

# An Evaluation Postgraduate Midwives' Attitudes Towards Postgraduate Education: Türkiye Example

## Lisansüstü Öğrenim Gören Ebelerin Lisansüstü Eğitime Yönelik Tutumlarının Değerlendirilmesi: Türkiye Örneği

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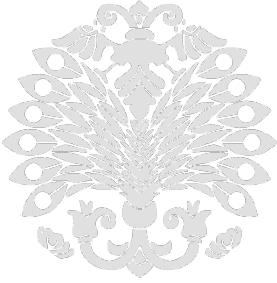


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### Abstract

**Objective:** To determine the academic and professional profiles of midwives studying at the Department of Midwifery in Türkiye, to examine their attitudes towards graduate education and related factors.

**Methods:** This study was carried out descriptive and cross-sectional study with 190 midwives actively continuing their postgraduate education and who met the inclusion criteria. The study was conducted between April 2021 and July 2021. Descriptive Information Form and Attitude Scale Towards Postgraduate Education were used to collect data.

**Results:** Thinking about becoming an academician in the future, being satisfied with the performance of the academicians in postgraduate education, thinking that clinical experience is necessary before postgraduate education were determined as the factors affecting the attitudes of midwives towards postgraduate education.

**Conclusion:** It is thought that determining the attitudes, expectations and problems of midwives towards graduate education and developing solutions for problems will increase positive attitudes towards graduate education.

**Keywords:** Midwifery, midwife, education, attitude

### Öz

**Amaç:** Türkiye'de Ebelik bölümünde okuyan ebelerin akademik ve mesleki profillerini belirlemek, lisansüstü eğitime yönelik tutumlarını ve ilişkili faktörleri incelemektir.

**Yöntemler:** Bu çalışma, lisansüstü eğitimlerine aktif olarak devam eden ve dahil edilme kriterlerini karşılayan 190 ebe ile tanımlayıcı ve kesitsel bir çalışma olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma, Nisan 2021-Temmuz 2021 tarihleri arasında yapılmıştır. Verilerin toplanmasında Tanımlayıcı Bilgi Formu ve Lisansüstü Eğitime Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği kullanılmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Gelecekte akademisyen olmayı düşünme, akademisyenlerin lisansüstü eğitimdeki performansından memnun olma, lisansüstü eğitim öncesi klinik deneyimin gerekli olduğunu düşünme, ebelerin lisansüstü eğitime yönelik tutumlarını etkileyen faktörler olarak belirlenmiştir.

**Sonuç:** Ebelerin lisansüstü eğitime yönelik tutum, beklenti ve sorunlarının belirlenmesi ve sorunlara çözüm önerileri geliştirilmesinin lisansüstü eğitime yönelik olumlu tutumları artıracakı düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ebelik, ebe, eğitim, tutum

## Introduction

Although midwifery is a profession as old as history, it only gained a professional identity with the start of a formal education process (Vermeulen et al., 2019). Midwifery education started in 1842 in Türkiye. Undergraduate education started in the 1997-1998 academic year and thus midwifery education was increased to the 4-year undergraduate level. The master's program was opened in the 2000-2001 academic year and the doctoral program in the 2013-2014 academic year. Since 2000, postgraduate midwifery education in Türkiye has accelerated each year, continues to develop both quantitatively and qualitatively (Çakır Koçak et al., 2017; Higher Education Council, 2013; Yılmaz and Karanisoğlu, 2016).

Postgraduate midwifery education is important in respect of midwives achieving professionalism in professional, and academic fields. It has also been reported to be important in respect of leadership in evidence-based care for women and newborns (Walker and Spendlove, 2018). The skills of change management, leadership, and critical thinking can be acquired through postgraduate education (Middleton et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2017).

In addition, midwives are equipped with the skills to be able to protect their specific professional roles and defend women (Wong et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2017). In a study of newly graduated nurses, it was reported that nurses who had received postgraduate education had higher levels of knowledge of practical and diagnostic reasoning skills (Doughty et al. 2021).

It should be taken into consideration that attitudes related to the postgraduate education of midwives could be a component which will improve postgraduate education. Although there are various studies in the literature examining the views and attitudes of postgraduate students in different health disciplines towards postgraduate education (Yılmaz et al., 2017; Işıkgöz, 2019, Doughty et al. 2021), there has also been a study examining the effects of midwifery undergraduate students' attitudes towards postgraduate education on their attitudes and behaviors to conduct scientific research (Ünal and Ekşioğlu, 2023). However, to the best of our knowledge, there is no study that has determined the attitudes to postgraduate education of midwives. There is a qualitative study which determined the opinions of students in a postgraduate midwifery program about midwifery as a profession. In that study, it was determined that the students had insufficient knowledge about the concept of professionalism. It was reported that midwives saw professionalism as an ongoing process because of the deficiencies in physical and social conditions, and the difficulties experienced (Çakaloz and

Çoban, 2019). In another study that examined the attitudes of nurses to postgraduate education, the predominant reasons for starting postgraduate education were determined to be gaining knowledge and confidence. It was also stated that continuing to work in the clinic at the same time as continuing postgraduate education was stressful and it was difficult to achieve a work-life balance (Ng et al., 2016).

There is a limited number of studies in literature that have been conducted with midwives undergoing postgraduate education in Midwifery Departments in Türkiye (Yücel et al., 2013). Midwives receiving postgraduate education are an important professional group, who will develop and carry forward both the theory and application of midwifery science. Therefore, determination of the attitudes of midwives towards postgraduate education and the factors affecting these is a marker of the academic and professional development of midwifery. It is also important in respect of discovering which aspects of midwifery postgraduate education are open to improvement.

