

Araştırma Makalesi

Analysis of Graduate Theses Related to Leadership Carried out in the Field of
Nursing in Turkish Universities

Türk Üniversitelerinde Hemşirelik Alanında Yürütülen Liderlik Konulu Lisansüstü
Tezlerin Analizi

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to analyze different variables of graduate theses related to leadership conducted in the field of nursing in Turkish Universities.

Methods: This is a bibliometric and descriptive study. The search for the theses was carried out in May 2022 in the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education using “leadership” and “nursing” as descriptors.

Results: A total of 48 theses were included. Most theses (45.83%) were published between 2017 and 2022. 66.67% of the theses were conducted at public universities. Almost all the theses were produced by the departments of nursing, nursing management, or nursing fundamentals and management. In most of the theses, the samples consisted of staff nurses. Quantitative approaches were present in all the theses and scales were the most used data collection instruments (56.25%). The most discussed topics were “leadership behaviors” (29.17%), “leadership styles” (20.83%), and “transformational leadership” (14.58%).

Conclusion: It is suggested that leadership be more widely discussed across different nursing departments and featured in a greater number of doctoral theses, primarily through qualitative approaches. Nursing students should be considered more as research samples, as it is important to investigate future nurses’ opinions and knowledge about leadership.

Keywords: Graduate Thesis, Leadership, Nursing

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışma, Türk üniversitelerinde hemşirelik alanında gerçekleştirilen liderlikle ilgili lisansüstü tezlerine ilişkin farklı değişkenleri analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem: Bu çalışma bibliyometrik ve tanımlayıcıdır. Tezlerin aramasında Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) Ulusal Tez Merkezi’nde detaylı arama sayfasında tez adı kısmında “liderlik” anahtar kelimesi ve konu bölümünde “hemşirelik” seçildi.

Bulgular: Toplamda 48 tez dahil edilmiştir. Tezlerin çoğu (%45,83) 2017-2022 yılları arasında yayımlanmıştır. Tezlerin %66,67’si devlet üniversitelerinde yapılmıştır. Neredeyse tüm tezler hemşirelik, hemşirelik yönetimi veya hemşirelik esasları ve yönetimi departmanları tarafından üretilmiştir. Tezlerin çoğunda örnekleme hemşireler oluşturmıştır. Tezlerin hepsinde nicel yaklaşımlar bulunup ve en çok kullanılan veri toplama aracı ölçekler olmuştur (%56,25). En çok tartışılan konular “liderlik davranışları” (%29,17), “liderlik tarzları” (%20,83) ve “dönüşümcü liderlik” (%14,58) olmuştur.

Sonuç: Liderliğin farklı hemşirelik departmanlarında ve daha çok doktora tezlerinde ağırlıklı olarak nitel yaklaşımlar aracılığıyla geniş çapta tartışılması önerilmektedir. Geleceğin hemşirelerinin liderlik konusundaki görüş ve bilgilerinin araştırılması önemli olduğundan, hemşirelik öğrencileri daha çok araştırma örnekleme olarak ele alınmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hemşirelik, Liderlik, Lisansüstü Tezi

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INTRODUCTION

Managing is one of the many roles of nurses (Aydemir Gedük, 2018). Management includes activities such as planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling (Baykal & Türkmen, 2022). All these functions must be properly developed by nurse leaders, as their attitudes will influence staff nurses' job satisfaction and retention, and consequently the quality of care (Kiwanuka et al., 2021; Ngabonzima et al., 2020).

Several styles of leadership can be adopted by nurses, and in some studies, it is stated that no type of leadership can be used at all times, thus nurses must be flexible and lead according to the existing situation (Perkins et al., 2020; Specchia et al., 2021). Authentic, autocratic, democratic, charismatic, laissez-faire, servant, transactional, and transformational are among the most discussed styles of leadership. Authentic leaders are transparent and self-aware; autocratic leaders make their decisions without consulting their teams; unlike democratic leaders, who value the opinions of others; charismatic leaders are motivational; laissez-faire leaders focus on the freedom of the team members; while servant ones favor the personal growth of the other employees; transactional leaders are focused on the organization's goals, and transformational leaders seek to empower their followers (Baykal & Türkmen, 2022).

