NEURODIVERSITY IN GRADUATE THESES IN TÜRKIYE: A SCOPING REVIEW

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Abstract

This study aimed to map how the concept of neurodiversity is used in graduate theses completed in Türkiye. The scoping review followed the JBI guidance and was reported according to the PRISMA-ScR checklist. In October 2026, the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) was searched with 13 Turkish and English terms. The full texts of 16 eligible theses were coded with a structured form and analyzed through descriptive content analysis. Fifteen theses were completed in 2023 or later, and the concept was most often associated with autism. Eleven theses defined neurodiversity as a paradigm or social model; in five of these, however, the concept was used in the research as a label for diagnostic groups. The concept shaped the research design in half of the theses, yet most of these did not use the term in their titles, and their abstracts often did not reflect how the concept was used. Only three theses conveyed the experiences of neurodivergent individuals in their own words, and in six, information was obtained solely from parents. No thesis included neurodivergent children or adolescents as participants or involved neurodivergent individuals as research partners. The findings indicated that the concept has entered the theoretical frameworks of the theses but has not yet changed, to the same extent, with whom and how research is conducted. Researchers are encouraged to state the sense in which they use the concept, to reflect it in the research design, and to involve neurodivergent individuals directly in research.

Keywords: neurodiversity, scoping review, graduate theses, descriptive content analysis

1. Introduction

Neurodiversity is an approach that considers conditions such as autism not as a disorder or deficit but as a form of variation within the diversity of minds (Pellicano & den Houting, 2022). Although the origin of the concept has long been attributed to Judy Singer, the term first appeared in print in 1998 in a piece by the journalist Harvey Blume, who credited the concept to online autistic communities. Archival evidence shows that the concept was already being discussed in 1996 on the Independent Living email list and was developed collectively by autistic activists (Botha et al., 2024).

Walker (2014, as cited in Dwyer, 2022) distinguishes three meanings of the term: the fact of the diversity of minds, the neurodiversity paradigm as a theoretical perspective, and the neurodiversity movement, which advocates for the rights of neurologically atypical individuals. In the factual sense, neurodiversity is a property of groups rather than of individuals. Because no two individuals' minds are ever the same, even a group of neurotypical individuals is neurodiverse (Dwyer, 2022). Individuals who diverge from neurotypical norms are referred to with the term *neurodivergent*, coined by Kassiane Asasumasu (Botha et al., 2024).

Neurodiversity approaches emerged as an alternative to the medical model that has traditionally guided developmental research. The medical model views disability as bodily and mental disorders that cause deficits and functional limitations in the individual, and it aims to transform disabled individuals into typically developing ones (Dwyer, 2022). Pellicano and den Houting (2022) point to three limitations of this model in autism research: "an overfocus on deficits, an emphasis on the individual as opposed to their broader context and a narrowness of perspective" (p. 381). The social model, in contrast, holds that disability arises entirely from

society's responses to individuals' "impairments" (Dwyer, 2022). Instead of these two extremes, Dwyer (2022) proposes interactionist and ecological approaches that view disability as the product of the interaction between the individual and the environment. The neurodiversity movement has also developed a rights-based stance against ableism, which idealizes physical, mental, and neurological functioning that conforms to certain standards and excludes those who fall outside them (Uysal, 2025).

The spread of the concept does not mean that its meaning has become clear. Dwyer (2022) notes that ambiguity about the meaning of the concept intensifies debate and argues that it would be more accurate to speak of multiple "neurodiversity approaches" rather than a single paradigm. Kapp et al. (2013) also showed that, despite fundamental differences between the medical model and the neurodiversity movement, the two approaches overlap substantially. A scoping review of definitions in empirical research found that the concept was most often defined as natural human variation, that seven further conceptualizations coexisted with this definition, and that debate continues about the concept's relationship with models of disability (McLennan et al., 2025b). Language is also part of this debate. No single term for describing autism is accepted by the whole community (Kenny et al., 2016), and the language used in research can reproduce ableist assumptions even when researchers do not intend it (Bottema-Beutel et al., 2021). Therefore, the mere use of the concept in a study does not by itself show in what sense and to what depth it is used.