The aim of this study was to determine the academic and professional profiles of midwives undergoing postgraduate education in Midwifery Departments in Türkiye, and to examine the attitudes to postgraduate education and related factors.

## Methods

**Study Design:** This descriptive, cross-sectional study included midwives who had completed at least one term of a postgraduate education program and were actively continuing with master's or doctoral education in branches of the Midwifery Department in Türkiye. Midwives were excluded from the study if they were taking postgraduate education programs in branches other than in the Midwifery Department (nursing, medical faculty, etc.).

**Sample and Participants:** A random sampling method was used in this study. To determine the number of midwives in postgraduate education (master's or doctorate) in Türkiye, a prepared Google form was sent to the WhatsApp group that included all the midwifery department heads. According to the data obtained based on unofficial information, approximately 438 midwives were actively continuing postgraduate education between April 2021 and July 2021, when the study was conducted. There was determined to be a midwifery master's program in 25 universities and a doctoral program in 10. A total of 190 students agreed to participate in the study and responded to the research questionnaire, giving a response rate of 43.3%.

**Data Collection:** The research data were collected with a questionnaire created with the cost-free, web-based software of Google Forms. The relevant questionnaire form was sent to the heads of the Midwifery Departments via official correspondence. The students on postgraduate midwifery programs were contacted through social media platforms (Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook). The questionnaire was delivered via social media platforms at 2-week intervals within the study period.

#### Data Collection Tools

**Descriptive Information Form:** It used in this study was prepared in accordance with the relevant literature (Yücel et al., 2013; Çakır Koçak et al., 2017) and comprised 30 items to elicit demographic and professional information, and questioning ideas about and experience of postgraduate education. Before application of the questionnaire to all the students, it was first applied to 3 faculty members in the Midwifery Department and to 3 midwifery postgraduate students. According to the feedback, the questionnaire was finalized.

**Attitude Scale Towards Postgraduate Education (ASTPGE):** It, which was adapted to Turkish by İlter in 2019, is a scale of 13 items in 3 sub-dimensions. The total scale points range from 15 to 75. The points obtained from the scale in total and from the subscales are interpreted with higher points indicating positive attitudes of the students towards postgraduate education (İlter, 2019). The necessary permission to use the scale in this study was obtained from the owner of the scale. The Cronbach alpha value of the scale has been determined to be 0.87 and, in this study, it was found to be 0.74.

**Ethical Approval:** Approval for the study was granted by the Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee of İstanbul University Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty (no: 74631 date: 14.04.2021). The data of the study participants was stored on Google Drive, and data confidentiality was assured by the researchers. All the study procedures were following the ethical standards of the institution and/or national research committee ethical standards, and the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and subsequent changes, or comparable ethical standards. The aim of the study was explained and a consent form was included in the questionnaire before the research questions.

#### Statistical Analysis:

Data analysis was done in IBM SPSS vn. 25 software program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Mean, standard deviation, and frequency values were used in the data analysis. Conformity of the data sets to normal distribution was evaluated with the Shapiro-Wilk test.

Differences in the groups were analyzed using the Chi-square test. In the comparisons of two independent groups, the Independent Samples t-test was used for data that showed normal distribution, and the Mann Whitney U-test for data that were not normally distributed. The attitudes to postgraduate education, year of education, and correlations were analyzed using the Pearson or Spearman correlation coefficient as appropriate. The data obtained were evaluated in a 95% confidence interval and a value of  $p < .05$  was accepted as statistically significant.

## Results

### Distribution Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Students

The study was completed with 190 midwives who completed the online questionnaire via Google Forms and were receiving postgraduate education, as 110 in a master's program and 80 in a doctoral program. The sociodemographic characteristics of the midwives in master's and doctoral programs are shown in Table 1. A statistically significant difference was determined between the midwives in respect of marital status, and the institution and unit where they worked ( $p < .001$ , Table 1).

### The Opinions of the Students related to Postgraduate Education

The opinions of the midwives in master's and doctoral education related to postgraduate education are shown in Table 2. The majority of the midwives were at the thesis stage, and a statistically significant difference was determined between the midwives in master's and doctoral education in respect of the number of terms completed, experience as an academician, thoughts of being an academician in the future, the appropriacy of the content of the postgraduate education, and their thoughts that clinical experience was necessary (Table 2,  $p < .05$ ).

In the posthoc analysis, there was a significant difference between the master's and doctoral students who were in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> term of lessons and had or did not have academician experience, and this difference was seen to be due to the group with academician experience. In the variable of thinking that clinical experience was necessary, the difference was due to those who stated 5 years or more of clinical experience was necessary.

### Opinions of the Students related to Postgraduate Education

The opinions of the midwives about postgraduate education are shown in Table 3. The vast majority of the midwives stated that they were taking postgraduate education to contribute to the professionalism and development of the midwifery profession, 46.3% that they wished to be an academician as they did not think they

were shown the respect they deserved in the clinic, 25% were currently working as an academician, and the conditions making postgraduate education most difficult were determined to be the working hours, workload, and administrative problems, such as not obtaining permission for time off from the

workplace, or organizing working hours according to the lesson program. The vast majority of the midwives (72.1%) found the content of the postgraduate programs to be appropriate.

