

The Impact of Theoretical Approaches on Management in Nursing

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine doctoral theses completed in Turkey that utilize theories within the field of nursing management. The main objective of the study is to reveal the extent to which theoretically based concepts in nursing management are reflected in academic work, to identify guiding areas for future research, and to provide researchers with a systematic and rapid overview of past studies.

In the Council of Higher Education Thesis Center, a total of 3,287 doctoral theses in the field of nursing published between 2018 and 2025 were reviewed. Among the 2,000 accessible doctoral theses, 57 were identified as belonging to the nursing management discipline. Of these, only 3.5% intersected with theoretical frameworks and were included in the scope of this study.

The analysis revealed that there is a minimal number of theses incorporating theory within the nursing management discipline.

Keywords: Nursing, doctoral thesis, nursing management, theory

1. Introduction

In the field of nursing, research first began with Florence Nightingale's book *Notes on Nursing*, which has been cited as a source emphasizing the necessity of organizing nursing knowledge through observation, record-keeping, and statistical inferences. Nightingale also supported her theoretical propositions through research, using statistical data and charts prepared to illustrate the impact of nursing care on health (McEwen & Wills, 2014). In our country, nursing research began with the introduction of nursing education in higher education in 1955 (Yavuz & Kocaman, 2017). Nursing is not merely a profession carried out through physical activity, but rather a caring art characterized by thought, emotion, and a holistic perspective aimed at promoting and sustaining health (Muslu & Özsoy, 2017). The art of nursing is the process of interpersonal relationships and interactions between the

individual and the nurse within a social context during the provision of nursing care. Therefore, the science and art of nursing are creatively applied in the methodological implementation of each conceptual model and theory in the nursing process through critical thinking (Fawcett, 2006).

Knowledge is the attainment of reality, revealed through science (Solmaz & Solmaz, 2019). In any discipline, science is the result of the relationship between the research process (research) and the product of knowledge (theory). Therefore, the purpose of research is to generate knowledge in a discipline through the development and/or testing of theory. To generate knowledge effectively, **the research process must be** developed within a theoretical framework that facilitates the analysis and interpretation of findings. Consequently, this will contribute to the advancement of scientific theory and the nursing discipline (McEwen & Wills, 2014). However, nursing is not limited to individual patient care; it is also a discipline that encompasses numerous managerial elements, such as the effectiveness of organizational structures, team coordination, and resource management (Torun & Bilgin, 2024). In this context, nursing management emerges as a cornerstone of quality healthcare delivery (Taş, 2012). Effective nursing management is critically important for enhancing patient safety, ensuring employee satisfaction, streamlining workflows, and improving the efficiency of healthcare services (Yolcu & Demir, 2023). Therefore, in order for every study conducted in the field to have an impact on practice, nursing management is expected to be integrated into theoretical research. Serving as a bridge, research in nursing management makes a significant contribution to translating theory into practice and plays a vital role in preserving the integrity of nursing science (Yürümezoğlu, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to examine postgraduate doctoral theses completed in Türkiye within the department/discipline of nursing management that have employed theoretical frameworks.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Method: Using the method of reviewing postgraduate doctoral theses, nursing studies were retrospectively examined to create a descriptive profile of the subject's development over time in the context of Türkiye. As the method, an analysis of the parametric data of the theses was employed. Through this evaluation, the numerical data presented aimed to partially reveal the level of interest and awareness directed toward the field of nursing management within postgraduate nursing programs, based on postgraduate theses completed in Türkiye. Parameters quantifying the theses were determined, and studies involving nursing management and theoretical frameworks were identified.

Data Collection: The screening from the **Council of Higher Education Thesis Center (CoHETC)** database system was conducted between 01 June 2025 and 01 August 2025, and 2,000 doctoral theses in the field of nursing, completed and accessible between 2018 and 2025, were included in the evaluation. Postgraduate doctoral theses in the field of nursing published in Türkiye were included in the scope of the study, while studies not belonging to the department/discipline of nursing management were excluded. Special attention was paid to the criterion of "department/discipline of nursing management" and the use of theoretical frameworks in the studies.

