned into a disaster. Notable historical earthquakes include the 1999 İzmit earthquake, which has a magnitude of 7.6 and resulted in significant loss of life and property (Erdik, 2000). Türkiye's approach to handling earthquakes involves a combination of stringent building codes (Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute, 2018), urban planning (JICA,

2013), public education, advanced emergency response, and comprehensive recovery programs (AFAD, 2020; AFAD, 2015; UNDP, 2015, World Bank, 2004). Additionally, the use of technology in disaster response has also improved. The adoption of early warning systems, seismic monitoring networks, and assessing damage has enhanced the efficiency of emergency response operations (Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute, 2018).

On the other hand, despite of all preventions and handling methods the earthquake may cause the disaster. February 6th, 2023, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake occurred in Kahramanmaraş province of Türkiye. The earthquake affected 11 provinces in different ways. According to Disaster and Emergency Aid Management Directorate of Türkiye (2024), 14 million people were affected, and more than fifty thousand died in the earthquake. The February 6 earthquake, which is the subject of the current study, turned into a disaster due to both the magnitude of the earthquake and the area it affected. Individuals lost their loved ones, homes, and their jobs in this earthquake. These multiple losses would lead to grief responses. Grief is the combination of behaviors and reactions individuals show after experiencing a loss. Grief is described as emotional reactions and feelings after loss (Corr & Coolican, 2010). Another concept is bereavement, which mean the loss of someone dear to the individual through death (Stroebe & Stroebe, 2009). The term 'mourning' refers to the loss itself, the state of pain, deprivation, and distance from a loved one (Humphrey & Zimpfer, 2008). In light of all these definitions, the following definition of Gross (2018) summarizes this concept: “The grieving process is a universal reaction that includes physical, cognitive, spiritual and emotional components” (see "Psychology of Grief", p.3). In the Turkish Language Dictionary (2023), grief is defined as “a pain that comes from a death or disaster.” Therefore, grief is used to explain the process after loss. If the loss is considered as the death of a loved one, it can be examined as a process in which the individual reconstructs the meaning of the their bonds with the deceased. The grief process is essentially a process of adjustment after loss. The grief, which human existence inevitably experiences, has been deemed worthy of study. The grief process in adulthood is essential in an individual's life. The adulthood as a

developmental stage is characterized by complex psychological, social, and functional dynamics that influence how individuals experience and cope with grief. The ability to process grief effectively during this stage is essential for maintaining emotional health, fulfilling social roles, and continuing personal development (Baltes & Baltes, 1990).

In the presented study, the loss process is examined as the death of a loved one of adults. Although death and grief are universal, grief also includes subjective elements (Neimeyer et al., 2014). For this reason, in the presented study, grief is examined by rituals performed after the loss of a loved one in an earthquake.

Numerous theories explain grief, and recently, the theories of Meaning Making (Neimeyer, 1999) and Continuing Bonds (Klass, 1996) have come to the forefront in terms of explaining grief rituals. The Meaning Making Theory (Neimeyer, 1999) emphasizes the importance of individuals finding new meaning in their lives after experiencing a loss. Furthermore, the Continuing Bonds Theory (Klass, 1996) highlights the importance of individuals understanding and continuing their bonds with the deceased. Accordingly, individuals adapt to the grieving process healthily not by severing their bond with the deceased, but by maintaining and continuing that bond. When this earthquake in Türkiye turned into a disaster, almost 20% of the population was affected. Therefore, Türkiye started a major mobilization. Due to the impact of the destruction and multiple losses, aid events were organized for Türkiye from all over the world. However, there were individuals who mourned the deaths of people. Possible to said that the emotional treatment of these individuals and the experiences they have experienced are essential in grief, attitude and crisis studies in future. Therefore, in this study, these experiences of the participants were investigated with qualitative method.

The type of loss has a role in affecting the grief reactions. Sudden events such as earthquakes and floods cause disasters and, therefore, loss of life. Epidemic diseases may be given as an example of a disaster situation in the context of loss and grief rituals. When examining the literature, there are studies on grief rituals under the influence of the pandemic that affected the whole world a few years ago (Bucuka, 2021; Masamah et al., 2023; Sami, 2021). However, there is one grief

study regarding the great earthquake in Türkiye in 1999 (e.g., Kula, 2002). In this research, the effect of religious belief as a method of coping with loss was examined (Kula, 2002). Therefore, to our knowledge, no study on grief rituals regarding the earthquake in Türkiye in 2023 has yet been found in the literature review. In a study conducted (Doğanay, 2023), parallel to the research of Kula (2002), the effect of religious faith on the experience of earthquake and loss was examined. It is expected that this research will adapt to the literature in understand the role of rituals, especially in subjective grief experiences.

The grief process consist of ongoing routines reflected in emotions and behaviors. These routines, which have been formed over the years and include both individual, cultural and social dimensions, are defined by the concept of ritual. Ritual, as a dictionary definition, is a set of behaviors and fixed rules shown during a worship and/or ceremony (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024; TDK, 2024). Rituals may be performed in both behavioral and emotional dimensions. Rituals work as a coping mechanism for the loss of a loved one (Aksöz-Efe et al., 2018; Mitima-Verloop et al., 2019). The rituals performed are an opportunity to say "goodbye" to the deceased for the last time. With the fulfillment of rituals, individuals' acceptance of death is getting smoother. (Yang Hsu & Palitsky, 2023). In this context, it is possible to say that grief rituals are behaviors in which individuals show their love and devotion to those they have lost. Rituals also benefit the individual when they meet the needs of the bereaved. Daniel (2021) claimed that rituals relieve individuals, and individuals who experience loss are purified from guilt and negative energies towards loss by performing rituals. In the research conducted, it is seen that some of the social and cultural rituals may shaped by the concepts of spirituality and religion (Hekimoğlu et al., 2022; Kula, 2002; Şimşek-Arslan et al., 2021; Yang Hsu & Palitsky, 2023). The funeral ceremony, shrouding the dead, reading the 40th Mawlid, and reciting various surahs are examples of these rituals. On the other hand, unfulfilled grief rituals may increase grief reactions (Savaş, 2020). Individuals who cannot perform rituals might have difficulty adapting to social life after loss. Some rituals that individuals could not perform in the sociocultural dimension reveal the deprivation of social support (Bonsu & DeBerry-Spance, 2008; Sami, 2021). In earthquake-related disasters, the

performance of rituals may be interrupted. During the COVID-19 pandemic, another example of this situation, procedures such as funeral ceremonies and condolences were restricted and rituals could not be performed. Studies are reporting that this situation has adverse effects on individuals, and that grieving individuals experience intense pain reactions due to not being able to perform rituals (Bucuka, 2021; Masamah et al., 2023; Sami, 2021; Savaş, 2020). Therefore, rituals may have a function in regulating grief reactions after loss, for this reason, the rituals are essential to perform (Sas & Coman, 2016).

Rituals may be performed both culturally as well as individually. This may mean that each region, society, and individual may have different rituals. For example, in Kenya, one of the local African cultures, the funeral ceremony varies according to the gender, age, and occupation of the deceased, while in another region a goat is killed at the grave of the deceased and left in the forest (Aslanoğlu, 2023). In some of the American, Jamaican and Baptist societies, children and women may not be allowed to attend funeral ceremonies (Labor et al, 2006). Chinese people leave food and various gifts on the grave of the deceased person and sweep around the grave (Yang Hsu & Palitsky, 2023). In Turkish-Islamic (Turkish) culture, Mawlid is recited on certain days after the death of the person and food is served to the guests attending the funeral ceremony (Aksoz- Efe et al., 2018; Sami, 2021). Furthermore, studies on grief rituals indicate that rituals are a coping mechanism (Doğanay, 2023; Kula, 2002; Masamah et al., 2023), that the last duty is fulfilled for the deceased (Bonsu & DeBerry-Spence, 2008; Yang Hsu & Palitsky, 2023), and that they support sharing the pain (Hekimoğlu et al., 2022; Savaş, 2020) reported.

As a result, the literature review underscores the buffering effect of rituals in the grieving process, as well as the impact of earthquake-related disasters on grief, given the sudden deaths and multiple losses they include. Furthermore, the theories of Meaning Making (Neimeyer, 1999) and Continuing Bonds (Klass, 1996) underline how individuals interpret and experience their own grief, as well as emphasize the significance of rituals in maintaining a connection with the deceased throughout the mourning process. In light of these theoretical perspectives and literature review, the present study aims to examine the grief

ritual experienced by adults after the loss, specifically the February 6 earthquake, which is called the disaster of the century in Türkiye.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This research aims to explore the grief and grief ritual experiences of individuals bereaved by the Kahramanmaraş, Turkey (2023) earthquake-related disaster. This study aims to comprehensively understand the multifaceted aspects of these experiences and explore the role of rituals in the grieving process. The present study will specifically focus on the following research questions:

How do individuals bereaved by the earthquake-related disaster experience loss and grief?

How do individuals bereaved by the earthquake-related disaster engage with grief rituals?

How do individuals bereaved by an earthquake-related disaster perceive the role of grief ritual during grief?

1.3 Significance of Study

Losing a loved one is a significant event in individual lives; thus, in the field of counseling, this topic is studied extensively (e.g., Aksöz-Efe et al., 2018; Bildik, 2013; Bonsu & DeBerry- Spence, 2008; Daniel, 2021; Lee & Saleh, 2009). Also, losing someone may cause disruption of life balance in adulthood. Adulthood as a developmental stage is critical in understanding how individuals experience and cope with grief. During adulthood, individuals face various roles and responsibilities, such as career development, parenting, and maintaining relationships, which can significantly influence their grieving process (Erikson, 1950; Levinson et al., 1978). Grieving in adulthood can disrupt these developmental tasks, making it imperative for adults to process their grief effectively to maintain overall well-being (Lachman & James, 1997). The developmental stage may requires the professional counseling support.

On the other hand, there are limited studies in the context of disasters grief in adulthood. (e.g., Doğanay, 2023; Kula, 2002; Tüccar & Yavuz, 2023). To our

knowledge, no study that examined how individuals bereaved by the Kahramanmaraş, Turkey (2023) earthquake-related disaster experience loss and grief. Therefore, this research is unique in terms of offering a closer understanding of grief in which individuals experience a crucial change due to sudden death from an earthquake-related disaster.

Additionally, this study aims to explore the grief ritual experiences of individuals who adults bereaved by the Kahramanmaraş, Turkey (2023) earthquake-related disaster.. During adulthood, cognitive and emotional maturity allows individuals to engage in meaning-making processes related to loss (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). Adults can draw from a broader range of experiences and coping strategies, which can aid in navigating the grieving process. However, the responsibilities and social expectations placed on adults can also add pressure, making it challenging to find time and space to grieve (Erikson, 1950). The mentioned earthquake-related disaster has put individuals in a psychologically and materially challenging situation.

The suddenness of the disaster and its occurrence in a large area negatively affected 14 millions people (AFAD, 2024). Some of them lost their homes, some people their entire families, and some their limbs. As such, their lifestyles, daily routines and rituals of death and loss differ. The loss of a significant other can have profound implications on an adult's social and functional stability, requiring them to adapt to new roles and responsibilities. Additionally, adults often serve as sources of support for others, such as children or elderly parents, necessitating a balance between managing their grief and providing support (Lachman & James, 1997). For instance, funeral ceremonies that could not be held as usual due to the widespread destructive impact of the earthquake and mass casualties may be seen as an act of saying goodbye to the deceased as part of the grief process.

The burial of the dead was carried out by digging mass graves. The bodily integrity of some of the individuals recovered from the rubble was compromised, preventing the shrouding, prayers and funeral ceremonies that are normally performed in such cases. The grief process of individuals who suffered such a loss could not proceed in its "normal" course. As the earthquake-related disaster caused

social destruction and mass loss of life, the processes of loss and grief evolved into different situations from the usual situation. While the effects of the earthquake are still ongoing, to our knowledge, there are studies on how doing or not performing rituals reflects individuals (Aksöz-Efe, 2018; Daniel, 2021; Şimşek-Arslan & Buldukoğlu, 2021). The difference of the presented study is that the participants are adults (regardless of gender and age) and are a sample of the February 6 earthquake. Therefore, the presented study is significant because it offers a broad perspective on grief rituals after a magnificent loss.

Another highlight of the research is that examining cultural and individual rituals will provide information that will support the development of cultural sensitivity skills in psychological first aid and grief counseling during the disaster process. By explaining how rituals are used coping mechanisms, emotional expression, and the healing process, counselors may customize their interventions to address their clients' needs more effectively.

Additionally, the presented study may assist psychological counselors in acknowledging the importance of rituals on cultural sensitivity and the various methods individuals use to integrate grief rituals. In addition, grief counseling may make it easier to recognize the factors that have an active role in the grief process. Grief research equips counselors with a comprehensive understanding of the grief process, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Stroebe, et al., 2017). Through empirical evidence, counselors gain insights into effective coping mechanisms (Neimeyer, 2019) and the significant role of rituals in facilitating grief resolution (Klass et al., 1991).

Moreover, research underscores the importance of considering cultural and individual differences in grief experiences, and advocating for culturally sensitive and tailored approaches to counseling (Rosenblatt, 2000). Theoretical frameworks such as Meaning Making Theory and Continuing Bonds Theory provide counselors with guiding principles for intervention (Neimeyer & Sands, 2011), enabling them to offer informed and effective support to clients navigating the complexities of grief and loss.

Numerous studies have delved into grief rituals, particularly focusing on cultural practices like funerals and condolences (Bonsu & DeBerry-Spence, 2008; Bucuka, 2021; Masamah et al., 2023). However, this study uniquely explores cultural and individual rituals, highlighting the enduring bonds with lost loved ones. By integrating these dimensions, the research contributes to the burgeoning literature on grief studies, offering a comprehensive perspective. The findings are relevant for psychological counselors engaged in disaster and crisis interventions, providing valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of grief and the significance of cultural and individualized approaches.

1.4 Definition of the Terms

Loss: Loss is the deprivation of being away from habits or loved things/people for a specific reason (Humphrey & Zimpfer, 2008). Loss is conceptualized in this study as the death of a loved one.

Grief: Grief is defined as “the usual reaction to bereavement ... defined as a primarily emotional (affective) reaction to the loss of a loved one through death” (Stroebe et al., 2001, p. 6).

Ritual: Ritual, as a dictionary definition, is a set of behaviors and fixed rules shown during a worship and/or ceremony (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024; TDK, 2024).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a comprehensive exploration of the literature related to grief rituals following disasters was undertaken. Initially, the definitions of loss and grief, then grief reactions, grief and rituals headings were presented. Additionally, disaster grief in earthquakes was explained with studies. This is followed by a summary of research findings on grief, disaster grief, and grief rituals that may be related to the theoretical background of the study was explained to understand the reflections and role of grief rituals in the aftermath of disasters. Once and for all, the literature review is summarized.

2.1. What is Loss?

Individuals experience losses in different ways throughout their lives. Loss, as a concept, can be used literally and figuratively. For example, not having an item anymore expresses a concrete (literally) loss, while "loss" used for death expresses a metaphorical situation. The concept of death used for death reflects the physical absence of the deceased and a relational loss for the person experiencing the loss (Gross, 2018). In the fields of health and medicine, the death of a loved one is considered an irreversible loss (Wortman et al., 1989). Likewise, the loss of beloved one is an unavoidable event for humanity (Mitima-Overloop et al., 2019). Stroebe (2010) describes loss as one of life's most significant transitions that leaves individuals in a complex situation.

Losses experienced when natural events turn into disasters may lead to multiple losses. Multiple losses may cause distress due to the concurrent reduction in available social support networks. (Neimeyer & Holland, 2006). Furthermore, experiencing multiple losses increase the risk of posttraumatic stress disorder (Eisma et al., 2019) and socio-economic destruction (Yelboğa, 2023) in individuals.

Additionally, deaths due to disasters occur suddenly, and sudden deaths inhibit individuals from performing a "saying final goodbye" gesture to their loved ones. (Kristensen & Franco, 2011). Therefore, sudden and violent loss may increase the possibility of experiencing complicated grief as traumatic (Worden, 2001). In the disaster, the waiting time for the bodies to be found and confirmed in cases of casualties resulting from disasters is a challenging process dominated by despair for those who wait (Kristensen & Franco, 2011). For this reason, loss rituals may be postponed and grief tasks may become difficult to perform, and individuals may be at risk of developing posttraumatic stress disorder. (Worden, 2001).

In summary, the loss is the change in the sense of an ongoing order. These changes can cause deprivation. After a loss, individuals may experience intense and distressing situations. Individual differences affect the intensity of these situations and the experiences of individuals (Glatt, 2018). Loss was conceptualized in this study as the death of a loved one.