Nurse managers have the autonomy to make decisions that will directly affect nursing care (Oshodi et al., 2019). Nursing leaders must manage their teams, provide quality working conditions, support and motivate staff nurses so that they can provide efficient and effective care (Specchia et al., 2021). In the same way that nurse leaders can favor the provision of quality care through leadership that values, motivates, inspires, and empowers nurses (Fischer, 2017; Specchia et al., 2021) they can also adopt a toxic leadership through which the entire nursing process can be harmed, thus threatening the patient safety (Labrague, 2021).

In a survey carried out in the United States, a relationship between the attitudes of the leader and the level of nurses' job satisfaction and intention to leave was observed (Perkins et al., 2020). In a study from Lebanon, it was observed that transactional and transformational leadership styles positively influenced staff nurses (Sabbah et al., 2020). Similar results were found in a study conducted in Turkey, in which the implementation of transformational leadership increased staff nurses' job satisfaction (Uslu Sahan & Terzioglu, 2022). The findings of an integrative review showed that nurse managers' leadership styles interfere with the productivity of the nursing team and the quality of care (Kiwanuka et al., 2021).

Nursing leaders' attitudes are among the most common reasons given by nurses for job dissatisfaction and intention to leave (Anselmo-Witzel et al., 2020; Perkins et al., 2020). It is believed that especially the retention of new generations of nurses will be a challenge for health systems worldwide (Anselmo-Witzel et al., 2020). Thus, nurse managers have increasingly fundamental roles in terms of promoting staff nurses' job satisfaction and retention (Alharbi et al., 2022).

Turkey faces problems due to nursing shortages (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2021) and it is believed that the situation will worsen in the coming years due to the abandonment of the profession and the emigration of Turkish nurses in search of better working conditions (Elmacioğlu, 2021). One of the strategies to reduce the shortage of nurses would therefore be the training of more empathetic nurse managers with the appropriate knowledge to lead the nursing team. However, what is observed is that nurses need to improve in the art of leading (Ardahan & Konal, 2017; Labrague, 2021; Silva et al., 2016). In-service training should be provided for nurses to develop leadership skills (Ardahan & Konal, 2017). Nursing students have difficulties in applying leadership in practice, as the subject is little addressed in theoretical classes and is almost completely ignored during practical nursing education (Silva et al., 2016). The increase in knowledge on such an important subject can be favored by research carried out in master's and doctoral programs in nursing.

In Turkey, master's degrees in nursing began in 1968 and have since developed rapidly. In master's programs, students

improve their skills to evaluate and interpret data through scientific research and then rely on evidence to increase the quality of care. Turkish doctoral programs in nursing began in 1972. Doctoral programs in nursing aim to carry out independent research with broad and in-depth analysis of issues relevant to nursing, providing new perspectives to improve care (Öztuğ, 2017; Ergöl, 2011). It is important to examine what is being scientifically produced in the field of nursing to disseminate knowledge, identify gaps and provide recommendations for future research. Given the importance of the topic, the purpose of this study was to analyze different variables of graduate theses related to leadership conducted in the field of nursing in Turkish Universities.

METHODS

Design

This is a bibliometric and descriptive study.

Sample

The study includes graduate nursing theses related to leadership conducted in the field of nursing in Turkish universities.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria involved the selection of theses related to leadership in the nursing field, conducted within the nursing department and published in Turkish. The search was not limited by date. A total of 67 theses were identified, 14 of them were excluded because they were conducted by another department other than nursing, and 5 more theses were not included due to access restrictions. The remaining 48 theses met the inclusion criteria and were read in full. Of the 48 theses included in the study, 43 are master's theses and 5 are doctoral theses (Figure 1).