One of the core demands of the neurodiversity approach regarding research practice is that neurodivergent individuals be included in research about them as participants and co-researchers (Fletcher-Watson et al., 2019; Nicolaidis et al., 2019). However, a scoping review of empirical research on neurodiversity showed that more than half of the research teams provided no statement about community involvement and that no participatory research with neurodivergent children was reported (McLennan et al., 2025a). How a study that uses the concept includes neurodivergent individuals is therefore an important indicator of the extent to which the concept has been adopted.

In Türkiye, neurodiversity is a topic that has only recently begun to attract attention, and the literature is quite limited (Özkul et al., 2025). In the field of working life, empirical studies on the employment experiences of neurodivergent individuals are almost nonexistent, and existing publications mostly address the concept only with a focus on autism (Ertek et al., 2025). Recently, the concept has also begun to be addressed in human resources and philosophy (Çelik, 2026; Özkul et al., 2025; Uysal, 2025), and two scales measuring neurodiversity awareness and practices in organizations have been adapted into Turkish (Özkul et al., 2026).

Turkish terminology, however, is not yet settled. The equivalent *zihinsel çeşitlilik* (mental diversity) has been proposed, but the term *nöroçeşitlilik* (neurodiversity) continues to be used because of its prevalence in the literature (Özkul et al., 2025). For individuals, the terms *nörodiverjan* (neurodivergent) and *nöroçeşitli* (literally, neurodiverse) are used interchangeably (Çelik, 2026; Özkul et al., 2025; Uysal, 2025). Çelik (2026) notes that the concept of neurodiversity is mostly used to describe neurodivergent individuals, whereas it fundamentally encompasses the cognitive differences of all people. In keeping with the distinction above, this study uses the term *neurodivergent* for individuals who diverge from neurotypical norms and *neurodiversity* for the concept itself; quotations from the theses retain their original wording.

A preliminary search found no study mapping how the concept of neurodiversity is used in academic work in Türkiye. Graduate theses are one of the first places where a concept enters academia, and they reflect early-stage work that has not yet appeared in published articles. Theses are considered grey literature (Polat & Sarıdaş, 2026), and because most theses in Türkiye are held in a single central database, a comprehensive and reproducible search is possible. Scoping reviews are also an appropriate method for clarifying concepts and

definitions in an emerging field (Peters et al., 2020). This study examined in what sense and to what depth the concept of neurodiversity is used in graduate theses completed in Türkiye and to what extent the voices of neurodivergent individuals are included.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to map how the concept of neurodiversity is used in graduate theses in Türkiye. To this end, the following questions were addressed:

1. How are the theses distributed by year, thesis type, and language of writing?
2. How are the theses distributed by discipline and university?
3. How are the theses distributed by study group?
4. How are the theses distributed by research design, data collection instruments, and analysis methods?
5. How is the concept of neurodiversity defined and framed in the theses?
6. What is the theses' level of engagement with the concept of neurodiversity?
7. To what extent do the theses include the voices of neurodivergent individuals?

2. Method

2.1 Research design

This study is a scoping review. Scoping reviews are exploratory and descriptive in nature (Peters et al., 2020). The study was conducted according to Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-stage framework and the JBI guidance (Peters et al., 2020) and was reported in accordance with the PRISMA-ScR checklist (Tricco et al., 2018). The data were analyzed through descriptive content analysis (Çalık & Sözbilir, 2014). No protocol was registered in advance for this study.

2.2 Eligibility criteria, search, and selection

The eligibility criteria were defined using the Population–Concept–Context (PCC) framework (Peters et al., 2020). The concept was the use of the term neurodiversity or its derivatives, and the context was graduate theses completed at higher education institutions in Türkiye. Because defining participants is not always necessary within this framework (Peters et al., 2020), the population was not restricted, and theoretical and art theses without participants were also included.