**Table 1.**

**Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Midwives**

Characteristics	Master's		Doctorate		Total		Statistic	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	$\chi^2$	p
<b>Marital Status</b>							25.868	<.001
Married	32	29.1	27	33.8	85	44.7		
Single	78	70.9	53	66.2	105	55.3		
<b>Place of Work</b>							52.365*	<.001
Independent midwife	2	50	2	50	4	2.1		
State Hospital, City Hospital	35	81.4	8	18.6	43	22.6		
Training and Research Hospital	34	77.3	10	22.7	44	23.2		
University Hospital	4	66.7	2	33.3	6	3.2		
Primary-level/Family Health Centre	16	55.6	12	44.4	28	14.7		
Private Hospital	6	75	2	25	8	4.2		
Ministry of Health/Management	0	0	2	100	2	1.1		
Academician (charity foundation/state)	10	19.6	41	80.4	51	26.8		
Unemployed	4	80	1	20	5	2.6		
<b>Clinical unit where working</b>							34.262*	<.001
Delivery suite	33	30	11	13.8	44	23.2		
Obstetric wards	12	10.9	4	5	16	8.4		
Neonatal/Pediatric wards	3	2,7	1	1.2	4	2.1		
Neonatal/Pediatric Intensive Care Unit	6	5.5	4	5	10	5.3		
COVID-19 ward/ Intensive Care Unit	8	7.3	1	1.2	9	4.7		
Adult Emergency Dept (surgery/internal)	13	11.8	2	2.5	15	7.9		
Not working in a clinic	29	26.4	54	67.5	83	43.7		

p<.05,  $\chi^2$ : Chi Square Test, \*Fisher Exact Test

In the recommendations for the improvement of postgraduate programs, the primary suggestion was that there should be an orientation program at the start of postgraduate education for use of the institution database and library, etc. followed by the recommendation that the opinion of the student should be taken into consideration when assigning a supervisor. The vast majority of the midwives (71.6%) thought that the midwifery postgraduate education should be separated into the branches of Gynecology and Obstetrics (74.2%) and Neonatal and Pediatric Health (71.6%). It was stated by 63.2% of the midwives that they believed they had the capability to

conduct a scientific study.

**Comparisons of the Demographic, Professional Characteristics, and ASTPGE Points of Midwives Receiving Master's and Doctoral Education**

The comparisons of some characteristics of the midwives are shown in Table 4. A statistically significant difference was determined between the midwives on master's and doctoral programs in respect of age, number of children, time since graduation, and duration spent working in clinics or as an academician (p<.05, Table 4).

**Table 2.**  
**The Opinions of the Students Related to Postgraduate Education**

Characteristic	Master's (N=110)		Doctorate (N=80)		Total (N=190)		Statistic	
	N	%	n	%	N	%	$\chi^2$	p
<b>Number of terms completed</b>								
Lesson stage 1st term	20a	18.2	5b	6.3	25	13.2	24.771	<.001
Lesson stage 2nd term	41a	37.3	11b	13.8	52	27.4		
Lesson stage 3rd term	3b	2.7	6b	7.5	9	4.7		
Lesson stage 4th term	5b	4.5	8b	10	13	6.8		
Thesis stage	41b	37.3	50b	62.5	91	47.9		
<b>Opinion received when assigned a supervisor</b>								
Yes	81	20.9	16	20	39	20.5	4.528*	.111
No	23	73.6	63	78.8	144	75.8		
I was not assigned a supervisor	6	5.5	1	1.3	7	3.7		
<b>I think clinical experience is necessary before postgraduate education</b>								
Yes	91	82.7	72	90	163	85.8	2.009	.156
No	19	17.3	8	10	27	14.2		
<b>Our midwifery practices are evidence-based</b>								
Yes	71	64.5	46	57.5	117	61.6	3.17*	.206
No	5	4.5	1	1.3	6	3.2		
I don't work in an institution	34	30.9	33	41.3	67	35.3		
<b>I have experience as an academician</b>								
Yes	8	7.3	44	55	52	27	53.075	.001
No	102	92.7	36	45	138	72.6		
<b>Future plans to be an academician</b>								
Yes	90a	82	36a	45	126	66	45.569	.001
No	11a	10	3a	3.8	14	7.4		
I am an academician	9b	8.2	41b	51.3	50	26.3		
<b>The content of postgraduate education is appropriate</b>								
Yes	94	85.5	56	70	150	78,9	6.656	.01
No	16	14.5	24	30	40	21.1		
<b>Satisfaction with the performance of faculty members in postgraduate education</b>								
Yes	86	78.2	53	66.3	139	73.2	5.61	.06
No	3	2.7	8	10	11	5.8		
Slightly	21	19.1	19	23.8	40	21.1		
<b>The period of clinical experience thought to be necessary</b>								
<2 years	10 a,b,c,d,e	62.5	6a,b,c,d,e	37.5	16	8.4	11.35	.023
2 years	46 d, e	56.8	35d,e	43.2	81	42.6		
5 years	27c, e	71.1	11c,e	28.9	38	20		
>5 years	10b	33.3	20b	66.7	30	15.8		
Clinical experience is not necessary	17a, c,d,e	68	8a,c,d,e	32	25	13.2		

p<0.05,  $\chi^2$ : Chi Square Test, \*Fisher Exact Test, Notes: a-e: no significant difference between values with the same letter Letters were assigned to each parameter in each group separately based on the columns

