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## **Research Article**

### Examination of Graduate Theses on Male Nurses in Turkiye

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#### Abstract

**Objective:** This study aims to retrospectively analyze the postgraduate theses on male nurses in Türkiye.

**Method:** The universe of the study consisted of all theses about male nurses registered with the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education. The scanning of theses was carried out between 3-6 March 2025. First, the search was conducted using the keyword "male nurse" and 93 theses were found. Then, all studies investigating male nurses were manually reviewed. Eight master's theses and one doctoral thesis were found in the retrospective descriptive literature search. In the analysis of the data, the aims of these theses, research types, sample numbers and research results were included.

**Results:** The research type of 66.7% (n=8) of the nine theses screened was descriptive, the sample group of 77.8% (n=7) was health professionals, and the title of thesis advisor of 55.6% (n=5) was professor. The first study on the subject is a master's thesis published in 2015. In the thesis studies, how gender roles and social perceptions are shaped in the nursing profession, the professional identities of male nurses, the positive and negative situations they face, and the gendered nature of the nursing profession were evaluated.

**Conclusion:** As a result of this research, it was determined that gender segregation in the profession is decreasing, but there are still differences in social perceptions. Qualitative and quantitative studies on the professional roles of male nurses and the process of social acceptance can be recommended.

Keywords: Gender, Male Nurse, Nursing, Professional Role, Thesis.

#### INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a multidisciplinary health field based on scientific foundations and shaped by human values to meet the health needs of individuals, families and society (Baykara Mat & Baykal, 2021; Şahin, 2024). When the origins of the profession are examined, it is seen that nursing became a systematic discipline with the pioneering works of Florence Nightingale, and in this process, women came to the fore in the profession with their compassion, care giving and inherent sacrifice due to gender perceptions (Birol, 2007; Kaya et al., 2011). However, in contemporary health systems, nursing is accepted as a field of expertise that must be practiced within the framework of professional competencies and ethical values, regardless of gender roles (Alan & Uğur, 2018; Gönç, 2017; Şahin, 2024). In line with this understanding, the participation of male individuals in the nursing profession is also supported (Official Gazette, 2007). The participation of male nurses in professional life is gaining importance in terms of diversifying nursing practices and breaking professional prejudices based on traditional gender roles (Gönç, 2017; Şahin, 2024; Şahin & Baykal, 2024).

The legal basis for male individuals to practice the nursing profession in Türkiye was provided by the "Law on Amendments to the Nursing Law", which came into force in 2007, and following this regulation, a significant increase in male representation in the profession was observed (Official Gazette, 2007). However, this rise could not transform social perceptions and professional acceptances in a short time. It is frequently emphasized in the literature that male nurses encounter various prejudices both in their education processes and professional practices, are sometimes subjected to discrimination, and have difficulties in developing a professional identity (Gönç, 2017; Yılmaz & Şen, 2014).

Postgraduate theses are important academic studies that reflect scientific knowledge in a

particular field. Examining postgraduate theses on male nurses in Türkiye is valuable in terms of revealing research trends, methodological approaches and missing points in this field. In addition, such an analysis can guide not only the academic world but also those who design nursing education programs, health managers and policy makers. Empirical data are needed to develop educational strategies that will support the professional development processes of male nurses, to plan in-house awareness activities, and to design initiatives to reduce gender-based prejudices (Demiray et al., 2012). At this point, analyzing postgraduate theses about male nurses is a critical step in developing recommendations for practice. In this context, this study aims to examine postgraduate theses on male nurses in Türkiye and evaluate the research topics, methodological approaches and findings.

#### METHOD

#### Type of Research

The study was retrospective and descriptive.

#### Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all theses related to male nurses registered in the Higher Education Council National Thesis Center (YÖKTEZ) database (https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/). The screening of the theses was carried out between 3.03.2025-6.03.2025. During the search, 93 theses were reached with the keyword "male nurse". The theses consist of master's and doctoral theses covering the years 2010-2025. Of the 93 theses, 7 are master's theses written in English, 82 are in Turkish, and 4 are doctoral theses written in Turkish. Theses were eliminated according to inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria of the theses were; they should be related to male nurses and the full text of the thesis should be accessible from the YÖK national thesis center. Exclusion criteria were that the research focus was not on male nurses and the full text of the thesis could not be accessed from the YÖK national thesis center. In our research, all studies conducted in the field of male nurses were manually examined and evaluated according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and a total of 9 theses, including eight master's theses and one doctoral theses written in Turkish, whose full texts were accessible and whose research subjects were male nurses, were included in the retrospective descriptive literature review.