Inclusion criteria. Theses were included if they were registered in the YÖK National Thesis Center; were master's, doctoral, or medical specialty theses completed at a higher education institution in Türkiye; contained the term in the title, abstract, or keywords (in Turkish or English); and had an accessible full text. No year restriction was applied. Theses completed at institutions abroad were excluded, whereas theses completed in Türkiye that used data from other countries were included, because the focus of the study is academic knowledge production in Türkiye.

Search. The search was conducted on October 22, 2026, in the YÖK National Thesis Center, in the "All fields" (*Tümü*) field, which covers titles, abstracts, and keywords, using 13 terms: *nöroçeşitlilik, nöroçeşitli, nöro çeşitlilik, nöro-çeşitlilik, nöro çeşitli, nöro-çeşitli, nöroıraksak, nörofarklı*, neurodiversity, neurodiverse, neurodivergent, neurodivergence, and neuro-diversity. Because the database uses exact matching, different spellings of the terms were searched separately.

Selection. After duplicates were removed, the bibliographic records and abstracts of 17 theses were screened; one thesis completed abroad was excluded, and 16 theses were included (Figure

1). Selection was carried out by the first author; cases in which the criteria did not give a clear answer were resolved by consensus with the other authors.

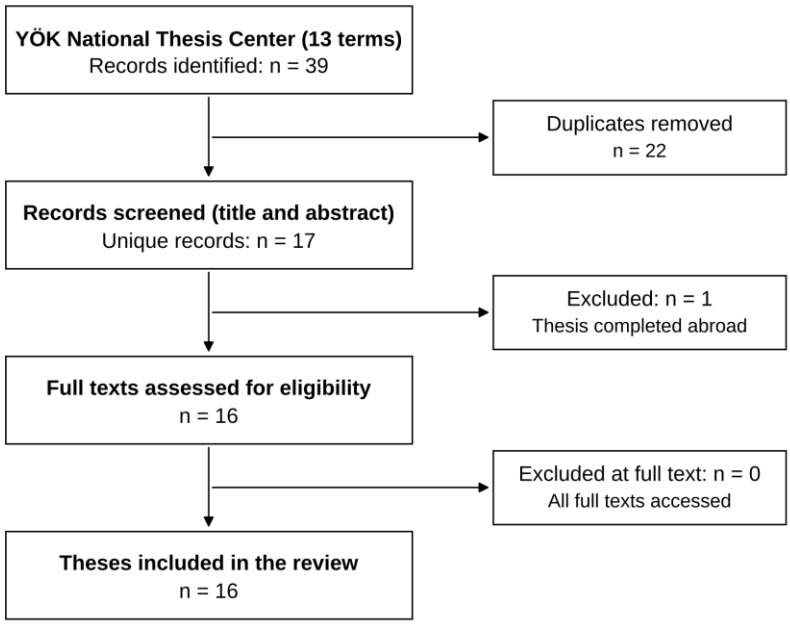


Figure 1. PRISMA-ScR flow diagram of the thesis selection process

2.3 Data charting, coding, and analysis

Data were extracted from the full texts of the theses using a two-part coding form developed by the authors. The first part contains directly observable variables such as year, thesis type, discipline, university, language, design, data collection instrument, analysis method, study group, country of data origin, and whether the term appears in the title. The second part contains six variables requiring interpretation: level of engagement with the concept, framing, scope, voice of the individual, language use, and sources cited. A definition, an example, and a decision rule were written for each category, and the page number and a supporting quotation were recorded next to each code.

Level of engagement with the concept classifies, at four levels, how much the concept functions in a thesis (Table 1). This classification was not adopted from an existing scheme but was developed for this study. A similar distinction was also used by McLennan et al. (2025a), who distinguished between merely defining the concept in a study and embedding it in the study as a theoretical framework, research aim, or central topic. When the evidence fell between two levels, the lower level was assigned. Framing was coded in four categories: medical/deficit, umbrella label, paradigm/social model, and universal neural diversity. If the meaning of the concept in the theoretical section differed from its use in the research, a second code was assigned and the case was noted as a "discrepancy." Voice of the individual indicates how neurodivergent individuals take part in the research: none (information obtained from others), indirect (scale or questionnaire), direct (interview or narrative), and partnership (participatory research).