**Table 3.**  
**Opinions of the Students related to Postgraduate Education**

	n	%
<b>The aim of postgraduate education</b>		
To contribute to the professionalism and development of the midwife profession	<b>152</b>	<b>80</b>
To increase the number of academician midwives	108	56.8
To continue working life as an academician	122	64.2
To increase recognition of midwifery as a profession	85	44.7
To specialize in this field	126	66.3
To improve the quality of midwifery practices	118	62.1
<b>Reason for wanting to be an academician</b>		
I don't think I get the respect I deserve in the clinic.	<b>88</b>	<b>46.3</b>
I think I have enough clinical experience.	41	21.6
I think the salary of an academician is higher.	23	12.1
I think there are opportunities for promotion in academia.	46	24.2
I think the working hours are more suitable.	45	23.7
I think I will be able to manage my postgraduate education better.	49	25.8
I am currently working as an academician.	48	25.3
<b>The most difficult conditions during postgraduate education</b>		
Working hours (being on call, clinic working hours)	<b>128</b>	<b>67.4</b>
Workload	111	58.4
Administrative problems (not obtaining permission for time off from the workplace, or organizing working hours according to the lesson program).	81	42.6
Family problems (children, spouse, etc.)	57	30
Economic difficulties	33	17.4
Transport problems	56	29.5
Not being able to contact my supervisor	26	13.7
Mental health status	52	27.4
Incomplete information related to database use	44	23.2
Too many lessons being taken	44	23.2
Foreign language ability level insufficient	57	30
Insufficient professional clinical experience	9	4.7
Lack of social support (from spouse, parents, etc.)	25	13.2
Unclear job description in the institution where I work	58	30.5
I have not experienced any problems	3	1.6
<b>Reasons for not finding the content of the postgraduate program appropriate</b>		
The lesson content has not been developed to be appropriate for the postgraduate program.	26	13.7
I don't think it enabled me to gain the ability to plan scientific research.	23	12.1
I don't think that sufficient research that would contribute to the midwifery profession was included.	22	11.6
It does not contribute to scientific advancement.		
I cannot apply what I have learned in the clinical environment.	14	7.4
I think the content was appropriate.	14	7.4
	<b>137</b>	<b>72.1</b>



*Table 3 continues.**Opinions of the Students related to Postgraduate Education*

	n	%
<b>Recommendations for improvements to the postgraduate education program</b>		
The lesson content could be organized to be appropriate to the midwifery program content.	58	30.5
The number of elective lessons should be increased.	45	23.7
Practical applications should be increased.	49	25.8
By increasing the European Credit Transfer System weighting per lesson, the number of lessons to be taken could be decreased.	57	30
The opinion of the student should be taken into consideration when assigning a supervisor.	<b>93</b>	<b>48.9</b>
There should be an orientation program at the start of postgraduate education (the institution database, use of the library, etc.)	<b>95</b>	<b>50</b>
The field-specific resources in the libraries should be enriched.	75	39.5
There should be the opportunity to take lessons from different departments.	87	45.8
I have no recommendations.	6	3.2
<b>Into which branches do you think the Midwifery Department should be separated?</b>		
Gynecology and Obstetrics	<b>141</b>	<b>74.2</b>
Neonatal and Pediatric Health	<b>136</b>	<b>71.6</b>
Basic Practices in Midwifery	112	58.9
Public Health Services	125	65.8
I don't think separation into branches is necessary	35	18.4
<b>Tendency to conduct scientific research alone</b>		
I can plan and conduct a scientific study	<b>120</b>	<b>63.2</b>
I don't think I have the ability to conduct a scientific study	70	36.8

No statistically significant difference was determined between the midwives on master's and doctoral programs in respect of the total and subscale points of the attitudes to postgraduate education.

#### **Comparisons of the Opinions of the Midwives about the Characteristics of Postgraduate Education with the ASTPGE Points**

The sociodemographic characteristics and the opinions of the midwives about that received education program are shown together with comparisons of the points related to the ASTPGE, the mean points according to the distribution of characteristics and the ranking of mean points in Table 5. A statistically significantly greater difference was

determined in the attitudes of the midwives towards postgraduate education of those who found the content of the program to be appropriate ( $p < .001$ ). A statistically significant difference was determined between the status of thinking clinical experience is necessary before postgraduate education and the subscale of Facilitator Roles ( $p = .042$ ).

A statistically significant difference was determined between the attitudes of the midwives to postgraduate education and plans to be an academician in the future and satisfaction with the performance of faculty members in the postgraduate education program ( $p = .038$ ,  $p = .008$ ).

**Table 4.**  
*Comparisons of the Demographic Data, Professional Characteristics, and ASTPGE Total and Subscale Points of Midwives Receiving Master's and Doctoral Education*

	Master's	Doctorate	Total	Statistic	
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	t	p
Age (years)	27.84 ± 4.85	33.13 ± 4.67	30.06 ± 5.44	-7.533	.001*
Number of children	0.29 ± 0.6	0.73 ± 0.83	0.47 ± 0.73	- 4.208	.001*
ASTPGE- Facilitator Roles	27.55 ± 2.77	27.14 ± 3.2	27.37 ± 2.96	0.938	.349
ASTPGE-Professional Recognition	12.96 ± 1.77	13.24 ± 1.69	13.08 ± 1.73	-1.076	.283
ASTPGE- Preventative Factors	7.23 ± 2.28	7.29 ± 2.3	7.25 ± 2.28	-0.179	.858
ASTPGE Total	47.74 ± 4.07	47.66 ± 5.15	47.71 ± 4.55	0.11	.912
	Mean Rank (Min-Max)	Mean Rank (Min-Max)	(Min-Max)	U	p
Time since graduation (months)***	68.88 (1-21)	132.1 (2-27)	(1-27)	-7.845	.001**
Duration of working in the clinic (months)	85.02 (0-300)	109.91 (0-312)	(0-312)	-3.091	.002**
Duration of working as an academician (months)	76.08 (0-60)	122.21 (0-240)	(0-240)	-7.13	.001**

p<.05, \* Independent Samples t-test \*\*Mann Whitney U-test\*\*\* Time since graduation was calculated as the time from the date of graduation to 2021.