#### **Data Collection Tools**

The "data collection form" developed by the researchers was used. The data collection form includes information on the type, author, year, data collection tools, research type, sample number, sample group, purpose and study results of the thesis included in the study. The theses that met the criteria for acceptance into the study were added to the data collection form and examined by the researchers.

#### **Data Evaluation**

Descriptive statistics (percentage and number) were used in the evaluation of the data and SPSS 27 package program was used.

#### RESULTS

It was determined that 88.9% (n=8) of the theses (n=9) included in the study were master's theses, 22.2% (n=2) were conducted in 2015, (n=2) in 2023 and (n=2) in 2024, 66.7% (n=8) were descriptive studies, 77.8% (n=7) of the sample group were health professionals, 55.6% (n=5) of thesis advisors were professors, and 44.44% (n=4) were conducted in Istanbul (Table 1).

When the theses included in the research were examined, Armut (2018), Bayram (2016), Saraç (2015), Şahin (2024) and Timur (2023) examined the perspectives of healthcare professionals and patients towards male nurses. In the study conducted by Saraç (2015), it was determined that health professionals had positive views on the communication, care quality and work environments of male nurses. Although male nurses are thought to be more successful in situations requiring physical strength, it has been stated that they may have problems communicating with other healthcare personnel and patients. Bayram (2016) examined the perspectives of female nurses regarding the presence of men in the profession and stated that there is no gender discrimination in nursing, but there are some advantages and disadvantages (Table 2).

In the studies conducted by Armut (2018) and Timur (2023), it was determined that patients' perspectives towards male nurses were largely positive. Şahin (2024) examined the opinions and expectations of healthcare professionals regarding male nurses. Positive views include changing the perception of women in society regarding the nursing profession, providing confidence, benefiting from the physical strength of male nurses, and contributing to work sharing and teamwork. Negative opinions are indisciplined behavior, men's efforts to put pressure on their female colleagues, and male nurses being perceived as doctors by patients and their relatives (Table 2).

Özaslan (2020), Sağaç (2023), Yeşilyurt (2015) and Döndü (2024) examined the roles and perceptions of male nurses in their theses (Table 2). Özaslan (2020) examined the gender attitudes and professional equality perceptions of male nurses and found that male nurses had egalitarian attitudes. Sağaç (2023) evaluated the attitudes of male nurses towards HPV vaccine and found that most of them had low level of knowledge about HPV vaccine. Yeşilyurt (2015) examined the roles of male nurses in forensic nursing and determined that healthcare professionals do not have sufficient knowledge about their roles and legal responsibilities regarding forensic cases. It was concluded that the roles of men in forensic nursing were unclear and in-service training was inadequate. Döndü (2024) examined the relationship between male nurses' belief in sexual myths and their sexual satisfaction. It was found that male nurses believed in sexual myths at a normal level and their sexual satisfaction levels were high (Table 2).

Table 1. Distribution of descriptive characteristics of the theses (n=9)

Characteristics	n	%
Thesis Type		
Degree	8	88.9
Doctorate	1	11.1
Thesis Year		
2015	2	22.2
2016	1	11.1
2018	1	11.1
2020	1	11.1
2023	2	22.2
2024	2	22.2
Research Type* (n=12)		
Descriptive	8	66.7
Cross-sectional	3	25.0
Qualitative interview	1	8.3
Thesis Sample Group		
Healthcare professionals	7	77.8
Sick	2	22.2
Thesis Advisor Title Distribution		
Professor	5	55.6
Associate professor	1	11.1
Assistant Professor	3	33.3
Provinces Where Theses Were Made		
Istanbul	4	44.4
Ankara	1	11.1
Samsun	1	11.1
Slap	1	11.1
Canakkale	1	11.1
Sivas	1	11.1