Table 1. Levels of engagement with the concept

Level	Definition
1 – Label	The term appears but is not defined (only as a keyword, a participant description, or a recommendation sentence).
2 – Definition	The concept is defined or discussed in the theoretical section but has no effect on the design or interpretation of the research.
3 – Interpretation	The concept is used analytically in interpreting the findings or in the discussion.
4 – Structuring	The concept shapes the research design: at least one of the research aim, sample, intervention content, or analysis categories is built on the concept.

Pilot testing. Before use, the form was piloted with three theses representing different levels of engagement, and the pilot results were reviewed together with the research team. The pilot showed that coding based on abstracts was insufficient, so all theses were coded from their full texts. In addition, the second level was redefined as "Definition" to accommodate theses that defined the concept in the theoretical section but did not use it in the research.
Reliability. To test the reliability of the variables requiring interpretation, five of the theses (31%) were coded independently by a second researcher. Intercoder agreement was calculated with the formula Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement) × 100, and agreement of at least 80% was considered sufficient (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Baltacı, 2017). The remaining 11 theses were coded by the first author.
Analysis. Descriptive variables were summarized with frequencies and percentages; variables requiring interpretation were classified into categories and illustrated with quotations from the theses. Because the aim of scoping reviews is to map rather than to synthesize evidence, the methodological quality of the theses was not appraised (Peters et al., 2020).

2.4 Research and publication ethics

This study complied with the rules set out in the Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive.

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive characteristics of the theses

Year, type, and language. Fifteen of the theses (94%) were completed in 2023 or later. The first thesis using the concept dates from 2017; no thesis using the concept was found for the years 2018–2022. The largest number of theses (seven) was written in 2025. Ten of the theses (63%) are master's theses, five (31%) are doctoral dissertations, and one (6%) is a medical specialty thesis; nine (56%) were written in Turkish and seven (44%) in English.
Discipline and university. The theses were most often written in psychology and psychological counseling and guidance (five theses, 31%), the social sciences (four theses, 25%), and art and design (three theses, 19%), followed by education (two), business administration (one), and public health (one). The 16 theses were completed at 15 different universities; the only university with more than one thesis is İstanbul Bilgi University (two theses). Nine of the theses were completed at foundation (nonprofit private) universities and seven at state universities; 10 were written in İstanbul, four in Ankara, and one each in İzmir and Eskişehir.
Study group. The most frequently studied group was parents of neurodivergent children (six theses). No thesis included neurodivergent children or adolescents themselves as participants

(Table 2). Study group sizes ranged from 12 to 515 people. In 13 theses, data were collected in Türkiye. Two theses examined practices in other countries (Jaber, 2025: the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates; Kurç, 2024: the United Kingdom), and one thesis is a theoretical art study (Demirci, 2023).

Table 2. Study groups of the theses

Study group	***f***	**Theses**
Parents of neurodivergent children	6	Aygün (2017), Akay (2023), Tuna (2024), Tercan (2024), Kaplan (2025), Kavilcioğlu (2025)
Adults (employees, women, app users, general sample)	4	Ağat (2023), Sönmez (2024), Koç (2025), Önal (2025)
University students	3	Dönmez (2023), Şahmaran (2025), Atik Şahin (2025)
No participants (theoretical study or secondary data)	3	Demirci (2023), Kurç (2024), Jaber (2025)
Total	16	

Research design. Quantitative (six theses), qualitative (five theses), and mixed (three theses) designs were used. In two theses, no empirical data were collected: one is an art practice based on theoretical analysis (Demirci, 2023), and the other is a study based on historical analysis and secondary data (Kurç, 2024). Among the quantitative theses, correlational survey and mediation analysis were the most common (three theses); among the qualitative theses, in-depth or semi-structured interviews were the most common (two theses). Four theses included an intervention or program: two family education and support programs (Tercan, 2024; Tuna, 2024), one online family counseling program (Kavilcioğlu, 2025), and one online cognitive training program (Sönmez, 2024).