**Table 5.**  
*Comparisons of the Opinions of the Midwives about the Characteristics of Postgraduate Education with the ASTPGE Total and Subscale Points*

Characteristics	ASTPGE-Facilitator Roles	ASTPGE-Professional Recognition	ASTPGE-Preventative Factors	ASTPGE-Total
	Mean Rank (Min-Max)	Mean Rank (Min-Max)	Mean Rank (Min-Max)	Mean Rank (Min-Max)
Marital Status				
Married	97.82 (18-30)	100.63 (7-15)	91.22 (4-15)	96.17 (37-60)
Single	93.61 (18-30)	91.34 (6-15)	98.96 (4-14)	94.95 (35-57)
U	-0.540	-1.182	-0.975	-0.152
p	.589	.237	.330	.879
Finding postgraduate education content appropriate				
Yes	101.28 (18-30)	101.26 (6-15)	100.24 (4-15)	103.79 (36-60)
No	73.8 (18-30)	73.87 (8-15)	77.72 (4-10)	64.38 (35-53)
U	-2.895	-2.858	-2.326	-4.040
p	.004*	.004*	.020*	.000*
Necessary to have clinical experience before postgraduate experience				
Yes	114.85 (18-30)	90.31 (6-15)	85.31 (4-15)	100.29 (36-60)
No	92.29 (20-30)	96.35 (9-15)	97.18 (4-12)	94.70 (35-55)
U	-2.035	-0.540	-1.050	-0.491
p	.042*	.589	.294	.624
Experience as an academician				
Yes	97.6 (18-60)	95.36 (9-15)	99.52 (4-12)	98.46 (35-55)
No	89.9 (18-60)	95.86 (6-15)	84.8 (4-15)	87.62 (36-60)
U	0.788	0.003	2.766	1.477
p	.375	.954	.096	.224



*Table 5 continues.*

*Comparisons of the Opinions of the Midwives about the Characteristics of Postgraduate Education with the ASTPGE Total and Subscale Points*

Characteristics	ASTPGE -Facilitator Roles	ASPGE -Professional Recognition	ASTPGE-Preventative Factors	ASTPGE-Total
	Mean Rank (Min-Max)	Mean Rank (Min-Max)	Mean Rank (Min-Max)	Mean Rank (Min-Max)
Opinion considered when assigning a supervisor				
Yes	94.87 (22-30)	93.96 (6-15)	94.36 (4-14)	93.48 (38-57)
No	96.12 (18-30)	99.86 (7-15)	94.21 (4-15)	97.85 (35-60)
Not assigned a supervisor	106.33 (26-30)	103.33 (12-15)	131.33 (6-11)	128.08 (47-56)
KW	0.273	0.507	2.688	2.387
p	.873	.776	.261	.303
	Mean± SD (Min-Max)	Mean± SD (Min-Max)	Mean± SD (Min-Max)	Mean± SD (Min-Max)
Evidence-based midwifery practices				
Yes	27.51±2.83 (24-30)	13.17±1.63 (18-30)	7.35±2.2 (7-15)	48.04±4.28 (36-60)
No	27.66±2.94 (35-60)	12.33±2.87 (18-30)	6.66±2.06 (6-15)	46.66±5.39 (37-52)
I work in a different unit	27.1±3.19 (18-30)	12.97±1.79 (8-15)	7.13±2.44 (6-15)	47.20±4.91 (35-57)
F	0.434	0.883	0.394	0.877
p	.649	.415	.675	.418
Future plan to be an academician				
Yes	27.54±2.93 (18-30)	13.17±1.79 (6-15)	7.48±2.31 (4-15)	48.2±4.57 (35-60)
No	26.28±3.04 (22-30)	12.14±1.65 (9-15)	6.78±2.48 (4-13)	45.21±4.83 (39-53)
I am an academician	27.24±2.99 (18-30)	13.1±1.52 (10-15)	6.8±2.08 (4-12)	47.14±4.16 (37-55)
F	1.218	2.267	1.949	3.334
p	.298	.106	.145	<b>.038***</b>
Satisfied with the performance of faculty members in postgraduate education				
Yes	27.55±2.94 (18-30)	13.23±1.64 (7-15)	7.43±2.29 (4-15)	48.23±4.43 (35-60)
No	26 ±3.52 (21-30)	11.81±1.88 (8-15)	6.45±2.06 (4-9)	44.27±5.65(36-53)
Slightly	27.12±2.78 (20-30)	12.87±1.88 (6-15)	6.82±2.22 (4-12)	46.82±4.14 (37-56)
F	1.595	3.883	1.859	5.017
p	.206	<b>.022</b>	.159	<b>.008***</b>
p<.05, *Mann-Whitney-U Test, **Kruskal-Wallis Test, ***One Way Anova, p< 0.05				

## Discussion

According to the results of this study, which examined the attitudes of midwives to postgraduate education and the associated factors, it was determined that whether the

midwives found the postgraduate program content to be appropriate, whether they thought that clinical experience was necessary before postgraduate education, whether they planned to be an academician in the future and whether they were satisfied with the performance of

faculty members affected their attitudes towards postgraduate education. Higher levels of positive attitude towards postgraduate education were determined for the midwives who were considering being an academician in the future and were satisfied with the performance of faculty members. The results of this study demonstrated that in general the attitudes of the midwives to postgraduate education were positive at a moderate level.

