

Bibliometric Analysis of Theses Made in Public Health and Registered in the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education in Turkey

Türkiye'de Halk Sağlığı Alanında Yapılmış ve Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi'nde Kaydı Bulunan Tezlerin Bibliyometrik Analizi

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Abstract

Introduction In this research, it is aimed to make a bibliometric analysis of master's, doctorate and medical residency theses written in public health in Turkey and registered on the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education.

Materials and Methods The research is of descriptive type. Within the research, all theses, including master's, doctorate and medical residency in public health, which were registered on the website of the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education until 31.12.2021, were reached. A data collection form consisting of 21 questions was used in the evaluation of the postgraduate theses. Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance and Chi-square test were performed to determine the relationships between variables. $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Results 2399 theses were evaluated in the study. Of the theses included in the research, 45.6% were master's thesis. The full text of 77.4% of the theses was available and, the gender of the thesis student was female in 66.1%. The most commonly used epidemiological method in theses was cross-sectional. The median number of pages of the theses is 108 (min: 27-max: 952). The university with the highest number of theses in Public Health was Istanbul University. When the topics of the theses were evaluated, the most chosen topic was occupational health (14.2%) and the least chosen topic was school health (0.7%).

Conclusion As a result of the research, it was determined that most of the theses were master's theses and, the number of public health theses increased over the years.

Keywords Thesis, Bibliometric analysis, Public health, Turkey.

Özet

Amaç Bu araştırmada Türkiye'de halk sağlığı alanında yazılmış ve Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi'nde kaydı bulunan yüksek lisans, doktora ve tıpta uzmanlık tezlerinin bibliyometrik analizinin yapılması amaçlanmıştır.

Gereç ve Yöntem Araştırma tanımlayıcı türdedir. Araştırma kapsamında Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi internet adresinde 31.12.2021 tarihine dek yayımlanmış olan halk sağlığı alanındaki yüksek lisans, doktora ve tıpta uzmanlık dahil bütün tezlerle ulaşılmıştır. Ulaşılan lisansüstü tezlerin değerlendirilmesinde 21 soruluk bir veri toplama formu kullanılmıştır. Değişkenler arası ilişkilerin belirlenmesi için Kruskal-Wallis varyans analizi ve Ki-kare testi kullanılmıştır. $P < 0,05$, istatistiksel olarak anlamlı kabul edilmiştir.

Bulgular Araştırma kapsamında 2399 tez değerlendirildi. En fazla sayıda tez 2019 yılında yazılmıştı. Araştırma kapsamına alınan tezlerin %45,6'sı yüksek lisans teziydi. Tezlerin %77,4'ünün tam metni bulunmaktaydı ve %66,1'inde tez sahibinin cinsiyeti kadındı. Tezlerde en sık kullanılan epidemiyolojik yöntem kesitseldi. Tezlerin sayfa sayısı ortancası 108 (min: 27-maks: 952) idi. Halk Sağlığı alanında en çok tez yapılan üniversite İstanbul Üniversitesi idi. Hazırlanan tezlerin konuları değerlendirildiğinde en fazla seçilen konu iş sağlığı (%14,2) ve en az seçilen konu okul sağlığı (%0,7) idi.

Sonuç Araştırma sonucunda yapılan tezlerin çoğunluğunun yüksek lisans tezi olduğu ve halk sağlığı tez sayısının yıllar içerisinde arttığı belirlenmiştir

Anahtar Kelimeler Tez, Bibliyometrik analiz, Halk sağlığı, Türkiye.

INTRODUCTION

Bibliometric analysis is a type of research that aims to follow the trend of publications over time as a result of applying statistical methods to the published literature. Bibliometric analysis, which has gained popularity in recent years, guides researchers, institutions and countries, and provides the discovery of the intellectual structure of the researched field. This type of research evaluates both the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of publications, includes a wide range of publications, generally uses a single database, and deals with a broad subject (1, 2). There are many examples of bibliometric analysis in the literature (3-7). There are also postgraduate theses using this research method (8-10).

In Turkey, the rules of postgraduate education comprising master's, doctorate, proficiency in art, pharmacy residency, dental residency and medical residency are regulated by regulations. One of these rules is that writing a thesis is necessary in order to complete graduate education (11-13).