To identify this relevance, the aims, methods, and results stated in the abstracts of the theses were evaluated, the subject headings addressed in the theses were examined, and in cases of doubt, the full text was reviewed. Final decisions were made through the joint evaluation of the authors. Using the keywords *nursing*, *doctoral thesis*, and *nursing management*, 2,000 studies were screened, and their abstracts and full texts, when necessary, were examined by the researchers, resulting in 57 theses being included in the study. Agreement among the authors was sought during the inclusion/exclusion process.

The theses included in the study were examined according to various parameters (year of publication, type of research, department/discipline, advisor, author) and the presence of a theoretical framework. Two studies were identified at the intersection of nursing management and the use of theory in research.

Limitations of the Study: The earliest postgraduate thesis in the CoHETC database dates back to 1959. Although efforts were made to access all these theses prepared in relevant fields in Türkiye within the scope of the screening, there is a possibility that some theses meeting the inclusion criteria could not be accessed because they were not available in the CoHETC database (despite there being 3,287 recorded theses in the field of nursing, only 2,000 were accessible). This constitutes one of the limitations of the present study. The full texts of all 57 theses included in the study were accessible through the system.

3. Results

The parameters examined were determined by the data recording system of CoHETC as thesis type, field (subject), department/discipline, advisor, author, year, and presence of a theoretical framework. In the analysis of the keywords parameter, a search using the keywords "nursing" and "doctoral" (thesis type) yielded 2,000 studies, of which 57 doctoral theses in the field of nursing management were included in the study; among these, only two theses were found to address theoretical frameworks. The field, thesis number, and title information of the 57 theses examined within the scope of the study are presented in Appendix 1. Regarding the distribution of theses by publication year, it was found that the highest number of theses were completed in 2022 (13 theses), followed by 2024 (12 theses), 2020 (8 theses), 2025 (7 theses), 2023 (6 theses), 2021 and 2019 (4 theses each), and 2018 (3 theses) (Figure 1). When examining the proportion of the included theses to the total number of theses completed in the corresponding year, it was determined that the theses completed in 2023, 2021, 2019, and 2018 were below the average (Figure 1).

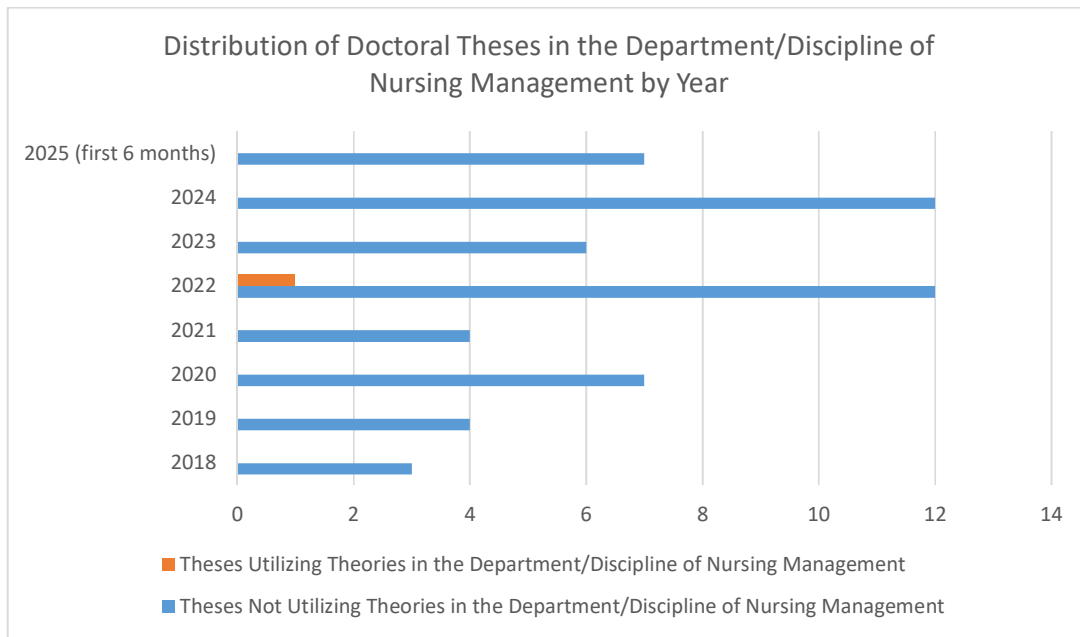


Figure 1. Distribution of Doctoral Theses in the Department/Discipline of Nursing Management by Year

