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The Content Analysis of National Theses Regarding Flight Attendants Published in Turkey

Türkiye'de Yayınlanan Uçuş Görevlilerine İlişkin Ulusal Tezlerin İçerik Analizi

Nilay ERBAY^a Sabiha ANNAÇ GÖV^{b*}

^a Yüksek lisans öğrencisi, Gaziantep Üniversitesi, Havacılık Yönetimi, Gaziantep / TÜRKİYE

ORCID: 0000-0002-6312-0662

^b Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Gaziantep Üniversitesi, Havacılık Yönetimi, Gaziantep / TÜRKİYE

ORCID: 0000-0001-7601-559X

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ÖZ

Uçuş görevlileri, bir uçakta yolcuların emniyet, güvenlik ve rahatlığından sorumlu olan ve gerektiğinde kokpit dışındaki uçuş güvertesi mürettebatının talimatlarını yerine getiren kişilerdir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de yayınlanan uçuş görevlileri ile ilgili ulusal yüksek lisans tezlerinin eğilimlerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, 2012-2020 yılları arasında YÖK Tez Tarama Merkezi veri tabanında yayınlanan, uçuş görevlileri ile ilgili 31 ulusal tezin içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Yayın yılı, üniversite, enstitü, tez türleri, araştırmacının cinsiyeti, yazı dili, danışman unvanı, araştırma yöntemi, araştırma tasarımı, konu, örneklem büyüklüğü, örnekleme yöntemi, veri toplama araçları ve veri analiz teknikleri belirlenmiş ve sistematik içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Analiz sonuçlarına göre; 11 tez ile en çok yayınlanan yılın 2019 olduğu, en çok kullanılan araştırma tasarımının anket araştırması olduğu ve iş doyumu, örgütsel bağlılık, duygusal emek, tükenmişlik sendromu ve iş-aile çatışması konularının araştırmacılar tarafından en çok çalışılan konular olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bugüne kadar Yök veri tabanında yer alan araştırmaların tek bir çalışmada analiz edilmesinin, havacılık sektörünün önemli bir parçası olan kabin görevlileri konu alan ileriki çalışmalara katkı sağlayacağı beklenmektedir. Bu çalışmanın bulgularından faydalanılarak gelecekteki çalışmalarda ilgili kavramlar farklı modeller kapsamında ilişkilendirilebilir ve test edilebilir. Böylece, alanyazına özgün katkılar yapılabilecektir.

ABSTRACT

Flight attendants are the persons who are responsible of the safety, security and comfort of the passengers in an aircraft and fulfill the instructions of the flight deck crew outside the cockpit when needed. This study aimed to determine the trends of national graduate theses regarding flight attendants published in Turkey. In this study, content analysis of 31 national theses on flight attendants published between 2012-2020 in the database of YÖK Thesis Scanning Center was conducted. Publication year, university, institute, types of thesis, researcher gender, writing language, title of supervisor, research method, research design, subject, sample size, sampling method, data collection tools and data analysis techniques were determined and systematic content analysis was employed. According to the analysis results; It has been determined that the most published year with 11 theses is 2019, the most used research design is survey research and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, emotional labor, burnout syndrome and work-family conflict issues are the most studied topics by the researchers. It is expected that analyzing the national theses in the Yok database in a study will contribute to future studies on cabin attendants, an important part of the aviation industry. The existing concepts can be related and tested in different models in future studies by making use of the findings of this study. Thus, original contributions to the literature will be made.

* Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author.
e-posta: sgov@gantep.edu.tr

Introduction

In the first airline of Turkey, which was established in 1933 and continues to grow, the first cabin attendants appeared in 1947 (Skylife Magazine, 2008; Akbař Lokenauth, 2018). Cabin services department are the most important unit of airline companies that enable them to provide quality service to their passengers. Cabin attendants, who have many responsibilities before, during and after the flight, are the representatives of the airline companies in providing all the services provided in the cabin with a high quality (Akan, 2017).

