

## **The Bibliometric Profile of Doctoral Theses in the Field of Nursing Management in Türkiye: An Evaluation from a Public Health Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

**Objective:** This study aims to examine the characteristics of doctoral theses completed in the Department of Nursing Management in Türkiye and to identify the topic orientations studied within the field of public health.

**Method:** This study is a retrospective and descriptive bibliometric research. It examined postgraduate doctoral theses archived in the Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (CoHETC). A total of 2,000 doctoral theses in nursing completed between 2018 and the first half of 2025 were evaluated. The theses were accessed via the detailed search engine on the website <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tarama.jsp> by selecting “Department of Nursing Management” in the department section and marking “doctoral” in the thesis type section. The retrieved theses were coded and grouped in the SPSS 23 program prepared by the researcher, and descriptive statistics were used for the evaluation.

**Results:** It was found that 23% of the theses were concentrated in 2022, professors supervised 74%, 84.2% were completed at Istanbul University, and 57.9% had nurses as the sample group. All these were accessible in full text, and 4% employed a theoretical framework. Additionally, 59.7% of the theses were conducted in a single phase, 26% used a qualitative design, 84% utilized researcher-developed forms, and 28% aimed to determine opinions. Regarding subject areas, 56% focused on health management, 11% on occupational health, and 9% on the health workforce.

**Conclusion:** The study shows that theses are concentrated mainly in the field of health management. These trends are of a nature that can strengthen the existing body of knowledge in nursing management within the scope of preventive health services and contribute to the practical dimension of the field. It is recommended to support further research topics that address current public health priorities and promote interdisciplinary collaboration.

**Keywords:** Nursing management, doctoral thesis, postgraduate education, bibliometrics, public health, sustainable health

## 1. Introduction

Public health focuses on improving the overall health of the community by enhancing individual health through various means, including disease prevention, screening, and treatment (Masters et al., 2017). Public health research plays a critical role in strengthening health systems, improving their performance and impact on public health, and adding value to society, as it provides important information on disease trends, risk factors, the outcomes of treatments or health interventions, patterns of care, healthcare utilization, and costs (Institute of Medicine, 2009). There are several significant challenges affecting public health. These include demographic changes and an aging population, increasing need for efficient use of resources, demand for new skills among health professionals, globalization of health problems, epidemics of non-communicable diseases, migration, disasters, climate change, and the shift of focus from prevention to treatment (Public Health Research, 2020). Public health, by its very nature, is an interdisciplinary field, and addressing patient, individual, and community health from a public health perspective can contribute to healthcare delivery, enhance managerial roles, and optimize community health (Çınaroğlu & Avcı, 2013). The World Health Organization (WHO) Health Emergencies Programme operates in collaboration with countries and international stakeholders to strengthen preparedness capacity for all risk factors that threaten global health security. In this context, global efforts are being carried out to investigate, prevent, and effectively manage health threats prone to infectious disease outbreaks and pandemics; to strengthen and expand systems that enable the rapid detection, analysis, and assessment of potential threats to public health; and to ensure rapid, systematic, and effective responses to acute health emergencies (WHO, 2025).

Among the many situations identified as public health emergencies, the nursing discipline remains dynamically engaged, standing out worldwide as an advocate for health equity (Rudner, 2021; Çevirme & Kurt, 2020). Nursing is a professional discipline based on a systematic and holistic approach aimed at protecting, promoting, and improving the health of individuals, families, and communities (Erer et al., 2017). Rooted in a holistic approach to humanity and ethical values, this profession encompasses not only clinical practice but also multifaceted responsibilities such as management, education, research, and policy development (Köse, 2023). Nurses are expected to acquire and maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to provide continuous professional development, person-centered, safe, and effective care, and to sustain these competencies in line with advancing technology (King et al., 2021). In this context, the key factors in maximizing the nursing profession include self-motivation, strong and supportive leadership, and a positive workplace culture, making it essential for educators and managers to understand the factors that enhance the impact of continuous professional development on career advancement (Kalateh Sadati et al., 2021). Nursing management encompasses the processes of planning, organizing, implementing, evaluating, and supervising nursing services (Üner & Baykal, 2024). Nurse managers not only undertake traditional managerial duties such as workforce planning and resource management but also support the professional development of their colleagues, develop strategies to meet changing health needs in a changing world, and enhance patient care standards for the sustainability of health (Yıldız & Yıldırım, 2021).