Public health education at undergraduate and master's level in Turkey started in 1908 at Gülhane Military Medical Academy under the name of "hygiene and preventive medicine". The chair of hygiene and preventive medicine was renamed community medicine and finally public health in 1982. Both undergraduate and postgraduate public health education, which started at the Gülhane Military Medical Academy, spread over the years to other cities in Turkey, starting from Ankara. As postgraduate education in public health, master's, doctorate and medical residency trainings are provided at the present time (14). Public health residency training in Turkey started at Refik Saydam Hygiene School in 1958 (15). Although public health master's and doctorate educations were officially started to be given in health sciences institutes after the Law of the Council of Higher Education in 1982, postgraduate educations were also provided in the institutes established before this date (16).

In this research, it is aimed to make a bibliometric analysis

of master's, doctorate and medical residency theses written in public health in Turkey and registered in National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education.

MATERIAL and METHODS

The research is of descriptive type. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Ankara University's Rectorate to conduct the research (Number: 10/107 Date: 30.05.2022). The study was carried out between 01.06.2022 and 15.07.2022. Within the research, all theses, including master's, doctorate and medical residency in public health, which were published on the website of the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education and published until 31.12.2021, were reached (17). The theses were accessed by selecting the 'Public Health Department' on the 'Detailed Search' tab on the website. Since the theses that are not registered in the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education cannot be accessed, these theses are excluded from the scope.

In the theses whose full text could not be reached, only the summary was reached, the data collection form was filled out by using the abstract. In the data collection form, the author's name, gender, title of the supervisor, the supervisor's gender, type of the thesis, year of publication, name of the university, subject of the thesis, type of the research, sample characteristics, number of pages, number of tables, number of figures and number of sources were searched and recorded.

The research data were transferred to the computer environment and analyzed. Compliance of numerical data with normal distribution was investigated by visual (histogram, detrended q-q) and statistical (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) methods. Since the normal distribution conditions are not met, the median, minimum, maximum and interquartile range (IQR) were used to summarize the numerical data; percentage and frequency distributions were used to summarize categorical data. Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance was performed to determine the relationships between numerical variables. The relationships between categorical

Table 1. Some characteristics of theses published by thesis type between 1970-2021 in Turkey

		Thesis Type						P	Total	
		Master		Doctorate		Medical residency			n	%
		n	%	n	%	n	%			
Full text	Available	841	76.9	274	67.2	741	82.5	0.001	1856	77.4
	Absent	252	23.1	134	32.8	157	17.5		543	22.6
The thesis student's gender	Female	825	75.5	244	59.8	517	57.6	0.001	1586	66.1
	Male	268	24.5	164	40.2	381	42.4		813	33.9
The advisor's gender	Advisor not specified	3	0.3	2	0.5	40	4.4	0.001	45	1.9
	Female	510	46.7	183	44.9	413	46.0		1106	46.1
	Male	580	53.1	223	54.7	445	49.6		1248	52.0
Advisor's title	Advisor not specified	3	0.3	2	0.5	40	4.5	0.001	45	1.9
	Assistant professor	183	16.7	25	6.1	100	11.1		308	12.8
	Associate professor	328	30.0	93	22.8	190	21.2		611	25.5
	Professor	562	51.4	287	70.4	567	63.1		1416	59.0
	Other	17	1.6	1	0.2	1	0.1		19	0.8
Region	Central Anatolia	58	6.9	23	8.4	54	7.3	0.001	135	7.3
	Aegean	121	11.1	80	19.6	162	18.0		363	15.1
	Marmara	224	20.5	94	23.0	194	21.6		512	21.3
	Eastern Anatolia	123	11.3	40	9.8	65	7.2		228	9.5
	Southeastern Anatolia	51	4.7	15	3.7	45	5.0		111	4.6
	Black Sea	106	9.7	7	1.7	81	9.0		194	8.1
	Mediterranean	55	5.0	10	2.5	95	10.6		160	6.7
Research type 1*	Quantitative	817	97.1	262	95.6	709	95.6	0.001	1788	96.3
	Qualitative	18	2.1	0	0.0	14	1.9		32	1.7
	Quantitative and Qualitative	4	0.5	9	3.3	15	2.0		28	1.5
	Other	2	0.2	3	1.1	4	0.5		9	0.5
Research type 2*	Descriptive	191	23.1	44	16.1	102	14.0	0.001	337	18.4
	Cross-sectional	542	65.5	150	54.7	492	67.5		1184	64.7
	Case control	20	2.4	9	3.3	16	2.2		45	2.5
	Cohort	11	1.3	4	1.5	15	2.1		30	1.6
	Experimental	45	5.4	49	17.9	52	7.1		146	8.0
	Methodological	15	1.8	12	4.4	42	5.8		69	3.8
	Other	3	0.4	6	2.2	10	1.4		19	1.0
Method of collecting research data*	Primary	783	93.1	251	91.6	688	92.7	0.709	1722	92.7
	Secondary	58	6.9	23	8.4	54	7.3		135	7.3
Sample calculation status*	Yes	292	34.7	112	40.9	335	45.1	0.001	739	39.8
	No	549	65.3	162	59.1	407	54.9		1118	60.2
Sample selection method entity*	Available	222	26.4	98	35.8	280	37.7	0.001	600	32.3
	Absent	619	73.6	176	64.2	462	62.3		1257	67.7
Sampling method*	Probability	204	93.2	97	99.0	266	95.0	0.090	567	95.0
	Non-probability	15	6.8	1	1.0	14	5.0		30	5.0