3.2 Definition and framing of the concept

Eleven theses treated neurodiversity as a paradigm or social model. In five of these, the meaning of the concept in the theoretical section differed from its use in the research (Table 3).

Table 3. Framing of the concept in the theses

Framing	***f***	**Theses**
Paradigm / social model, consistent use	6	Aygün (2017), Ağat (2023), Dönmez (2023), Kurç (2024), Tercan (2024), Jaber (2025)
Paradigm / social model, medical use in the research (discrepancy)	3	Önal (2025), Atik Şahin (2025), Koç (2025)
Paradigm / social model, umbrella label in the research (discrepancy)	2	Akay (2023), Kaplan (2025)
Umbrella label	4	Sönmez (2024), Tuna (2024), Kavilcioğlu (2025), Şahmaran (2025)
Universal neural diversity	1	Demirci (2023)
Total	16	

In theses that consistently used the concept as a paradigm, neurodiversity is a perspective that locates the condition not in the individual but in the interaction with the environment. For example, Tercan (2024) states that, in developing the program, she "accepted [neurodevelopmental conditions] as 'differences' of the brain rather than describing them as 'disorders'" (p. 93). In theses showing a discrepancy, the concept is defined as a paradigm in

the theoretical section but used like a diagnostic category in the research. For example, Kaplan (2025) defined the concept, drawing on Walker (2014), as "infinite variations in neurocognitive functioning" (p. 6), yet used the heading "Child's Neurodiversity Diagnosis" in the demographic table (p. 22). In umbrella-label use, the concept appears, without being defined, as a collective name for diagnostic groups. Sönmez (2024), in turn, used the term "neurotypical" for the general undiagnosed population and measured autistic traits in this population.

Scope. Within the scope of neurodiversity, the theses most often mentioned autism (13 theses), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (nine theses), and dyslexia or specific learning disability (six theses). Three theses extended the scope to psychiatric diagnoses such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or obsessive-compulsive disorder, and two theses also included genetic or physical conditions such as Down syndrome and cerebral palsy.

Language and sources. English terms have no consistent Turkish equivalent. Tuna (2024) rendered "neurodiverse children" in the English title as *gelişimsel yetersizliği olan çocuklar* (children with developmental disabilities) in the Turkish title and as *farklı gelişim gösteren çocuklar* (children who develop differently) in the Turkish abstract; the first of these renderings carries the concept into the language of deficit. Kavilcioğlu (2025) translated "neurodivergent children" in the English abstract as *farklı gelişen gruplar* (groups that develop differently) in the Turkish abstract. Dönmez (2023), in turn, treated the concept as a paradigm in the main text but used the language of disorder in both abstracts, rendering "disorders" in the English abstract as *rahatsızlıklar* (ailments) in the Turkish abstract. Seven theses cited foundational or theoretical texts of the neurodiversity literature (e.g., Sinclair, Singer, Blume, Walker, Armstrong, Chapman) when defining the concept (Akay, 2023; Atik Şahin, 2025; Aygün, 2017; Dönmez, 2023; Jaber, 2025; Kaplan, 2025; Tercan, 2024); the other nine theses did not cite these sources.

3.3 Level of engagement with the concept

In half of the theses (eight theses), the concept shapes the research design (Level 4). Only three of these eight theses contain the term in their titles (Table 4).

Table 4. Level of engagement of the theses with the concept

Level	***f***	**%**	**Term in title**	**Theses**
4 – Structuring	8	50	3	Aygün (2017), Demirci (2023), Dönmez (2023), Tercan (2024), Jaber (2025), Önal (2025), Atik Şahin (2025), Koç (2025)
3 – Interpretation	2	13	0	Ağat (2023), Kurç (2024)
2 – Definition	3	19	1	Akay (2023), Şahmaran (2025), Kaplan (2025)
1 – Label	3	19	1	Sönmez (2024), Tuna (2024), Kavilcioğlu (2025)
Total	16	100	5	

Note. Percentages do not sum to 100 because of rounding.