2.2. What is Grief?

Grief is defined as a painful experience that disempowers people (Parkes, 2011). Similarly, it is conveyed as a painful process that the individual experiencing loss goes through as a necessity (Humphrey & Zimpfer, 2008). Grief can be seen as a process that individuals may complete by performing certain tasks (Humphrey & Zimpfer, 2008). However, grief is a process that sometimes individuals can overcome with little support, and sometimes it causes psychiatric consequences (Parkes, 1997). Although grief is a process in which the routines of individuals are interrupted, it is the process of adapting to a new life and new routines after the irreversible loss experienced by the individual. However, collective accumulations, social and cultural elements have formed certain common grief reactions in disaster that cause grief (Erdur-Baker, 2020). Regional cultural elements, religious beliefs and rituals, family experiences and the consequences of the disaster can be effective in the formation of common grief reactions. The uniqueness of grief is that the individual's thoughts about death, longing for the person who lost, acceptance

of loss, resources to cope with difficult situations and the ways to continue bonds with the person who lost are unique. Although there are similar aspects of this process among individuals, the grief process is also unique due to the uniqueness of each individual. When considering the accumulative definition of grief in terms of "loss of a loved one through death" is frequently encountered in earthquake-related natural disasters in Türkiye (1999 Gölcük Earthquake, 2011 Van Earthquake, 2023 Kahramanmaraş Earthquake, etc.) Therefore, it is possible to say that individuals in Türkiye have a cumulative history of loss and grief, especially in earthquake-related disasters, as mentioned above. The way the grief process is expressed may be shaped by the "common past" (Rechtman, 2000) experienced by society, and individuals learn this through observation and experience. In addition, there are elements of the grief process that become subjective depending on the individual's own resources and relationship with the person who lost. Therefore, the grief process may be shaped by individual experiences and ideas as well as social accumulation and culture. An example of this situation may be shown in a study in which some grief behaviors do not match the needs of each person in the grief process (Aksoz- Efe et al., 2018). In addition, the way the loss is experienced also makes grief reactions different from each other (Hekimoğlu et al., 2022).

2.2.1 Types of Grief and Grief Reaction

Grief, is a response to loss, manifesting various forms and intensities. Normal grief encompasses a range of physical, emotional and behavioral phenomena such as pain, denial, anxiety, and sleep disturbances (Dyregrov & Dyregrov, 2008; Gross, 2018; Worden, 2009). Complicated grief, on the other hand, occurs when individuals experience "normal" grief responses but encounter complexities due to relational, circumstantial, historical, or social factors (REF). Factors such as the manner and intensity of the loss, multiple losses, or violent circumstances may increase the risk of complicate grief (Worden, 2018). Additionally, Currier et al. (2006) reported that violent losses play a role in complicating the grief process. Terms like "delayed", "pathological", or "prolonged" grief may describe this state, highlighting its multifaced nature

(Gross, 2018; Worden, 2018). It may not be possible to distinguish between these types of grief because different factors can shape them. For example, if complex grief is perceived as a cultural phenomenon, suicide, sudden deaths, and cultural backgrounds may affect the transformation of grief into complex grief (Gross, 2018). Besides, traumatic grief refers to a complex and often prolonged grief reaction that occurs in response to the sudden, unexpected, or violent death of a loved one or in situations where the grieving process is hindered by additional stressors such as witnessing the death or experiencing feelings of guilt or responsibility. It is characterized by intense emotional distress, intrusive thoughts or images related to the death, avoidance of reminders of the deceased, and difficulty in accepting the reality of the loss (Shear & Shair, 2005). Traumatic grief can have significant psychological and physiological consequences, including an increased risk of developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as physical health issues such as insomnia, fatigue, and somatic complaints (Prigerson & Maciejewski, 2008).

Various types of grief may cause different reactions. Typical grief reactions are described in the literature as sadness and emotional pain (Bonanno, 2009), yearning and longing (Rando, 1993), guilt and regret (Stroebe et al., 2007), anger and resentment (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005), social withdrawal (Stroebe & Schut, 1999), and physical symptoms such as fatigue, changes in appetite, and sleep disturbances (Stroebe et al., 2007). As a summary, Gross (2018) examined grief reactions under four headings. These topics are physical, cognitive, spiritual, and behavioral reactions. Grief reactions, as defined by Gross (2018), are presented in Table 2.1 as a summary.

Table 2.1.

Grief Reactions After Loss

Physical/ Somatic Reactions	Affective Reactions	Cognitive Reactions	Spiritual Reactions	Behavioral Reactions
muscle pain	anger	obsessive	search for	crying
headache	guilt	thoughts	meaning in life	social withdrawal
insomnia	sadness	inability to focus	belief changes	frequent cemetery
fatigue etc.	despair etc.	thoughtfulness	etc.	visits
		hallucinations		increased alcohol
		etc.		and tobacco use
				etc.

(Gross, 2018)

2.3 Grief and Role of Rituals

Funeral ceremonies, burial of the dead, and post-death rituals are some behavioral patterns influenced by culture. Culture has been defined as a way of doing things and a set of norms (Walter, 2010). Culture represents a heritage of beliefs, traditions, and habits of a group of people or society (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Therefore, culture is actually a broad factor that consists of different factors and includes the whole of social life. Culture determines how individuals make sense of death and how they experience grief (Schut & Stroebe, 2011). After the literature review, it was seen that two important concepts came to the fore under the title of culture. One of these concepts is religion and the other is rituals.

Following the loss of loved ones, individuals and societies frequently exhibit divergent religious beliefs, yet engage in cultural rituals associated with those beliefs. This phenomenon underscores the mutual influence of culture and religion, wherein both factors interact reciprocally (Kuehn, 2013). For example, in a study conducted in the United States with a group of different ethnicities and cultures (Asian, European, Caribbean, American), it was found that the participants came together with their family members in the cultural context, prayed after their loss, and talked to remember the lost person. Additionally, it has been stated that funeral ceremonies are also performed as

a way of showing respect to the deceased (Labor et al., 2006). Kula (2002) conducted a qualitative study with individuals who lost loved ones due to the earthquake in Türkiye in 1999. In this study, Kula (2002) stated that participants frequently used religious coping methods such as praying during and after the earthquake.

Another factor was considered as rituals. As stated before, rituals can be presented as a factor that can be shaped by culture. Therefore, in the literature review, the studies in which rituals are presented intertwined with culture. The most common grief ritual that has been the subject of research is the funeral ceremony. Explanatory information about grief and death rituals is conveyed in the following sections through studies on the subject.

Grief rituals support survivors to share their pain and accept the loss (Savaş, 2020). Rituals, as a metaphor, are a mechanism for the individual experiencing grief to get fresh air (Daniel, 2021). Religious rituals, on the other hand, encourage sharing the pain of grief socially and feeling peaceful by connecting with family members (Aksöz-Efe et al., 2018). Coping mechanisms have a role in crisis situations experienced by the individual. The rituals are useful for coping with loss (Mitima-Overloop et al., 2019). One of the benefit of ritual is social support that has been presented as an effective coping mechanism regarding death and grief. Bonsu and DeBerry-Spence (2008) found in their study that individuals who did not attend funeral ceremonies encountered negativities in their social relationships. Bucuka (2021) reported that individuals felt a sense of guilt due to condolence visits that could not be made during the pandemic period. Insufficient social support disrupted adaptation to social life (Bucuka, 2021). Neimeyer et al. (2014), emphasizing narratives, reported that individuals personally transform death and loss into narratives, but share this situation in the social context. Secondly, the perspective on death can also work as a coping mechanism. The existence of life after death and seeing death as an end may play a role in the grief process. In Islam, life after death is believed. Muslims, who believe that the dead person does not disappear but continues to live in another world (*afterlife*), perform religious rituals such as giving alms and praying, thinking that it will benefit the deceased. These

rituals can be shown as a coping mechanism that helps people get used to the loss (Sami, 2021).

Likewise, in the study conducted after the 1999 earthquake, one of the two largest earthquakes in Türkiye, and in the study conducted on the earthquake that took place on February 6, 2023, which is the subject of this research, it was observed that spirituality-based rituals such as praying positively affected the process of individuals coping with grief and had a role as meaningful coping tool (Doğanay, 2023; Kula, 2002).

Grief reactions after loss are affected by how the loss occurred (Hekimoğlu et al., 2022). Likewise, sudden and unexpected losses appear to be more intense than individuals' reactions to deaths that are considered "normal" (Şimşek-Arslan & Buldukoğlu, 2021). Sudden deaths in disaster situations may bring different effects along with death. For example, in disasters caused by earthquakes, individuals lost their homes, workplaces, and many material possessions while losing multiple lives. They encountered these multi-impact situations in unexpected ways.

The losses experienced during the pandemic period also occurred suddenly and unexpectedly. COVID-19 pandemic was also kind of a disaster. However, people have faced restriction rules due to the risk of the pandemic. As a result, in addition to losses, individuals were not able to realize the above-mentioned social support and funeral ceremonies due to restrictions. These situations, whose positive effects on individuals are mentioned above, could not be discovered during the pandemic process, and as a result, they prevented individuals from sharing their emotions during the grief process and caused their negative emotions to be experienced individually intensively (Bucuka, 2021). Similarly, in a study conducted during the pandemic period, it was reported that the funeral ceremony, which could not be held due to prohibitions, was seen as a source of shame for individuals who lost their relatives in the cultural context (Masamah et al., 2023).

In summary, the factors affecting grief are not separated with clear headings. In the literature, these factors are referred to together as things that affect and

are affected by each other. Although it is explained under three headings as mentioned above, the connection of each concept with the other is presented through research. While grief is affected by individuals' cultural heritage, belief systems and coping skills; It is also affected by factors that are beyond the individual's control, such as the cause of death and the manner of death.

2.4 Grief in Earthquake

Disasters cause extraordinary situations because they occur suddenly. An earthquake is a natural event that occurs suddenly and unexpectedly. The earthquake, which occurred at night on February 6, affected eleven cities, resulted in widespread destruction and thousands of people death, and turned into a disaster. The effects of such disasters and crises can negatively affect the grief process.

Studies have shown that disasters that involve multiple losses, such as getting out of the rubble in an earthquake or losing a family member, increase the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (Eisma et al., 2019; Yelboğa, 2023). Sudden deaths and multiple losses that occur after an earthquake cause things to remain unfinished. In sudden losses, survivors cannot say their "final farewell" to the deceased (Yelboğa, 2023). Sudden deaths differentiate natural grief reactions and can turn the loss into a traumatizing one (Currier et al., 2006).

A person who experiences a severe loss may also lose the things that give meaning to their life, so the relationship with the deceased and how the loss occurred are important risk factors during the grief process (Currier & Neimeyer, 2006; Neimeyer et al., 2006). Doğanay (2023) emphasizes that the consequences of disasters that may occur after natural events are transferred to all humanity as a shared legacy and that this legacy can cause a complex grief process. Therefore, it may be concluded that earthquake-related disasters may influence the grief process.

2.5 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Many researchers working on grief have developed different theories of grief (Bowlby, 1980; Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005; Klass, 1996; Neimeyer, 1999;

Stroebe & Schut, 1999; Worden, 2009). Grief theories explain the reason for the sociocultural behaviors shown after death, their impact on the individual, and the motivations for performing these behaviors (Gross, 2018). These theories have tried to collect the grief process that individuals go through in a meaningful framework. Some theories are shaped by stages, and some by phases (Kübler-Ross et al, 2005; Rando, 1993). Some theories define the process of coping with loss in a broader context (Neimeyer, 1999; Stroebe & Schut, 1999). In this section, grief theories developed to understand the grief process of individuals are explained. It should be noted that the Meaning Making Theory and the Continuing Bonds Theory are determined as the potential theoretical framework of this research. In addition, different theories developed from the past to the to present are also included to explain more clearly why the selected theories were chosen.

2.5.1 Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory was developed by John Bowlby in the 1960s. The theory attempted to conceptualize the link between separation and fear by examining the bond between mothers and their babies (Mallon, 2008). Worden (2009) presented the theory as a method of making sense of the emotional bond between individuals through the concept of loss. Bowlby (1980) described loss as the most painful experience in human life. Loss or separation is thought to activate the behavioral attachment system (Zech & Arnold, 2011). In fact, the person who experiences loss or separation is exposed to stress factors. In this case, grief reactions such as anxiety and sadness may be observed after the loss (Mallon, 2008). As a result, attachment theory emphasizes emotional separation between individuals and defines loss as intense pain (Bowlby, 1980).

2.5.2 Five-Stages Theory

The most well-known theory on the grief process can be shown as Kübler-Ross's Five-Stage Grief Theory (Kübler-Ross, 2014). Kübler-Ross defined the grief process with a 5-stage model including denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. This five-stage model was developed based on the experiences of individuals with terminal illnesses such cancer shaped based on

their experiences. Kübler-Ross's aim was to understand how terminally ill and aware patients prepare for the dying process. The first stage of the Five Stages of Grief Theory is "denial and isolation". This is the period when there is no acceptance of the illness, and individuals do not accept the loss. In this period, the individual completely denies the situation they face and does not accept that the situation they are experiencing is real by saying "No, it is not me. This cannot be real". This is a process in which the individual directly confronts the illness (Kübler-Ross, 2014). In this case, the time the individual spends denying the situation can actually be seen as a defense mechanism. Here, along with confrontation, denial and isolation serve as a buffer in the transition to acceptance (Gross, 2018). After the denial process, the "anger" stage emerges. The individual thinks that the situation is unfair and questions "Why did this happen to me?". The anger caused by this thought can be reflected on anyone around the individual as well as on the individual themselves. However, the reflection of this anger is not intended to blame someone. This may make it difficult for those around the patient/loss survivor to cope with the situation (Gross, 2018; Kübler-Ross, 2014). The third stage is the "bargaining" stage. In this stage, the terminally ill individual bargains with God or the doctor to postpone or prevent death. This process may benefit the individual for a short time (Kübler-Ross, 2014). In the bargaining stage, individuals set a behavior they want to do for the last time, a special moment they want to attend as a "deadline" and wish they had lived until this time. The depression stage, in which the individual's helplessness increases, is the process in which the individual confronts the reality of death and experiences awareness. At this stage, the individual is now tired and weakened by the disease, and as a result, they are no longer able to deny the disease and tends to show depressive behaviors. At this stage, the patient prepares themselves for the end of the world, that is, for death (Kübler-Ross, 2014). The last stage is the acceptance stage. The individual is not angry or angry about their fate. In the process of acceptance, the individual is open to transfer their feelings and thoughts calmly. They feel a sense of jealousy towards healthy people, survivors, and people who have not had their experience (Kübler-Ross, 2014). Kübler-Ross

developed this model as a result of her work with terminally ill individuals. Therefore, this model is shaped around the preparation process of individuals who experience physical, spiritual, emotional, and social loss for their own death.

2.5.3 Dual Process Model

The Dual Process Model offers mutual interaction. According to this model, the grief process is experienced through the interaction between loss-oriented factors, that is, the internal grief process, and the external grief process focused on reconstruction (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). The Dual Process Model was developed by Stroebe and his colleagues, in the light of Continuing Bonds Theory, as a coping process. In this model, coping with the loss of a spouse is in the first place, and it has started to be used to understand the process that a person experiences upon the loss of anyone with whom he/she has a bond, provided that it is not systematic (Gross, 2018; Stroebe & Schut, 1999). The Dual Process Model explains the process of coping with loss and post-loss adaptation with loss-focused stressors and recovery/restoration-focused stressors approaches. Accordingly, the individual sometimes confronts the tasks of the grief process, but sometimes avoids these tasks (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). Approaching the grief process in this way provides an opportunity to better understand individual differences in this process (Gross, 2018). Stroebe (2013) states that grief is not only a process of sequential tasks, but that grief is an active process. In the loss-focused approach, the person experiencing loss evaluates this experience from his/her own perspective. At this stage, feelings and thoughts about the loss are in the foreground, the individual thinks about the memories of the people they lost, examines photographs and longing for the loss is in the foreground (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). At first, the pain of loss is felt intensely, but as time passes, positive thoughts about the loss affect the healing process upward (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). In the recovery-oriented approach, the individual tries to cope with secondary stressors. For the bereaved individual, nothing is the same anymore (Özmen, 2020) and the individual tries to adapt to the changes that take place in a world without the person they lost. The individual re-enters the flow of life, takes on new roles

and establishes new relationships (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). The functioning of this model is based on stress and coping factors. Changes in coping with or avoiding stressors are dynamic and variable, a process described as an oscillation (Gross, 2018; Stroebe & Schut, 1999).

2.5.4 Four Tasks of Mourning

Worden (2009) underlines that individuals who experience loss should redefine themselves to cope with this situation, make self-investment and establish a connection with a new world without the deceased loved one. Within the framework of this idea, he developed the "Four Grief Tasks" model. Although this model consists of different tasks, it is not a stage model. One of the challenging points of stage approaches is that individuals continue the grief process in a series in a gradual manner (Worden, 2009). This model, which is presented in the form of tasks, suggests that individuals take action (Worden, 2009).

Task 1: Acceptance

This task is to accept that death has occurred and is irreversible. This acceptance is expected to be both emotional and cognitive. However, if the acceptance is reluctant or unrealistic, it damages the adaptation process (Worden, 2018).

Task 2: Experiencing Pain

In this task, the individual fully experiences the pain of loss. This experience involves the process of perceiving and processing pain. Worden (2018) states that the effect of pain on the individual may increase or decrease from time to time, but pain will inevitably be experienced. Because suppressing pain can also negatively affect the coping mechanism (Yousuf-Abramson, 2020).

Task 3: To adapt to the world without the deceased person

After facing the reality of the loss and completing the pain processing part, the process of adaptation to the new world begins. The person experiencing loss reorganizes their relationship and roles with the person who has left their life

(Gross, 2018; Worden, 2018). The loss is redefined and the process of re-signification begins in life to adapt to the new world. It is expected that harmony related to spiritual, internal, and external factors will be achieved, and meaning will be added to the new world without the lost person (Worden, 2018).

Task 4: Connecting with the deceased

In this task, the person establishes a new connection with both the person they lost and themselves. They withdraw their feelings towards the deceased (Worden, 2018) and use their intense energy to rebuild their own identity (Gross, 2018). The main purpose of this task is to reconstruct the individual's relationship with the deceased and to strengthen themselves. So that the connection with the deceased is not completely severed but reorganized healthily way and the individual can continue their life in the new world (Gross, 2018).

