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## **A bibliographic analysis of postgraduate theses using the health belief model in the field of midwifery in Turkey**

### **Analiza bibliograficzna prac podyplomowych z wykorzystaniem modelu przekonań zdrowotnych z zakresu położnictwa w Turcji**

#### **Abstract**

**Introduction.** Midwifery is a universal healthcare discipline that holistically addresses the physiological, psychological, and social needs of women and their families. The Health Belief Model (HBM) is the oldest and most frequently used theoretical model used to explain the factors that shape individuals' health behaviours, their search for medical care, and symptom management

**Objective.** The objective of this study is to examine postgraduate theses in the field of midwifery in Turkey that use the Health Belief Model (HBM) through bibliometric analysis.

**Material and Method.** This research was conducted retrospectively and descriptively. In order to access theses, the Higher Education Institution National Thesis Centre search engine was searched using the keywords 'Health Belief Model' and 'midwifery' in both Turkish and English. As a result of the scans conducted, seven postgraduate thesis studies utilising the Health Belief Model in the field of midwifery, which are accessible and meet the inclusion criteria, were examined within the scope of the research up to the year 2026. The data were analysed using IBM SPSS 26 software, and descriptive statistical methods were employed in their evaluation.

**Findings.** The vast majority of theses were master's theses (86.7%), while doctoral theses accounted for 13.3%. The studies were conducted between 2017 and 2026, with the highest number of theses completed in 2019. A significant portion of the theses were conducted at Istanbul University and Manisa Celal Bayar University. When examining the research designs, it was observed that the majority of the studies were descriptive in nature, although semi-experimental and experimental studies also played an important role. While the sample groups consisted mainly of healthy women, it was determined that the majority of the studies focused on early diagnosis and screening.

**Conclusion.** The model was used effectively in all theses examined within the scope of the research, yielding positive results. In recent years, studies using the Health Belief Model in the field of midwifery have been increasing; however, there is still a need for experimental, qualitative, and mixed-method studies, particularly at the doctoral level.

**Keywords:** Health Belief Model, Midwifery, Postgraduate, Thesis

## Streszczenie

**Wstęp.** Położnictwo to uniwersalna dziedzina opieki zdrowotnej, która holistycznie zaspokaja fizjologiczne, psychologiczne i społeczne potrzeby kobiet i ich rodzin. Model Przekonań Zdrowotnych (HBM) to najstarszy i najczęściej stosowany model teoretyczny, służący do wyjaśnienia czynników kształtujących zachowania zdrowotne, poszukiwanie opieki medycznej i radzenie sobie z objawami.

**Cel.** Celem niniejszego badania jest analiza bibliometryczna prac podyplomowych z zakresu położnictwa w Turcji, w których wykorzystano Model Przekonań Zdrowotnych (MPZ).

**Materiał i metoda.** Badania przeprowadzono retrospektywnie i opisowo. Aby uzyskać dostęp do prac dyplomowych, przeszukano wyszukiwarkę Centrum Prac Dyplomowych Instytucji Szkolnictwa Wyższego, używając słów kluczowych „Model Przekonań o Zdrowiu” i „położnictwo” w języku tureckim i angielskim. W wyniku przeprowadzonych badań, w ramach badania do roku 2026 przeanalizowano siedem dostępnych i spełniających kryteria włączenia prac magisterskich z zakresu położnictwa, wykorzystujących Model Przekonań Zdrowotnych. Dane analizowano przy użyciu oprogramowania IBM.

**Wyniki.** Zdecydowana większość prac dyplomowych to prace magisterskie (86,7%), a 13,3% to prace doktorskie. Badania przeprowadzono w latach 2017–2026, przy czym najwięcej prac dyplomowych ukończono w 2019 r. Znaczna część prac dyplomowych została wykonana na Uniwersytecie Stambulskim i Uniwersytecie Celal Bayar w Manisie. Analizując projekty badawcze, zaobserwowano, że większość badań miała charakter opisowy, choć istotną rolę odegrały również badania półeksperymentalne i eksperymentalne. Chociaż grupy badawcze składały się głównie ze zdrowych kobiet, ustalono, że większość badań koncentrowała się na wczesnej diagnostyce i badaniach przesiewowych.