*These characteristics of theses without full text are not included in the table.

Table 2. Evaluation of numerical characteristics of theses in terms of thesis type between 1970-2021 in Turkey

	Thesis Type						p	Difference between groups
	Master		Doctorate		Medical residency			
	Median	IQR	Median	IQR	Median	IQR		
Number of thesis pages	99.00	43.00	124.00	67.00	114.00	54.00	0.001	There is a difference between all 3 groups.
Number of thesis tables*	26.00	21.00	32.00	28.00	32.00	24.00	0.001	There is a difference between master's and the other 2 groups.
Number of thesis figures*	1.00	4.00	3.00	7.00	3.00	6.00	0.001	There is a difference between master's and the other 2 groups.
Number of thesis references*	82.00	56.00	112.00	77.00	114.50	72.00	0.001	There is a difference between master's and the other 2 groups.

*These characteristics of theses without full text are not included in the table.

variables were investigated with the chi-square test. $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant

RESULTS

2399 theses evaluated in the research were prepared between 1970-2021. The highest number of theses were written in 2019 (n=220). 2019 was followed by 2020 (n=150), 2018 (n=142) and 2017 (n=141), respectively. The least number of theses were prepared in or before 1981 (1 or 2 per year) (Graph 1).

(Graph 1. Number of theses published in public health between 1970-2021 in Turkey)

Of the 2399 theses included in the research, 45.6% (n=1093) were master, 17% (n=408) were doctorate, and 37.4% (n=898) were medical residency thesis. 77.4% of the theses had the full text and 66.1% of the thesis students were female. Some characteristics of the theses according to the thesis type are presented in Table 1.

The median number of pages of the theses is 108 (min: 27-max: 952), the median number of tables is 29 (min: 0-max: 294), the median number of figures is 2 (min: 0-max: 135),

and the median number of references is 100 (min: 15-max: 847). While a statistically significant difference was determined between the groups in terms of the number of thesis pages, the master's theses were found to be different from the other two thesis groups in terms of the number of tables, the number of figures and the number of sources Table 2.

The top five universities with the most theses written in Public Health were Istanbul University (8.2%, n=197), Erciyes University (7.9%, n=190), Hacettepe University (7.8%, n=186), Dokuz Eylül University (6%, n=144) and Gazi University (5.7%, n=137) Table 3.

(Table 3. Universities with the most theses written in public health by thesis type between 1970-2021 in Turkey)

When the topics of the theses were evaluated, the most chosen topics were occupational health (14.2%), non-communicable diseases (8.4) and health services/health management (7.6%), respectively. The least chosen topics were school health (0.7%), disasters (0.8%), oral health (0.8%) and immigrant health (0.9%), respectively (Table 4).