In Level 4 theses, the concept entered the design in different ways: building the research question or hypothesis on the concept (Jaber, 2025; Önal, 2025), turning the concept into a variable (Atik Şahin, 2025), grounding the measurement model or the intervention content in the concept (Dönmez, 2023; Tercan, 2024), defining the analysis criterion through the concept (Aygün, 2017), the concept emerging as a separate theme in the findings (Koç, 2025), and building an art collection on the concept (Demirci, 2023). In Level 2 theses, the concept was addressed in the theoretical section but was not used in the method or the discussion. For

example, Akay (2023) defined the research problem as "addressing it from a neurodiversity perspective" (p. 6), yet this perspective was reflected neither in the design, which consisted of scale adaptation and correlational analysis, nor in the discussion. In the preliminary coding based on abstracts, nine theses were classified at a lower level than their full texts warranted; that is, abstracts often do not reflect how the concept is used in the full text.

3.4 Voice of neurodivergent individuals in the theses

Only three theses convey the experiences of neurodivergent individuals in their own words; no thesis involved these individuals as partners in the research design (Table 5).

Table 5. Voice of neurodivergent individuals in the theses

Code	***f***	**Theses**
0 – None (information obtained from others)	6	Aygün (2017), Akay (2023), Tuna (2024), Tercan (2024), Kaplan (2025), Kavilcioğlu (2025)
1 – Indirect (scale or questionnaire)	3	Dönmez (2023), Atik Şahin (2025), Önal (2025)
2 – Direct (interview or narrative)	3	Ağat (2023), Şahmaran (2025), Koç (2025)
3 – Partnership (participatory research)	0	–
No neurodivergent participants	4	Demirci (2023), Kurç (2024), Sönmez (2024), Jaber (2025)
Total	16	

In all six theses in which information was obtained from others, the participants were parents of neurodivergent children. Two of these theses are participatory action research (Tercan, 2024; Tuna, 2024); however, those involved as partners were the parents, not the neurodivergent individuals themselves. Aygün (2017) states that she had planned to include children with autism in the research as well, but that this could not be carried out "due to various obstacles" (p. 91). Of the eight theses in which the concept shaped the design (Level 4), only one directly includes the voices of neurodivergent individuals (Koç, 2025).

4. Discussion and conclusion

This study mapped how the concept of neurodiversity is used in 16 graduate theses completed in Türkiye. The fact that 15 of the theses were completed in 2023 or later indicates that the concept has begun to spread in graduate theses in Türkiye in recent years. This picture is consistent with the assessment that the topic has only recently begun to attract attention in Türkiye (Özkul et al., 2025). Considering that neurodiversity publications in the Web of Science have increased markedly since 2016 (Ertek et al., 2025), graduate research in Türkiye can be said to follow this trend a few years behind. The distribution of the theses across six disciplinary groups is consistent with the interdisciplinary nature of the concept (Ertek et al., 2025).

In the theses, the concept was most often associated with autism. This finding is consistent with the review showing that autism also dominates international empirical research (McLennan et al., 2025a) and with the observation that publications in Türkiye mostly address the concept with a focus on autism (Ertek et al., 2025). The extension of the scope to psychiatric diagnoses such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia in three theses is in line with approaches that broaden the concept of neurodivergence to include individuals experiencing mental health conditions (Asasumasu, 2016; Walker, 2021, as cited in McLennan et al., 2025a). Nevertheless,

it has also been argued that such broad inclusiveness fails to take into account the experiences and needs of some individuals (Uysal, 2025).

Eleven theses defined neurodiversity as a paradigm or social model. In five of these, however, the concept was used during the research phase as a diagnostic category or umbrella label. These theses presented the paradigm definition in the theoretical section but relied on diagnostic categories at stages such as defining the sample and collecting data. This discrepancy can be explained by the absence of a single meaning of the concept. Dwyer (2022) notes that ambiguity in the meaning of the concept deepens debate and that it is possible to speak of multiple approaches rather than a single paradigm.