**Wnioski.** Model został skutecznie wykorzystany we wszystkich pracach badawczych objętych zakresem badań, przynosząc pozytywne rezultaty. W ostatnich latach badania wykorzystujące Model Przekonań Zdrowiu w dziedzinie położnictwa zyskują na popularności; jednak nadal istnieje zapotrzebowanie na badania eksperymentalne, jakościowe i z wykorzystaniem metod mieszanych, szczególnie na poziomie doktoranckim.

**Słowa kluczowe:** model przekonań zdrowotnych, położnictwo, studia podyplomowe, praca dyplomowa

## **Introduction**

Midwifery is a universal healthcare discipline that holistically addresses the physiological, psychological, and social needs of women and their families [1,2]. Research and practices aimed at the professional development of a profession must be grounded in theory, framework, or model [3]. It is also critically important that midwifery care provided to women and their families be grounded in this theory, framework, or model [1,3]. Many different models are used in midwifery care [1,4]. The effectiveness of these models has been proven in studies [1,3].

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is the oldest and most frequently used theoretical model used to explain the factors that shape individuals' health behaviours, their search for medical care, and symptom management [5]. HBM assumes that individuals possess specific belief systems that trigger health-related behaviours [6]. In addition to focusing on the individual, HBM offers a holistic approach by also addressing the social context in which health behaviours occur [7]. This model is widely applied to examine interpersonal decision-making processes related to various health behaviours, such as disease screening and prevention, vaccination, surgery, and cessation of harmful behaviours [8]. Midwifery care practices are not limited to birth services but also play an important role in preventive health services [9]. For this reason, one of the models used in midwifery and in the advancement of women's health is HBM [10].

Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method for analysing written publications that facilitates the evaluation of research capacity, researchers and institutions [11]. Bibliometric analysis aims to examine the quantitative and statistical distribution of publications on a subject or in a field, identify research trends and areas for development, and provide a roadmap [12,13]. Bibliometric indicators provide information about researchers, countries, institutions, and the quality and quantity of published research [11]. A review of the international literature reveals that numerous studies have been conducted in the field of midwifery using bibliometric analysis methods [14,15]. In our country, there are bibliometric analyses examining theses based on theory-models in the field of midwifery and conducted using HBM in the field of nursing [3]. However, no bibliometric analysis of theses conducted using SIM in the field of midwifery has been found. For this reason, the aim of our study is to determine the theses conducted in the field of midwifery related to the Health Belief Model in our country and the characteristics of these theses. This research aims to evaluate the integration of model use in midwifery practices and to create a roadmap for future research.

## Material and method

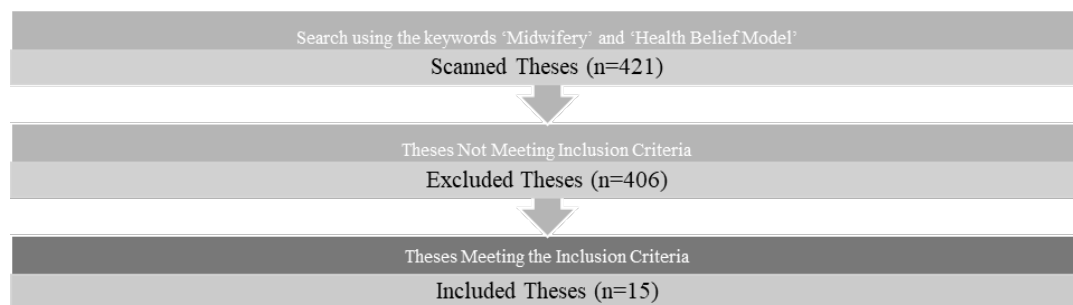
### Purpose and Type of Research

The research was conducted retrospectively to determine the theses in the field of midwifery related to the Health Belief Model in Turkey and the characteristics of these theses.