2.5.5 Continuing Bonds

The grieving process and the rituals performed in this process are closely related to the continuation of the bond with the deceased person. Rituals firstly support the acceptance of separation and loss (Garcia, 2007) and rationalize the individual to establish a new bond. Continuing bonds can be defined as the continuation of the relationship between the individual and the lost person in a different dimension (Klass, 2001). The theory of continuing bonds was first developed through observation of grieving individuals by Klass and his colleagues in 1991 (Ziółkowska, 2015). As a result of the observations made, Klass et al. (1996) concluded that grieving individuals, in addition to understanding the death, did not break their bonds with the person they lost. Continuing Bond Theory, which was developed as an alternative grief model, was developed systematically (Ziółkowska, 2015). The theory emphasizes that there is no need to end bonds with the deceased to complete the grief process (Klass et al., 1996). Thus, the Continuing Bonds Theory was integrated as a coping strategy and became the source of the proposal of the Dual Process Model as a result of the work of Stroebe and Schut (1991). Continuing bonds

from a new transformed bond between the individual and the loss. Individuals continue these bonds through rituals. For example, someone who wants to establish physical closeness frequently visits cemeteries (Klass, 2006). Activities such as visiting the cemetery, offering food, praying and making donations are some of the rituals performed to continue the bond (Şimşek-Arslan & Buldukoğlu, 2021; Yang Hsu & Palitsky, 2023). Research emphasizes that the continued bonds with the deceased play a role in coping with and accepting the loss (Field et al., 2014; Root & Juola Exline, 2014; Yang Hsu & Palitsky, 2023).

2.5.6 Meaning Making Theory

Grief after loss is a universal process, but an individual's experience is personal and unique (Neimeyer et al., 2014). Neimeyer (2001) emphasizes that the grief process is unique in his Meaning Making Theory. In this model, how the individual makes sense of their experiences forms the basis of the theory. Since the meaning of grief is unique for the individual, the narrative of the grief process plays an important role in the process of meaning reconstruction (Neimeyer et al., 2014). The two main components of the theory are making sense of the loss and finding a benefit from the loss experience. Neimeyer (2011) summarizes the process of meaning reconstruction as focusing on the individual's self-narratives that shape their emotional, cognitive and behavioral structures. The word narrative, as a term, refers to an individual's expression of specific experiences as short stories (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). The individual may find themselves in a process of questioning after a loss. In this process of questioning, the individual constantly asks themselves questions such as "Why did this happen to me?", "Why did God let him/her die?", "Who am I really"? In the theory of the reconstruction of meaning, Neimeyer (2011) mentions how we perceive these questions and our behaviors in coping with loss and how we will find solutions to shape who the person will be after the grief process is completed.

According to Neimeyer (2001), making sense of life after experiencing loss is complicated. Additionally, a violent loss (disaster, accident, suicide, etc.) may

destroy the fundamental facts that give meaning to a person's life (Currier & Neimeyer, 2006). Despite this, it is inevitable for life to gain meaning-making. Meaning-making of life is a part of the individual's adaptation process during grief (Holland et al., 2006). In a study, it was reported that sense-making, which is one of the important factors of meaning making theory, is a predictor of the adaptation process of individuals, and since sense-making and benefit-finding interact with each other, participants derive high meaning from the loss (Holland et al., 2006). Neimeyer and Anderson (2002) presented three constructs related to the reconstruction of meaning making. The first is *sense-making*. This is the most urgent need to understand and adjust to loss. Making sense of loss may vary depending on the maturation process. The second step is *benefit-finding* in the aftermath of loss. Benefit-finding after death may not happen immediately, but over time, as sensitive issues are recognized, the process of finding benefit may take place. The last structure is the *identity-reconstruction*. The individual has gotten used to the loss over time. However, in this case, the individual can take on new roles in the changing world after the loss. These roles are realized over time as the individual discovers own resources.

In summary for the background of the study, many theories of grief have been developed from past to present as mentioned above. Although all theories are crucial and contribute to understanding the grief process, stage theories are criticized by experts today due to the fact that grief is unique to the individual. The grief process is a process that is shaped according to the situation of the individual's family, culture and social environment (Aksöz- Efe, 2020; Cimete & Kuguoğlu, 2006) and may sometimes be considered as a natural flow of daily life (Worden, 2009). This process is influenced by personal protective, risk factors, and coping resources. Therefore, each individual makes his/her process unique and does not live according to sequential stages as stated in stage theories. The grieving process is unique and original. Although the stage theories mentioned above have common points with the behaviors and attitudes of the grieving process in a scientific sense, these stages may not be the same

for everyone. In addition, people may not experience each stage of grief serially (Worden, 2009). This has led to criticism of stage theories.

In this study, individuals who experienced loss after the earthquake-related disaster, called the disaster of the century in Türkiye, were studied. Although these individuals experienced the earthquake in the same city in Kahramanmaraş and experienced similar losses, it is assumed that their feelings, thoughts and behaviors regarding the grief process may differ from each other. Therefore, in this study, instead of stage theories, Neimeyer's (1999) Reconstruction of Meaning Making and Klass et al.,'s (1991) Continuing Bonds Theories are evaluated as the potential theoretical framework to explore the grief and grief ritual experiences of individuals bereaved by the Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye (2023) earthquake-related disaster. These two theories give importance to individual experiences, find personal narratives valuable, and build the grief process on making sense and continuing the relationship with deceased. This theory is also not a theory with a series of stages; on the contrary, it emphasizes the individual's experience of grief.

2.6 Research on Grief and Earthquake Disaster

In the following, information is given about national and international studies on grief in different fields of study. The studies are divided into various headings, such as the loss process, grief rituals, and prevention of rituals during COVID-19. It was deemed necessary that research on the COVID-19 process emphasized rituals that could not be performed. Research on earthquakes and disasters is mainly related to the magnitude and impact of the earthquake. However, grief rituals in disasters caused by earthquakes were conveyed specifically in Türkiye. By presenting information about the studies carried out, common themes that are important for this research are given followings.

Kula's (2002) research is noteworthy for the present study. This research is related to the August 17 Marmara and November 12 Düzce earthquakes in Türkiye in 1999. The research is about the “religious coping methods” of individuals who lost their loved ones in these earthquakes. Kula (2002) defined six themes about the coping behaviors as religious coping, escape/jumping,

immobilization, self-protection by looking for a safe place with religious coping, religious coping and family support, and fear/shuddering/panic. In addition, in the context of the results, prayer behavior ranked first in cognitively and significantly positive religious coping behaviors (Kula, 2002). Previously said that there were disasters caused by earthquakes in Türkiye. This research was conducted after an earthquake-related disaster. Therefore, this qualitative research, conducted on a similar topic in the literature, has a guiding feature. It is also noteworthy that the research was conducted with 200 earthquake survivors. Religious coping behaviors, among the themes found in this research, match some of the rituals shared by individuals in the presented research. Kula (2002), on the other hand, indicated that "prayer" was the most effective coping method.

A recent study regarding the earthquake in Türkiye on February 6, 2023, reports the studies on grief counseling specifically for the earthquake (Yelboğa, 2023). The numeral information provided by the research about the earthquake is crucial to understand the severity of the earthquake. According to research, getting out of the rubble or being injured in an earthquake, losing a loved one, or experiencing multiple losses may increase post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, sudden and unexpected deaths prevent individuals from saying their "final farewell" to the deceased. An earthquake is a sudden event due to its nature. Individuals or societies who lose loved ones in an earthquake-related disaster also have traumatic experiences (Yelboğa, 2023). Lastly, this research emphasized that the rituals performed had a relieving effect on grieving individuals (Yelboğa, 2023).

Another research study on the earthquake that occurred on February 6, 2023, examines the role of religious factors in the grief processes of earthquake survivors (Doğanay, 2023). Doğanay (2023) conducted interviews with earthquake survivors in the Niğde province of Turkey and examined the role their religious beliefs played in coping with loss and grief. The research results reported that religion positively affects on the grief process. Disasters that occur as a result of natural events leave a legacy to society with the losses and

destruction they cause, and this legacy is evaluated as a method of coping with the grief process by creating social support for individuals (Doğanay, 2023).

2.7 Research on Grief and Rituals

Aksöz-Efe et al. (2018) conducted a study to understand the grief process with female participants of a specific age range from 25 to 59, and living in Turkey. In this study, eight women who lost a loved one in the last five years were interviewed. The main topic of the research is to understand the religious beliefs of grieving Turkish women and the rituals they performed in relation to death. This study may be evaluated as the research with the closest similarity to the research conducted in the current study. In the questions asked within the scope of the research, it was asked which rituals individuals perform during the grief process. Individuals shared that they performed actions such as reading Mawlid and Quran, and giving food for the deceased. Within the information shared, three main themes were formed. These themes were metaphors of loss, funeral rituals, rituals in relation to control and personal factors. As a result of the research, it was found that rituals are beneficial for individuals in the grief process to find social support and continue family ties. In addition, it was also stated in the results that a ritual that does not overlap with the current needs of the grieving individual does not benefit the individual. Individuals with low socioeconomic status reported feeling pressure to perform rituals, even if they were not good for them. If rituals are imposed, they do not benefit the bereaved individual (Aksöz-Efe et al., 2018).

A number of studies presented in this section belong to the COVID-19 period. Due to the prohibitions implemented during this period, rituals such as funerals and condolences could not be performed after the loss. The fact that similar rituals could not be performed after the earthquake was thought to be important in terms of showing the similar conditions between the presented study and the research conducted.

Şimşek- Arslan and Buldukoğlu (2021) conducted a study with individuals who lost their loved ones and relatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, grief rituals that could not be performed during pandemic restrictions

and individuals' grief reactions were examined. The study was conducted with 114 participants aged 18 years and the average age of the participants was 30.46 years. The research was conducted with the descriptive analysis method and the participants were administered the Grief Scale (Çelik, 2006) along with a personal information form. The participants consisted of individuals who lost a loved one and/or lost second-degree relatives. At least three months have passed since the loss of the participants. Some of the participants could not attend the funeral ceremony of the person they lost and some of them could not perform at least one grief ritual. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented mourning with loved ones during the grief process and interrupted the performance of grief rituals. Individuals also avoided physical actions such as hugging, especially in terms of sharing emotions (Şimşek-Arslan & Buldukoğlu, 2021). In addition, according to the answers of 72 of the 93 participants who responded to the open-ended questions asked to the participants about rituals, rituals such as the funeral ceremony, washing the dead, and serving funeral food, which is normally performed, could not be performed due to the pandemic (Şimşek- Arslan & Buldukoğlu, 2021). As a result of the research, it was found that the participants defined the grief process of the COVID-19 pandemic as a negative process in which there is a risk of contagion and a process in which they cannot share their feelings with their loved ones. In addition, with the sudden deaths, individuals showed more physical grief reactions than expected (Şimşek- Arslan & Buldukoğlu, 2021).

Similarly, Hekimoğlu et al. (2022) conducted a study on the religious and cultural rituals that individuals could not perform during COVID-19. This research was conducted with the assumption that the rituals performed by individuals after the loss have a positive effect. The research was planned as a qualitative study and four participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview form. The participants were individuals between the ages of 47-65 who had lost a loved one due to COVID-19. The research was conducted from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis considering that religious and cultural rituals benefit the process of making sense of the void in the loss experienced by the individual. This research seeks to understand the

experiences of the participants regarding the rituals that they could not perform due to the pandemic and the impact of these “rituals on individuals”. In the interviews, the participants were asked questions such as “What were the rituals you wanted to perform?” and “How did you feel not being able to perform these rituals?”. As a result of the data analysis, five themes were formed as “Negative emotions in the absence of rituals, references to rituals in terms of facilitating the grief process, methods of coping with loss, compensation for unfulfilled rituals, and despite prohibitions: being able to perform rituals” (Hekimoğlu et al., 2022).

As a result, it was found that the participants had difficulty in accepting the loss and experienced a sense of helplessness as a result of their inability to perform religious and cultural rituals. Researchers think that rituals are important in accepting the loss, sharing the pain, and helping the bereaved person go through a healthy grief.

In the parallel context, Sami (2021) investigated the grief process of individuals who lost their relatives due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The specific feature of this research was to examine the religious coping methods of individuals during the grief process. The research was planned as a qualitative study. The participant group consisted of individuals between the ages of 17-48 who had lost their relatives due to COVID-19, and at least 5 months had passed since the loss. Twelve of the participants were female and 16 were male. In the research, the participants were asked questions such as “Which coping elements do individuals who lost their relatives due to COVID-19 get support from more?” and “Do some religious and cultural rituals (funeral and burial procedures, condolences, reading Mawlid, etc.) that cannot be performed after the deceased after the loss have an effect on the grief process?” (Sami, 2021). The research data were subjected to analysis with the thematic analysis technique, and the codings made were determined as physical, behavioral, cognitive and emotional themes as 4 themes. The researcher stated the most coded sub-themes as “disbelief and denial”, “pain and sadness”, “shock and surprise” and “thinking that the deceased person is alive”. According to the results of the study, all of the participants stated that religious coping methods

had a positive effect on coping with the stress of loss (Sami, 2021). Participants also used this belief as a coping method because they believed that they would meet the person they lost in eternal life thanks to their belief in the afterlife (Sami, 2021). Similarly, with the belief that the pain suffered in this world will be rewarded by God in the hereafter, the participants stated that they were comforted by the belief that people who died due to the disease would be considered martyrs (going directly to heaven) (Sami, 2021). As a result, the researcher stated that the inability to accept death and denial of loss seen in individuals who lost their relatives due to the pandemic are intense. The reason for the predominance of these feelings is that the loss occurred suddenly, as well as as a result of the funeral ceremony and condolence visits that could not be realized due to pandemic restrictions. It can be said that negative emotions caused by not performing these behaviors that facilitate the acceptance of death can be said that individuals have a meaningful grief process by using religious and spiritual coping methods (Sami, 2021).

Bucuka (2021) conducted a qualitative study with sixteen bereaved people who lost a loved one due to the COVID-19 pandemic and could not fulfill the rituals related to death after the loss. This research has importance in order to understand the role of rituals performed after loss and coincides with the purpose of the presented study. In this research, it was investigated how individuals experience the phenomenon of death in the social context due to unfulfilled rituals (Bucuka, 2021). The participant group of the research consists of individuals residing in Bingöl province of Turkey, which can be shown as one of the limitations of the research. Participants describe that the deceased died a “bad death” without being able to meet anyone and say goodbye. Situations such as the inability to organize condolences, the fact that the funeral ceremony can be held with few people, people staying away from each other during the funeral ceremony in order not to get sick, the inability to read the Qur’an at the head of the deceased, and the fact that condolences are always conveyed by phone have further increased the pain experienced by the participants (Bucuka, 2021). In conclusion, crowded funeral ceremonies, condolences and sharing the pain collectively are rituals that constitute an

important part of the culture in the context of Türkiye. These rituals performed during the grief process are among the elements that enable individuals to experience their grief at the social level, receive social support in case of crisis and ensure the continuity of traditional accumulation. Failure to perform these rituals after death has deprived individuals of social support and made it difficult to make sense of grief (Bucuka, 2021).

Masamah et al. (2023) conducted a study with bereaved families and mortuary workers in Indonesia. This study is considerable because of it presents the role of rituals for grieving families through different rituals from a different country, a different cultural context. This research presents findings from different the main subject of the research was funeral rites and rituals that could not be performed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten family members and twelve mortuary workers participated in the study. For mortuary workers, participants were restricted to being over 18 years of age, having taken care of the funerals of people who died due to COVID-19, and working in West Timor. For bereaved families, participants were included in the study if they had lost a family member due to COVID-19, the loss had occurred within the last year, they were over 18 years of age, and they lived in West Timor. The research, which was planned as a qualitative study, was conducted with a semi-structured interview form. In the research, information about the experiences of bereaved families about not performing funeral rituals and the pandemic rules applied by morgue workers during the funeral were shared. Accordingly, in the cultural context, cultural and religious rituals performed after the dead have an important role. For example, in West Timor, the region where the research was conducted, the funeral is brought to the cultural houses, where a special dance show is performed along with a prayer for the deceased. The people of the region believe that through these rituals the soul of the deceased will be at peace (Masamah et al., 2023). So much so that it is considered a source of shame by the community if the family of the deceased does not fulfill the traditional funeral rituals (Masamah et al., 2023). Three themes were identified as a result of the research. These themes were defined as funeral procedures during the pandemic, unfulfilled religious and cultural rituals, and stigmas against

bereaved families. Accordingly, the research findings indicate that morgue workers carefully and strictly follow the rules set by the Indonesian Ministry of Health, and as a result, the funeral and related rituals of the bereaved people should or could not be carried out in a very short time. As a matter of fact, the inability to perform the rituals fully caused the bereaved to perceive that their duties to the deceased were not fully fulfilled and to define themselves as ungrateful (Masamah et al., 2023).

As a result, the rituals performed after the deceased person are emphasized as the process of saying goodbye to the deceased person in the best way possible as a "last duty".

2.8 Research on Grief and Cultural Rituals

It was mentioned that grief rituals are affected by cultural factors. In the literature review, studies on grief rituals from different cultures were found. These studies mostly include the burial of deceased people and some subsequent behaviors. Research in this context is presented in the following.