Cabin attendants are obliged to be carried on aircrafts to meet the minimum requirements of the Civil Aviation Authority by airlines (Cabincrew, 2010; Abdelhakim, Jones, Redmond, Hewedi and Seaman, 2019). The airline operators must have a flight attendant on aircraft with more than 19 seats. If an aircraft carry one or more passengers, the airline operator must provide at least one cabin attendant and 1 cabin attendant is necessary for every 50 passengers in order to ensure passenger safety (SHGM, 2002). The cabin crew consist of cabin clerks and at least one cabin chief, the numbers which varies according to the aircraft type, who come together for a flight operation (Akan, 2017).

The main duty of cabin crew during a flight is the cabin of the aircraft and they have been certified by the airline operator by taking the necessary basic and refresher training to meet passenger safety and requirements. Cabin crews who have received the best training in flight safety are responsible for ensuring the safe travel of passengers (IATA, 2017; Kayalar and Kayalar, 2021). Cabin crews also play an important role in detecting potential security threats at an early stage. Both detection with technology and observation of cabin crew provide important inputs to the system. (Lemmers, Bos and Speijker, 2006).

The first duty of cabin attendants is to ensure that all safety rules are followed and to make flights comfortable and enjoyable for passengers (Kao, Stewart and Lee, 2009). It is thought that studying on cabin attendants, who are responsible for ensuring safety and security and providing various services in a flight, will make essential contributions to airline companies. In this context, it is important to determine the striking and accurate topics that will contribute to the sector. Grbz and řahin (2018) indicates that different sources can be used in addition to literature review in determining research topics. It will be useful to examine the graduate education theses in the database of YK Thesis Screening Center (<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/>), especially for young researchers at the beginning stage to have a preliminary idea of what is being studied in the field. Reviewing previous studies with a critical point of view can direct new studies on the subject (Grbz & Sahin, 2018). The researchers' knowledge about the relevant literature will change and develop thanks to academic studies published in their field which regularly present the research methods and statistics used (Ycedađ and Erdođan, 2011). It is expected that this study will contribute to such a new study in future covering different time periods, and other future studies on flight attendants based on the findings of this study.

This study employs content analysis to investigate 31 theses on Flight attendants published in Turkey national thesis search center between 2012 and 2020 by classifying in a systematic framework. It aims to provide insight into researchers who are interested in the subject of cabin attendants by determining the trends of master and phd theses published on flight attendants in the concepts of 14 different items.

Literature Review

Cabin attendants play an important role in ensuring the safety of cabin and provide services in an aircraft (Chen and Chen, 2012). Therefore, a considerable amount of research has

been conducted on flight attendants in the last 20 years or so (Damos, Boyett and Gibbs, 2013). When the relevant literature is examined, there are some studies on cabin crews.

Nagda and Koontz (2003) examine the studies since 1980 about the short term health and comfort effects of flight attendants by using the National Institute of Health's Pubmed database. 21 studies are reviewed. Among the findings of this study, many complaints and symptoms were noted by cabin crews in most of the studies. It is stated that the majority of these are associated with professional duties and the nature of the aircraft. The most mentioned in the studies are the symptoms of dryness caused by low humidity and the symptoms of fatigue experienced with the disruption of the circadian rhythm. At the same time, in some studies examined, it is found that there is a low air quality problem based on the experience of cabin crews.

Flight attendants are exposed to many job-related negativities, including carcinogens. According to the studies, flight attendants with a sample size of 5366 have the potential to develop cancer more than 2729 people included in the study, who have the same socioeconomic status and are not cabin crew. Especially in women, breast cancer, melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer are among these risks (McNeely, Mordukhovich, Staffa, Tideman, Gale and Coul, 2018).

Eren (2017) examines the complaints of cabin crew regarding the musculoskeletal system. According to the analysis results of the survey conducted with 571 cabin crew, 62.2% of the participants complained about the musculoskeletal system in the last 12 months. While this rate was 53.4% in the last 1 month, it is among the findings of this study that 26.8% of the participants felt their current complaints at the time of the survey.

According to the analysis results of semi-structured interviews with 25 cabin crew, Berg, Signal and Gander (2019) reveal that the level of fatigue experienced by participants on long flights affects both the health, well-being and safety (cabin, passenger and themselves) and the services provided. Among the causes of fatigue are; lack of sleep, disruption of the circadian, insufficient rest, overwork, the nature of the job itself, lack of company support, and inadequate fatigue management training. It is among the findings of the study that the opportunity to rest at a sufficient level will prevent loss of sleep as well as enable work-life balance to be established.