Among the doctoral theses in nursing management evaluated between 2018 and 2025, there were **six** advisors with the title of Professor (Prof. Dr.) and **four** with the title of Associate Professor (Doç. Dr.). It was determined that the two studies in nursing management that utilized theories were supervised by advisors holding the title of Professor (Prof. Dr.). (Figure 2)

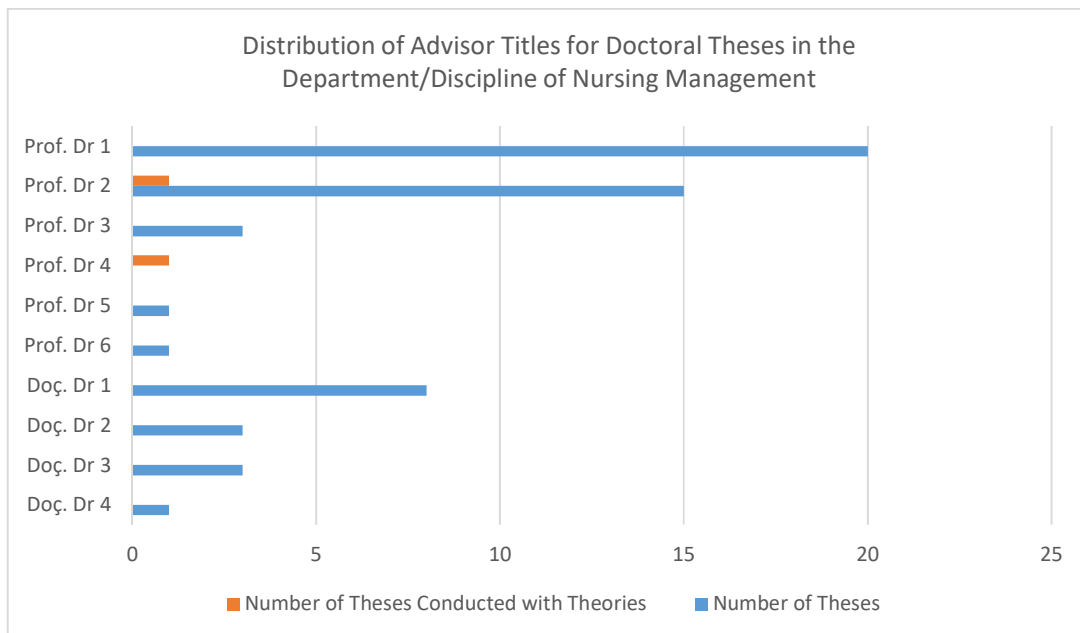


Figure 2. Distribution of Advisor Titles for Doctoral Theses in the Department/Discipline of Nursing Management

In the doctoral theses within the Department/Discipline of Nursing Management, **two studies utilized theoretical frameworks**. These theses were structured based on "Watson's Theory of Human Caring" and "Duchscher's Transition Shock Model."

DISCUSSION

Considering the years in which the theses were completed, 2022 stands out as the year with the highest number of completed theses, while 2018 has the lowest. Taking into account that the second half of 2025 has not yet been completed, the findings indicate that, in the Department/Discipline of Nursing Management, 2022 ranks first with 22.8% of the theses completed. In Demirkaya's postgraduate thesis research, 32 doctoral theses in nursing management were evaluated (Demirkaya, 2020). This suggests that 2022 witnessed an increase in academic interest and productivity in this field. Such growth may be attributed to several factors, including heightened interest in addressing managerial issues in healthcare systems in the post-pandemic period, academic incentives, or a higher number of graduates from doctoral programs during that time.