Yang Hsu et al. (2023) studied on a death ritual in China. This research focuses on the graveyard sweeping ritual. When Chinese people visit the graveyards of their deceased loved ones, they sweep around the gravestones and describe this as establishing a dialog with the deceased. After the tombstone and its surroundings are cleaned, food and drinks that the deceased loved are left around the grave. This ritual appears as a ritual of continuing bonds. In this study, 116 observations and 91 interviews were conducted, from which four ethnographic observations and two in-depth interviews were selected (Yang Hsu et al., 2023). Researchers have found that rituals performed after the deceased establish a new form of connection with the deceased, so leaving food at the grave, even if they do not eat together, allows for a different form of giving and receiving interaction and creates a new representation of the deceased (Yang Hsu et al., 2023).

As a cultural study, Bonsu et al. (2008) examined death rituals in the Asante region of Ghana. The main theme of the research is to understand how post-

mortem rituals affect the process of identity and community construction of individuals. The research defines the term "consuming death". This term refers to how living makes death meaningful. Thus, rituals related to death actually enable self-definition (Bonsu et al., 2008). Some of the rituals performed in the Asante region are a special dance performance with drum accompaniment at the funeral, an elderly person giving water to the deceased, which is believed to give the person great strength "on the other side", on the eighth day after the death of the person, the bereaved family attends a clan meeting and plans the rituals (Bonsu et al., 2008). This research was planned as an ethnographic study and finalized with 11 months of observations. The researchers made long observations and studied the grief rituals of individuals who had lost a loved one. Eighteen people were interviewed in total. Ten of the participants were women and ten were men. In conclusion, rituals strengthen individuals' social bonds and shape their beliefs in a social context, and these social investments support individual identity development (Bonsu et al., 2008). Rituals remove barriers and increase social unity by shaping sociocultural ties within a common framework (Bonsu et al., 2008).

Becker et al. (2022), conducted a study in Japan and investigated the psychosocial impact of funeral ceremonies on individuals. The researchers hypothesized that funeral ceremonies would help improve social relations. The researcher aimed to try to understand the positive and negative aspects of the psychosocial experiences of Japanese people during funerals. Data were collected using anonymized postal questionnaires and 288 grievors participated in the study. According to the survey results, the most repeated responses were related to funeral directors, rituals/ceremonies, participants, and pre-planning of the funeral. Participants emphasized the importance of pre-planning funerals to avoid regrets in the future. They expressed regret that they did not invite many people to their funerals. Participants expressed dissatisfaction with some unknown costs and mistakes in rituals. In addition, rituals. For the Japanese, rituals have a positive effect on maintaining a connection with the deceased. In conclusion, based on the most common responses, funerals and funeral directors have a positive impact on the grieving process for the Japanese

(Becker et al., 2002). In addition, funerals serve as a positive psychosocial support and rituals are an important healing behavior for Japanese to say goodbye to the deceased and to connect with their spirit (Becker et al., 2002).

2.9 Summary

In this chapter, the concepts of grief and loss are defined, and grief rituals are examined. Then, the factors affecting grief are explained. Theories developed regarding grief are presented. Continuing Bonds and Meaning Making Theory formed the potential theoretical framework for the presented research. Then, the way grief rituals are carried out in various cultures is explained through research. The studies in the literature have been limited to grief rituals and crisis/disaster situations, as they are considered to be related to the research topic.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In the third chapter of the study, the methodological design of the research was introduced. Initially, overall design of the study was presented. Then, characteristics of the participants, instruments that used in the research, and data collecting procedures was explained. Following this, the data analysis procedure, the limitations of study, and the researcher's reflexivity were presented.

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted as a qualitative phenomenological study. The phenomenological approach attempts to interpret the meaning, structure, and content of the lived experience of a phenomenon for an individual or a group of individuals (Patton, 2002). This qualitative study aims to explore the experiences of individuals bereaved by the Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye (2023) earthquake-related disaster, specifically regarding their perceived grief rituals.

Within the scope of the research, an online interview was held with the participants once. Informed consent and semi-structured interview form were used in the interviews. Two expert psychological counselors who work in the field of grief examined the first version of the interview questions. Following the experts' feedback, the number of questions was reduced, probing questions were added to some questions, and the questions were finalized with revision. In line with the scope of the study, ten people who experienced the Kahramanmaraş earthquake, experienced the earthquake and lost at least one loved one in the earthquake participated in the research. Before the research, a cognitive interview was conducted with one person to check the questions. No negative situations were encountered regarding the questions prepared during the interview, and no feedback was received from the participant that the questions were not clear. Therefore, no changes were made to the questions after the cognitive interview.

3.2 Sampling Method

Participants were selected based on purposeful sampling method and criterion-based case selection strategy. Purposeful sampling is a strategy extensively used in qualitative research for identifying and selecting information-rich situations to make the most use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). The snowball sampling was used to determine the sample. The snowball sampling facilitates access to vulnerable populations and increases the trustworthiness of research participants. Since the research was conducted with a sensitive group with disaster and loss experience, the snowball sampling was preferred. In terms of the analysis method and design characteristics used in qualitative research, the number of participants is ten

During the participants selection, the inclusion criteria were experiencing the Kahramanmaraş Earthquake on 6th of February, 2023 and loosing at least one loved in this erathquake. A total of ten people who met the incluison criteria were interviewed within the scope of the research.

3.2.1 Participants

The participant group consisted of ten adults who experienced the earthquake in Kahramanmaraş. Of the ten paticipants, seven were female and three were male. The age of the participants ranged between 20 and 51 years. Regarding their education level, seven had Bachelor's degree, three were high school graduates, Seven were full-time employees, whereas three were university students, Detailed descriptions of each participants were as follow and also demographic characteristics of the participants were also presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

	n	%
Gender		
Female	7	70%
Male	3	30%
Prefer not to say	0	
Degree of Education		
High school graduate	3	30%
Bachelor's degree	7	70%
Employment Status		
University Student	3	30%
Full-Time Employee	7	70%

Participant 1 (P1): P1 is 24 years old and a lawyer. She is from Kahramanmaraş and stayed in there after the earthquake. She lost her aunt, aunt's husband and aunt's children..

Participant 2 (P2): P2 is 45 years old and a housewife. She has high school graduate. She has three children. She is from Kahramanmaraş but leave the city after the earthquake and currently lives in Ankara. She lost her sister and sisters' family (including four members) in the earthquake.

Participants 3 (P3): P3 is university university student was rescued from the wreckage alive. He is 22 years old. He lived in Mersin for a while after the earthquake, and now lives in Kahramanmaraş for his university education. He lost his parents in the earthquake.

Participant 4 (P4): P4 is a 35-year-old woman who is a high school graduate. She lost her aunt, her husband's brother, and her nephews in the earthquake.

Participant 5 (P5): P5 is 8-year-old single mother. She and her only 3-year-old son stayed in the rubble for a week. Her son died of hunger under the rubble on the 3rd day following the earthquake. Participant 5 was pulled from the rubble

on the 7th day of the earthquake. The participant, who lost her best friend, sister and brother-in-law due to the earthquake, currently lives in Kahramanmaraş with her sister's two surviving children.

Participant 6 (P6): P6 is a 22-year-old male university student. The participant lost his best friend due to the earthquake. He is a university student and currently lives in Ankara.

Participant 7 (P7): P7 is a 38-year-old married woman and a classroom teacher. She lost her uncle, aunt, and cousins from her husband's family. She identified one of the people she lost as a close friend among her relatives.

Participant 8 (P8): P8 is a 22-year-old female university student. She left Kahramanaraş immediately after the earthquake, and currently lives in Ankara with her family. She lost her aunt, uncle and cousins in the earthquake.

Participant 9 (P9): P9 is a 20-year-old woman, who is a high school graduate and is preparing for the university exam in Ankara. She lost her aunt, uncle, and cousins in the earthquake.

Participant 10 (P10): P10 is a 51-year lawyer, currently resides in Kahramanmaraş. He lost his aunt and cousins in the earthquake, participated in search and rescue activities, especially after the earthquake.

3.3 Instruments

In this section, the instruments used throughout the research were presented. The Informed Consent Form to ensure voluntary participation was used. The Demographic Information Form containing information such as age and job was presented. The Interview Protocol, consisting of interview questions and prepared with expert opinions, was included in this section.

3.3.1 Informed Consent Form

The informed consent form (see Appendix B) was presented to the participants to provide detailed information about the research and to obtain their consent. The form includes the purpose of the study, expectations from the participant, information about the participant's rights, how the research will be carried out

and how long it takes, ethical approvals for which research permission is obtained, and warnings about the research process, how the obtained data will be stored, analyzed and used for scientific publications. This form was sent to the participants before the interview and the form signed by the participant was received again. During the interview, the information written in the form was verbally conveyed to the participant again, and the participant's verbal approval was also obtained. Participants were informed that the research was voluntary and they were allowed to withdraw from the research at any time if they feel uncomfortable.

3.3.2 Demographic Information Form

The demographic information form (see Appendix C) includes questions about their age, gender, education level, marital status, profession/job, contact information and the degree of closeness of the missing person(s).

3.3.3 Semi-structured Interview Protocol

The interview plays a substantial role in collecting data for qualitative research studies (Cresswell, 2007). The semi-structured interview form (see Appendix C) consisting of nine questions prepared by reviewing the literature and receiving expert opinions. The questions were prepared to understand individuals' "grief rituals". An explanation of ritual to the participants was also included in the interview protocol. During the preparation process of the protocol, firstly the questions were prepared by the researcher, and in the second stage, the questions were reviewed by the thesis advisor. Recommended changes were made in the initial revision, and then two different field experts' opinions were requested. According to their feedback, the number of questions was reduced, and probing questions were arranged. Following review and revisions, the final version of the interview protocol was created and included question such as "How do you define grieving?", "Which of your rituals could you not do due to the earthquake?" and "How do the rituals you could not perform affect you?" A cognitive interview was carried out with one person to see the functionality of the questions. The person on

whom the pilot application was conducted meets all participant criteria. There were no problems in the processing of the research questions.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Before starting to the data collection ethics approval from the TED University Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A) was obtained, eight months after the earthquake, in the fall semester of 2023. Afterward, the research announcement was shared as a written text via social media tools. Then, participants were included in the research using the snowball sampling. Phone and message conversations were conducted with potential participants in accordance with the inclusion criteria (direct experience of the earthquake, and loss of at least one loved one during the event on February 6, 2023). Individuals meeting the specified criteria were then identified. After these initial interactions, participants were encouraged to share the research announcement within their respective circles. Ten interviews were conducted online via the Zoom platform between November 2023 and February 2024.

In a detailed manner, during the interviews for the research, participants were first briefed on the identity of the researcher, the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, and confidentiality principles. Subsequently, after clarifying that participation was voluntary, participants were presented with an informed consent form and asked to provide their signature. Following this, the interview questions were explained in general terms, and participants were reminded of their ability to withdraw from the research if they felt distressed. The interview sessions began with inquiries aimed at gathering demographic information, followed by research-related questions. Before proceeding to the fifth question, the concept of 'ritual' was elucidated both according to dictionary definitions and everyday usage. Upon completion of the study, participants received an informational brochure detailing institutions where they could access free psychological counseling support if needed. The interviews took approximately 40 minutes and concluded with gratitude extended to the participants for their valuable contributions. The interviews were recorded as video and/or audio as permitted by the participants

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The content analysis method was used to analyze the data in this study. All audio recordings obtained from the interviews were transcribed. Afterward, the transcripts were re-read in detail. Coding of the written interviews was carried out with the MAXQDA. Common themes in the transcripts were identified. Sub-orders of common themes were created. The superorders and sub-orders were checked with the supervisor. The themes created were interpreted in association with the participants' answers. Interpretations of the findings were checked with the literature. Thus, the research results were created in coherent with the literature support. In order to reduce the researcher's bias and increase the reliability of the research, transcripts were sent to three participants and their approval was obtained. The code book created during the data analysis process was sent to an independent field expert and expert's opinion was sought. Thus, an attempt was made to reduce the researcher's possible bias.

3.6 Trustworthiness of the Data

Trustworthiness concepts used in qualitative research are provided differently than those used in quantitative research. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest four criteria to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. These criteria are credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). In this regard, overall the research was explained step by step to ensure dependability.

To ensure credibility in data saturation, individuals who experienced the February 6 earthquake in Kahramanmaraş province and lost at least one loved one were included in the study. Before the interviews, signed informed consent forms were obtained from the participants and their voluntary participation was confirmed both verbally and in writing. It was conveyed to individuals that the research questions may cause individuals to recall painful experiences. Participants were guaranteed to leave the study at any time if they encountered this situation. In addition, the confidentiality of any information to be shared was guaranteed to the participants. These steps were deemed essential to make the researcher feel that the information they would share was safe. In this way, the credibility of the research was ensured. The transcripts were forwarded to

an independent researcher for triangulation, who reviewed both the codes and transcripts, offering feedback. Subsequent adjustments were implemented in response to this feedback to enhance credibility. As a last step, the transcripts were sent to three participants, and the participants approved the written documents. It is not possible to make generalizations in qualitative research.

To ensure dependability making provide reliability of the data. In this research, audit trail and code-recode strategy, one of the methods recommended by Cresswell and Poth (2018), were used to ensure dependability. All interviews with participants were recorded audio or visually or both audio-visually, with the permission of the participants, and were stored throughout the research. In addition, some of the data were coded independently by the researcher and the supervisor, and then these codes were compared.

Therefore, it is considered necessary for the researcher to remain impartial regarding interpreting the findings. In this context, Guba and Lincoln (1981) proposed the concept of confirmability instead of objectivity. Confirmability is the researcher's ability to constantly verify data and results while transforming the data the researcher collects into a result (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). In this context, the steps taken to increase the confirmability of the research presented are explained. First, the interview questions prepared for the research were evaluated by two experts working in the field of loss and grief. After these evaluations, the researcher revised the questions and created the final version. The research questions were tested in a pilot study. During the pilot study, clear and understandable. The question asked by the researcher was understood and answered by the participant within the expected meaning. After the cognitive interview, it was concluded that the questions were clear and understandable and no changes were made. After each interview, transcripts were compared with those of the previous interview, and the comprehensibility of the interview questions was tested in this way. After all interviews, the transcripts were sent to three participants and their opinions were evaluated. At this stage, no feedback pointed out a contradiction was received from the participants. The transcriptions were confirmed by the participants. Afterwards, the given coding was done separately by the researcher and the

thesis advisor and then the codings were compared. In this comparison, it was seen that the coding titles were compatible with the main themes. The researcher and the thesis advisor reached a consensus in the coding comparison. And then, expert opinion was taken before the final version of the research results was given.

Transferability means the testability of the findings of the research about the generalizability of the research by repeating it in similar environments (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). Purposive sampling was used to increase the transferability of the presented research (Erlandson et al., 1993). In a qualitative study, the researcher takes an active role.

In summary, the following was provided to ensure reliability in this research. All steps of the research were explained in detail. Confirmation was provided from experts and the thesis advisor in the field of loss and grief, which is the main theme of the research. Interview transcripts were confirmed with participants.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Although this research is expected to contribute to the literature on loss and grief, it has certain limitations. Firstly, this study focused on Türkiye, specifically on the province of Kahramanmaraş, which was the earthquake's epicenter. While the earthquake affected 11 provinces, the scope of this research is limited to Kahramanmaraş. That's means, the information about grief and loss are indicated from people who are similar culture and traditions. By the way, this could be a limitation to make generalization on the other hand, it makes a special study about a specific region. Secondly, the majority of the participants, seven out of ten, are women. Thus, the limitation may be attributed to the unequal gender distribution among participants. Third, all interviews are conducted online, which can count as a limitation. It can be assumed that it would be difficult and uncomfortable for the participants to talk about their losses and share their feelings with someone they have never met. Fourthly, research was conducted with individuals with similar cultural habits using the snowball sampling method. The research can be repeated in different sample groups, for example on the basis of gender, at different developmental stages.

Lasly, in the study, the type of loss was restricted to the loss of loved person. However, other types of loss might be experienced after an earthquake, such as loss of pets, organs, finances, cultural heritage, ecology, and nostalgia. Further studies might focus on these types of losses. Another recommendation for further research is to replicate the study with more specialized groups such as, individuals who have experienced the loss of only a parent, only a child, or only a spouse.

3.8 Researcher's Reflexivity

In qualitative studies, the researcher plays an active role. Therefore, the researcher needs to avoid subjective judgments when interpreting the findings. Reflexivity involves the researcher examining and being aware of their subjective judgments, beliefs, and assumptions and maintaining an internal dialogue throughout the research process (Berger, 2015). The researcher maintains an internal dialogue with themselves throughout the entire research and constantly examines the research with their subjective thoughts, while also accepting the limitations of the research (Berger, 2015). Considering these definitions in terms of the presented research, the researcher experienced the February 6 earthquake in Hatay. Considering that this would increase the sensitivity of the researcher towards the participants, it was considered to be a positive rather than a limitation. Nevertheless, the researcher avoided emotional sharing about the earthquake experience throughout the research in order to avoid directing the research and not to influence the participants.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents results regarding the experiences of the participants who lost their relatives in the Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye earthquake disaster, especially regarding their participation in grief rituals. The results are presented under superorder and suborder (see Table 4.1). For each of these superorders and participant quotes are included to explain the integrity of the superorders and suborders.