The variety of practice settings in nursing—including hospitals, primary healthcare centers, community health centers, school health services, workplace health units, home care services, long-term care facilities, disaster areas, prisons, military healthcare institutions, elderly care centers, academic institutions, and research centers—represents a broad scope from a public health perspective (Açıkgöz & Baykal, 2023; Yolcu & Demir, 2023). This diversity demonstrates that nursing is not limited to clinical practice but also carries strategic and managerial responsibilities aimed at improving and sustaining community health (Çiftçiöğlu & Tunç, 2022).

In this regard, the analysis of doctoral theses in the field of nursing management contributes to strengthening the scientific foundation of the profession, shaping future managerial practices, and developing new strategies that will benefit public health. In particular, management theses addressed from a public health perspective can serve as an important guide in restructuring nursing services with a community-centered, preventive, and holistic approach, thereby enriching the literature.

This study aims to evaluate the bibliometric profile of doctoral theses in the field of nursing management conducted in Türkiye from a public health perspective.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This study is a retrospective and descriptive bibliometric research. It was conducted to retrospectively examine the characteristics of doctoral theses completed in the Department of Nursing Management in Türkiye and to determine the topic orientations studied within the framework of the public health discipline. In the present study, postgraduate theses completed in the Department of Nursing Management and archived in the Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (CoHETC) were examined, and a total of 57 doctoral theses completed between 2018 and the first half of 2025 were evaluated. All 57 theses included in the study were accessed in full without any access restrictions.

The study data were obtained using a data collection form prepared by the author, which included variables such as the year of the thesis, the number and title of supervisors, the name of the university, the aim(s) of the thesis, research design, sample characteristics, access status, and measurement tools. The theses were accessed online between 07–27 July 2025 via the detailed search engine on the website [<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tarama.jsp>](<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tarama.jsp>), by selecting “Department of Nursing Management” in the department section and “doctoral” in the thesis type section.

The data were coded into the SPSS 23 program for numerical analysis and evaluated using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages.

## **3. Results**

In this study, 57 doctoral theses completed in the Department/Division of Nursing Management were examined. The descriptive characteristics of the doctoral theses conducted in the Department/Division of Nursing Management are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Characteristics of Doctoral Theses Conducted in the Department/Division of Nursing Management

<b>Descriptive Characteristics</b>	<b>Doctoral Theses (n=57)</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
2018	3	5.0
2019	4	7.0
2020	8	14.0
2021	4	7.0
2022	13	23.0
2023	6	11.0
2024	12	21.0
2025 (first half)	7	12.0
<b>Supervisor Title</b>		
Professor	42	74.0
Associate Professor	15	26.0
<b>University Completed</b>		
Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa	48	84.2
University of Health Sciences	3	5.2
Dokuz Eylul University	2	3.5
Bandırma Onyedi Eylul University	2	3.5
Akdeniz University	1	1.8
Istanbul Okan University	1	1.8
<b>Sample Group</b>		
Nurse*	33	57.9
Nurse, nurse manager, and academic nurse	9	15.8
Nurses and other healthcare professionals**	5	8.7
Nurse manager	4	7.0
Nurse, patient, and patient relative	4	7.0
Nurse, document	1	1.8
Local community, healthcare worker, and local administrator	1	1.8
<b>Access Status</b>		
Full-text available	57	100.0
<b>Use of Theory</b>		
Used	2	4.0
Not used	55	96.0

\*This category includes students, male nurses, and foreign-national nurses.

\*\* This category includes healthcare workers, physicians, and midwives.

It was determined that 23% of the doctoral theses were completed in 2022, and professors supervised 74%. Among the theses included in the study, 84.2% were completed at Istanbul University, and 57.9% had nurses as the sample group. It was also observed that the full text of all theses was accessible and that theories were used in 4% of the theses.

**Table 2.** Research Method Characteristics of Doctoral Theses Conducted in the Department/Division of Nursing Management

<b>Descriptive Characteristics</b>	<b>Doctoral Theses (n=57)</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Number of Phases</b>		
Single phase	34	59.7
Two phases	21	36.8
More than two phases	2	3.5
<b>Research Type</b>		
Qualitative	15	26.0
Scale development	13	23.0
Mixed (qualitative, quantitative, methodological)	10	18.0
Descriptive and correlational	10	18.0
Scale adaptation	4	7.0
Quasi-experimental	3	5.0
Retrospective literature review	2	3.0
<b>Data Collection Tools</b>		
Use of existing scales in the literature	9	16.0
Questionnaire, semi-structured form, question form, scale development, model development (researcher-developed)	48	84.0