(Table 4. Evaluation of the distribution of public health thesis topics by thesis types between 1970-2021 in Turkey)

Table 3. Universities with the most theses written in public health by thesis type between 1970-2021 in Turkey

No.	Universities with the most theses in Public Health	Universities with the most theses in Public Health	Universities with the most theses in Public Health	Universities with the most theses in Public Health
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
1	Istanbul University (U) 197 (8.2)	Erciyes U 121 (11.1)	Istanbul U 63 (15.4)	Istanbul U 71 (7.9)
2	Erciyes U 190 (7.9)	Hacettepe U 101 (9.2)	Dokuz Eylül U 43 (10.5)	Dokuz Eylül U 46 (5.1)
3	Hacettepe U 186 (7.8)	Marmara U 71 (6.5)	Hacettepe U 39 (9.6)	Hacettepe U 46 (5.1)
4	Dokuz Eylül U 144 (6.0)	Gazi U 66 (6.0)	Ege U 37 (9.1)	Cukurova U 45 (5.0)
5	Gazi U 137 (5.7)	Istanbul U 63 (5.8)	Erciyes U 35 (8.6)	Gazi U 43 (4.8)

DISCUSSION

Most of the theses evaluated in our research are master's theses. In a study examining public health postgraduate theses between 2009 and 2019, similar to our study, the rate of master's theses was found to be higher than medical residency and doctorate theses (3). It is seen that the number of master's theses is higher in three studies, examining the public health nursing theses made until 2015, examining the theses made between 1978 and 2017 in occupational health and safety, and examining the occupational health nursing theses between 2009-2016 (7, 18, 19). Since the researchers could not find a study evaluating public health theses made in a country other than Turkey, a study evaluating nursing theses was examined. In a study examining nursing theses written in Brazil between 1981 and 2002, it was concluded that the number of master's theses was higher (20). The reasons for this situation may be that admission to the master's degree is easier, the duration of the master's education is shorter, the content of the master's education is lighter compared to medical residency and doctorate, and the number of institutions providing master is higher. In addition, while there are master's, doctorate and medical residency in public health in Turkey, there are only public health master's and doctorate abroad. This point should not be overlooked when interpreting the findings in our research and in the literature.

The oldest dated thesis evaluated within our research was written in 1970 and the newest dated thesis was written in 2021. An increase was observed in the number of theses from 1970 to 2019, and there has been a slight decrease in the last two years. In two studies examining public health doctorate and medical residency theses between 1998-2019 and public health postgraduate theses between 2009-2019, they were found that the number of theses produced in recent years is higher (3, 21). There is a similar finding in Kaya et al.'s study (22). In another study examining postgraduate theses in public health nursing, the number of theses written in recent years is higher (7). In a study examining doctorate theses in nursing practice, it was found that the number of theses has increased in recent years (23). Because of the interest in postgraduate education and majoring desire in a special field over the years, the increase in the number of people who receive postgraduate education has led to the result that the number of theses produced also increase. Another reason for this increase may be the increase in the number of postgraduate education institutions over the years. The decrease in the number of theses observed in our research after 2019 can be associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects. In our study, it was determined that the highest number of quantitative studies were conducted, and cross-sectional and descriptive studies were preferred. Similar findings were reached in two studies in which medical residency theses prepared in public health between 2000-2018 were

Table 4. Evaluation of the distribution of public health thesis topics by thesis types between 1970-2021 in Turkey