Table 4.1

Superorders and Suborders

Superorders	Suborders
4.1. Loss	Deprivation Pain
4.2. Grief	Grief Reactions Grief Process
4.3 Individual Rituals	Continuing Bonds
4.4 Cultural Rituals	Funeral Ceremonies Traditional/ Spiritual Beliefs
4.5 Meaning Making	Reconstructed Priorities New Roles/ Responsibilities

4.1 Loss

When examining the concept of loss through various perspectives, most participants ($n=7$) described it as a sensation of emptiness and deprivation resulting from their experiences. Some of the participants ($n=3$) characterized loss as a source of pain and negative emotions, often using the term 'deprivation' to articulate their understanding. Additionally, all participants

($n=10$) reported encountering multiple losses, including the death of loved ones, and loss of housing, and material possessions.

4.1.1 Deprivation: “The Magnificent Extinction”

The majority of participants ($n=8$) described the loss they experienced as an emptiness, a deprivation. It is seen that the participants who used these expressions of emptiness and deprivation emphasized that they experienced multiple losses due to the earthquake. When participants talked about loss, it was not just the loss of a person who passed away, but also the loss of many family members, their homes, routines, and bonds. Participants shared their experiences with the following statements:

“Now, when you say loss, it is a much broader concept. But when we think as a person define it as losing one’s voice, smell, smile, and breath and being unable to get them again. You can’t reach when you want and miss...” P1

“Şimdi kayıp dediğiniz zaman çok daha böyle geniş bir kavram aslında. Ama insan olarak düşündüğümüzde artık onun sesini, kokusunu, gülüşünü, nefesini yitirmek tekrar elde edememek olarak tanımlıyorum. İsteddiğinizde ve özlediğinizde ulaşamayacağınız...” K1

“Loss... is a huge void right now, a huge lack. I don’t know, maybe it’s because it’s so close. The emptiness, the lack, feels irreplaceable.” P4

“Kaybı... şu anlık büyük bir boşluk, büyük bir eksiklik. Yakın derece olduğundan kaynaklı galiba bilemiyorum. Boşluk, eksiklik, yeri doldurulamayacakmış gibi geliyor.” K4

“So, I mean, we lost my child, my sister, my best friend, my brother-in-law, my nephew. If you go one step further, we lost all our apartment neighbors, doorman, and even the grocery store

“Yani işte hem evladımı hem ablamı hem en yakın arkadaşımı eniştemi, yeğenimi yani. Bir tık daha ileri gidersen tüm apartman komşularımızı, kapıcımızı alışveriş yaptığımız bakkala kadar hepsini kaybettik yani. Yani

where we shop. So for us, it was a truly magnificent extinction. " P5 *bizim için tamamen gerçekten muhteşem bir yok oluş oldu." K5*

"Someone who is always there for me and supports me, but he can never be there for me after a while." P6 *"Her zaman yanımda olup bana destek olan ama bir vakitten sonra asla yanımda olmayan yanında olamayan biri." K6*

"So you will no longer be able to see or communicate with the people I mentioned. The disappearance of people with whom you felt good or thought you could make friends is a huge loss, and you will never forget them." P7 *"Yani dediğim kişileri artık göremeyeceksin, onlarla iletişim kuramayacaksın. Ya şöyle gördüğün zaman kendini iyi hissettiğin ya da onunla arkadaşlık kurabilirim dediğin kişilerin yok olması gitmesi çok büyük bir kayıp ve hiç aklınızdan çıkmıyor." K7*

4.1.2 Pain

Three participants described the loss as a situation that negative emotions caused "pain.". The narratives used by participants when describing grief may be associated with their bonds to the deceased. As conveyed in the examples below, loss was defined for the participants as a situation that consisted of negative emotions and disrupted their intimate relationships with loved ones.

"I don't know, it's a completely different feeling; it's a great pain, especially for a sibling. I lived and grew up together, and we were together until she died. We were very sincere. Her loss is such a great pain." P2 *"Bilmiyorum, bambaşka bir duygu bu hele kardeşten olunca çok çok büyük bir acıymış. Beraber yaşadığım, büyüdüğüm ki ölene kadar da beraberdik. Çok samimiydik. Onun kaybı çok büyük bir acı yani." K2*

"How do I define the loss? It was excruciating for me because of the situation I had to get out of the rubble. In other words, I was stuck under the rubble. I got out later... So it was a heavy and painful loss for me." P3

"Kaybı nasıl tanımlıyorum? Benim için çok acıydı. Enkazdan da çıkmamın vermiş olduğu durumdan dolayı. Yani enkaz altında kaldım. Ben sonradan çıktım...Benim için ağır ve acı bir kaybım oldu yani." K3

"To define loss, for me, it consists entirely of negative emotions. It evokes grief all kinds of losses are difficult that is, losing a lover, a separation, and a death have the same value for me, so my losses have always been difficult, and I am not a person who never faces their losses. P9

"Kaybı tanımlamak gerekirse benim için tamamen negatif duygulardan oluşuyor. Bir yas çağrıştırıyor, kaybın her türlü zor, yani bir sevgiliyi kaybetmek, yani bir ayrılık yaşamakla bir ölüm de bende aynı değeri taşıdığı için kayıplarım her zaman zordu ve ben kayıplarıyla asla yüzleşen bir insan değilim." K9

In summary, participants frequently conceptualized loss in terms of pain and deprivation. This emphasis on deprivation and pain may be attributed to the unforeseen and abrupt nature of the event, which led to a series of losses. Moreover, the participants' interpersonal bonds with the deceased influenced these conceptualizations.

4.2 Grief in Those Experienced the Disaster of the Century

Participants highlighted different aspects related to their grief experiences. Examining of these varied viewpoints, two distinct sub-themes emerged under the overarching theme of grief. Subthemes were identified as grief reactions and grief process.

4.2.1 Grief Reactions

Most of the participants expressed the various grief reactions they experienced when defining grief. The fact that participants experience different grief

reactions after undergoing similar losses highlights the uniqueness of the grief process. The participants' answers regarding grief reactions are given based on emotional, cognitive and behavioral grief reactions.

Initially, among the participants' grief reactions, *feelings of yearning or separation distress* came to the fore. Participants described longing to see their loved ones again and feeling a deep sadness over their absence. For instance, P5 and P9 articulated as follows:

“Yes, there is no problem with the thing, so you accept he is dead. You know, we will experience this too. Of course, there is only trouble in missing it. I mean, this could be your friend or your sister. Just when you miss him, tears naturally fall from your eyes. Sometimes it stems from the love between them.” P5

“Evet aslında şeyde sıkıntı yok yani öldüğünü kabul ediyorsunuz. Hani bunu biz de yaşayacağız. Sadece özlemekte sıkıntı var tabii ki. Yani bu arkadaşınız da olabilir ablanız da yani. Sadece özleyince işte gözünüzden haliyle yaş dökülüyor. O da yani aradaki sevgiden bazen kaynaklı.” K5

“Life losing meaning, having no reason to wake up, and all this goes on. Loss of appetite, energy, feeling of remorse for emotions other than sadness.” P9

“Hayatın anlam kaybetmesi, uyanmak için bir sebebinin olmaması ve bunların devam etmesi. İştah, enerji düşmesi, üzüntü haricindeki duygulardan vicdan azabı hissetme.” K9

In terms of emotional grief reactions, those were determined by considering the answers shared by the participants about their feelings. The participant (P1), who lost her aunt, whom she described as her second mother, said, "I feel like I lost a half of myself." A participant (P3) who lost his parents expressed the feelings he experienced with the following words: "Sadness, pain, sorrow. Unhappiness. I get emotional when I think of the time spent with them. Pain, that is, heavy grief. It is a heavy feeling, and it is even heavier for someone who has emerged from the rubble of course." It was thought that the participant's recovery from the rubble made the grief more difficult.

Some participants showed emotional reactions related to the feeling of regret. It was noted that the participants shared expressions starting with "I wish". The participant P2, who lost her sister and did not go to see her the day before the earthquake, expressed her regretful experience with the following words:

"I wish I had seen, even if I was sick, I would have visited her, it was our last few days anyway. This makes me very sad. I wish I could have seen her." P2

"Keşke görseydim hasta olsam bile ziyaret etseydim son birkaç günümüzdü zaten. Bu beni çok üzüyor. Keşke görebilseydim diyorum.." K2

Regarding cognitive grief reactions, it was thought that the suddenness and unexpectedness of the earthquake changed the thought flow of individuals. In the participants' answers, the presence of behaviors such as obsessive thoughts, thinking about extinction, and clinging to past memories were observed. Participants also tried to adapt to the extinction.

"For example, I lost my sister. I lost my brother-in-law, my nephew, my best friend of 20 years. However, I also lost my child. So they all have their own place. Not having them all hurts in a different way. You want to share something, but you see that you don't have that friend. You dream of something like this when your child grows up and you realize you don't have that child. I have something to share, you see, you don't have a sister. In other words, it is annihilation, but you are patient because it is in the process where all this should happen." P5

"Mesela ben ablamı kaybettim. Eniştemi, yeğenimi, yani 20 yıllık en yakın arkadaşımı kaybettim. Bununla beraber de evladımı da kaybettim. Yani hepsinin yeri ayrı. Hepsinin olmaması farklı bir acı veriyor. Bir şeyi paylaşmak istiyorsun ama bakıyorsun o arkadaşın yok. Bir hayal kuruyorsun, hani evladın büyüdüğünde şöyle olur diyorsun, bakıyorsun o evladın yok. Paylaşacağım bir şey var bakıyorsun ablan yok. Yani yok oluş ama o tüm bunların olması gereken süreçte olduğu için de sabrediyorsun". K5

"Before the deceased died, we were very beautiful, we would go shopping, travel, run, do things together, go to coffee shops. I don't want any of this now. We call it the bazaar there in Maraş. You know, we had a market, it was a nice thing for us to go and visit the market. For us, it was freeing oneself from housework. It was a relief to clear your mind like that. It was nice to sit together, have a coffee, and go somewhere with my brother. We are 4 sisters. When we went somewhere, we would immediately

"Rahmetli ölmeden önce biz çok güzeldik, alışverişe giderdik, gezerdik, koşardık, beraber yapardık, kahvelere giderdik. Şimdi bunların hiçbirini istemiyorum. Biz orada Maraş'ta çarşı deriz. Hani çarşımız vardı, bizim için gidip gezmek çarşıya çıkmak güzel bir şeydi. Bizim için ev işinden kendini kurtarmaktı. Böyle bir kafanı dağıtmak rahatlamaktı. Beraber bir oturup bir kahve içmek, bir yere gitmek kardeşimle güzeldi yani. Biz 4 kız kardeşiz. Bir yere gittiğimizde hemen birbirimizi arayıp

call each other and meet there immediately. That's how we were, but now I don't feel like anything. P2

hemencecik orada buluşurduk. Öyleydik yani ama şimdi hiçbir şey canım istemiyor.” K2

Participant 5 said, "I have something to share, you see, you don't have a sister." and Participant 2's statement: "It was nice to sit together, have a coffee, and go somewhere with my sister." It is thought that the experience of loss changes the patterns that existed before the earthquake.

Behavioral grief reactions may include some behaviors that individuals perform differently than normal in their grief experiences. In the presented research, the clearest example of a behavioral reaction was the following words of Participant 2:

“I don't dye my white hair, I can't go shopping, I eat something but I don't know what I eat.” P2

“Beyaz saçlarımı boyamamak, alışveriş yapamıyorum, bir şeyler yiyorum ama ne yiyorum bilmiyorum.” K2

4.2.2 Grief Process

Some of the participants ($n=3$) considered grief as a process. Participants explained this process with acceptance, patience, and an infusion of emotions. One participant described grief as a process of ups and downs. During this process, participants also expressed their thoughts about remembering the deceased. For instance, P1 and P8 articulated as follows:

“I define grieving as a calm process after accepting the loss and after it becomes clear that I cannot take things back. Maybe it could be for mine. I think for me, grief was a process that I spent more calmly and accepting the facts, quietly and remembering my

“Yas tutmayı kaybı kabullendikten sonra artık hani bir şeyleri geri döndüremeyeceğim belli olduktan sonra buna ilişkin sakın bir süreç olarak tanımlıyorum. Belki de benimki için olabilir. Biraz daha sakın ve gerçekleri kabul ederek geçirdiğim bir süreç. Yas

relationships with them, my memories, the things we did, the things we shared. You know, I spent a little bit of my life trying to revive the memories we had with them by feeling their pain without forgetting them, thinking about what you did with them in the past, or buying something they loved, or going to that place, that's why I define grief as not forgetting those people and realizing the pain.” K1

benim için, sessiz sakin ve onlarla olan ilişkilerimi, anılarımı, yaptığımız şeyleri, paylaşımlarımızı hatırlayarak geçti sanırım. Hani onları unutmadan acılarını hissederek geçmişe dair yaptıklarınızı düşünerek ya da onların sevdiği herhangi bir şeyi alarak veya o mekana giderek onlarla yapmış olduğumuz anıları canlandırmaya çalışarak geçti biraz sanırım benimkisi o yüzden yas tutmayı o kişileri unutmamak ve acıyı fark etmek olarak tanımlıyorum.” K1

“Grieving.. I can think of it as the brewing of emotions. I mean, just now I was thinking about them all the time. For a while I was missing them all the time. Afterwards... I don't know if it was healthy or unhealthy, there was a process of forgetting for a while. So, I wouldn't say don't forget, but rather go back to your daily life. Then there are declines again. It's such a bumpy process for me. This, we'll probably get back to normal, which I think I'm still in, but like I said, with ups and downs.” P8

“Yas tutmak. Duyguların demlenmesi gibi düşünebilirim aslında. Yani böyle biraz önce sürekli onları düşünüyordum. Bir süre sürekli onları özliyordum. Daha sonra... sağlıklı mı sağlıksız mı bilmiyorum bir süre unutma gibi bir süreç olmuştu. Yani unutma değil de günlük hayatıma dönme diyeyim. Sonra tekrar bir düşüşler falan oluyor. Böyle inişli çıkışlı bir süreç aslında benim için. Yani muhtemelen hâlâ içinde olduğumu düşündüğüm ama dediğim gibi iniş çıkışla sonra normale döneceğiz.” K8

One participant (P3) stated that he experienced *sleep disturbance* during the grief process. The participant said: “My grieving process was a little heavy at first. It was slow. After that, there were times when I couldn't sleep.”

“My grieving process was a little heavy at first. It was slow. After that, there were times when I couldn't sleep. After the earthquake, I was diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder.” P3

“Yas tutma sürecim ilk zamanlar ağırdı biraz. Ağır geçti. Ondan sonra uyuyamadığım zamanlar oldu. Depremden sonra obsesif kompulsif bozukluk tanısı konuldu.” K3

4.3 Individual Ritual: “A Type of the Love Language”

Individual rituals are rituals that bereaved individuals perform subjectively. Individual rituals are performed specifically and uniquely by the bereaved individual towards the deceased. All participants ($n=10$) stated that they performed individual rituals. The following quotes include the rituals performed by grieving participants for their loved ones. The way the participants perceived rituals and the reflection of the ritual were conveyed by quotes.

“I mean, I approach her daily with the same attitude that each of them (my aunt and uncle) have towards her. I think I set up my biggest ritual with Ayşe. I can say so. You know, this is an individual ritual. I care for her every night by kissing her good night or when she wants something, I feel better even when they take the time to enter the kitchen.” P1

“Yani mutlaka her gün her birinin (teyzemin ve eniştemin) ona karşı olan tutumuyla ona yaklaşıyorum, sanırım en büyük ritüelimi ben Ayşe ile kuruyorum. Öyle söyleyebilirim. Hani bireysel bir ritüel bu. Her gece mutlaka onu öperek iyi geceler diyerek ilgilenerek yapıyorum ya da canı bir şey istediğinde onlar vakit ayırıp mutfığa girdiğimde bile kendimi daha iyi hissediyorum.” K1

“And as we say as a ritual, we said it on birthdays. You know, we said, "Let's at least buy a cake let's make at least one child happy in such a poor family." Cakes were bought and distributed to poor families or people around us.” P4

“Ritüel olarak dediğimiz gibi doğum günlerinde dedik en azından hani bir pasta alalım, ihtiyacı olan bir çocukla böyle düşkün bir ailede en azından bir çocuk sevindirelim dedik. Pasta alıp düşkün ailelere ya da çevremizdeki insanlara dağıtıldı.” K4

One of the participants described distributing the beloved candy of the deceased person to someone else as an individual ritual. In addition, he compared the prayer he made to the deceased person to a way of communicating with that person. P5 expressed this situation as follows.

"For example, he loved blue lollipops and candy. When we see a child on the street or in the market, I buy him a candy. Occasionally, you send a message to my phone with a person you love, or you send Fatiha while you sleep, as if it were good morning and good evening message in the morning and evening. In this way individual things continue." P5

"Şöyle mesela mavi lolipopu çok severdi şekerini. Caddede veya çarşıda bir çocuk gördüğümüzde ona bir şeker alıyorum. Ara ara sevdiğiniz bir insanla telefonuma mesaj atıyorsunuz ya sabah akşam sanki günaydın, iyi akşamlar mesaja gibi uyurken Fatiha gönderiyorsunuz. Bu şekilde bireysel şeyler devam ediyor." K5

P6 explained his sharing with the deceased person and how he performed it after losing friend, by giving an example of his individual ritual. Then, P8 explained that a connection is maintained with the belongings left by deceased people. Participants shared the role of individual rituals in relational dynamics as described below by P6 and P8.