\*More than one answer was given

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Table 2. Distribution	of variables rel	ated to theses (n=9)
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Author/Year	Purpose of the Study	Data Collection Tools	Sample Group	Study Design of the Research	Conclusion
Sarac, 2015	Healthcare workers' views on male nurses	Survey form prepared in line with literature	467 health professionals (physicians, nurses, health managers)	Descriptive and Cross-Sectional	Male nurses expressed positive thoughts and opinions about communication, quality of care and work environment. The most common positive aspects of working with male nurses were that they were more successful in interventions that required physical strength, and the negative aspects were that they had problems communicating with other healthcare personnel and patients.
Yesilyurt, 2015	The roles of male nurses in forensic nursing	Survey form prepared in line with literature	56 health professionals	Descriptive and Cross-Sectional	It has been determined that although health workers encounter forensic cases in the institutions they work in, they do not have sufficient knowledge about their roles and legal responsibilities regarding forensic cases and that in-service training regarding forensic cases in their institutions is inadequate. The roles of men in forensic nursing are not clear; in-service training is recommended.
Bayram, 2016	Perspectives of female nurses on men's presence in the profession	Survey form prepared in line with literature	146 female nurses	Descriptive	There is no gender discrimination in nursing; however, there are some advantages and disadvantages.
Armut, 2018	Patients' perspectives on male nurses	Survey form prepared in line with literature	384 patients	Descriptive	It was found that patients' perspectives towards male nurses were largely positive.
Ozaslan, 2020	Examining male nurses' gender attitudes and perceptions of professional equality	-Personal Information Form, -Descriptive Characteristics Questionnaire, -Gender Role Attitude Scale	220 male nurse	Descriptive	It was found that male nurses had egalitarian attitudes in terms of gender attitudes.

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Timur, 2023		Survey form prepared in line with literature	400 patients	Descriptive	It was found that patients' perspectives towards male nurses were generally positive.
Sagac, 2023	vaccination	-Descriptive Characteristics Questionnaire, -Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Knowledge Scale -Karolina HPV Vaccination Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (KHATIÖ)	383 male nurses	Descriptive and Cross-Sectional	It was determined that most male nurses had low level of knowledge about HPV vaccine. It is recommended that initiatives be taken to increase their general knowledge about HPV and vaccine.
Şahin, 2024	0	Semi-structured interview form	27 health professionals	Qualitative research in phenomenological design	Positive views about men becoming nurses are listed as changing the perception of women in the society regarding the nursing profession, providing confidence, benefiting from the physical strength of male nurses, demonstrating a positive approach to job sharing and contributing positively to teamwork. Negative views about men becoming nurses are stated as exhibiting undisciplined behaviors, men trying to put pressure on their female colleagues, male nurses being evaluated as doctors by patients and their relatives and sometimes having problems in providing care to female patients.
Döndü, 2024	Determining the relationship between male nurses' belief in sexual myths and sexual satisfaction	-Personal Information Form, -Sexual Myths Scale -New Sexual Satisfaction Scale	341 married male nurses	Descriptive	It was determined that male nurses believed in sexual myths at a normal level and their sexual satisfaction level was high. It was determined that believing in sexual myths affected sexual satisfaction positively, although at a low level.

#### DISCUSSION

In the study conducted to examine the postgraduate theses on male nurses in Türkiye, nine theses were evaluated. It was found that most of the theses were master's theses, theses on this topic have been conducted for the last 10 years, most of the research type and sample group used were descriptive and on health professionals, and most of the thesis advisors were professors. These studies provide important information on how gender roles and social perceptions are shaped in the nursing profession. These theses reveal the gendered nature of the nursing profession by focusing on male nurses' professional identities, challenges and gender perceptions.

It was determined that 88.90% of the nine theses examined were master's theses. Supporting our research findings, some studies in the field of nursing have also reported that there are more master's theses (Demirkaya, 2020; Kıyıcı & Arıca, 2024; Özkan et al., 2019; Özpulat, 2016; Serbest & Aytolan, 2023). It is thought that the reason for this situation may be that there are 69 institutions providing master's education in the field of nursing, while there are 35 institutions providing doctoral education (Özkütük et al., 2018). At the same time, it is thought to be due to reasons such as the entrance requirements for doctoral programs being more difficult, the requirement of having a master's degree to be able to do a doctorate, and the fact that individuals who plan an academic career choose doctoral programs (Özdemir & Kaplan, 2024; Kundakçı, 2023).

When the type of theses were analyzed in our study, it was found that the number of descriptive studies was high. In support of our research findings, in a study examining nursing theses in the field of hemodialysis in Türkiye, 57.70% of the theses were descriptive (Özdemir & Kaplan, 2024), in a study examining postgraduate theses

in the field of nursing management in Türkiye, 84% of the theses were descriptive (Demirkaya, 2020), in a study examining postgraduate theses conducted in the field of women's health nursing in Türkiye, 76. 70% of the master's theses were descriptive (Akalın & Şahin, 2022) and 68.20% of the theses were descriptive (Karaman & Oksel, 2020) in a study examining graduate theses in the field of internal medicine nursing in Türkiye. Despite the research findings, in a study examining postgraduate theses in the field of pediatric nursing, 57.10% of the theses were fully experimental (Sahin et al, 2022), in a study examining nursing theses on oral mucositis in cancer patients in Türkiye, 55.00% of the theses were experimental (Kundakçı, 2023), and in another study by Arslan et al. (2010) examining doctoral theses in the field of nursing in Türkiye, it was reported that 45.16% of the theses were experimental and semi-experimental. It is thought that the reason for this difference in the type of research may be that there are postgraduate education programs in different disciplines in the field of health and that there are some differences in the field they examine.