The vast majority of the midwives in this study stated that they were taking a postgraduate program with the aim of contributing to the professionalism and development of the midwifery profession. Other aims included specialization in a field, improving the quality of midwifery practices, and wanting to be an academician. In a previous study of nurses, it was reported that the aims of those who started a nursing postgraduate program were development of the profession, to be able to provide professional healthcare, and to gain knowledge and confidence (Kinsella et al, 2018).

In different studies in the field of education, students have stated that postgraduate education provides the development of personal knowledge and skills and provides the opportunity to specialize in a professional area (Serin and Ergin-Kocatürk, 2019; Çalık and Gürer, 2019; Gökçe et al.,2022). The current study results are similar in this respect.

One of the aims of postgraduate education is to raise the scientists and academicians needed by a country (Teyfur and Çakır, 2018; Dilci, 2019). In the current study, 66% of the midwives in postgraduate education stated that they wished to be an academician. In a study of midwifery students by Amanak et al. (2020), it was reported that 33.3% planned to take postgraduate education to be an academician, and this rate was found to be 45.3% of nursing students in a study by Kavurmacı et al. (2021).

In a study by Bilgin et al. (2017), when the midwives were asked why they wished to be an academician, the vast majority did not think they were shown the respect they deserved in the clinic, and supporting this finding were reasons affecting the thought of leaving the profession, such as no value given to the profession of midwife, and that midwives are not valued as they deserve. Factors affecting professional commitment and sense of belonging are that the person is doing a job they love, professional status and societal attitude (Lee et al., 2000; Ocak Aktürk et al, 2021; Özdevecioğlu and Aktaş, 2007). In a study by Başkaya (2018), midwives stated that lack of respect and importance were the most important factors affecting professional commitment.

When the midwives were asked what was most difficult during postgraduate education, they stated working hours (on call, in the clinic), workload, and experiencing administrative problems such as obtaining permission for time off to be able to continue lessons. It has also been reported in many studies conducted with teachers that teachers experienced problems in obtaining permission to be able to continue with postgraduate teaching as the schools in which they worked had a high workload (Aydın Hayal 2014; Nas et al.,2017; Teyfur and Çakır, 2018; İlter, 2019; Avcı and Akdeniz, 2021).

That no difference was determined in the levels of attitude to postgraduate education by the midwives in a master's program or a doctoral program was an unexpected result of this study. While a student on a master's program is expected to learn how to access scientific information and how to evaluate and interpret that information, a student on a doctoral program is expected to have a greater depth of knowledge, develop critical and analytical thinking, and be able to independently plan and conduct research (Ergül 2011; Gökçe et al., 2022). In contrast to the current study result, in a study of teachers by İlter (2019), it was determined that the attitudes towards postgraduate education of teachers at doctorate level were higher than those of their colleagues teaching at master's level. The result in the current study was thought to be due to the fact that in Türkiye there is no standardization of midwifery postgraduate programs, and there could be qualitative and quantitative differences in the postgraduate programs and in the faculty members responsible for the programs.

To be able to achieve the aims of postgraduate education, it is extremely important that the programs are prepared appropriate to the needs of the field (Erden and Seferoğlu, 2021). In the current study, the midwives who considered the content of postgraduate education to be appropriate were determined to have higher levels of positive attitude to postgraduate education. In a study conducted with teachers, one of the basic reasons that the expectations of teachers of postgraduate education were not met was determined to be deficiencies in the lessons presented at postgraduate level and the lesson contents were not specific to the field (Erden and Seferoğlu, 2021). In this respect, it can be said that the expectations of the content of the postgraduate education of the midwives in the current study were met.

Academicians are one of the most important factors in providing an effective and productive process in postgraduate education. Continuous interaction and communication between students, supervisors and faculty

members is included in this process (Orakçı, 2020; Polat et al., 2022). In a previous study, it was reported that students expect the postgraduate education process to be conducted by faculty members who are intelligent, cultured and will contribute to the student, and that the faculty members will be able to provide a broad perspective of the field. In different studies, it has been reported that students expect faculty members to be experts on academic subjects related to the fields of their own research and to have good communication skills (Hajihosseini et al., 2018; Orakçı, 2020). Thus, it can be said that the nature and performance of faculty members in postgraduate education, and the communication established with the student in the field of work will affect the attitude of the student to postgraduate education. In the current study, the midwives who were satisfied with the performance of faculty members were determined to have more positive attitudes to postgraduate education.

It has been determined that midwives who thought clinical experience is necessary before postgraduate education had higher attitude levels related to the subscale of Facilitator Roles. The subscale of Facilitator Roles includes items related to “self-confidence in decision-making”, “critical thinking”, “academic autonomy”, “job satisfaction”, “the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills”, and “career development”. Clinical experience is extremely important in respect of developing critical thinking and problem solving (Sharif and Masoumi, 2005). During midwifery practice, various cases and problems are encountered and midwives work in a team. This provides midwives with the opportunity of gaining professionalism, and developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and decision-making mechanisms (Yıldırım and Bağısürer, 2019). In some studies of nurses, it has been determined that as the years of working and professional experience increase, so the problem-solving skills of nurses increase to a higher level (Çelenk and Topoyan, 2017; Bahar et al., 2019).

When the midwives in the current study were asked for recommendations to improve postgraduate education, the responses were predominantly that there should be an orientation program at the beginning of postgraduate education (use of the institution database and library etc.), that the student’s opinion should be considered when assigning a supervisor, and that the opportunity should be provided for lessons from different departments. In a study by Çalık and Gürer of students in postgraduate education in the field of education sciences, it was similarly recommended that the selection of a supervisor should be left to the student (Çalık and Gürer., 2019).