An examination of the research method characteristics of the theses revealed that 59.7% were conducted in a single phase, 26% employed a qualitative design, and 84% were carried out using forms developed by the researchers.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Doctoral Theses Conducted in the Department/Division of Nursing Management by Research Aim

<b>Research Aim</b>	<b>Doctoral Theses (n:57)</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Determining opinions	16	28.0
Developing a scale	13	23.0
Evaluating effects	12	21.0
Examining relationships	8	14.0
Adapting a scale	4	7.0
Developing a model/method	4	7.0

In the study, an examination of the aims of the theses revealed that they were primarily focused on determining opinions (28%), followed by scale development (23%), effect evaluation (21%), relationship analysis (14%), scale adaptation (7%), and model/method development (7%).

**Table 4.** Distribution of Doctoral Theses Conducted in the Department/Division of Nursing Management by Public Health Research Topics

<b>Research Topic</b>	<b>Doctoral Theses (n:57)</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Health services research	3	5.0
Health workforce	5	9.0
Migrant health	2	4.0
Occupational health	6	11.0
Health policies	1	2.0
Use of artificial intelligence	1	2.0
Health education	3	5.0
Violence	2	4.0
International health	1	2.0
Health management	33	56.0

In the study, an examination of the public health research topics of doctoral theses conducted in the Department/Division of Nursing Management revealed that 56% focused on health management, 11% on occupational health, and 9% on the health workforce.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

In this study, doctoral theses conducted in the field of nursing management in Türkiye were examined from a public health perspective, allowing for the identification of topic orientations within the discipline of public health through a retrospective approach.

The findings indicate that doctoral theses in the field of nursing management in Türkiye were concentrated in certain years, institutions, and supervisor profiles. Similar results were also reported in Demirkaya's study (Demirkaya, 2020). The fact that a large proportion of these theses were completed in 2022 suggests an increasing academic interest in the field of nursing management in recent years. This increase in academic productivity may be associated with the growing importance of managerial roles in health systems and the need to define the complex skills these roles require scientifically.

The high proportion of professors serving as supervisors indicates that doctoral research is being guided by experienced academics, which may contribute to maintaining methodological rigor and scientific quality. Furthermore, the predominance of theses completed at Istanbul University aligns with previous literature. For instance, Kaya and Işık's study on leadership among nurse managers found that doctoral theses in the field of nursing management were completed mainly at Istanbul University (Kaya & Işık, 2024). This suggests that the institution occupies a central position in academic production in this field.

The fact that nurses were the most frequently selected sample group reflects the critical role of the nursing profession in health services management. Full-text accessibility of all theses is another strength, as it supports academic transparency and facilitates knowledge sharing. However, the low rate of theory use is noteworthy. Theoretical frameworks in nursing are not only an academic necessity but also a critical tool guiding decision-making processes in public health practice. The scarcity of theory-based research may represent a gap in establishing a solid

scientific foundation for policy development and public health interventions in nursing management.

In terms of research design, most of theses were single-phase, qualitative studies utilizing researcher-developed data collection tools. This reflects a tendency toward in-depth data collection and the development of original tools. Increasing methodological diversity and encouraging the use of standardized measurement instruments could enhance the validity and reliability of findings.

The results further reveal that a significant portion of the theses focused on determining opinions and developing scales. This trend reflects the field's efforts to assess its current state and contribute new measurement and evaluation tools.

From a public health standpoint, the existence of potential threats necessitates the adoption of managerial measures both globally and in Türkiye (Ak, 2023; Partigöç & Tarhan, 2021). While the range of topics addressed within the public health discipline was limited, it is notably, that over half of the doctoral theses in nursing management focused on health management. This suggests that the field's primary focus is on management processes and organizational structures. Encouragingly, topics such as occupational health (11%), health workforce (9%), and health services research (5%)—all of which are highly relevant to nursing management from a public health perspective—were also represented, though at relatively lower rates. Given their direct impact on the sustainability of health and the functioning of the healthcare system, increasing research capacity in these areas could provide an important opportunity to address factors threatening community health.

## CONCLUSION

This study, by examining doctoral theses conducted in the field of nursing management in Türkiye from a public health perspective, provides a comprehensive overview of the field's topic orientations, methodological preferences, and academic production characteristics. The findings indicate that the theses have limitations in addressing the public health discipline and are concentrated mainly in the area of health management. These trends have the potential to strengthen the existing body of knowledge in nursing management and contribute to the practical dimension of the field. It is recommended to support further research topics that encompass current public health priorities and promote interdisciplinary collaboration.

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