Cabin attendants work with a shift system that includes irregular hours. This threatens the social and family life of cabin crew. Since the majority of flight attendants are women, they put the responsibility of managing the home remotely in addition to their work. There are some studies showing that flight attendants who are mothers feel lonely and unsuccessful. Flight attendants with mixed feelings for their job need to develop complex strategies for managing both the business and the home. More comprehensive analyzes of the health and psychosocial consequences of this situation are needed (Ribeiro-Silva, Rotenberg and Fischer, 2016).

Chen and Chen (2012) state that cabin crews experience health problems and intention to leave as a result of heavy workload. While high job demand causes burnout, job resources increase job commitment. There is a negative relationship between job resources and burnout. In addition, according to the findings of the study, experienced health problems directly affect the intention to leave and mediate between burnout and intention to leave.

According to the results of the survey conducted with 97 United States-based flight attendants, there is a significant and positive relationship between the quality of work-life and organizational commitment. Accordingly, a 1-point increase in the quality of work-life increases organizational commitment by 0.283 points (Walter, 2017). At the same time, job

satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on organizational commitment (Kim and Back, 2012).

A considerable amount of subjects have been examined about cabin attendants by researcher so far. It is expected to contribute to the local literature by determining which subjects and how many studies have been conducted by the researchers regarding cabin attendants, which has a job description since 1947 in Turkey. This study attempts to fill that gap by reporting on the findings of an exploratory content analysis study of the theses on flight attendants. Thus, it will be able to guide researchers for those who need to find solutions by pointing out repetitive topics.

Methodology

Totally, 31 theses published in the database of YK Thesis Screening Center in Turkey between 2012 and 2020, including the words cabin crew, flight attendants (any words address the cabin crew) in its title, has been examined. All theses published in this time period are open to access by their authors. In the examination of the theses, 14 subject titles were determined and content analysis has been applied;

1. Years
2. The name of University
3. Institute
4. Type of thesis
5. Writing language
6. Researcher gender
7. Title of Supervisor
8. Subject of Thesis
9. Sample size
10. Sampling Method
11. Research Method
12. Research Design
13. Data collection tools
14. Data analysis techniques

If a researcher does not have any previous awareness of the subject, the literature must be searched carefully and meticulously and the gap and need for research must be discovered. In other words, there is already a wall (accumulated information set) built by previous researchers on the subject to be researched. The researcher will first search for the empty place on this wall where can be put bricks, that is, the problematic or problem of the research will be identified. Then, with the next research, the researcher will add a brick to the previously built wall, contributing to scientific knowledge and related field (Grbz & Őahin, 2018).

Content analysis is a family of systematic, rule-guided techniques that is used to analyze the informational contents of textual data (Mayring, 2000; Forman and Damschroder, 2007). It gives an idea about the development of a profession as it indicates the subject trends and main problems that occupy the profession within a certain period of time. (Blessinger and Frasier, 2007; Ahorany, 2012). The topics covered by the researches are generally the most frequently

encountered and the ones that need improvement the most (Çifçi and Ersoy, 2019). Content analysis, a non-reactive or unobtrusive method of data collection, allows researchers to overcome some of the weaknesses of survey research, such as low response rates, sampling errors, or unclear question expressions. (Neuman, 2003; Lowry, 2015).

Findings

The content analysis of the theses examined was transformed into numerical data by creating data tables in line with the 14 items and some findings were obtained accordingly.

Distribution Of The Theses By Publication Year, University And Types

Of the 31 theses, 11 of them belong to the year 2019 and they cover a ratio of 35.48% of the total theses. It has been determined that there is no thesis which has the words (crew members, flight attendants and cabin crew) in 2013-2014 years. Except these years, it has been analyzed that there is at least 1 thesis for each year since 2012. 27 of the theses are master's, 3 are phd and one of them medical specialty thesis. Beykent University is the university that provided the most studies for this profession among all public and private universities in Turkey, with 6 postgraduate theses in the period of time covered by this study. Table 1 shows its distribution according to frequency and percentage values