When examining the academic titles of the advisors for doctoral theses completed in the Department/Discipline of Nursing Management, it is observed that the majority of the theses were supervised by faculty members holding the titles of Professor (n=6) and Associate Professor (n=4). Similar results were reported in the study by Kara and Işık, which evaluated nursing management theses (Kara & Işık, 2024). This finding indicates that doctoral-level thesis studies are generally conducted under the supervision of faculty members with high academic seniority and experience. The predominance of professors and associate professors as advisors reflects the field's requirement for academic depth and expertise, while also highlighting the importance of experienced guidance for producing high-quality scientific work. Furthermore, the distribution of advisor titles underscores the active contribution of highly ranked academics in the doctoral process within this field.

In this study, it was found that doctoral theses in the field of nursing management rarely adopted a theoretical framework, with only two theses identified as being structured based on Watson's Theory of Human Caring and Duchscher's Transition Shock Model. This indicates that theory-based practices and research in the field of nursing management are limited. **However**, theories not only ground nursing practice on a scientific basis but also provide structural coherence and consistency in research, thereby enhancing the generalizability and applicability of findings (Alligood, 2013). Given the interdisciplinary nature and practice-oriented structure of nursing science, it is essential to bridge theoretical knowledge with practice. Theories serve as a critical tool for grounding not only clinical practices but also managerial decisions in scientific evidence. Research with a theoretical framework offers systematic guidance both in the formulation of research questions and in the interpretation of findings (Parker & Smith, 2010). Similarly, in the study conducted by Ede and Uysal, the use of theories in postgraduate theses in Türkiye was evaluated. **In line** with the present findings, the number of doctoral theses in nursing management was found to be low (Ede & Uysal, 2021).

The limited use of theoretical foundations in the field of nursing management suggests that academic development in this area has, to some extent, remained confined to practical approaches. Increasing theory-based studies is expected to both strengthen the academic prestige of nursing management and contribute to the development of more systematic and solution-oriented approaches to complex managerial problems encountered in practice. In this

context, the fact that only two doctoral theses in nursing management were based on a theoretical model is noteworthy and reveals a significant gap in the field. Structuring future studies within a theoretical framework is important both for the scientific advancement of the discipline and for ensuring that the knowledge produced can be effectively applied in practice.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the analysis of doctoral theses conducted in the Department/Discipline of Nursing Management by year, advisor title, and theoretical foundation reveals the academic trends and areas for development in the field. The near absence of theoretical **model use highlights** the need for theory-based research in nursing management. In this context, in order to increase the production of field-specific theoretical knowledge and to ground management practices on stronger foundations, **it is of great importance that theoretical frameworks support doctoral-level studies.**

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Appendix 1: Fields, Thesis Numbers, and Titles of the Theses Examined in the Study

