

BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF POSTGRADUATE THESIS WRITTEN ON MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY IN TURKEY (2012-2023)

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to analyse the postgraduate theses written in Turkey on mental health literacy in line with the criteria determined by the researchers.

Material and methods. The study was built on the case design, which is frequently preferred in qualitative research, and the bibliometric analysis method was used.

Results. It was observed that the theses examined in the study were mostly carried out at the master's level and were written in Turkish, and the topic of mental health literacy was preferred by female writers.

Conclusions. In recent years, it has been observed that the importance and number of studies on the concept of mental health literacy have increased in both national and international literature. This increase can be attributed to a greater understanding that mental health issues are an integral part of social and individual life.

Keywords: bibliometric analysis, mental health literacy, postgraduate thesis

RÉSUMÉ

Analyse bibliométrique de la thèse de troisième cycle écrite sur la littératie en santé mentale à Türkiye (2012-2023)

L'objectif de l'étude était d'analyser les thèses de troisième cycle écrit en Turquie sur la littératie en santé mentale conformément aux critères déterminés par les chercheurs.

Matériel et méthodes. L'étude a été construite sur la conception de cas, qui est fréquemment préférée dans la recherche qualitative, et la méthode d'analyse bibliométrique a été utilisée.

Résultats. Il a été observé que les thèses examinées dans l'étude ont été principalement réalisées au niveau de la maîtrise et ont été écrites en turc, et le sujet de la littératie en santé mentale a été préféré par les femmes écrivains.

Conclusions. Ces dernières années, il a été observé que l'importance et le nombre d'études sur le concept de littératie en santé mentale ont augmenté dans la littérature nationale et internationale. Cette augmentation peut être attribuée à une meilleure compréhension

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health literacy is known as a subject concerning health literacy, that has been developing and expanding, progressively increasing its scope. Jorm et al. introduced the concept of mental health literacy, building upon the definition of health literacy. They first defined this concept in 1997 as the ability to recognize, manage, and prevent mental illnesses. Mental health literacy encompasses recognizing mental illnesses, understanding how to access mental health information, and knowledge about seeking professional help and includes skills that encourage and facilitate such behaviors¹.

Understanding mental health literacy accurately and comprehensively is anticipated to facilitate advancements in both individual and societal health levels. Increasing individuals' levels of mental health literacy is crucial for them to recognize mental illnesses and perform appropriate interventions. According to a study conducted in 2020, mental health literacy education provided to both male and female individuals would significantly contribute to the improvement of mental health behaviors within the society regarding mental illnesses².

According to a review conducted by Wei et al., in 2015, assessing mental health literacy and various dimensions of different mental illnesses, most studies in this field were conducted between 2000 and 2009, with the United States being the leading country in terms of the number of studies conducted³.

The Mental Health Literacy Scale, which measures individuals' levels of mental health literacy, was developed by Jung et al. in 2016⁴. The adaptation of the scale sub-dimensions of Knowledge-Belief and Resource Focus into Turkish literature was accomplished by Gökteş et al. in 2019⁵. In the literature, there were published studies about the validity and reliability of the Mental Health Literacy Scale⁶⁻⁸.

A study conducted in the Central Anatolia region of Turkey, the levels of mental health literacy among participating individuals varied according to socio-demographic variables such as gender, education, and employment status. The study revealed that the participants had a good level of mental health literacy⁹. In another study, with a sample group consisting of healthcare professionals, it was found that the mental health literacy of healthcare workers was

que les problèmes de santé mentale font partie intégrante de la vie sociale et individuelle.

Mots-clés: analyse bibliométrique, littératie en santé mentale, thèse de troisième cycle

below the expected level. It was anticipated that organizing training and development programs could have a positive impact on patient outcomes as well¹⁰. In a study conducted on university students, which is one of the commonly used samples for the scale, it was observed that female students obtained higher scores in mental health literacy compared to male students, and the gender variable created a statistically significant difference¹¹. The mental health literacy levels of university students studying in the field of health sciences vary significantly according to variables such as seeking professional help for mental illnesses, gender, and their mental well-being status¹².