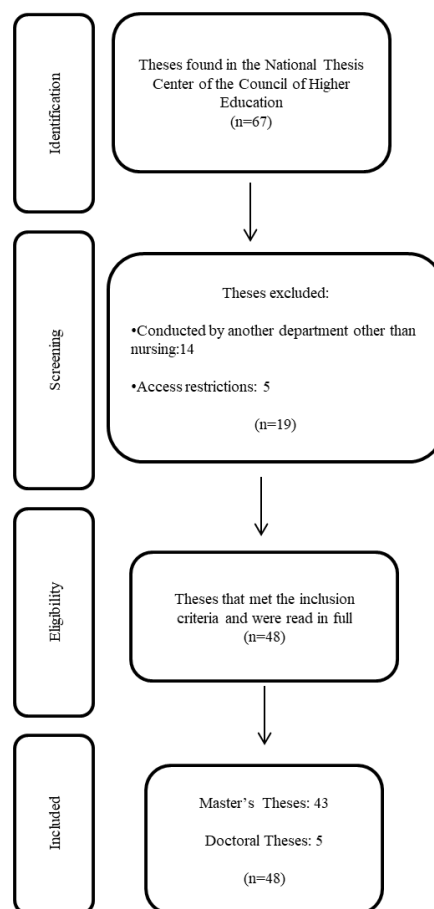


Figure 1. Research Flowchart

Data Collection

Data was collected through a search at the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education. The search was conducted in May 2022. The theses were searched by title through the descriptor “leadership” and by subject by selecting the descriptor “nursing”.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using a descriptive method. The 48 included theses were analyzed according to the following variables: year of publication, type of university, department of nursing where the study was conducted, study design, sample, data collection instruments, and subject addressed in the study. Percentage and frequency values were determined.

Ethical Considerations

Since this study involved the analysis of publicly accessible theses in the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education, approval from a Research Ethics Committee was not necessary according to the guidelines provided by the Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2020).

FINDINGS

It was identified that the theses included in this study were published between 1996 and 2022. Of the 48 theses, 89.59% (n=43) are master’s theses and 10.41% (n=5) are doctoral theses. Most theses (45.83%) were published between 2017 and 2022. Between 1996 and 2005 were published only 5 (10.42%) of the 48 theses (Table 1). Regarding the type of university; 66.67% of the theses were conducted at public universities (Table 2).

Table 1. Distribution of Theses by Year of Publication (n = 48)

Year	Master’s theses		Doctoral theses		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1996-2005	4	9.30	1	20.00	5	10.42
2007-2011	10	23.26	2	40.00	12	25.00
2012-2016	9	20.93	0	0	9	18.75
2017-2022	20	46.51	2	40.00	22	45.83
TOTAL	43	100	5	100	48	100

n: Number, %: Percent

Table 2. Distribution of Theses by Types of University

Type of University	Master’s theses		Doctoral theses		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Public	28	65.12	4	80.00	32	66.67
Private	15	34.88	1	20.00	16	33.33
TOTAL	43	100	5	100	48	100

n: Number, %: Percent

When examining the distribution of theses according to the nursing departments where they were conducted, it was observed that six departments were represented; 27 (56.25%) theses were carried out by the department of nursing, and 14 (29.17%) theses were conducted by the department of nursing management (Table 3). Regarding the methodology used in the theses included in this study, it was identified that, except for one study that used mixed methods, in all the theses quantitative approaches were adopted. The most common was the descriptive design, which corresponded to 58.33% (n=28) of the designs

used. A total of 62.50% (n=30) of theses had staff nurses as participants and only in 2 theses (4.16%) students were chosen as samples. Scales were the most used data collection instruments in both master's theses (58.13%) and doctoral theses (40.00%) (Table 4).

Table 3. Distribution of Theses by Department of Nursing

Department	Master's theses		Doctoral theses		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Nursing	25	58.13	2	40.00	27	56.25
Nursing Management	13	30.23	1	20.00	14	29.17
Nursing Fundamentals and Management	3	6.98	0	0	3	6.25
Public Health Nursing	0	0	2	40.00	2	4.17
Internal Medicine Nursing	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Psychiatric Nursing	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
TOTAL	43	100	5	100	48	100

n: Number, %: Percent

Table 4. Distribution of Theses by Methodology

Design	Master's theses		Doctoral theses		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Quantitative						
Descriptive	27	62.79	1	20.00	28	58.34
Descriptive and correlational	12	27.90	0	0	12	25.00
Descriptive and cross-sectional	2	4.65	0	0	2	4.17
Cross-sectional	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Experimental	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Evaluation research	0	0	1	20.00	1	2.08
Methodological	0	0	1	20.00	1	2.08
Methodological and quasi-experimental	0	0	1	20.00	1	2.08
Mixed-methods	0	0	1	20.00	1	2.08
TOTAL	5	100	43	100	48	100
Sample						
Nurses	29	67.44	1	20.00	30	62.50
Nurses and nurse managers	5	11.63	4	80.00	9	18.75
Nurse managers	7	16.28	0	0	7	14.58
Nursing students	2	4.65	0	0	2	4.17
TOTAL	43	100	5	100	48	100
Data collection instrument						
Scale	25	58.13	2	40.00	27	56.25
Scale and inventory	6	13.95	0	0	6	12.50
Scale and questionnaire	6	13.95	1	20.00	7	14.58
Questionnaire	3	6.98	0	0	3	6.25
Inventory	1	2.33	1	20.00	2	4.17
Questionnaire and inventory	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Scale, inventory, and form	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Scale, inventory, questionnaire, and interview	0	0	1	20.00	1	2.08
TOTAL	43	100	5	100	48	100