Table 1: *Distribution By Years, University And Types Of Theses*

University	2012		2015		2016		2017			2018		2019		2020		f	%
	Msc	Phd	Msc	Phd	Msc	Phd	Msc	Phd	Expertise in Med.	Msc	Phd	Msc	Phd	Msc	Phd		
Altınbaş University												1				1	3,23
Anadolu University					1		1									2	6,45
Atılım University	1															1	3,23
Beykent University			1				1			1		3				6	19,35
Bursa Uludağ Uni.												1				1	3,23
Doğuş University												1				1	3,23
Ege University										1						1	3,23
Gazi University												1				1	3,23
Istanbul Kultur Uni.													1			1	3,23
Istanbul Aydın Uni							1					2				3	9,68
Istanbul Bilgi Uni.														1		1	3,23
Istanbul Gelisim Uni.							1									1	3,23
Istanbul Sehir Uni.										1						1	3,23
Istanbul Ticaret Uni.														1		1	3,23
Istanbul University	1											1				3	9,68
Kocaeli University										1						1	3,23
Maltepe University												1				1	3,23
Namik Kemal Uni.													1			1	3,23
Nev. H. Bek. Veli Uni.										1						1	3,23
Sakarya University							1									1	3,23
Yeditepe University												1				1	3,23
Total	f	2	1	1	5	1	1	5	2	11	2	31	100				
	%	6,45	3,23	3,23	16,13	3,23	3,23	16,13	6,45	35,48	6,45	100					

Distribution by Institute

According to the analysis results in this section; 26 of the theses, that is 84%, belong to the Institute of Social Sciences. 4 of the theses are in the field of Science and they cover 13% of the total theses. In the field of specialty in medicine, there is 1 thesis corresponding to only 3% of the total theses as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Distribution by Institute*

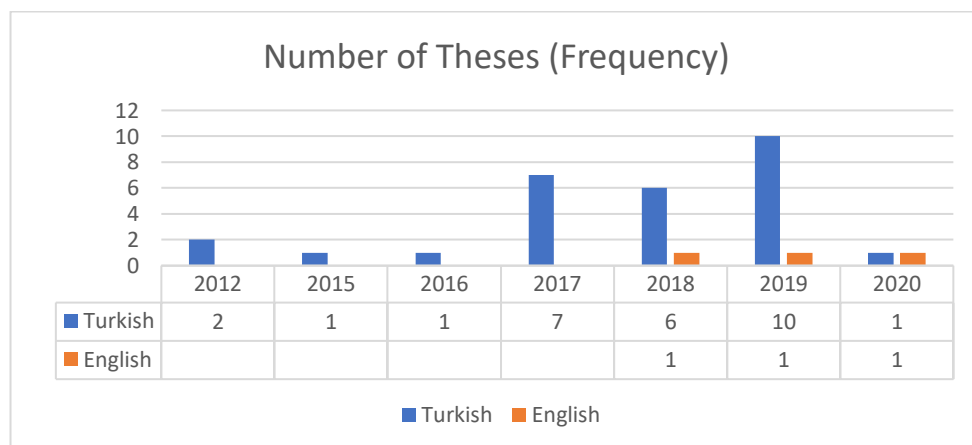
	Social Sciences Institute	Institute of Science	Exp. in Med.	f	%
2012	2			2	6,45
2015	1			1	3,23
2016	1			1	3,23
2017	4	2	1	7	22,58
2018	7			7	22,58
2019	9	2		11	35,48
2020	2			2	6,45
Total f	26	4	1	31	100
%	84	13	3	100	

The reason for this finding is that the subject of "flight attendants" as a branch is close to the field of social sciences.

