



Emotional distress related to hazards and earthquake risk perception

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Abstract

This paper aimed to investigate emotional distress related to hazards (EDH) considering appraisals and personal resources from cognitive appraisal theory in a sample of Bucharest inhabitants periodically exposed to earthquakes (EQ). The sample consisted of 336 respondents ($M=33.71$ years old, $SD=13.71$, 64.6% females). The hierarchical regression model revealed that discomfort of living space, a personal resource, was the strongest predictor of EDH ($\beta=.18$, $t(313)=3.09$, $p<.01$), closely followed by appraisals or risk perception variables: hazards anticipation ($\beta=.17$, $t(316)=2.11$, $p<.05$) and negative EQ consequences ($\beta=.13$, $t(316)=2.28$, $p<.05$). The overall model explained 17% of the variance of EDH. This study shows that the cognitive appraisal theory can be successfully used to explain the EDH of citizens living in an earthquake-prone city. Also, it emphasizes that earthquake-related factors can be relevant when discussing EDH levels of people in cities experiencing recurrent earthquakes.

Keywords Bucharest · Distress · Earthquake · Risk perception · Discomfort · Hazard anticipation

1 Introduction

Living in urban areas is a life choice that comes with a series of implications for life satisfaction and multiple professional opportunities, but it also entails taking certain risks and subject to various stress factors (Willie et al. 2016; Galea and Vlahov 2005). Generally, urban stress was studied from the perspective of traffic-related matters and urban

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