n: Number, %: Percent

A total of 15.397 participants took part in the 48 theses included in this study. Of this total, 13.562 were staff nurses. The master's thesis with the largest sample size had 1.065 and the doctoral thesis with the largest sample size had 653 nurse

participants. The one with the smallest sample size was a doctoral thesis which was conducted with 9 nurses and 9 nurse managers. On average the analyzed master's theses had 640.6 and doctoral theses had 260 participants (Table 5).

Table 5. Distribution of Sample by Participants' Category

Sample	Total sample size		Minimum sample size		Maximum sample size		Mean	
	Master's theses	Doctoral theses	Master's theses	Doctoral theses	Master's theses	Doctoral theses	Master's theses	Doctoral theses
Nurses	12.456	1.106	68	9	1,064	653	366.4	221.2
Nurse managers	1.358	155	15	9	258	80	113.2	38.8
Nursing students	322	-	22	-	300	-	161	-
TOTAL	14.136	1,261	99	18	1.622	733	640.6	260

Fifteen different topics related to leadership were addressed in the 48 theses included in this study, among them the most discussed subjects were “leadership behaviors” (29.17%), “leadership styles” (20.83%), and “transformational leadership” (14.58%), as shown in Table 6. Theses on leadership behaviors have shown that the behaviors of nurse leaders affect the motivation and job satisfaction of staff nurses. It was determined that Turkish nurse managers often adopt task-based behaviors, which negatively influence some of the essential characteristics of leaders, such as empathy, and the ability to delegate and provide effective feedback. The need to develop educational nursing programs that address leadership behaviors was identified. Theses that addressed the leadership style of nurse managers also pointed to its influence on team motivation and the need for leadership training. Furthermore, it was identified that characteristics of the institution, such as offering support to employees, having certificates of quality, and adopting reward-punishment models, affect the leadership style of nurse leaders. Positive effects of transformational leadership in the nursing field were pointed out in theses that addressed this style. It was identified that in the presence of transformational leaders, nurses work more satisfied. In addition, it was emphasized that transformational leaders instill confidence in other team members.

Table 6. Distribution of Theses by Subject

Subject	Master's theses		Doctoral theses		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Leadership behaviors	13	30.23	1	20.00	14	29.17
Leadership styles	10	23.26	0	0	10	20.83
Transformational leadership	6	13.95	1	20.00	7	14.58
Authentic leadership	2	4.65	0	0	2	4.17
Ethic leadership	2	4.65	0	0	2	4.17
Leadership practices	2	4.65	0	0	2	4.17
Servant leadership	2	4.65	0	0	2	4.17
Leadership and organizational commitment	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Leadership perceptions	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Leadership skills	1	2.33	1	20.00	2	4.17
Leadership treats	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Spiritual leadership	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Transformational and transactional leadership	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.08
Innovative leadership	0	0	1	20.00	1	2.08
Leadership development	0	0	1	20.00	1	2.08
TOTAL	43	100	5	100	48	100

n: Number, %: Percent

DISCUSSION

Universities are responsible for guiding researchers in different stages of their careers. In this scenario, master's and doctoral theses are essential for students to deepen their knowledge and contribute to the development of higher education (Ergöl, 2011; Nnebedum & Obuegbe, 2021), thus, it is important to explore the scientific production resulting from graduate theses. Regarding the types of theses covered in this study, 43 of them (89.59%) are master's theses. These results are in line with the percentage relative to the total number of master's and doctoral theses produced by Turkish nursing. A survey carried out in Turkey in 2017 identified a total of 4,887 graduate theses made in the field of nursing, of which 79.2% were master's theses and 20.8% were doctoral theses (Yılmaz et al., 2017). Similar results were found in studies carried out in Brazil, where there are also more master's programs in nursing than doctorates (Antonini et al., 2014; Pimenta et al., 2018).