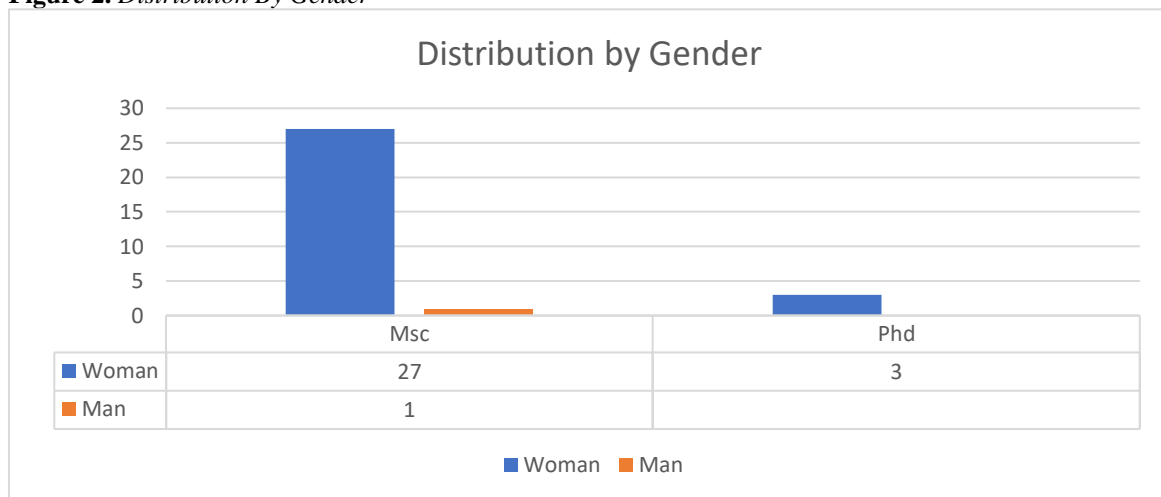
Distribution By Language And Gender Of Researcher

The writing language of 28 of the theses whose content analysis was employed is Turkish, and 3 of them are English. The distribution of the theses according to the writing language and years is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Distribution By Writing Language*



30 (96.77%) of the analyzed theses belong to female researchers, and only 1 (3.23%) of them has been determined to be male researchers. The distribution by gender is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. *Distribution By Gender*

The reason for this finding may be that female students are more interested in air hostessing and flight attendants.

Distribution By Title Of The Supervisor

The findings obtained from the content analysis of the thesis indicates that the distribution of thesis advisors is as follows; 13 (41,94%) Prof, 10 (32,26%) Assoc. Prof., 7 (22,58%) are Assist Prof and only one (3,23%) Dr. Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage distributions.

Table 3. *Distribution By Title Of The Supervisor*

Title of Supervisor	MsC	Phd	Expertise in Medicine	Total	%
	f	f	f	f	
Prof.	11	1	1	13	41,94
Assoc. Prof.	9	1		10	32,26
Asst. Prof.	6	1		7	22,58
Dr.	1			1	3,23
Total	27	3	1	31	100

As the academic title rises, the academicians' level of conducting thesis will increase, so such a result is considered normal.

Distribution By Subjects

The results of the content analysis indicate that Job satisfaction (6), organizational commitment (5), emotional labor (5), burnout syndrome (4) and work-family conflict (3) are the most frequently used topics. The distribution of the topics is included in Table 4. Although there are 31 theses, the fact that there are 58 subjects is due to the fact that there are more than one subject studied in some theses.

Table 4. *Distribution By Subjects*

Subject of thesis	Msc	Phd	Exp. in Medicine	Total
Job satisfaction	6			6
Burnout sendrom	4			4
Teamwork	1			1
Organizational Commitment	5			5