"We had a common playlist I listen to that playlist all the time. We listen to his favorite songs together when we go to his grave. We had another friend, our mutual friend, we made playlists together. We listen to him again, he comes to our mind. I tried to do the things he liked. I go where he wants to go." P6

"Bizim şey vardı ortak müzik listemiz vardı, o çalma listesini sürekli dinliyorum. Onun mezarına gidince beraber dinliyoruz en sevdiği şarkılarını. Bir tane daha arkadaşımız vardı, ortak arkadaşımız beraber liste yaptık yine onu dinliyoruz, aklımıza geliyor. Onun sevdiği şeyleri yapmaya çalışıyorum. Onun gitmek istediği yerlere gidiyorum"

P6

"I keep something from them, for example, my cousin has a sweater. I try to wear it once a week. It makes me feel close to him. There is a bracelet. It was my cousin's, for example, I like to carry it all the time. It's like he is with me." P8

"Ben onlardan bir şeyler saklayıp mesela kuzenimin kazağı var. Mutlaka o hafta bir kere onu giymeye çalışıyorum. O beni yanında hissettiriyor. Bir bileklik var. Kuzenimden çıkmıştı mesela bunu sürekli taşımak hoşuma gidiyor. Sanki o yanımdaymış gibi." P8

Some participants ($n=3$) integrated their individual rituals with spiritual behaviors. Rituals related to spirituality were shared by the participants, such as praying and doing charity for the deceased. These rituals, influenced by spirituality, were conveyed by the participants as follows.

"I went to the cemetery and planted flowers in the cemetery... Yes, it is a ritual, as long as there is greenery on a grave, as long as you live and remember... because according to my belief, those plants, flowers, trees and birds all remember Allah. That's why I planted flowers on it. All four of them... As long as they live and it stays green, they will mention and benefit from it." P2

"Mezarlığa gittim mezarlığında çiçekler diktim. Evet, ritüeldir bir mezarın üzerinde yeşillik olacak bir yeşillik yaşadıkça, zikrettikçe... çünkü benim inancıma göre o bitkiler de çiçekler de ağaçlar da kuşlar da hepsi Allah'ı zikreder. Onun için üzerine çiçekler diktim. Dördüne de... onlar yaşadığı sürece o yeşil durduğu sürece zikredip ondan da yararlanacaklar." K2

"I try to do charity in general. I had a well-built in their name. The water well in Africa is something I'm trying to do, and I'm also trying to give money individually... I think of them and help those who need help." P3

"Genel olarak hayır yapmaya çalışıyorum. Onların adına şey kuyu yaptırdım. Afrika'daki su kuyusu yapmaya çalıştığım bir şey, bireysel olarak da para vermeye çalışıyorum... Onları da düşünerekten yardıma ihtiyacı olanlara yardım yapıyorum." K3

K3

4.3.1 Continuing Bonds: “I Always Remember You”

Rituals have been said to have a role in continuing bonds with the deceased. Participants described the rituals as a symbol that the deceased was not forgotten. Performing a ritual not only means saying "I do not forgotten you" to the deceased, but also continues bonds with the deceased. One of the participants (P1), who lost her aunt, uncle and cousins, expresses this situation and the role of the ritual she performed in her life with the following words:

“Actually, no matter how much it is, people also take action out of conscience. How should I explain? I want to find this word, the right word. I feel more loyal, when I do something for Ayşe, I know that we do not forget them, and I act in a way that will please them. I feel like they are also happy with it, and it strengthens me. It keeps my bond with them more alive. Especially psychologically, of course, I feel happier during the day. I feel calmer. When I'm away, I feel like I'm not able to pray or that I'm upsetting them when the daily worldly worries get in the way, that is, I feel like a disloyal person, more like an ungrateful person, who quickly forgets and quickly adapts to a new life. This hurts me a lot.” P1

“Ya aslında ne kadar olsa da tabii insan biraz vicdanen de harekete geçiyor. Nasıl anlatayım? Bu kelimeyi, doğru kelimeyi bulmak istiyorum. Daha vefalı hissediyorum, yani Ayşe 'ye karşı bir şey yaptığımda onları unutmadığımızı, onların hoşuna gidecek bir davranışta bulunuyorum. Sanki onlar da bundan hoşnut oluyormuş, memnun oluyormuş gibi hissediyorum ve bu beni daha güçlü kılıyor. Onlarla bağımı daha canlı tutuyor. Özellikle psikolojik olarak tabii ki gün içinde kendimi daha mutlu hissediyorum. Daha sakin hissediyorum. Uzak kaldığımda dua edemediğine veya hani gündelik dünyalık telaşlar araya karıştığında onları üzüyormuşum gibi hissediyorum yani vefasız biri gibi kendimi daha böyle hani nasıl diyeyim nankör, hızlı unutmuş, hızla yeni hayatına adapte olmuş biri gibi hissediyorum. Bu da oldukça canımı yakıyor.” K1

One participant (P2) emphasized that she felt relieved when she performed the ritual that her deceased sister had performed before. In this case, continuing the ritual of the deceased revealed the connection of the ongoing bonds with the rituals.

“When I am in trouble and upset and everything is weighing on me, I call my husband and have the animal sacrificed today. This gives me great relief. She would like it very much. When we sacrifice, she would want us to sacrifice one here and send the other abroad. She would also be very happy when she fed the hungry people there. Now, when I get it done there seeing those orphans get fed makes me so happy that I wanted it anyway, I feel so happy that it's like I'm making my sister happy like this.”

“Dara düştüğümde üzülüp her şey üzerime geldiğimde eşimi arayıp bugün kurban kestiririm bu beni çok rahatlatıyor... Şeyi çok isterdi O, kurban kestiğimizde birini burada kesip birini yurt dışına göndermemizi isterdi. Oradaki açların da karnını koyduğunda o da çok mutlu olurdu. Şimdi ben onu orada yaptırdığımda o yetim çocukların karnını doyduğunu görmek, o kadar mutlu ediyordum zaten o kadar mutlu oluyorum ki sanki kardeşimi mutlu ediyorum böyle.” K2

P2

4.4 Cultural Rituals : Social Coping Mechanism

Almost every society has cultural elements that have been formed through social accumulation. The accumulation may create rituals that determine how societies behave in events such as weddings or deaths. Therefore, all these elements were examined within the scope of "cultural rituals." Participants were asked: “What cultural rituals have you performed/continue to perform?” The answers received from this question were conveyed as funeral, traditional, and spiritual rituals. Most participants emphasized that rituals closely linked to religious beliefs, such as funeral ceremonies, the Mawlid held on the 40th day of the deceased, and praying for the deceased, are cultural rituals. Many expressed that these funeral ceremonies helped the deceased say goodbye. It was emphasized by the participants that rituals that were not fulfilled meant not being able to fulfill the "last duty" and that the funeral ceremony that did not

take place made it difficult for the person to accept death. The participants' answers to the questions are given under the headings “Funeral Rituals”, and “Traditional and Spirituality- Based Rituals”.

4.4.1 Funeral Rituals

Due to the devastating effect of the earthquake, it was not possible to hold funeral ceremonies. In most provinces affected by the earthquake and in Kahramanmaraş, the dead taken from the rubble were buried collectively. This situation also prevented people from saying goodbye to their loved ones. Some of the participants emphasized that it was a positive thing to have pulled the dead from the rubble.

“In that chaos, it was as if we experienced the apocalypse. When we found our dead in the apocalypse, we were thankful, we were thankful that we found a place to bury our deceased. We were grateful to find a shroud.” P2

“O kargaşanın içinde sanki kıyameti yaşamışız. Kıyametin içinde biz ölümü bulduğumuzda şükrettik, gömecek yer bulduğumuza şükrettik. Kefen bulduğumuza şükrettik.” K2

“We couldn't hold the funeral ceremony. It's a shortcoming, but we just couldn't get it out on the first day due to insufficient equipment. And we took it out ourselves, we took it out with our own hands.” P4

“Cenaze törenini yapamadık. O bir eksiklik ama biz sadece ilk gün çıkaramadık yetersiz ekipmanlardan dolayı. Bir de kendimiz çıkarttık, kendi ellerimizle çıkarttık.” K4

One participant explained the function of the funeral ceremony. The participant cited the funeral ceremony as a factor that made it easier to accept the death of a person. Having a grave for the deceased was a means of saying goodbye.

“So, in loss, not seeing a person buried and loss create the same thing in your mind, but seeing that it is there and being in the same grave in the same place when

“Yani kayıpta, yani bir insanın gömüldüğünü görmemekle kayıp aynı şey gibi kafanızda aynı şeyi oluşturuyor ama orada olduğunu görmek düzenli

you go there regularly makes it a little more, saying goodbye, disappearing etc., all of them are fully accepted.” P5 *olarak gittiğinizde aynı yerde aynı mezarda bulunmak biraz daha bunu şey yapıyor, vedalaşmayı, işte yok oluşu falan hepsi tam olarak kabul ediliyor yani.” K5*

In this earthquake-induced disaster, we emphasized that some rituals such as funeral ceremonies, which are typically performed under normal conditions and provide the reality of the loss, could not be performed. The expressions "now" and "at least" used by the participants were thought to emphasize that finding the death body of the person they lost, shrouding it, and having a specific burial place had a positive effect despite the cultural rituals that could not be performed.

4.4.2 Traditional and Spirituality- Based Rituals

It can be said that the grief process is often followed by a process related to tradition and spiritual beliefs after the funeral rituals. Among these rituals, the 40 Mawlids and special prays are the most emphasized. Since the impact of the earthquake continued, behaviors such as giving food, reading the whole Quran (hatim), and praying, which were not done immediately after the loss, were mostly performed in 40 Mawlids. Participants expressed these rituals as follows:

“There was no funeral ceremony for our loss because it was a mass loss, but we held 40 mawlids. Apart from that, I think my grandmothers made reading the Quran in the my city.” P9 *“Kaybımıza yönelik şimdi cenaze töreni zaten olmadı çünkü toplu bir kayıp olduğu için yoktu ama 40 mevlidi yaptık. Onun haricinde anneannemler sanırım memlekette bir Kuran okuttular.” K9*

“We only did it as a family, like Mawlid at forth day of loss, and there was no one there anyway. Here too, my uncle's *“Sadece kırkında mevlit gibi ailece yaptık zaten kimse yok. Burada da benim dayımın oğlu da*

son and his daughter-in-law passed away, they came. Meanwhile, it was read from Ankara that we, my landlord, reading Quran such a small thing. At that time, we made hatim and completed hatim. They have reading “kelime-i tevhid” with the rosary. We made about 80,000 of them.”

geliniyle rahmetli oldu, onlar geldi. Onları da Ankara'dan bu sırada biz benim ev sahibim falan, böyle bir küçük bir şeyle Kuranlarımız okundu. O sırada hatim yaptık, hatimler indirdik. Bunların o tespihle kelimeyi tevhit çekme var. 80.000 tane falan işte onları yaptık.” K2

“When our work related to the earthquake was reduced, we had our aunt drill a water well and had recite Mawlid. Yasin Şerif was read, we also have something traditionally related to 40 days. Something local or traditional. So, 40th day of the passed away, we gave food that day for her.” P10

“Depremle ilgili şeylerimiz azalınca halamıza su kuyusu açtırdık, mevlit okuttuk. Yasin Şerif okundu, yine bizde de geleneksel olarak bir 40 günle ilgili bir şey var. O yöresel veya geleneksel bir şey. Yani kırkı çıktığında da o gün yemek verdik.” K10

“After that, we were very afraid that they would be put in body bags and bury without shrouds. They were shattered like this, we saw and heard. We told them to at least release the whole piece. Now we started to pray. We are now certain of their lifelessness. At least they come out safe. At least they should be clear about something. We have started to pray them so that they can be shrouded at least so that they can enter the ground with their white shrouds.”

“Ondan sonra ceset torbalarıyla gömülecekler, kefensiz gidecekler diye çok korktuk. Sonra hep böyle paramparça olmuşlardı, gördük, duyduk. En azından tüm parça çıksınlar dedik onlara. Artık dua etmeye başladık. Artık cansızlıklarından emin olduk. En azından hani sağlam çıksınlar. En azından bir yerleri belli olsun. Kefenlensin en azından onlar beyaz kefenleriyle toprağa girebilsin diye artık ona şükretmeye başladık.” K4

Some of the participants ($n=2$) shared that they thought it was not appropriate to perform some of the traditional rituals during grief process. In this context, P2's sharing is exemplified below.

"My sister and we were very against him giving food anyway. No one gathered together to complain and no food was given. We have already read our Quran, so we did charity again after that, but I am so happy about this food incident. Because my brother was against it. "So we were against it too, as I said, everything happened as he wanted." P2

"Kız kardeşim ve biz yemek vermesine çok karşıydık zaten. Kimse toplanıp böyle ah vah etmedi ve yemek verilmedi. Kuranlarımızı okuduk zaten yani arkasından yine hayır yaptık ama o kadar mutluyum ki bu yemek olayına. Çünkü kardeşim karşıydı. Yani biz de karşıydık, dedim ya her şey istediği gibi oldu." K2

In this earthquake-related disaster, the presented study emphasized that rituals such as funeral ceremonies performed under normal conditions and provide the reality of the loss, could not be performed. Even though the participants lost their loved ones, they saw finding the dead body from the rubble and burying it as a reason for gratitude. Rituals that are considered important by the participants support the behaviors of accepting the reality of the loss and remembering the loved one. Also, rituals were classified as individual and cultural during the grief process. The rituals that the participants performed individually to continuing bonds with the deceased were explained. Cultural rituals, which consist of dimensions such as traditional and religious- spiritual were discussed and explained as individuals define them as "cultural".

4.5 Meaning-Making by Injured Healer

The meaning-making process is the individual accepting the loss experienced and continuing the griever's life with an awareness of this change. The individuals think that things will continue differently in their lives after the deceased. The absence of a loved one may cause a difference in the individual's ongoing life. In this study, participants shared what changed in their lives after losing their loved ones. For most participants, the things they valued before the

earthquake and loss were now different. These differences were thought to be related to valuing material and spiritual things. The meaning-making process is grouped under two headings according to the answers given by the participants. The subheadings are changed priorities and new roles/responsibilities.

4.5.1 Reconstructed Priorities

Most participants ($n=6$) emphasized that their priorities are different and some of personal characteristics and priorities have changed. Namely, the things the participants found meaning in life are reconstructed.

“Right now, I’m saying, if my house were completely destroyed, if I didn’t have a single needle, if I had nothing left even the size of a pin, but if they didn’t die, I would give up everything. Because I saw that this world remains in this world. So life is more important.” P2

“Şu anda diyorum ki evim benim evim tamamen yerle bir olsaydı, hiçbir tane iğnem olmasaydı iğne toplu iğnem kadar bile hiçbir şeyim kalmasaydı ama onlar ölmeseydi her şeyimden vazgeçiyorum. Çünkü gördüm ki bu dünyadaki bu dünyada kalıyor. Yani can daha önemli.” K2

“I would say we have already removed money from our lives; I mean everything, not everything is materialistic... everything is empty. Financially, right now, I don’t care at all if I have a house or not, but I feel very resentful that I wish I had a house before the earthquake... Spiritually, I can describe it as follows. I was always postponing it all the time. Sometimes I would postpone our prayer. Sometimes we postponed our previous fasts. Come on, from now on, this earthquake was a good lesson. We shouldn’t leave it until tomorrow. We try

“Ya şöyle söyleyeyim, parayı hayatımızdan çıkarttık zaten her şeyi yani, her şey maddiyat değilmiş...her şey boşmuş. Maddi açıdan şu an yani evim olsa da olmasa hiç umurumda değil ama depremden öncesinde keşke evim olsaydı diye çok içerliyorum...Manevi yönden de şöyle tanımlayabilirim. Daha böyle hep sürekli erteliyordum. Yeri geliyor namazımızı erteliyordum. Yeri geliyor geçmiş oruçlarımızı erteliyorduk. Hadi bundan sonra artık bu deprem iyi bir ders oldu. Yarına bırakmamamız

to do all we can. We are trying to do everything we postponed on site." K4

lazımmış. Elimizden geldiğince hepsini yapmaya çalışıyoruz. Ertelelediğimiz her şeyi yerinde yapmaya çalışıyoruz." K4

"I am intolerant of people, I mean, I have become more careless, there is an incredible carelessness and I don't care about many things like I used to. In school, for example, I came to a new school for the first year. For example, my ability to be offended is gone. I can say that even my ability to hold grudges, my jealousy, and my ambition are gone. So everything seems so unimportant. Our perspectives have changed a lot. For example, when you see conflict within your family over the smallest thing even at home, and when you constantly see those around you experiencing losses, you don't care. After a while, you want to have a good time." P6

"İnsanlara toleranssızım yani şöyle diyeyim, daha fazla umursamaz oldum ya inanılmaz bir umursamazlık var ve hani eskisi gibi çoğu şeye takılmıyorum. Okulda mesela yeni bir okula geldim ilk sene. Mesela alınma özelliğim gitti. Kin tutma özelliğim, kıskançlığım, hürsüm bile gitti diyebilirim. Yani böyle her şey çok önemsizmiş gibi geliyor. Bakış açılarımız çok değişti. Mesela evde bile en küçük şeyde aile içinde çatışırken, sürekli etrafınızda kayıp yaşayanları gördüğünüzde umursamıyorsun. Bir vakitten sonra hani güzel vakit geçirmek istiyorsunuz." K6

"We have seen how valuable spirituality is in terms of giving less importance to material things, and that anything can happen to a person at any time, anything can happen to us. Besides, some things were predicted. It was said that these things would happen, but when they do, the emotional dimension of the situation becomes more important." P7

"Hani maddiyata daha az önem verme noktasında maneviyatın ne kadar değerli olduğunu, bir insanın her an her şeyin olabileceğini, başımıza her şey gelebileceğini görmüş olduk. Hem bazı şeyler tahmin ediliyordu. Hani bunlar yaşanacak falan deniyordu ama hani yaşandığı zaman işin duygusal boyutu daha ağır basıyor." K7

Some participants ($n=2$) emphasized that they had some changes after the loss they experienced. Participants conveyed the development that would benefit them in the meaning-making process after the loss they experienced.