### Research Population and Sample

The research population consists of 421 theses published using the Health Belief Model in the National Thesis database. The sample consists of 15 thesis studies that met the inclusion criteria (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Research Flowchart



### Inclusion Criteria for the Study:

- Conducted in the field of midwifery,
- Inclusion of data related to the Health Belief Model in the thesis title or content,
- Theses conducted in line with the Health Belief Model,
- Publication language in Turkish or English,
- Thesis text available in open access.

### Location and Time of the Research

This research was conducted online via the Turkish Higher Education Council National Thesis Centre database. Research data was accessed between 01.02.2026 and 10.02.2026 by searching for the keywords 'Health Belief Model' and 'Midwifery' in both Turkish and English. Seven theses that met the inclusion criteria were examined within the scope of the research.

## **Statistical Analysis**

The theses included in the study were categorised according to thesis type, year of publication, supervisor title, university where the research was conducted, research type, and sample group. Percentage and frequency values were determined in the analysis of the data. The SPSS 26.00 programme was used for the analysis.

## **Ethical Aspects of the Research**

This study is a literature review covering the bibliometric analysis of published postgraduate theses in the field of midwifery. The data in this study was not obtained directly from living participants but was obtained from the publicly accessible National Thesis Centre. For this reason, ethical committee approval was not required.

## **Limitations of the Study**

Due to the ongoing development of master's and doctoral programmes in midwifery today, conducting thesis work using models in the field of midwifery science is still new. Master's and doctoral theses in the system are limited to those under the heading 'Midwifery Department'. Studies conducted by researchers with midwifery degrees in Women's Health and Disease Nursing, Public Health Nursing, Public Health (Medicine) and Child Health Nursing were excluded from the evaluation. Therefore, while the strength of the study lies in the fact that the data pertains solely to the field of midwifery, the lack of sources limits the discussion.

## **Findings**

Data regarding the characteristics of master's theses conducted within the framework of the Health Belief Model in the field of midwifery are given in Table 1 and Table 2. The vast majority of the theses were master's theses (86.7%; n=13), while the proportion of doctoral theses was 13.3% (n=2). When examining the distribution of theses by year, it is seen that the studies were conducted between 2017 and 2026. The highest number of theses was completed in 2019 (20.0%; n=3), while two theses (13.3%) were conducted in 2021, 2023, and 2025. When examining the universities where the theses were completed, it is observed that the highest number of studies were conducted at Istanbul University (26.7%; n=4). This is followed by Manisa Celal Bayar University (20.0%; n=3) and Sivas Cumhuriyet University (13.3%; n=2). One thesis each was conducted at Kafkas University, Ege University, Karabük University, İnönü University, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, and Eskişehir Osmangazi University (6.7%). It has been determined that the majority of theses, according to the title of the supervisor, were completed under the supervision of doctoral teaching members (60.0%; n=9). This is followed by supervisors with the title of associate professor (33.3%; n=5) and super-

visors with the title of professor (6.7%; n=1). When examining research designs, it is observed that the majority of theses are descriptive in nature (40.0%; n=6). Semi-experimental (educational intervention) and experimental (randomised controlled) studies each account for 26.7% (n=4), while studies using mixed methods account for 6.7% (n=1). When examining the sample groups, it is observed that the vast majority of studies were conducted with healthy women (60.0%; n=9). In addition, studies conducted with individuals diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, hearing-impaired individuals, visually impaired individuals, postpartum women, nulliparous pregnant women, and pregnant couples each accounted for 6.7% (n=1). When examining the distribution of thesis topics, it was determined that the majority of studies focused on early diagnosis and screening (80.0%; n=12). In addition, studies on breastfeeding (13.3%; n=2) and childbirth (6.7%; n=1) were also identified (Table 1, Table 2).