The conceptual introduction of mental health literacy, its recognition, significance, and its role as a powerful component in empowering communities have been emphasized in studies found in the international literature¹³⁻¹⁸. Mental health literacy has increasingly become an important topic, given its contribution to individuals' health levels. The number of postgraduate theses conducted in this field has increased over the years. However, both bibliometric and content analyses in this area are limited. It is considered that the study is valuable in terms of guiding researchers who produce resources in the literature and filling the relevant gap.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY was to provide data about the content of the theses about mental health literacy in Turkey, not only to be limited to bibliometric analyses concerning research in mental health literacy. In other words, it examines deeper into the research topics and issues, methodologies employed, and outcomes in the field of mental health literacy, not only through numerical analysis of publications, but also by focusing on the contents of the theses.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The current study is designed to examine postgraduate theses (master, doctoral, and medical specialization) written in the field of mental health literacy in the database of the Turkish Council of Higher Education National Thesis Center (CHENTC) using bibliometric analysis. The term "bibliometrics" rooted in the concept of "statistical bibliography" was introduced by Pritchard in 1969 and defined as "emphasizing the characteristics of written materials

using statistical methods¹⁹. Bibliometric analysis refers to the use of various programs or software to conduct mathematical and statistical analyses in a designated research field, resulting in the classification of materials in the field according to certain criteria and the presentation of various structures²⁰. Bibliometric analysis reveals the structure of the field and ensures its relevance by classifying the findings who produce resources in the field²¹.

With the development seen in academic publishing today, there has been an increase in the number of articles and books across various platforms. Such an increase has led to the accumulation of work in related fields and has made it quite challenging and time-consuming for researchers to access resources. Therefore, this situation has led to an increase in studies based on bibliometric analysis in required areas²².

In the literature there is no clear guide available for the process of bibliometric research. However, researchers producing literature in this field generally approach bibliometric research with fundamentally similar logic and similar steps²³⁻²⁵. According to Öztürk, who has created a classical template for the stages of bibliometric research by examining technical articles and books written on bibliometric analysis, bibliometric studies are carried out in four steps. First, the purpose of the research is determined, and then the database where the sources addressing the research purpose will be searched is selected. After selecting the sources for the research on the designated database, data analysis is conducted using specific programs, and the analysis results are presented visually. In the final stage, the findings are interpreted according to the research questions initially identified²⁶.

As a result of the search conducted in the CHENTC database, as of August 31, 2023, a total of 21 postgraduate theses were included in the study. The study consists of two parts. Primarily, the bibliometric analysis of the postgraduate theses that constitute the scope of the study has been conducted. The sample, objectives, results, and recommendations presented in the literature by the thesis studies have been examined following the created thesis analysis form. While the first part of the research is presented as sections in the form of tables, the second part has been presented integrally as a single table. The theses were subjected to analysis based on 14 questions formulated by the researchers:

1. What is the distribution of postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy according to their types?

2. How is the distribution of postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy based on the years?
3. What is the distribution of postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy, according to the publication language?
4. What is the distribution of the authors' genders in postgraduate theses written in mental health literacy?
5. What is the distribution of research methods in postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy?
6. What is the distribution of the provinces where the postgraduate theses on mental health literacy were conducted?
7. What is the distribution of the regions where the postgraduate theses on mental health literacy were conducted?
8. What is the distribution of the universities where the postgraduate theses on mental health literacy were conducted?
9. What is the distribution of the departments where the postgraduate theses on mental health literacy were conducted?
10. What is the distribution of the page numbers in the postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy?
11. What is the distribution of the sample groups in the postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy?
12. What are the aims emphasized in postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy?
13. What are the results emphasized in postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy?
14. What are the recommendations emphasized in postgraduate theses written on mental health literacy?

The data obtained within the scope of the questions were classified in Microsoft Office Excel, and frequency analyses were performed using the SPSS 25 software package and presented in the form of tables. Furthermore, since no human-specific experimental intervention was conducted in the study, ethical committee approval was not required.

RESULTS

It was observed that 21 thesis studies were conducted between 2012 and 2023. The quantitative and qualitative findings obtained have been presented through tables.