The majority of the theses (45.83%) were conducted between 2017 and 2022. In recent years the number of universities in Turkey has increased, as well as the number of graduate education departments. Between 2015 and 2016 there were 128 nursing courses distributed among 92 public and 36 private universities (Kocaman & Arslan Yürümezoğlu, 2015). Two years later, Turkey already had 104 nursing courses in public universities and 38 in private universities, totaling 142 nursing courses in the country (Torun, 2019). The number of public universities has always exceeded the number of private universities over the years, and most graduate nursing courses are conducted at public universities, which explains the fact that most theses included in this study were conducted in public universities (Kocaman & Arslan Yürümezoğlu, 2015). These results are in line with the findings of similar studies carried out in Brazil, in which most of the graduate theses in nursing related to the researched subject were conducted in public universities (Antonini et al., 2014).

Most of the theses included in this study were carried out by the general nursing department. In previous studies conducted in Turkey to evaluate graduate theses in nursing, similar results were found (Ozpulat & Barmakci, 2015; Yılmaz et al., 2017). Concerning specific nursing departments where the theses were conducted, 29.17% of the theses were conducted by departments of nursing management, which was expected since the topic of this study was "leadership". A review carried out in Turkey showed that "leadership" was one of the most discussed subjects in graduate theses of departments of nursing management of Turkish universities (Demirkaya, 2020). It was identified that, among the total set of theses produced by the departments of nursing management at Turkish universities during the same period in which the 48 theses included in this study were produced, 18.46% addressed the theme of "leadership" (Yükseköğretim Kurulu, 2024).

Evidence-based practices are essential in nursing and the best sources of evidence are high-quality research. These surveys can have quantitative or qualitative designs. Quantitative approaches seek to test hypotheses or are conducted to answer questions determined by researchers through numbers and statistics (Nahcivan, 2015). On the other hand, qualitative research is focused on the experiences and behaviors of individuals. Both designs are essential for scientific development in the field of nursing (Erdoğan, 2015). Quantitative approaches were employed in all the theses included in this study, with one thesis incorporating a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Descriptive designs prevailed. Similar results were found in a previous study conducted in Turkey, where theses from the department of nursing management were examined. Only 5.70% of the theses employed qualitative approaches (Demirkaya, 2020). The descriptive design was also the most used in master's theses conducted by the department of internal nursing in Turkey, while in doctoral theses the experimental design was the most used (Karaman & Oksel, 2020). A study conducted in Iran to analyze master's theses carried out by nursing and midwifery programs also identified descriptive design as the most used (Motamet-Johromi & Dehghani, 2014). On the other hand, studies conducted in Turkey to analyze theses in the area of women's health nursing (Ay & Bilgiç, 2021) and to evaluate theses produced in the area of surgical nursing (Dönmez et al., 2018) identified that experimental studies were the most used.

In contrast, in a similar survey, carried out in Brazil, 76.6% of graduate theses in nursing had qualitative or mixed methodological approaches (Pimenta et al., 2018). According to the scientific literature, more qualitative research should be developed in the nursing field in Turkey since through this approach it is possible to identify lived experiences of patients and healthcare workers, which would provide subsidies to facilitate communication and favor the provision of holistic and humanized care (Öztürk Çopur et al., 2020). In most of the theses included in this study, the participants were nurses. When addressing an issue such as leadership, it was already expected that most participants would be staff nurses or nurse managers. This is consistent with the findings of a study carried out to analyze theses conducted by departments of nursing management at Turkish universities where most of the participants were also nurses (Demirkaya, 2020).

In 56.25% of the theses included in this study, scales were used as data collection instruments; in addition, in most of the remaining theses, scales were used associated with other instruments such as inventories or questionnaires. The same was observed in studies carried out in Turkey to evaluate theses developed between 1994 and 2019 by the department of nursing management (Demirkaya, 2020) and between 1991 and 2015 by the department of surgical nursing (Dönmez et al., 2018). In addition, in one of the studies, it was pointed out that in many of the doctoral theses, methodological designs are used and scales are developed, which may explain the use of scales in many master's theses included in this study since there is a very large variety of scales produced by Turkish nurses that can be used by other researchers (Demirkaya, 2020).