The perspective of health workers and patients on male nurses is an important topic of discussion in this field. In the study conducted by Saraç (2015), it was determined that health professionals had positive opinions about male nurses' communication, quality of care and working environment. In the studies conducted by Armut (2018) and Timur (2023), it was found that patients' perspectives on male nurses were largely positive. Supporting the findings of the study, there are studies showing that the view of male nurses is generally positive (Kaya et al., 2011; Öner & Utkualp, 2024; Yılmaz & Şen, 2014). It is thought that this may be due to the increasing views that men can also play an active role in the nursing profession, which is traditionally identified with women. At the same time, it is thought that this positive perspective may result from the combination of dynamics such as the widespread discourse on gender equality, the objectification of professional standards and the prioritization of individual needs of patients (Kaya et al., 2011; Öner & Utkualp, 2024; Yılmaz & Şen, 2014).

Şahin (2024) examined the opinions and expectations of health professionals regarding male nurses and found that there were some negative opinions as well as positive ones. Supporting the findings of the study, there are studies reporting both positive and negative aspects of being a male nurse in Türkiye (Dömbekçi et al., 2019; Gönç, 2017; Yılmaz & Şen, 2014). It is thought that this may be due to the fact that the nursing profession is coded as a feminine profession and the perception of male nurses in society is complex and multidimensional (Dömbekçi et al., 2019; Gönç, 2017; Kaya et al., 2011).

Looking at the roles and perceptions of male nurses, Yeşilyurt (2015) examined the roles of male nurses in forensic nursing and found that healthcare professionals do not have sufficient knowledge about their roles and legal responsibilities related to forensic cases. Özaslan attitudes (2020) examined gender and perceptions of professional equality of male nurses and found that male nurses had egalitarian attitudes. Sağaç (2023) evaluated the attitudes of male nurses towards HPV vaccine and found that most of them had low level of knowledge about HPV vaccine. These findings suggest that the roles and perceptions of male nurses are influenced by various factors. It is thought that this situation may be due to deficiencies in vocational education, gender dynamics and diversity in health policies (Özaslan, 2020; Sağaç, 2023; Yeşilyurt, 2015).

The perspectives of female nurses on the presence of men in the profession is also an issue that needs to be taken into consideration. Bayram (2016) examined the perspectives of female nurses on the presence of men in the profession and stated that there is no gender discrimination in nursing, but there are some advantages and disadvantages. Similar studies supporting the findings of the study reported that there is no gender discrimination in the profession (Ekinci et al., 2014; Kaya et al., 2011; Kocaer et al., 2004) and that the profession has some advantages and disadvantages for male nurses (Gönç, 2017). This situation suggests that the perception of gender in the nursing profession has changed with the social changes. Despite the findings of the study, Ünver et al. (2010) reported in a study that 61.40% of the participants argued that nursing is a female profession. It is thought that this situation may be due to gender inequality in the society (Başaran & Kösgeroğlu, 2020) and the fact that the media associate nursing with the female gender and that there are not many studies introducing the profession.

The fact that most of the postgraduate theses examined within the scope of this study were conducted with descriptive designs limits the generalizability of the findings. Although descriptive studies are effective in describing the current situation, they are insufficient in explaining causal relationships, making it difficult to reveal the causal effects of artificial intelligence on nursing practice. In addition, the limited sample sizes of some studies reduce and weaken statistical power the representativeness of the findings. The lack of experimental and quasi-experimental designs in studies prevents the effects of artificial intelligence applications from being tested with more powerful methods.

Postgraduate theses on male nurses in Türkiye show that gender roles and social perceptions in the nursing profession have significant effects on professional identity, career progression and professional satisfaction. These findings should be taken into consideration by policy makers and educators to ensure gender equality in the nursing profession.

#### CONCLUSION

The results of the theses reveal the difficulties faced by male nurses in their professional lives, their sources of motivation and their attitudes towards the profession. It shows that gender segregation in the profession is decreasing, but there are still differences in social perceptions. These results provide important clues for the improvement of nursing education and professional practices. According to the results of the study, policies can be developed for various areas such as strengthening the professional status of male nurses, improving working conditions, updating the educational curriculum and increasing social awareness. Qualitative and quantitative studies on the professional roles of male nurses and the process of social acceptance are recommended.

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