**Table 1.** Distribution of Characteristics of All Postgraduate Theses Related to the Health Belief Model in Midwifery (n=15)

<b>Some characteristics of theses</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Thesis type</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Master's degree	13	86.7
Doctorate	2	13.3
<b>Year of publication</b>		
2017	1	6.7
2018	1	6.7
2019	3	20.0
2020	1	6.7
2021	2	13.3
2022	1	6.7
2023	2	13.3
2024	1	6.7
2025	2	13.3
2026	1	6.7
<b>University Name</b>		
Kafkas University	1	6.7
Manisa Celal Bayar University	3	20.0
Ege University	1	6.7
Sivas Cumhuriyet University	2	13.3
Karabük University	1	6.7
İnönü University	1	6.7
Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University	1	6.7
Eskişehir Osmangazi University	1	6.7
İstanbul Üniversitesi- University	4	26.7
<b>Consultant Title</b>		
Professor	1	6.7
Associate Professor	5	33.3
Assistant Professor	9	60.0

<b>Research Type</b>		
Descriptive	6	40.0
Semi-experimental(Educational Intervention)	4	26.7
Experimental (RCT)	4	26.7
Mixed Methods	1	6.7
<b>Sample Group</b>		
Healthy Women	9	60.0
Women Diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes	1	6.7
Women with Hearing Impairment	1	6.7
Women with Visual Impairment	1	6.7
Postpartum Women	1	6.7
Nulliparous Pregnant Women	1	6.7
Pregnant Women and Expectant Fathers (Couples)	1	6.7
<b>Topic</b>		
Early Diagnosis and Screening	12	80.0
Breastfeeding	2	13.3
Childbirth	1	6.7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

## **Discussion**

In this study, conducted to examine theses in the field of midwifery related to the Health Belief Model in Turkey and to determine the characteristics of these theses, it was observed that the majority of the theses were master's theses. In a study analysing the content of postgraduate theses conducted in the field of midwifery, it was observed that the vast majority of the theses examined were master's theses [16]. In Turkey, postgraduate education in midwifery, which is still a relatively new field of undergraduate education, began in 2000, and doctoral education began in 2013 [17]. It is thought that the research findings emerged later due to the later commencement of doctoral education.

It is observed that the postgraduate theses examined within the scope of the research were published from 2017 to the present day, but it can still be said that there is a lack of HBM-based theses. In the study examining theory- and model-based theses conducted in midwifery practice areas, although the subject matter is related to midwifery, it is observed that almost all of the theses were conducted in the nursing department [3]. In a study examining the content of postgraduate theses conducted in the field of midwifery, it was determined that the most frequently recurring main theme was women's health [16]. Similarly, other studies have determined that topics related to women's health and sexual/reproductive health are less frequently studied [18,19]. An examination of current research findings reveals that SIM-based theses generally