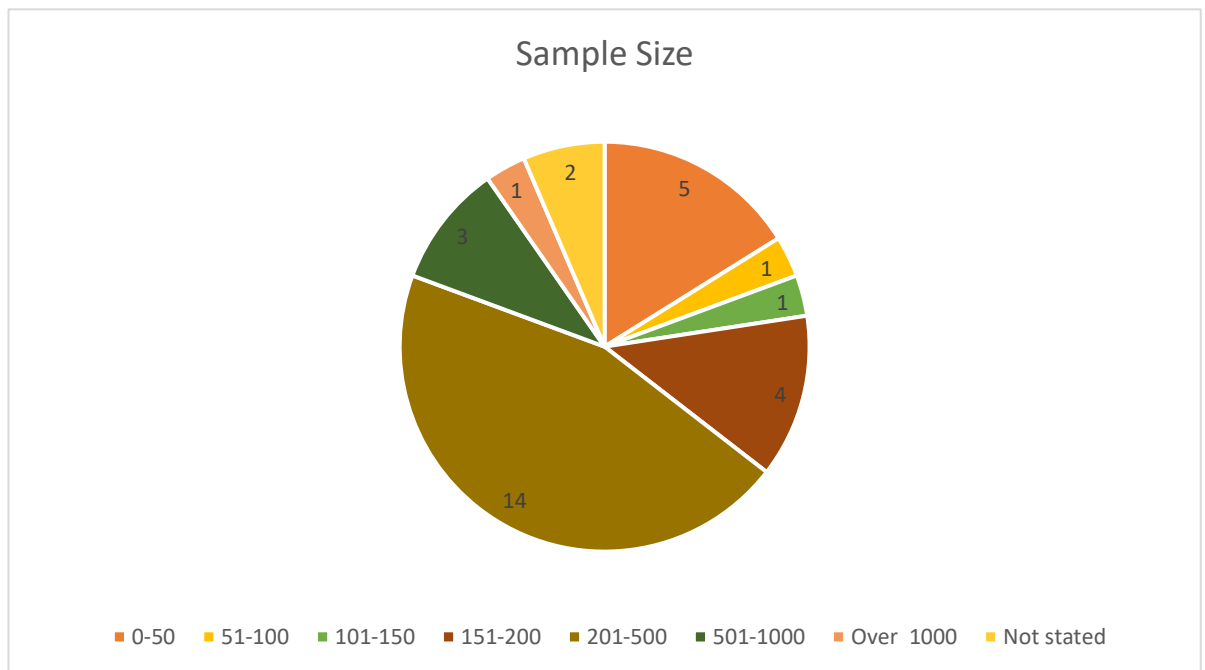
Innovative design of shirting woven fabrics	1			1
Annual performance evaluation	1			1
Personality	1			1
Stress	1			1
Alienation	1			1
Types of manager	1			1
Team performance	1			1
Motivation Methods	1			1
Occupational Health and Safety	2			2
Work performance	1			1
Fear of job loss	1			1
Presenteeism	1			1
Work conflict management	1			1
Intention to quit		1		1
Career satisfaction	1			1
Organizational silence	1			1
Personality traits	1			1
Cabin crew training	1			1
Crew resource management	1	1		2
Emotional intelligence capabilities	1			1
Crew's communication		1		1
Flight safety attitude		1		1
Musculoskeletal system complaints and factors			1	1
Emotional labor	4	1		5
Person-job fit	1			1
Work-family conflict	3			3
Subjective wellbeing		1		1
Organizational communication		1		1
Self presentation	1			1
Digital storytelling	1			1
Management system mobile application	1			1
Gender identity	1			1
Disciplinized bodies	1			1
Psychological Empowerment	1			1
Total	50	7	1	58

The reason for this finding may be that flight attendants give the image that they are worn out in society. Therefore, job satisfaction of flight attendants may have been wondered.

Distribution By Sampling Size And Sampling Method

14 of total amount of the theses have a sample size of 201-500 and it corresponds to 45.16% of the total theses. There is one thesis that the sample size is not stated, and the distribution of the theses according to the sample size is shown in figure 3.

Figure 3. Distrubition By Sampling Size



The reason for using mostly 201-500 samples in the number of samples used in theses may be due to the fact that more quantitative studies are conducted.

30 sampling methods have been determined in 28 theses. The findings show that while there are 2 theses that have two different sampling methods used by the researchers, there are 3 theses that sampling method was not specified. Data on sampling methods are shown in table 5.

Table 5. Sampling Method

		Msc	Phd	Exp. Med.	in	Total
Non Probabilty	Convenience Sampling	16	1			17
	Quota Sampling	1	1			2
	Purposive Sampling	1				1
	Snowball Sampling	3				3
Probability	Random Sampling	5	1			6
	Cluster Sampling				1	1
Not Stated		3				3
Total		29	3	1		33

The reason for using "convenience sampling" in theses may be the ease of reaching the people to be researched and doing research in this method.

Research Method And Design of Dissertations

As seen in Table 6, quantitative method is the most frequently used methods in 25 graduate theses. There are 5 qualitative methods and only 1 mixed method. Survey research design is the most used research design in 24 theses. The number of research design used is 33, as 2 different research designs, (both case study and phenomenology) were used in 2

graduate theses.