As indicated in Table 1, out of the theses related to mental health literacy in the CHENTC database, 16 are master's theses, 1 is a doctoral thesis, and 4 are specialization theses. The findings regarding the

Table 1. Distribution of postgraduate theses according to types

<i>Thesis Type</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Master's thesis	16	76.2
Doctorate	1	4.8
Specialization	4	19
Total	21	100

Table 2. Distribution of postgraduate theses according to years

<i>Thesis Publication Year</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
2012	1	4.8
2018	2	9.5
2020	3	14.3
2021	1	4.8
2022	7	33.3
2023	7	33.3
Total	21	100

Table 3. Distribution of postgraduate theses according to publication language

<i>Publication Language</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Turkish	20	95.2
English	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 4. Distribution of gender of postgraduate thesis authors

<i>Author Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Woman	19	90.5
Man	2	9.5
Total	21	100

Table 5. Distribution of postgraduate theses according to research methods

<i>Research Method</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Quantitative	19	90.4
Qualitative	1	4.8
Quantitative and qualitative	1	4.8
Total	21	100

distribution of postgraduate theses according to years are included in Table 2. Considering this distribution, it is evident that the number of postgraduate theses written in the field of mental health literacy, especially in 2022-2023, is significantly higher compared to other years, showing a substantial increase. Looking at the publication languages of the

Table 6. Distribution of postgraduate theses according to provinces

<i>Province</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
İstanbul	5	23.8
Karabük	1	4.8
Hatay	1	4.8
Antalya	1	4.8
Düzce	1	4.8
İzmir	1	4.8
Balıkesir	1	4.8
Ankara	2	9.5
Bolu	1	4.8
Muğla	2	9.5
Eskişehir	1	4.8
Denizli	2	9.5
Edirne	1	4.8
Londra	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 7. Distribution of universities conducting postgraduate theses according to regions

<i>Region</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Marmara	6	28.6
Aegean	4	19
Mediterranean	4	19
Central Anatolia	3	14.3
Black Sea	3	14.3
Continent of Europe	1	4.8
Total	21	100

postgraduate theses on mental health literacy, 20 theses are written in Turkish (95.2%) and one thesis is written in English (4.8%) (Table 3). Quantitative data on the gender distribution is included in Table 4. Accordingly, 19 of the postgraduate theses were written by female authors, and 2 by male authors. Out of the examined theses, 19 used quantitative methods, one used qualitative methods, and one used both qualitative and quantitative methods (Table 5).

When examining the distribution of postgraduate theses in the field of mental health literacy by provinces, it is observed a great diversity. The universities in Istanbul have worked the most on this topic, followed by universities in cities such as Ankara, Muğla, and Denizli (Table 6). The regional distribution of the examined theses is presented in Table 7. The theses were mostly conducted in the Marmara Region. Additionally, one postgraduate thesis was conducted in the Europe (in the UK). When examining the distribution of the theses according to

Table 8. Distribution of postgraduate theses according to universities

University	N	%
Maltepe University	1	4.75
Karabük University	1	4.75
İstanbul University	2	9.5
Hatay Mustafa Kemal University	1	4.75
Health Sciences University	2	9.5
Kings College London-England	1	4.75
Pamukkale University	2	9.5
Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University	2	9.5
Eskişehir Osmangazi University	1	4.75
Trakya University	1	4.75
Akdeniz University	1	4.75
Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University	1	4.75
Gazi University	1	4.75
Ankara University	1	4.75
Bandırma On Yedi Eylül University	1	4.75
İzmir Kâtip Çelebi University	1	4.75
Düzce University	1	4.75
Total	21	100

universities, more than one university conducted thesis studies in the field of mental health literacy (Table 8). The relatively small number of postgraduate thesis studies in the field of mental health literacy makes it difficult to make comparisons in terms of which universities conducted the most or the least studies. Table 9 presents the classification of the theses according to the main branches of study. The theses were predominantly conducted in the field of Nursing (n=7), followed by Public Health (n=5), and Psychiatric Nursing (n=3). The distribution of the examined theses according to the number of pages has been grouped by researchers according to predetermined proportions. Accordingly, there is one thesis (4.8%) in the 0-50 pages range, 11 theses (52.4%) in the 51-100 pages range, 7 theses (33.3%) in the 101-150 pages range, and 2 theses (9.5%) in the 201-250 pages range (Table 10).