This discrepancy is not necessarily a contradiction. Although there are fundamental differences between the medical model and the neurodiversity approach, the two overlap substantially (Kapp et al., 2013). Dwyer (2022) also proposes an intermediate position that views disability as an interaction between the individual and the environment. Nevertheless, theses need to justify explicitly the difference between the theoretical definition and its use in the research. In four theses, the concept was used, without any definition, as a collective name for diagnostic groups. This finding is consistent with the observation that the concept is mostly used to describe neurodivergent individuals (Çelik, 2026).

In half of the theses, the concept shaped the research design. However, this is not visible in the titles and abstracts of the theses. Of the eight theses that placed the concept at the center of the design, only three contained the term in their titles. A review that examines the use of the concept only by looking at titles or abstracts may therefore miss some of the theses that use the concept most deeply, or may evaluate them as more superficial than they are.

One of the most striking findings of the study is the limited voice of neurodivergent individuals. In six theses, information was obtained solely from parents. No thesis included neurodivergent children or adolescents as participants, and in none were neurodivergent individuals involved as partners in the research design. Of the eight theses in which the concept shaped the design, only one directly includes the voices of these individuals (Koç, 2025). With respect to children, this picture is similar to that in the international literature: A review of empirical research on neurodiversity also reported no participatory research with neurodivergent children (McLennan et al., 2025a).

One way to produce research that reflects community priorities is to involve individuals with autism and those who support them directly in the process through participatory, co-designed, and co-produced research (Pellicano & den Houting, 2022). Such research is also expected to facilitate the translation of findings into practice and to lead to better outcomes for individuals with autism (Fletcher-Watson et al., 2019). From this perspective, it can be said that the concept has entered the topics and theoretical frameworks of the theses in Türkiye but has not yet changed to the same extent with whom and how research is conducted. Two participatory action research studies conducted with parents (Tercan, 2024; Tuna, 2024) show that these methods are feasible in Türkiye. Using these methods with neurodivergent individuals themselves could be the next step.

The findings on language use confirm that Turkish terminology is not yet settled (Özkul et al., 2025). The rendering of the same English term with different Turkish expressions across theses, and the shift of the concept into the language of deficit in the Turkish title of one thesis, may lead to the same thesis being read through different frames in the two languages. Given that there is no single term for autism that is accepted by everyone (Kenny et al., 2016) and that research language can unintentionally reproduce ableist assumptions (Bottema-Beutel et al., 2021), it is important that Turkish equivalents be chosen with justification and used consistently in the abstracts in both languages.

In conclusion, the concept of neurodiversity began to enter graduate theses in Türkiye particularly from 2023 onward and was used in half of the theses with enough depth to shape

the research design. Nevertheless, the theoretical definition of the concept and its use in research do not always align, and the number of theses in which neurodivergent individuals convey their own experiences in their own words remains limited. Based on these findings, the following recommendations can be made to researchers:

1. Clearly define the sense in which the concept is used and reflect this definition in the research design.
2. Involve neurodivergent individuals directly as participants and, where possible, as co-researchers (Fletcher-Watson et al., 2019; Nicolaidis et al., 2019), and extend this involvement to children and adolescents.
3. Use consistent terminology in Turkish and English abstracts, and include the term in the title, abstract, and keywords of theses in which the concept shapes the design.

Limitations. This study examined only theses registered in the YÖK National Thesis Center with accessible full texts; articles on the topic and theses with restricted access fell outside its scope. Because the search used exact matching, theses using different equivalents such as *zihinsel çeşitlilik* (mental diversity) may have been missed. Selection was carried out by the first author, and the reliability of the interpretive codes was tested on five theses. Future studies could track the use of the concept in Türkiye by also including articles and could examine the representation of neurodivergent individuals in research together with neurodivergent researchers.

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