Table 6. *Research Method And Design of Dissertations*

Research Methods	Research Design	Msc	Phd	Exp. in Medicine	F	%
Quantitative	Survey	19	3	1	23	69,70
	Experimental	1			1	3,03
	Archival	1			1	3,03
Qualitative	Case Study	2			2	6,06
	Phenomenology	5			5	15,15
Mixed Method	Phenomonology and survey	1			1	3,03
Total		29	3	1	33	100

Data Collection Tools And Data Analysis Techniques Of Dissertations

Survey (66,67%) is the most preferred data collection tool among 9 different data collection tools. The frequencies and percentage distributions of the data collection tools used are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. *Data Collection Tools of Dissertations*

Data Collection Tools	Msc	Phd	Exp. in Medicine	Total	%
Survey	20	3	1	24	66,67
Experiment	1			1	2,78
Intra-company documents/informations	1			1	2,78
Observation	2			2	5,56
Interview	5			5	13,89
Voice messages	1			1	2,78
Face-to-face calls	1			1	2,78
Online messaging	1			1	2,78
Total	32	3	1	36	100

In social sciences, as in other subjects, the survey method was preferred more in this regard. The survey technic is used more than qualitative research method because, applying and persuading participants is easier than persuading them for deep interview.

In this section, data analysis techniques used in 31 theses are examined. Looking at Table 8, it is seen that the most preferred data analysis technique is pearson correlation analysis technique. Second is Anova and regression analysis.

Table 8. *Data Analysis Techniques of Dissertations*

Data Analysis Techniques	Msc	Phd	Exp. in Medicine	Total	%
Spearman Correlation	1			1	1,06
Anova	16	1		17	18,09
t-testi	14	1		15	15,96
Decision tree algorithms	1			1	1,06
Regression analysis	14	3		17	18,09
Levene test	1			1	1,06

Tamhance 12	1			1	1,06
Post hoc Tukey test	5			5	5,32
Pearson Correlation	15	3		18	19,15
Post hoc Scheffe test	3			3	3,19
Chi square test			1	1	1,06
Fisher's exact test			1	1	1,06
Binary logistic regression analysis			1	1	1,06
Content analysis	4			4	4,26
Lsd post hoc test	1	1		2	2,13
Ad hoc test	1			1	1,06
Games-Howell test	1			1	1,06
Dunnett's C post Hoc		1		1	1,06
Hierarchical regression	1			1	1,06
L-type matrix method	1			1	1,06
Not stated	1			1	1,06
	81	10	3	94	100

Conclusion

26 theses (84%) on the cabin crews belong to the Institute of Social Sciences. By publishing 11 (35.48%) theses, the most contribution to the literature was made in 2019. Only 1 (3.23%) of the researchers is male and 30 (96.77%) of them are women. The writing language of only 3 is English and 28 are Turkish. In Table 3, frequency values are shown according to the title of thesis advisor.

The sample size of 14 theses are between 201-500, and it has been determined that the convenience sampling method was used in 17 national theses. 25 (72.73%) quantitative studies exist, and the most used research design is survey research. Frequency and percentage values are shown in Table 6. The findings address that survey was used in 24 graduate theses. Pearson's correlation analysis is the most used technique of data analysis.

The most studied subjects regarding frequency values are; job satisfaction (6), organizational commitment (5), emotional labor (5), burnout syndrome (4) and work-family conflict (3). According to the inferences made from the mostly emphasized topics; the organizational commitment and job satisfaction levels of flight attendants who work in labor-intensive jobs have attracted the most attention of researchers.

The results obtained from the theses published in the database of YOK National Thesis Scanning Center indicate that some of the researches are concerned with the sample group that consist of flight attendants that have burnout syndrome and work-family conflict. It is revealed that some of the studies are related to organizational factors. New models created by determining the variables affecting the burnout syndrome can be tested, exploratory qualitative studies can be conducted on this topic, and the results can be provided to offer suggestions to airline operators. At the same time, it is recommended to conduct a qualitative study to evaluate the work-life balance perceptions of cabin crews.

Nagda and Koontz (2003) state that the majority of the 21 studies that examined cabin crew health problems had some weaknesses such as poor response rate, significant response bias, specific reliance on questionnaires, or limited analysis. As can be understood from the previous literature, cabin crews are a difficult group to reach as a research group. Thus, for increasing the accessibility, a team consisting of senior officials of airline operators, flight attendants and academicians is proposed to be formed, studies involving cabin or cabin-cockpit samples should be carried out and airline operators in Turkey should be further convinced to support scientific studies.

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