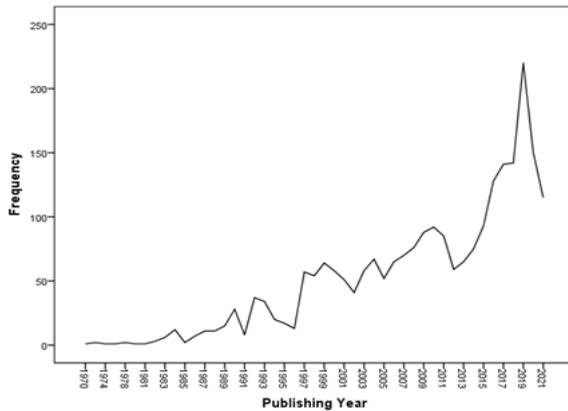
Thesis topic	Thesis Type						P	Total	
	Master		Doctorate		Medical residency			n	%
	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Elderly Health	31	2.8	18	4.4	34	3.8	83	3.5	
Infant and child health	73	6.7	21	5.1	51	5.7	145	6.0	
Communicable diseases	35	3.2	15	3.7	32	3.6	82	3.4	
Work health	163	14.9	52	12.7	125	13.9	340	14.2	
Environmental health	29	2.7	21	5.1	58	6.5	108	4.5	
School health	8	0.7	3	0.7	5	0.6	16	0.7	
Adolescent health	27	2.5	12	2.9	30	3.3	69	2.9	
Women's health and pregnancy	76	7.0	18	4.4	52	5.8	146	6.1	
Reproductive health and family planning	37	3.4	22	5.4	33	3.7	92	3.8	
Mental health	61	5.6	19	4.7	54	6.0	134	5.6	
Non-communicable diseases	73	6.7	35	8.6	93	10.4	201	8.4	
Cancer	32	2.9	11	2.7	23	2.6	66	2.8	
Smoking, alcohol and substance abuse	41	3.8	18	4.4	37	4.1	96	4.0	
Oral health	8	0.7	10	2.5	2	0.2	20	0.8	
Nutrition	121	11.1	15	3.7	24	2.7	160	6.7	
Health services/health management	74	6.8	40	9.8	69	7.7	183	7.6	
Health education	32	2.9	22	5.4	13	1.4	67	2.8	
Disasters	12	1.1	3	0.7	4	0.4	19	0.8	
Migrant health	13	1.2	3	0.7	5	0.6	21	0.9	
Immunization	17	1.6	12	2.9	31	3.5	60	2.5	
Other	130	11.9	38	9.3	123	13.7	291	12.1	
Total	1093	45.6	408	17.0	897	37.4	-	2399	100.0

evaluated and public health postgraduate theses were evaluated between 2009-2019, and it was found that the most common types of research were cross-sectional and descriptive (3, 22). In a study in which public health nursing postgraduate theses conducted until 2015 were evaluated, the most common type of research was descriptive research (7). In an article evaluating hepatitis A-related studies presented as a paper at the Turkish National Public Health Congresses and in a study evaluating the articles published in the Turkish Journal of Public Health, it has seen that most of the studies were descriptive and cross-sectional (4, 5). In two different theses in which emergency medicine specialty theses were evaluated, it was found that the observational research type, which includes descriptive and cross-sectional studies, came to the fore (8, 9). In a bibliometric analysis on palliative care and nursing practices in Portugal, it was observed that the most common type of research in the theses examined was quantitative research (24). In the light of the findings in our research and in the literature, as the reasons for preferring the research design-

ns that are preferred in the foreground, it can be shown that descriptive and cross-sectional studies are faster, easier to apply and more economical in terms of cost and time compared to other types of research.

In our research, it has been determined that the universities with the highest number of theses in public health are in the cities with a high population density (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana and Kayseri). There are similar findings in other studies in the literature in which postgraduate theses are evaluated (3, 18, 21). This situation may be because of the types of postgraduate education the public health departments of these universities have, the education program applies and the number of postgraduate candidates they accept.

The most preferred public health postgraduate thesis topic in our research is occupational health. In a study in which postgraduate theses were evaluated, it was determined that the most frequently studied subject in medical residency theses was occupational health, and the most frequently studied subject in doctorate theses was health promotion



Graph 1. Number of theses published in public health between 1970-2021 in Turkey

and health education (21). Similarly, in three studies evaluating public health postgraduate theses made between 1978-2010, between 2009-2019, and between 2000-2018, the most frequently studied subject was occupational health (3, 22, 25). In two studies in which public health nursing graduate theses were evaluated, the most frequently studied subjects were found to be women's health and healthy lifestyle (6, 7). The most commonly studied topics in theses may be preferred, as they are important issues for developing countries in terms of public health.

Research Highlights and Limitations

Evaluation of all master's, doctorate and medical residency theses made and registered in public health in Turkey makes the study comprehensive. The research reveals the most frequently preferred research types and study topics in public health theses. These characteristics are the superior aspects of the study.

The full text of 543 theses could not be reached, and variables such as the number of tables, figures, sources, sample characteristics, and research type of these theses could not be recorded. This is the limitation of the study.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the research, these were determined that most of the theses are master's theses, the number of theses in public health has increased over the years, the most frequently used epidemiological research types in theses

are cross-sectional and descriptive types, more these come out from cities with a high population density. The most frequently covered subject in these is occupational health and the least covered subject is school health. It would be beneficial to make new theses in types such as cohort and/or intervention studies, which are considered having higher levels of evidence, and to choose thesis topics from less studied topics.

The study has never been presented anywhere before.

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