## Limitations

For various reasons (graduation, new registrations, record removal, etc.), the number of midwives in postgraduate education is constantly changing. When this is taken into consideration, the most important limitation of this study can be said to be that the data collected were limited to an academic term and were based on unofficial information. Another limitation was the limited number of studies in literature which have evaluated the attitudes of midwives to postgraduate education.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study demonstrated that the factors affecting the attitude to postgraduate education of midwives were the thought of being an academician in the future, satisfaction with the performance of faculty members in postgraduate education, and the need for clinical experience before postgraduate education. Despite the difficult conditions of the profession and the high workload, midwives make a great effort to continue postgraduate education. Therefore, for the expected benefit to be obtained from postgraduate education, it is extremely important to determine the expectations, needs, and problems experienced by midwives in the process of postgraduate education, and studies should be planned to present recommendations for the resolution of these problems. It can also be considered that studies reflecting the clinical results of postgraduate education in the field of midwifery will also make a positive contribution to the development to the education and profession of midwifery. The most important strength of this study was that it was a comprehensive study which evaluated attitudes to postgraduate education and the expectations of and problems experienced by midwives in postgraduate education in several different universities in Türkiye.

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**Hasta Onamı:** Çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerden online form doldurmadan önce onam alınmıştır.

**Hakem Değerlendirmesi:** Dış bağımsız.

**Yazar Katkıları:** Fikir-S.O.A., T.K., N.G., G.D; Tasarım- S.O.A., T.K., N.G; Denetleme- S.O.A., T.K., N.G., G.D.; Kaynaklar- S.O.A., T.K; Veri Toplanması ve/veya İşlemesi S.O.A., T.K., N.G., G.D.; Analiz ve/veya Yorum- S.O.A., N.G.; Literatür Taraması- Yazıyı Yazan- S.O.A., T.K., N.G; Eleştirel İnceleme- S.O.A., T.K., N.G., G.D.

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## Geniřletilmiř Özet

Ebelik insanlık tarihi kadar eski bir meslek olmakla birlikte profesyonel kimliđini formal bir eđitim sürecinin bařlamasıyla kazanmıřtır. Türkiye’de ebelik eđitiminin bařlangıcı 1842 yılına dayanmaktadır. Lisans eđitimine ise 1997-1998 eđitim öđretim yılında bařlanmıř, böylece ebelik eđitimi 4 yıllık lisans düzeyine çıkarılmıřtır. Ebelikte yüksek lisans programı 2000-2001 eđitim öđretim yılında, doktora programı ise 2013-2014 eđitim öđretim yılında açılmıřtır. Türkiye’de 2000 yılından bu yana ebelikte lisansüstü eđitim, her geöen yıl ivme kazanarak hem nicelik hem de nitelik yönünden geliřmeye devam etmektedir. Lisansüstü eđitim, bilginin derinleřtirilmesi yoluyla bireylerin kariyerlerini geliřtirmesini ve yeni alanlarda beceriler kazanmasını sađlar.

Ebelikte lisansüstü eđitim, meslekî ve akademik alanlarda ebelerin profesyonelleřmesini sađlamak aöısından önemlidir. Bu nedenle ebelerin lisansüstü eđitime iliřkin tutumları, lisansüstü eđitimi geliřtirecek bir unsur olabileceđinden dikkatle ele alınmalıdır. Lisansüstü öđrenim gören farklı sađlık disiplinlerindeki öđrencilerin lisansüstü eđitime yönelik görüřlerini ve tutumları inceleyen öeřitli öalıřmalar mevcuttur. Literatürde Türkiye’de Ebelik Bölümünde öđrenim gören lisans öđrencilerinin lisansüstü eđitime yönelik tutumlarını belirleyen bir arařtırma yapılmıř olup, Ebelik Anabilim Dalında lisansüstü öđrenim gören ebeler ile yapılan öalıřmaların sınırlı olduđu, mevcut öalıřmaların da güncel olmadıđı görülmektedir. Lisansüstü eđitim almakta olan ebeler; hem teori hem de uygulamayı iöeren ebelik bilimini geliřtirecek ve ileriye tařıyacak olan önemli bir meslek grubudur. Dolayısıyla ebelerin lisansüstü eđitime yönelik tutumlarının ve etkileyen faktörlerin belirlenmesi, ebeliđin akademik ve meslekî boyuttaki geliřimi ile ilgili bir gösterge niteliđi tařımaktadır. Ayrıca ebelikte lisansüstü eđitimin geliřtirilmeye açık yönlerinin keřfedilmesi aöısından da önem tařımaktadır. Bu bađlamda bu öalıřmayla Türkiye’de Ebelik Anabilim Dalında lisansüstü öđrenim gören ebelerin akademik ve meslekî profillerinin belirlenmesi, lisansüstü eđitime yönelik tutumlarının ve iliřkili faktörlerin incelenmesi amaölanmıřtır.