The topics most discussed in the included theses were “leadership behaviors”, “leadership styles”, and “transformational leadership”. According to the data obtained in the theses analyzed, behaviors and leadership styles of nurse managers have important influences on the motivation and job satisfaction of nurses. Leadership styles and leadership behaviors are topics much discussed in nursing both national (Gülkaya & Duygulu, 2020; Uslu Sahan & Terzioglu, 2022) and international studies (Labrague, 2021; Sabbah et al., 2020), as nurse managers' attitudes and leadership preferences will influence the behavior of other nurses in the team and consequently interfere with care (Labrague, 2021; Uslu Sahan & Terzioglu, 2022). As the theses included in this study, a survey carried out in Saudi Arabia also revealed that the job satisfaction of staff nurses is related to nurse managers' leadership skills (Alharbi et al., 2020).

According to the included theses, task-based behaviors are commonly adopted by Turkish nurse leaders, which negatively affects leadership. Similar results were found in a survey of Turkish nurses who stated that their nurse managers more often adopt task-based leadership behavior than employee-oriented behavior. However, in the same study, it was emphasized that such leadership behaviors did not affect nurses' job satisfaction but influenced the emergence of occupational stress (Ergün & Çelik, 2015). A study carried out in Brazil identified that task-based is also the leadership approach most adopted by Brazilian nurses (Rached et al., 2022). Task-based leadership is focused on planning activities, specifying objectives and roles, and monitoring employee performance. Relationship-oriented leadership, in turn, includes support for the employee to develop and be recognized (Moura et al., 2017). Transformational leadership is a good example of a relationship-oriented style since in this approach leaders have the ability to develop positive relationships with followers (Foulkes-Bert et al., 2019). In other words, transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers (Fischer, 2016). The transformational style seems to be suitable for the nursing field since, according to the included theses, in the presence of this kind of leadership, nurses trust their leaders more and work more satisfied. Transformational leadership is among the most discussed styles in the field of nursing. In many studies, it is indicated as a type of leadership capable of increasing nurses' job satisfaction (Iqbal et al., 2019; Uslu Sahan & Terzioglu, 2022). A study conducted in the Philippines revealed that transformational leadership, in addition to increasing nurses' job contentment, also decreases turnover (Labrague et al., 2020).

It was pointed out in the analyzed theses that health institutions' culture influences nurse managers' leadership styles. In addition, the findings of this study show that training could help nurse managers to adopt more appropriate leadership

styles. These results are in line with those from an integrative literature review conducted in 2020 which emphasized the need for organizational support and training in leadership to advance modern nursing (Kiwanuka et al., 2021). It was observed that leadership was addressed in several ways by nursing graduate students. However, more importance should be given to the topic that should be further explored.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to analyze different variables of graduate theses on leadership conducted in the field of nursing in Turkish universities. Most of the theses analyzed were master's theses, produced in public universities. Almost half of the theses were published after 2016. Almost all the theses were produced by the departments of nursing, nursing management, or nursing fundamentals and management, the other departments of nursing were practically not represented. The use of quantitative approaches was overwhelmingly evident, and scales were the most common data collection instruments. Most of the theses had staff nurses as samples. Several topics concerning leadership were identified, but the most discussed were leadership behaviors and styles. A relationship between the type of leadership adopted by nurse managers and the motivation and job satisfaction of the team was identified. On the other hand, the leadership style adopted in nursing is influenced by characteristics related to the health institution, such as support and professional recognition. The development of training was pointed out as a necessary measure for nurse managers to be able to adopt adequate leadership styles.

Leadership in nursing should be addressed in interdisciplinary and multidimensional contexts. Nursing leadership significantly influences the quality of healthcare, thus discussions on the implementation of innovative practices led by nurses in clinical settings and the analysis of the impact of leadership on nurse satisfaction and retention should extend beyond the nursing management department. Additionally, topics such as ethical leadership in clinical decision-making, leadership and the use of technologies in nursing, the development of emerging leaders in nursing, and leadership and resilience during crises in nursing can be further explored by the nursing management department itself. Examining interprofessional dynamics and the crucial roles played by nurse leaders in promoting healthy work environments can enhance the understanding of leadership in the health sector. It is also suggested that leadership should be discussed in a greater number of doctoral theses, through qualitative approaches. Further studies should use students as research samples since it is necessary to investigate the opinions and knowledge of future nurses about nursing leadership.

Araştırmanın Etik Yönü/Ethics Committee Approval: Since this study involved the analysis of publicly accessible theses in the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education, approval from a Research Ethics Committee was not necessary according to the guidelines provided by the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 2020).

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