	Tez No	Tez Başlığı
1	928911	A model proposal for the contribution of local governments in meeting the healthcare needs of the community
2	939774	Evaluation of the perception of gender-based career barriers in nursing in the context of glass concepts: A scale development study
3	939778	Tendencies of nurses to migrate abroad in the context of the international mobility of the healthcare workforce: A scale development study and an application
4	942913	Opinions of nurse managers and nurses on the supervision of patient care and the development of the nursing care evaluation form
5	942948	Healthcare access experiences of Syrians in Turkey
6	945332	Adaptation of the Hess Professional Nursing Governance Index into Turkish and identification of factors associated with nurses' perceptions of governance
7	942914	Experiences of nurses educated in Turkey regarding their working lives abroad: A qualitative study
8	861678	Healthcare professionals' views on male nurses: A qualitative study
9	862711	Planning the required nursing workforce for the hospital emergency department: A public training and research hospital example
10	862942	Opinions and experiences regarding lean nursing: A model proposal
11	917404	Nurse managers' views on nursing care delivery methods and the effect of implementing the primary nursing method
12	909006	The relationship between organizational justice perception and job satisfaction among nurses: A systematic review and meta-analysis study
13	909207	Problems, causes, and solution proposals related to nursing records: A retrospective and qualitative study
14	880601	Development of a clinical placement method for nurses working in public hospitals and its effect on nursing outcomes
15	888405	The relationship between nursing characteristics in hospitals and patient outcomes
16	888422	Development of the Value-Based Management in Nursing Scale
17	883967	Occupational anxiety among nurses: A scale development study
18	865389	The impact of post-2000 health policies and legal regulations on the nursing profession
19	867561	Nurses' views on motivation and the development of the Nurse Motivation Scale
20	794081	Development of the Autonomous Behavior in Professional Roles Scale for nurses: A qualitative study
21	778490	Physicians', nurses', and patients' views on artificial intelligence and robot nurses
22	781576	Nurse managers' views on nurse empowerment: A qualitative study
23	811857	Examination of the effect of leadership styles on nurses' job satisfaction through meta-analysis
24	805021	The effect of problem-solving and decision-making training on nurse managers' problem-solving and decision-making skills
25	805075	Design of a web-based nursing orientation training and its effect on perception of the work environment
26	782727	The effect of a program structured according to "Watson's Theory of Human Caring" on nurses' perceptions of the nurse manager approach and their attitudes towards the institution
27	818620	Development of the Nurses' Attitude Towards Patient and Patient Relative Violence Scale
28	755520	Determination of managerial ethical principles to be followed by nursing services managers
29	757352	Development of an attitude scale by determining healthcare professionals' views on quality management
30	759466	Diversity management practices in healthcare services and a scale development study for nurses
31	733455	Determining the effectiveness of interdisciplinary teamwork in healthcare services
32	734111	Adaptation of the Teamwork Perception Scale into Turkish and the relationship between nurses' teamwork perceptions, professional collaboration, and communication
33	709837	The relationship between presenteeism of nurses working in hospitals and missed nursing care
34	715148	The relationship between nurses' professional value perception and contextual performance levels
35	715196	Intergenerational differences in professionalization and professional commitment in nursing and the influencing factors: A qualitative study
36	716018	Development of an intellectual capital scale for healthcare institutions and determining its relationship with innovative work behavior among nurses
37	720436	Development of the Nursing Professional Adaptation Scale

38	722369	Factors affecting nurses' workaholism, work-life balance, and burnout levels, and the relationships among them
39	702404	A scale development study on nurses' perceptions of discrimination
40	696928	Development of the Nurses' Attitude Towards Time Management Scale
41	681359	Determination of the skills required for nurse managers using the Delphi method and comparison with the skills they possess
42	682326	Determination of the structure, functioning, and characteristics of nursing services management in university hospitals and a model proposal
43	629201	The effect of the simulation strategy on strengthening nursing students' perceptions of professional readiness
44	693256	Experiences of foreign national nurses regarding their working life: A qualitative study
45	630767	Nurse managers' approaches to female employees exposed to domestic violence
46	651581	Development and implementation of the Nurses' Attitude Towards Workplace Risks Scale
47	634144	Nurses' perceptions of empowerment and control over practices: Nurse and patient outcomes
48	630766	The effect of an occupational health and safety improvement program on employees' health behaviors and perceptions of safety culture
49	651580	Experiences of physicians, nurses, and midwives regarding the management of women's health services provided to refugees
50	651676	Adaptation of the Job Characteristics Model Scale into Turkish and determination of the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance among nurses
51	550012	Establishment of nursing services management standards
52	549879	Determination of the relationship between political sensitivity and perception of organizational democracy among nurses
53	578288	Determination of healthcare professionals' views on feminization and development of an attitude scale towards female employees
54	553785	Development of a self-efficacy scale for nurse managers and determination of its relationship with decision-making
55	540979	The effect of perceptions of manager, colleagues, and organizational support on nurses' psychological well-being and job performance
56	541945	Nurse managers' views on hiring and retaining nurses: A qualitative study
57	493301	Perceived source of power among nurse managers: A scale development study