Tanımlayıcı ve kesitsel türde yapılan arařtırma Nisan 2021- Temmuz 2021 arasında 110 yüksek lisans, 80 doktora olmak üzere lisansüstü öđrenim gören toplam 190 ebe ile tamamlanmıřtır. Arařtırmaya Türkiye’de Ebelik Anabilim dallarında yüksek lisans ve doktora eđitimine aktif olarak devam eden ve lisansüstü eđitim programında en az bir dönem ders almıř olan ebeler dâhil edilmiř. Ebelik Anabilim dalı dıřındaki farklı lisansüstü (Hemřirelik, Tıp Fakóltesi vb.) eđitim programlarında öđrenim gören ebeler öalıřmaya dahil edilmemiřtir. Formal olmayan bilgilere dayalı olarak elde edilen veriler dođrultusunda öalıřmanın yürütüldüđu Nisan 2021-Temmuz 2021 tarihleri arasında aktif olarak lisansüstü eđitime devam eden yaklařık 438 ebe olduđu belirlenmiřtir. Ebelikte yüksek lisans programı olan üniversite sayısı 25, doktora programı olan üniversite sayısı ise 10 olarak tespit edilmiřtir. Arařtırmanın verileri ücretsiz, web tabanlı bir anket yönetim yazılımı olan Google Forms kullanılarak toplandı. Ebelik Anabilim Dalı başkanlıklarına ilgili anket formu resmi yazıřma yoluyla ulařtırılmıřtır. Ayrıca Lisansüstü ebelik programlarının öđrencilerine sosyal medya platformları (Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook) aracılıđıyla da ulařılmıřtır. Öđrenciler gizli ve öevrimiöi olan bu nicel anketi (katılım ve onay formu dahil) doldurmaya davet edilmiřtir. Öalıřma süresi iöinde anket formu iki hafta arayla sosyal medya platformlarında paylařılmıřtır. Arařtırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Literatür dođrultusunda hazırlanan “Tanımlayıcı Bilgi Formu” ve “Lisansüstü Eđitime Yönelik Tutum Ölöeđi” kullanılmıřtır.

Ebelerin lisansüstü eđitime yönelik tutumlarının ve iliřkili faktörlerin incelenmesi amaöıyla yapılan bu öalıřmanın sonuçlarına göre, lisansüstü öđrenim gören ebelerin, aldıkları eđitim iöeriklerini uygun bulup bulmama, lisansüstü eđitimden önce klinik deneyimin gerekli olduđunu düřüme, gelecek planlarında akademisyenliđi düřünme ve aldıkları eđitimde öđretim üyelerinin performansından memnun olma durumlarının lisansüstü eđitime yönelik tutumlarını etkilediđi belirlenmiřtir. Gelecekte akademisyen olmayı düřünen ve öđretim üyelerinin performansından memnun olan ebelerin lisansüstü eđitime yönelik tutum düzeylerinin daha yüksek olduđu bulunmuřtur. Arařtırma sonuçları, ebelerin lisansüstü eđitime yönelik tutumlarının genel olarak olumlu ve orta düzeyde olduđunu göstermiřtir.

Ebelerin büyük öođunluđunun (n=91, %47,9) tez ařamasında olduđu belirlenmiř olup, yüksek lisans ve doktorada öđrenim gören ebeler arasında dönem sayısı, akademisyenlik deneyimi olma, gelecekte akademisyenlik mesleđini düřünme, lisansüstü eđitim iöeriklerini uygun bulma ve klinik deneyim süresinin gerekli olduđunu düřünme durumu aöısından anlamlı bir fark saptanmıřtır (sırasıyla p<,001, p<,001, p<,001, p=,01, p=,023). Ebelerin lisansüstü eđitimle ilgili görüřleri Tablo 3’te yer almaktadır. Ebelerin büyük öođunluđunun (n=152, %80) Ebelik mesleđinin profesyonelleřmesine ve geliřimine katkı sađlamak amaöıyla lisansüstü eđitim aldıkları, %46,3 (n=88)’ünün klinikte hak ettiđi saygınlıđı görmediklerini düřündükleri iöin akademisyenliđi istedikleri, řu an %25 (n=48)’inin ise akademisyen olarak öalıřtıkları, öalıřma saatleri (n=128, %67,4), iř yükü (n=111, %58,4), iř yerinden izin alamama, mesai saatlerini ders programına göre düzenleyememe gibi idari sorunlar (n=81, %42,6) lisansüstü eđitim süresince en öok zorlayan durumlar olarak saptanmıřtır. Ebelerin büyük öođunluđu lisansüstü eđitimin iöeriđini (n=137, %72,1) uygun



bulmaktadır. Lisansüstü eğitim programının geliştirilmesine yönelik önerilerin başında (n=95, %50) eğitim başlangıcında kurumun veri tabanlarını, kütüphanesini kullanma gibi içeriklerle ilgili oryantasyon programlarının düzenlemesi ve danışman atamasında fikirlerinin alınması (n=93, %50) gelmektedir. Ebelik alanında lisansüstü eğitimin anabilim dallarına ayrılmasını düşünenler arasında Kadın Hastalıkları ve Doğum (n=141, %74,2), Yenidoğan ve Çocuk Sağlığı (n=136, %71,6) alanlarına ayrılması gerektiğini düşünenler büyük çoğunluktadır. Ebelerin %63,2'si (n=120) bilimsel bir araştırmayı yürütebilme yetkinliğine sahip olduğunu düşünmektedir.

Ebeler, mesleğin zor koşullarına ve iş yükünün fazla olmasına rağmen lisansüstü eğitimlerini sürdürme konusunda çaba göstermektedirler. Bu nedenle, lisansüstü eğitimden beklenen faydanın sağlanabilmesi için ebelerin lisansüstü eğitim sürecindeki beklentileri, ihtiyaçları ve yaşadıkları sorunların tespit edileceği ve sorunlara yönelik çözüm önerilerinin sunulacağı araştırmalar planlanması oldukça önemlidir. Ayrıca ebelik alanındaki lisansüstü eğitimin klinik sonuçlara yansımaları ele alan çalışmalar yapılmasının da ebelik mesleğinin ve eğitiminin olumlu yönde gelişmesine katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.