"I became more determined. I turned to reading more books. I'm working more on my lessons. I hold on tighter to my goal. My GPA is above three, and I have started to follow things with more determination and responsibility. There is more awareness of responsibility. I hold on tighter to my work. I read more of my books. I am improving myself more and trying to improve myself."

P3

"Daha daha çok azimli oldum. Daha çok kitap okumaya yöneldim. Daha çok derslerime çalışıyorum. Daha çok hedefime sıkı sarılıyorum. Ortalamam da için üzerinde şu anda zaten daha çok böyle azimle daha işleri sorumlulukla takip etmeye başladım. Daha çok sorumluluk bilinci var. Daha çok işlerime sıkı sarılıyorum. Daha çok kitabımı okuyorum. Daha çok kendimi geliştiriyorum, geliştirmeye çalışıyorum."

K3

"In normal life, there is no way I could go to the morgue, so it would never even cross my mind. In normal life, I cannot attend a funeral. It's the thing I fear the most... We were sad, but it took on a different meaning when we saw it. I mean, I don't understand if my Lord gives patience, I mean, what kind of horror did we come out of? That momentary anxiety, fear, sadness. I did everything I said I couldn't do because of the chaos... I'm glad I did it, I have no regrets, so that's what I said. I had to get used to these kinds of things, you know, I had to see them and get used to them. Well, it wasn't as I feared."

P4

"Ben normal hayatta mümkünatı yok morga gidemezdim zaten öyle bir yani hiç aklımın ucundan bile geçmezdi. Normal hayatta ben cenazeye bakamam. En korktuğum şeydir zaten...Üzüliyorduk ama görünce daha bir farklı anlam taşıdı. Hani diyorum ki Rabbim sabır mı veriyor anlamadım yani nasıl bi dehşetten çıktık. O anlık endişe, korku, üzüntü. Kargaşadan, yapamam dediğim ne varsa hepsini yaptım... İyi ki de yapmışım diyorum içimde pişmanlık yok yani demek ki dedim. Alışmam gerekiyormuş bu tür şeylere de hani

görüp alışmam gerekiyormuş. Hani korktuğum gibi değilmiş.” K4

4.5.2 New Roles/ Responsibilities

Two of the participants emphasized that their personal roles were shaped after the loss they experienced. After the loss, the participants' new roles were defined as a responsibility. These roles are carried out with the mission of caring for the children of deceased people. P1 described this situation as "growing up" and P5 described it as a situation in which one must remain strong.

“It happened like this, my responsibilities increased or I took responsibility for myself. You know, sometimes I can't tell the difference between the two. Ayşe was their little daughter and, had just started living with us. I no longer feel like just a sister or a grandchild in a house. My grandmother also lives with us because her house was damaged. It was my mother's second marriage, so I was the only one left at home because my brother went to university. Because of this, my responsibilities have increased and I feel I've grown. So, after all these experiences, sometimes I can't act like the old Melek anymore;” P1

“Şöyle oldu benim sorumluluklarım arttı ya da ben kendime sorumluluk aldım. Hani ikisi arasındaki farkı bazen ayırt edemiyorum. Ayşe onların küçük kızıydı ve artık bizimle birlikte yaşamaya başladı. Artık kendimi hani sadece bir abla ya da bir evin içindeki bir torun olarak hissetmiyorum anneannemin de eve hasarlı olduğu için o da bizimle birlikte yaşıyor şu an. Annemin ikinci evliliği olmuştu ve o yüzden evde kardeşim üniversiteye gittiği için tek ben kaldım. Bundan kaynaklı biraz daha sorumluluklarım artmış ve kendimi büyümüş gibi hissediyorum. Yani bu yaşadıklarım sonra artık eski Melek olarak bazen davranamıyorum...” K1

“Also, for example, my responsibility has increased. Because I used to have one child. I had one son, so now my sister has 2 children left. We got out of the rubble together that night, a 10-year-old and a 15-year-old. We had losses but in the period after the earthquake, our responsibility increased. I took their guardianship over them. They live with me, and now I have to stand strong for both them and myself.” P5

“Bir de şöyle ben mesela hani sorumluluğum da arttı. Çünkü eskiden bir tane evladım vardı. Benim bir tane erkek evladım vardı yani şimdi ablamın 2 çocuğu kaldı. Biz o gece enkazdan beraber çıktık onlarla biri 10 yaşında biri, 15 yaşında. Depremden sonraki süreçte kayıplarımız falan var ama sorumluluğumuz arttı. Biz onları yani vasiliklerini ben aldım. Benimle beraber yaşıyorlar şu anda hem onlar için hem kendim için yani güçlü durmak zorundayım.” K5

5. Summary of Findings

The presents study aims to explore the experiences of individuals bereaved by the Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye (2023) earthquake-related disaster, specifically regarding their perceived grief rituals. Participants recounted the challenges they faced post-loss, including the timing of the earthquake during the winter season in Türkiye, being trapped under rubble, and rescuing loved ones. These experiences resulted in multifaceted grief reactions, predominantly emotional and cognitive, characterized by feelings of sadness, regret, and anger. Participants described engaging in individual and cultural rituals to continue their bonds with the deceased, viewing these rituals as a means of not forgetting their loved ones.

Individual rituals were identified as personalized acts symbolizing the unique bond between the participant and the deceased. In contrast, cultural rituals encompassed religious and traditional practices involving family, friends, and the broader social circle. Participants emphasized the role of these rituals in continuing their bonds with the deceased. The qualitative phenomenological approach adopted in this study allowed for an in-depth exploration of

participants' subjective experiences. Findings revealed that certain rituals, whether performed or not, influenced individuals' grieving processes.

Participants reported that rituals facilitated the continuation of bonds with the deceased, the acceptance and attribution of meaning to the loss, and the creation of new meanings in their post-loss lives. Through the analysis of responses from ten participants, coding, and thematic analysis, the study provides insights into the role of grief rituals on individuals affected by the "Disaster of the Century."



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the results of the research were discussed with a literature review. The discussion was conveyed in a manner consistent with the literature, with the themes discussed under the headings of Loss and Grief after the Earthquake, Rituals, Individual Grief Rituals, Cultural Grief Rituals, Unperformed Rituals and Meaning-Making. Following this, implications and suggestions for future research are presented. Following this, implications and suggestions for future research are presented.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

In the presented study, the grief rituals of individuals who lost their loved ones in the earthquake-related disaster that occurred on February 6 were examined. The grief rituals may be divided into rituals that can be performed and those that cannot. In addition, rituals have been examined at individual and cultural dimensions. The study sought an answer of how participants perceived the role of grief rituals in the grief process. The role of grief rituals in coping with multiple losses and difficult conditions caused by earthquake-related disasters was explained in the light of research findings and information in the literature. According to the results of the presented study, grief after loss is a painful process. Loss and grief were described by the participants with the words "deprivation" and "pain". However, the disaster caused by the earthquake prevented people from performing the grief rituals they normally perform. This made it difficult to accept the loss. Rituals such as funerals and condolences that did not take place were perceived by the participants as negativity in the grief process, and this was interpreted as not being able to say "last farewell" to the deceased. In addition, the fact that the deceased was removed from the rubble and buried as a whole in the grave appears as a fact that supports the acceptance of the reality of the loss. Some rituals of the participants during the grief process were examined as individual and cultural rituals. Individual rituals have emerged as a factor that continues the connection with the deceased.

Participants saw it as an important coping mechanism that provided social support through cultural rituals.

5.1.1 Loss of Loved One and Grief

Death has been an inevitable reality since the is loved can be a saddening situation. As a term, the loss is defined as the fact of not having or continuing to have something (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). However, the loss of a loved one through death is defined in different ways by individuals. Throughout the research, participants were asked "How do you define loss?" the answers that were received after asking the question revealed the uniqueness of the loss and supported the idea of the uniqueness of the grief process. Participants mostly described loss as a "great pain," "a great deficiency," and, "a magnificent disappearance". When we look at the literature, the most common usage for loss is that is something painful (e.g., Doğanay, 2023; Glatt, 2018; Stroebe & Schut, 1999). The severe devastating consequences of the sudden earthquake and the unexpected and multiple deaths have worn out the coping mechanisms of individuals. In the study, participants emphasized that removing the body of the person who died in the earthquake from under the rubble, burying it and making a grave site made it easier to accept the loss. Some participants associated the funeral ceremony and gravestones of those they lost with the love and respect felt for the deceased. In the literature, these processes were reported as a sign of respect and final farewell by individuals to the deceased (Aslanoğlu, 2023; Labor et al., 2006; Masamah et al., 2023). Therefore, it seems that the research results are compatible with the literature.

The loss and grief process occurred as a result of the disaster caused by the earthquake. The losses and damages caused by the earthquake caused participants to experience complex emotions. Some of the participants stated that they had complex feelings about their experience. Participants experiencing complex emotions were often caught between dilemmas. They experience uncertainty about whether what they feel or want to do is good or bad. This situation may be related to how individuals make sense of the loss and grief process. According to Neimeyer et al. (2014), meaning making of

loss has social and individual dimensions. Death is universal and some common emotions can be shown afterward. In addition, the meaning of grief is subjective and unique, and participants can reflect grief based on their own experiences and thoughts. As a result, although there are common emotional and behavioral reactions, the subjective and complex structure of grief can cause participants to experience different emotions in a complex way. Besides, rituals play a role in accepting loss, grief reactions, and making sense of life after loss.

5.1.2 Rituals

The presented study has focused directly on adult grief rituals. The concept of ritual defines a set of behaviors performed at times, such as a ritual or religious ceremony. When research in the literature is examined, it is possible to say that rituals are mostly spiritually based and shaped by religious behaviors (Aksöz-Efe et al., 2018; Doğanay, 2023; Sami, 2021; Şimşek-Arslan et al., 2021). Cleaning and shrouding the deceased, praying for the missing person, and reading the Mawlid on the 40th day can be cited as examples of religious and spiritual rituals. Similarly, in the presented research, participants stated that they prayed and read the Quran for their lost loved ones. Some participants emphasized special prayers for the deceased people. Some of the participants distributed food in memory of the deceased on certain days and asked those who ate the food to pray. Therefore, the knowledge that some religious and spiritual phenomena influence some grief rituals supported the findings of the presented research. In addition, when examining the international culture-oriented studies in the literature, although common phenomena such as funeral ceremonies are seen, the behaviors exhibited and the activities performed differ. This presented research covers the Kahramanmaraş province of Türkiye. Therefore, it was thought that the participants would reflect a regional culture within the scope of cultural rituals. However, due to the sudden of the loss as a result of an earthquake-related disaster, a uniform regional element was not created based on the participants' answers. In addition, participants also shared similar rituals, mostly religious rituals.

Rituals have been found to have a positive effect on individuals coping with the loss. Savaş (2020) reported that rituals that could not be performed increased grief reactions. In the presented study, not directly, participants shared as a reason for gratitude that their loved ones who died under the rubble were removed from the wreckage while preserving their physical integrity and were buried in a specific grave. The finding supports that performing rituals has a positive cognitive effect on individuals and plays a role in coping with loss.

5.1.3 Individual Rituals

In terms of individual rituals, almost all of the participants perform a special individual ritual for their lost loved ones. When we asked the participants what effect performing individual rituals had, it was seen that their answers converged on a common point. Participants stated that the individual rituals protected their bonds with the deceased and enabled them to continue their bonds. Continuing Bonds Theory (Klass, 1996) emphasizes that there is no need to end bonds with the deceased person entirely and that the relationship with the lost person can continue in a different dimension. For this reason, when explaining the beneficial aspect of rituals, the research findings seem to support the Continuing Bonds Theory. Some of the participants stated that the rituals soothed emotional feelings such as anxiety and sadness. In contrast, some participants stated that they felt conscientious relief with the thought that the lost person was not forgotten. The literature stated that rituals purify guilt and bad energies, which can be considered consistent with research findings (Daniel, 2021; Qi Tey & Ling Lee, 2022). It has been determined that the rituals performed in this case support positive emotions and thoughts in individuals during the grief process. Many participants emphasized that individual rituals supported continued bonds with the deceased. According to the answers given by the participants, individual rituals are related to the special relationship between the survivor and the deceased, such as mother, sister, friend, etc. It was thought to be related to what they shared and their bonds. When the answers were examined, it was seen that the participants were not directly affected by culture or different phenomena, as examples of their individual

rituals, but shared only the rituals that were special to them. One of the biggest reasons why individual rituals supported continuing bonds may be that they are created in a completely private and unique way. The participants turned the special things they shared with the people they lost into rituals. For example, one participant distributed her deceased son's favorite candy to other children, and a participant who lost his best friend started listening to the song list he had listened to with his friend at his friend's grave. These rituals can be associated with the reshaping of existing bonds after loss (Klass, 2006). As a result, the results regarding individual rituals emerged within the scope of this research, unlike the existing grief literature. To our knowledge, it has not been found that rituals are examined at an individual level in grief studies in the literature. Therefore, it was thought that the findings obtained regarding individual rituals in this research would directly contribute to the grief studies literature.

5.1.4 Cultural Rituals

When considering the cultural dimension of the ritual, it can be inferred that rituals are similarly important for the participants. For almost all of the participants, the funeral ceremony was found to be a meaningful ritual. Participants defined the funeral ritual as a cultural element and viewed it as important for accepting the reality of death. Therefore, it can be concluded that the funeral ceremony held under ordinary conditions makes it easier for individuals to perceive the reality of the thought of death in their minds. In the study on grief during the pandemic, Hekimoğlu et al., (2022) emphasized that cultural rituals such as funeral ceremonies and food distribution have therapeutic properties during the grief process. On the other hand, a few participants stated that there were traditional rituals they did not want to do (funeral dinner, offering dessert) and that they were pleased that these rituals did not take place due to the earthquake. In there, it was deemed useful to emphasize the rituals performed in the context of the community. Sami (2021) stated that rituals that cannot be performed may reveal a lack of social support. Related to this issue, P2 mentioned that after the funeral, those who experienced the loss were in a rush to distribute food and that the pain of the loss was not experienced as it was. The participant who lost her sister and

sister's family stated that she did not want food to be served at her sister's funeral and that food could not be served as a result of the earthquake. The participant also stated that she was satisfied with this situation. As a result, it may be difficult to adapt to traditional rituals on an individual level. While individuals perform "cultural rituals", they can leave "individual rituals" behind and delay the grief process. Aksöz-Efe et al. (2018), emphasized that some rituals did not match the needs of grieving individuals. These results also support the uniqueness of the grief process.

It can be said that cultural rituals provide social support as another function (Bonsu & De-Berry Spence, 2008; Savaş, 2020). When the needs of individuals in the same social environment during the grief process match culturally established rituals, cultural rituals play a pain-reducing and comforting role in individuals (Aksöz-Efe et al., 2018). Participant 1 shared that after leaving Kahramanmaraş after the earthquake, she returned to the city and felt more understood when she shared the pain he experienced during the grief process with people who experienced the same pain. It can be emphasized that praying spending time with the grieved people and having experienced the same pain create a circle of trust. A study reported that collective rituals, such as funerals, also support reconciliation among people by breaking social norms (Bonsu & De-Berry Spence, 2008).

P7 defined the funeral ritual as "the last duty" and stated that this ritual she interpreted the fact that it did not happen as "as if it had never left." This sharing coincides with the finding stated by Savaş (2020) that rituals contribute to giving meaning to death and accepting loss. Also, grief rituals have roles to coping with loss (Mitima-Overloop et al., 2019).

5.1.5 Unperformed Rituals After Disaster

In a study conducted while the COVID-19 pandemic was ongoing, Şimşek-Arslan et al. (2021) found that unexpected sudden deaths and losses increased individuals' grief reactions. In addition, Savaş (2020) emphasized that unfulfilled grief rituals may increase grief reactions. In the presented research, sudden and multiple losses occurred after the earthquake became a disaster.

Individuals have suddenly lost their loved ones like the pandemic period. However, in addition to the loss of life, there were different effects such as loss of home, loss of job, and financial losses. In addition, the large number of casualties and the deaths of entire families left individuals alone in despair. In such a situation, some of the participants were thankful that they were able to pull their lost loved ones out of the rubble, find a shroud and bury them in one piece, and have a specific burial place. Additionally, the participants conveyed grief rituals that could not be performed from a negative perspective. Rituals that could not be performed made it difficult for some participants to say goodbye to the deceased and created perceptions that the lost person was not given the value they deserved. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the rituals that cannot be performed, as reported in the literature, have a feature that may increase emotional grief reactions in individuals.

Due to the impact of the disaster caused by the earthquake, the loss and grief process extraordinarily took place. Because the participants experienced financial losses (i.e, home, workplace) along with their loved ones. Participants were also able to carry out such as reaching the relatives of the deceased, removing the deceased from the rubble, shrouding and burying them with difficulty. In normal cases, after the burial of the deceased, individuals would perform rituals such as distributing food and accepting condolences as previously mentioned. However, as a result of the earthquake-related disaster, normal rituals could not be performed, which prevented the need to "process the pain, share the pain", as stated by P2. Similarly, due to the restrictions of the pandemic period, the bereaved individuals could not perform a funeral ceremony or accept condolences (Hekimoğlu et al., 2022; Şimşek-Arslan et al., 2021). Hereby, grieving individuals lived more intensely because they could not share their pain. As a result, individuals are left with intense emotions because they are unable to experience grief normally in situations that fall within the scope of disasters and crises (Savaş, 2020). These intense emotions turn into complex emotions, which can also be supported by the results of the presented study.