The postgraduate theses in the mental health literacy field, found in the CHENTC database, were examined in this study in terms of bibliometric parameters determined by the researchers. It was found that the number of examining postgraduate theses was relatively low, but there has been an increase in the number of theses since 2012. The particularly high production of theses in 2022 and 2023 compared to other years indicates an increased interest in this field. The increased demand for mental health literacy, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic,

Table 9. Distribution of postgraduate theses according to main branches of study

Department of Science	N	%
Psychology	1	4.8
Nursing	7	33.3
Public Health	5	23.8
Psychiatric Nursing	3	14.3
Healthcare Management	2	9.5
Educational Sciences	2	9.5
Overseas Institute	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 10. Distribution of postgraduate theses according to the number of pages

Number of pages	N	%
0-50	1	4.8
51-100	11	52.4
101-150	7	33.3
151-200	0	0
201-250	2	9.5
Total	21	100

can be considered as an intervention tool to promote the development of individuals' mental health.

According to the data obtained from the research, most of the examined theses (76.2%) were at the master's level, and only one thesis was written within the scope of a doctoral program. This situation is thought to potentially hinder the creation of qualified publications in the field of mental health literacy in the future and the training of expert individuals. Only one of the examined theses was written in a foreign language (English), emphasizing the necessity of increasing awareness of mental health literacy at international level.

We noticed that 90% of the thesis authors on mental health literacy are women. In addition, most of the theses (90.4%) are based on quantitative research methods. However, upon examining the content of the theses, it has been noted that in the recommendations section, particularly in studies conducted using quantitative research methods, participants' mental health statuses were not fully identified, and they hesitated when faced with the questions in the mental health literacy scale, thereby leading to unclear research results. In future postgraduate studies, both quantitative and qualitative research methods must be used together.

Most of the studies were conducted in Istanbul, and regionally, most in the Marmara Region. Conducting thesis studies in every region and

province rather than limiting them to specific areas could contribute more to the field. However, evaluations-based universities have revealed an incomplete distribution of thesis studies. This situation suggests that the topic might still be an unexplored research area for some universities.

More than half of the examined postgraduate theses (52.4%) fall within the 51-100 page range. A significant portion of these theses was observed to be conducted in the Department of Nursing. Particularly, it was noticed that psychiatric nurses preferred the subject of mental health literacy and nurses were generally selected as samples in the studies. This situation can be associated with the perception of mental health literacy as a preventive solution against mental health problems that emerged due to the intense working conditions of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemics. Moreover, it may be considered a decisive factor in identifying mental health issues. This also suggests that addressing the topic as a research area could be a significant step towards providing more qualified service and fostering healthier communities.

The content analysis has revealed that specific occupational groups, such as students, teachers, and nurses, were mostly chosen as research samples. This may not fully reflect the mental health literacy level of Turkish society and the results obtained could be limited in terms of generalizability. Therefore, selecting sample groups from different segments and regions could make the obtained data more meaningful for the entire population.

The theses focused on scale development and determining individuals' mental health literacy status. The results of the studies are as follows:

- The created scale forms are a valid and reliable measurement tool for the Turkish community.
- Individuals' sociodemographic status creates significant differences in their mental health literacy levels.
- The mental health literacy status of the relatives of individuals undergoing mental illness treatment has a good level, indicating that mental illness enhances individuals' mental health literacy.
- The education provided to individuals regarding mental illnesses improves their mental health literacy levels.
- There is a need to enhance students' mental health literacy levels and promote school-based mental health activities.
- It is necessary to incorporate intervention and preventive measures into the nursing students' curriculum and the work standards of practicing nurses.
- Mental health literacy prevents/reduces erroneous and negative thoughts and behaviors regarding mental illnesses.

- Conducting internet-based educational activities to improve mental health literacy, especially among students, may significant outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Almost all the conducted thesis studies recommend the consideration of the cultural dimension of mental health literacy. However, this aspect might not be fully captured through quantitative studies and numerical data. Therefore, stakeholders involved in mental health literacy are advised to conduct qualitative research using interview techniques. This approach will not only fill the gaps in the field but also provide a more valuable framework in terms of presenting an overall perspective. Thus, establishing a connection between existing quantitative studies and qualitative research models will enable more accurate and meaningful insights. This way, the impact of cultural differences and the adaptation of mental health literacy to local dynamics can be examined more effectively.

Compliance with Ethics Requirements:

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