5.1.6 Meaning Making

Loss and grief may cause some life changes. Individuals who lose a loved one may view the world differently. In particular, more intense grief reactions may be observed in individuals who suddenly lose their loved ones, such as in disasters (e.g., Şimşek- Arslan et al., 2021). Individuals try to re-meaning life during this grief process. This process overlaps with Neimeyer's theory of Meaning Making (2002). The majority of the participants, especially those whose homes were destroyed and experienced financial losses, emphasized that the loss of life they experienced was precious and that the deceased would not return. Participants shared that the value they gave to material possessions before the earthquake was meaningless. In addition, some participants experienced a process of emotional meaning-making after their experiences. As an example, a few participants stated that it is unimportant to remain offended, that relationships with loved ones should be valued, and that they avoid habits such as holding grudges and jealousy. These results can be related to two components of the Meaning Making Theory, finding benefits and making sense of loss (Neimeyer & Anderson, 2002). Participants construct a new meaning after their experiences and carry out the transfers they find useful in their ongoing lives with this meaning. Participants' priorities were reconstructed. In addition, a change has been observed in the things they find meaning in life. Differentiation of meaning, meaning-making, and change of priorities are related to making sense of the loss on an individual level.

The process of meaning reconstruction was presented as an inference of loss for the participants. Most of the participants said that after a disaster, "everything we have can be lost in an instant." They emphasized the idea. Similarly, when the loss process is examined from the perspective of religious belief, the belief that the loss comes from the creator, that is, in fate, supported individuals to make sense of the loss (Sami, 2021). As a result, a change was observed in the things that the participants valued. Examples of these changes include prioritizing experiences in life, not postponing desired things, spending more time with loved ones, and not postponing prayers. P5, stated that she was

not upset about her financial losses at all and expressed the meaning making process of her experience as follows: "And one should not postpone anything. You know, if you have a child, let them grow up and finish school. Let's see the summer, not something like that, I'll throw it in if something comes to your mind. If you think of eating ice cream, we should do it at that moment. We saw that we can lost all in minutes." As a result, participants made sense of the value of what they lost. After the meaning-making process, the things that individuals prioritize differ from their previous experiences. In this context, the identity reconstruction proposition of the Meaning Making Theory (Neimeyer, 2001) is compatible with the experiences of the participants. Participants realized the necessity of performing behaviors that they had not done or postponed in the past. The new meaning offered by this situation is presented as the inference of participants' loss experiences.

Finally, I would like to add that *injured healer* is a term used in the literature for mental health workers. However, in this study, this term was also used for bereaved individuals who find and strive to find new meanings in their ongoing lives after the traumatic losses they have experienced. This usage was specially selected by the researcher and dedicated to individuals who heal others with the rituals they perform while healing their own injured during the grieving process.

5.2 Implications for Theory and Practice

The grief process is a challenging life transition for individuals. The level of difficulty of the factors affecting grief may also negatively affect the process. Grief as a result of a disaster is an example of this situation. Natural disaster-based disasters occur frequently around the world. The earthquake that occurred on February 6, 2023 in Türkiye, which is the sample of this research, turned into a disaster. It has been observed that in disaster situations, multiple losses have a negative impact on individuals. It has been observed that individual and cultural rituals performed by individuals play an important role in grief. In this case, performing rituals in the event of a disaster is important for a healthy grief process and acceptance of loss.

It was seen that the results of the grief rituals examined within the scope of Meaning Making and Continuing Bonds Theories were compatible with the propositions of the theories. During the grief process, participants were seen searching for new meaning after the loss. Research findings showed that performing rituals played a role for individuals in continuing bonds with the deceased (Garcia, 2007) and that they saw positive benefits in the grief process. The positive effect of individual rituals on the bereaved participants confirmed the emphasis that the grief process is unique (Neimeyer, 2002). In addition, the participants' thoughts and experiences in the process of making sense of loss were seen to be compatible with Meaning Making Theory's definition of sense-making of loss. Self-narratives emphasized by Meaning Making Theory can be associated with individual rituals. Continuing Bonds Theory emphasizes that there is no need to break bonds with the deceased in order for the grief process to end (Klass, 1996). Many of the participants emphasized that they would never forget the people they lost, but that they now returned to normal life after the grief. Accompanied by these listed examples, it can be seen that the research findings are compatible and overlap with the propositions of the Meaning Making Theory and the Continuing Bonds Theory.

Working with grieving individuals is a process that requires care. Each individual is unique, which makes grief unique. As a result, individuals' personal coping methods should be brought to the fore in grief counseling (Lewis & Hoy, 2011). Rituals performed after the deceased support preserving the fact that the lost person "once existed" and become a source of consolation for grieving individuals (Lewis & Hoy, 2011). The positive effect of rituals on individuals has also been seen as a result of the research. For grieving individuals, performing rituals is a coping method to continue bonds with the lost person and to provide relief to the grieving individual. For disaster-specific grief, multiple losses may strain individuals' coping mechanisms, and as a result, individuals may need urgent intervention (Kristensen & Franco, 2011).

While working with grieving individuals, mental health professionals' having accurate information, visiting the disaster area, identifying high-risk groups and providing customized therapies play an important role in the intervention

process for grieving individuals (Kristensen & Franco, 2011). In addition to all this, working in a disaster area also makes the principle of cultural sensitivity essential in order to provide the most appropriate intervention to individuals. The principle of cultural sensitivity is a requirement that mental health professionals have and use, especially in disaster situations, in order to quickly identify individuals' needs, make the individual open to help, and show respect for the individual. In addition, the principles of humanitarianism, non-discrimination, impartiality, volunteerism, unity/togetherness and universality are the principles that must be met to realize disaster ethics (Aksöz-Efe, 2020). Finally, we often encounter natural disaster-based disasters. As a sensitive human being and mental health worker, it is important to increase awareness of psychological first aid in order to prepare our group, environment and environment for disaster.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The scope of this research covers the earthquake-induced disaster that occurred in Turkey on February 6, 2023. Specifically, the grief rituals of adults between the ages of 20 and 51 were examined in different themes. There are such studies on grief rituals in the literature. However, this research is a qualitative study on the grief process after the disaster mentioned above, and, to our knowledge, no similar study has yet been found in the literature. Although there have been studies in the literature on religious coping methods with this situation, the presented study presents the individual, cultural and loss-specific experiences of the grief process.

Even though a year has passed since the earthquake, its impact still continues. Since the debris has not been completely removed, earthquake victims continue to live in containers. There are people who have lost both their loved ones, homes, and jobs, that is, they have experienced multiple losses. For this reason, future studies may investigate how earthquake victims grieve based on the types of losses they experience.

Future research may be conducted as a field study by conducting face-to-face interviews and observing the living conditions of the participants. In addition,

Turkiye is a country where disasters caused by natural events occur frequently. In this context, the issue of grief rituals can be examined with a longitudinal study, taking into account past experiences. The grief rituals performed by individuals for different events they experience and/or the grief rituals of individuals changing over time can be a subject of research.

It is expected that this research will contribute to the literature on understanding the grief process of adult individuals. The research was carried out covering a province of Turkiye (the epicenter of the earthquake, Kahramanmaraş). For this reason, the research results were conducted with individuals who have similar cultural knowledge and rituals.

The research may be repeated in different samples according to age, gender and different developmental periods and culture. Additionally, study participants were expected to lose "the person who loved someone." In a different study, the research may be repeated with only individuals who have lost a parent, only with mothers/fathers who have lost a child, or only with individuals who have lost a spouse. Additionally, research may be conducted with larger groups or more limited age groups (such as individuals between 18 and 25).

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APPENDICES- A

ARAŞTIRMAYA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu form, TED Üniversitesi Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Huri Elif Özcan tarafından yüksek lisans tez araştırması kapsamında Dr. Öğr. Üyesi F. Zehra Ünlü Kaynakçı danışmanlığında yürütülen araştırma için hazırlanmıştır. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Araştırmanın amacı, 6 Şubat 2023 tarihli deprem kaynaklı afeti Kahramanmaraş ilinde yaşayan ve afette sevdiği bir yakınını kaybeden bireylerin yas ritüellerini incelemektir.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde, sizlerle yaklaşık 50-60 dakika aralığında olan bir görüşme gerçekleştireceğiz. Görüşmemiz, imkanlara bağlı olarak yüzyüze veya çevrimiçi olarak gerçekleştirilecektir. Görüşme kapsamında yaşadığımız kayıp ve yas sürecine ilişkin bir dizi soruya yanıt vermenizi isteyeceğiz.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Araştırma katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Çalışmamızda paylaşımanızı istediğimiz bilgiler sizlerin adı kullanılarak herhangi bir yerde paylaşılmayacaktır. Cevaplarınız şifreli dosyalama sistemi aracılığı ile gizli tutularak yalnızca araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Elde edilen verilerin bilimsel

yayınlarda kullanılacaktır. Görüşmelerde katılımcının onayı doğrultusunda ses ve görüntü kaydı alınabilecektir. İlgili izin bölümüne sayfa sonunda ulaşabilirsiniz.

Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Görüşmede sorulacak sorular kaybettiğiniz sevdiğinizle ilgili öğeler içermekte ve deneyimlediğiniz afeti tekrar düşünmenize neden olabilir. Görüşme esnasında sorulardan ya da başka bir sebeple kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz araştırmayı yarıda bırakma hakkına sahipsiniz. Araştırmayı bırakmanız halinde o ana değin elde edilen verilen siz onay verdiğiniz takdirde kullanılacaktır. Bu durumda araştırmacıya araştırmayı bırakmak istediğinizi söylemeniz yeterlidir. Araştırma sonunda, psikolojik destek alabileceğiniz kuruluşların bilgilerinin bulunduğu bir broşür tarafınıza iletilecektir.

Görüntü ve Ses Kaydı İzin Bölümü (Daireyi işaretleyiniz)

- Görüntüm ve sesim kaydedilebilir.
- Yalnızca sesim kaydedilebilir.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Araştırma ile ilgili sorularınız olursa _____ adresinden mail yoluyla araştırmacı ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

Araştırmaya katılımınız ve haklarınızın korunmasına yönelik sorularınız varsa ya da herhangi bir şekilde risk altında olduğunuza veya strese maruz kalacağımıza

inaniyorsanız **TED Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu**'na (

_____) telefon numarasından veya _____ e-posta adresinden birimize ulaşabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

Katılımcı;

Ad - Soyad

İmza

APPENDICES- B

“Türkiye’de Yaşanan Yüzyılın Felaketi Sonrası Yetişkinlerde Görülen Yas Tutma Ritüellerinin İncelenmesi” Başlıklı Araştırma’nın

GÖRÜŞME FORMU				
Görüşme Tarihi	Görüşme Saati- Toplam Süre	Katılımcı Kodu	İmza	Araştırmacı adı/soyadı ve imzası
DEMOGRAFİK BİLGİLER				
KATILIMCININ;				
Araştırma için kullanılan adı:	Yaşı:	Şu andaki romantik ilişki durumunuzu nasıl tanımlarsınız? () Romantik bir ilişkim var () Sözlüyüm/Nişanlıyım () Evliyim () Romantik bir ilişkim yok () Diğer:		
Eğitim Düzeyi:	Şu anda ikamet ettiğiniz il:			
Cinsiyeti: () Kadın () Erkek Kendim Belirtmek İstiyorum:	Mesleği/ İşi:			
Kaybettiğiniz kişiyle yakınlık dereceniz (kan bağı, fiziksel/ duygusal bağ, yaşanan şehirler vb.):			İletişim numarası ve/veya mail adresi:	

Görüşme Soruları [TR]

1. Kaybı nasıl tanımlarsınız?
2. Yas tutmayı nasıl tanımlarsınız?
3. Kaybettiğiniz kişiyle olan yakınlığınızdan (bağınızdan) bahseder misiniz?
 - a. Bu bağ fiziksel, duygusal ve kan bağı gibi durumlardan hangisi olarak nasıl tanımlanabilir?
4. Yaşadığınız kayıptan sonra hayatınızda neler değişti? (fiziksel, duygusal, ekonomik, sosyal)

Ara bilgi: *Ritüel, bir din veya inanç sistemine ait ibadet, ayin, merasim ve bu sırada uyulması gereken kurallar olarak tanımlanır (TDK, Güncel Sözlük). Daha öz anlamda ritüel, yapılması adet/ rutin haline gelmiş davranışlar bütünüdür. Dolayısıyla hem kültürel hem bireysel ritüeller bu kapsam dahilindedir. 40 mevlidi kültürel bir ritüel olabilirken, belirli bir günde mezarlık ziyareti gerçekleştirmek bireysel ritüele örnek gösterilebilir.*

5. Kaybınıza yönelik hangi ritüelleri gerçekleştirdiniz? (cenaze töreni, dua etmek, mezarlık ziyareti, yemek dağıtmak)
6. Bu ritüellerin hangileri bireysel ritüel, hangileri kültürel ritüellerdendir?
7. Bu ritüelleri gerçekleştirmek sizi nasıl etkiledi?
8. Deprem dolayısıyla hangi ritüellerinizi gerçekleştiremediniz?
 - a. Gerçekleştiremediğiniz ritüeller sizi nasıl etkiledi?
 - b. Bazı ritüelleri gerçekleştirememek hakkında bugün ne yaşıyorsunuz?
9. Deneyimlerinizi paylaşmak ile ilgili şu anda ne yaşıyorsunuz?

- ❖ Konu ile ilgili sorularda size sorulmamış ancak size göre önemli olup da paylaşmak istediğiniz bir şey varsa dinlemeye hazırım.
- ❖ Çalışmaya katılıp zaman ayırdığınız için çok teşekkür ederim. Aklınıza takılan bir soru olduğunda ya da araştırmayla ilgili merak ettiğiniz bir şey olduğunda size verdiğim iletişim bilgilerinden bana ulaşabilirsiniz.

İletişim:

Psk. Danışman Huri Elif Özcan

Interview Questions [ENG]

1. How do you define loss?
2. How would you describe grief?
3. Can you tell us about your closeness (bond) with the person you lost?
 - a. How can this bond be defined, such as physical, emotional and blood bond?
4. What has changed in your life after the loss (physical, emotional, economic, social)?

Intermediate information: *Ritual is defined as worship, rites, ceremonies and rules that must be followed in a religion or belief system (TDK). More specifically, a ritual is a set of behaviors that have become a custom/routine. Therefore, both cultural and individual rituals are within this scope. While 40th day Mawlid can be a cultural ritual, visiting a cemetery on a certain day can be an example of an individual ritual.*

5. Which rituals did you perform in response to your loss (funeral, praying, visiting the cemetery, distributing food)?
6. Which of these rituals are individual rituals and which are cultural rituals?
7. How did performing these rituals affect you?
8. Which rituals could you not perform because of the earthquake?
 - a. How did the rituals you could not perform affect you?
 - b. What do you experience today about not being able to perform some rituals?
9. What are you experiencing now about sharing your experiences?

- ❖ I am ready to listen if there is something that was not asked to you in the questions about the topic but is important to you and you would like to share.
- ❖ Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in the study. If you have any questions or are curious about the research, you can contact me through the contact information I have given you.

Contact:

Psychological Counselor Huri Elif Özcan

APPENDICES- C



TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU ETİK KURUL KARARLARI Sayı: 2023-20 Tarih: 08.12.2023

Toplantı Sayısı: 2023-20

Toplantı Tarihi: 08 Aralık 2023

Toplantı Saati: 10.00

Toplantı Yeri: Zoom üzerinden yapılmıştır.

Katılanlar: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Kıymet Duygu ERDAŞ - Başkan
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Duygu Onay Çoker - Raportör
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Çağla Öneren ŞENDİL - Üye
Doç. Dr. Melike Ünal GEZER - Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Elçin Emre AKDOĞAN - Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Beril Türkoğlu DEMİREL - Üye

Raportör: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Duygu Onay Çoker - Raportör

GÖRÜŞME MADDELERİ

G.017 : TED Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Anabilim Dalı Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Fatma Zehra Ünlü' nün "Türkiye'de Yaşanan Yüzyılın Felaketi Sonrası Yetişkinlerde Görülen Yas Tutma Ritüellerinin İncelenmesi" başlıklı çalışmasının araştırma etiğine uygunluğu görüşüldü.

Karar 2023-20/17 : TED Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü Rehberlik ve Psikolojik

Danışmanlık Anabilim Dalı Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Fatma Zehra Ünlü' nün "Türkiye'de Yaşanan Yüzyılın Felaketi Sonrası Yetişkinlerde Görülen Yas Tutma Ritüellerinin İncelenmesi" başlıklı çalışmasına,

ONAY KARARI VERİLDİ.

Toplantı saat 12.40 sona erdi.





TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU
ETİK KURUL KARARLARI

Sayı: 2023-20 Tarih: 08.12.2023

e-imzalıdır

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Kıymet Duygu ERDAŞ
Başkan

e-imzalıdır

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Çağla Öneren ŞENDİL
Üye

e-imzalıdır

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Duygu Onay Çöker
Raportör

e-imzalıdır

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Beril Türkoğlu DEMİREL
Üye

e-imzalıdır

Doç. Dr. Melike Ünal GEZER
Üye

e-imzalıdır

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Elçin Emre AKDOĞAN
Üye