Table 2. Postgraduate Theses Using the Health Belief Model in Midwifery

Author, Consultant and Year	University and Thesis Type	Thesis Title	Type of Research	Sample Group	Data Collection Forms	Results
Esra TAYHAN, Asst. Prof. Nurgül GÜNGÖR, TAVŞANLI (2017)	Celal Bayar University, Master's Degree	Determination of breast cancer risk in type 2 diabetic women and assessing of training for self-breast examination	Semi-Experimental	Women aged 25-65 diagnosed with type 2 diabetes (n=130)	Socio-demographic Form, Breast Self-Examination (BSE) Information and Application Form, and BSE Health Belief Model Scale	Women with type 2 diabetes were found to have a lower risk of breast cancer. Following breast cancer screening education, women's perceptions of sensitivity, seriousness, benefit, confidence and health motivation increased, while their perceptions of barriers decreased.
Necla PAK, Assoc. Prof. Servda ELİŞ YILDIZ (2018)	Kafkas University, Master's Degree	The living in Kars/Sarikamis district health beliefs on breast cancer, breast self examination and mammography	Descriptive-Predictive	Women of reproductive age (aged 15-49) (n=230)	Introductory questionnaire and Champion's Health Belief Model Scale	It has been determined that socio-demographic characteristics influence breast cancer screening behaviour and health beliefs related to breast cancer screening behaviour. Participants were found to have low sensitivity perceptions and high perceptions of the benefits of mammography and clinical breast examination.
Yeliz KILINÇ, Professor Esin ÇEBER TURFAN (2019)	Ege University, Master's Degree	Evaluation of women with and without pap smears test for early diagnosis of cervical cancer according to health belief model	Descriptive-Predictive	Women aged 30-65 who had undergone a Pap smear test (n=166) and those who had not undergone a Pap smear test (n=163), who were sexually active in the past and/or currently	Introductory Questionnaire Form and Cervical Cancer and Pap Smear Test Health Belief Model Scale	It was found that the perception of benefit and motivation was higher among those who took the test than among those who did not. It was determined that the perception of obstacles was higher among those who did not take the test than among those who did.
Melike KOÇAK, Asst. Prof. Selida İLDAN ÇALIM (2019)	Manisa Celal Bayar University, Master's Degree	The effect of the training video which was prepared with sign language on breast- self examination of women with hearing impairment	Semi-Experimental	Women aged 18 years and over with hearing impairment: experimental group (n=30) and control group (n=30)	Socio-Demographic Characteristics and BSE Information Form, BSE Skill Assessment Form, and Champion's Health Belief Model Scale	Prior to training, it was determined that most hearing-impaired women had not heard of KKMM and none of them could perform it. After training, it was found that women in the experimental group performed most of the KKMM skill steps, while those in the control group performed them at a very low rate.
Sultan ÇELİK, Asst. Prof. Selida İLDAN ÇALIM (2019)	Manisa Celal Bayar University, Master's Degree	The effect of the training video record arranged by voice description on self-breast examination of visually- impaired	Semi-Experimental	Women aged 18 years and over with visual impairment: experimental group (n=30) and control group (n=30)	Socio-Demographic Characteristics and BSE Information Form, BSE Skill Status Education Assessment Form, and Champion's Health Belief Model Scale	Prior to training, it was determined that most visually impaired women had not heard of or were unable to perform BSE. After training, it was found that women who listened to the audio-described training video performed most of the BSE skill steps, while those who listened to the training video without audio description performed them at a very low rate.
Gülsemin ARKAT,	Sivas Cumhuriyet University,	Determination of the health beliefs of	Descriptive	Women attending the Cancer Early Diagnosis,	Personal Information Form and Champion Health Belief	Women's sensitivity, concern, health motivation, awareness of the benefits of breast cancer screening,

Assoc. Prof. Handan GÜLER (2020)	Master's Degree	women who applied to the cancer early diagnosis, scanning and education center for breast cancer	Experimental	Centre for cancer screening (n=695)	Model Scale	self-efficacy, and health beliefs regarding the benefits of mammography were found to be high. However, women's health beliefs regarding barriers to mammography and breast cancer screening were found to be lower.
Ganize BAYRAK BAŞDAĞ, Asst. Prof. Engin YURTCU (2021)	Karabük University, Master's Degree	Evaluation of breastfeeding self-efficacy and breastfeeding success of mothersreceiving breastfeeding training based on health belief model	Semi-Experimental	Postpartum women (n=207) who underwent a preliminary test within the first 48 hours after delivery and received HBM-based training with a final test administered in the fourth postpartum week.	Introductory Questionnaire Form, Postpartum Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy Scale, LATCH Breastfeeding Assessment Tool	Providing HBM-based breastfeeding education increases breastfeeding self-efficacy and breastfeeding success in postpartum women. As self-efficacy scores increase, breastfeeding success scores also increase.
Emine İBİCİ AKÇA, Assoc. Prof. Yeşim AKSOY DERVA (2021)	İnönü University, Doctorate	The effect of mobile education given to belief model on normal delivery tendency in nulliparous pregnant women	A study consisting of methodological and experimental sections	Scale Development: Pregnant women in the 20th-40th week of pregnancy (n=737), RCT: 149 nulliparous pregnant women (73 experimental, 76 control)	Pregnancy Information Form and Belief in Normal Birth Scale	It has been determined that the Belief Scale for Normal Birth is a valid and reliable scale for Turkish society, and that SIM-based mobile education significantly increases nulliparous pregnant women's belief and inclination towards normal vaginal birth.
Hilal ALKAN, Asst. Prof. Deniz AKYILDIZ (2022)	Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Master's Degree	The effect of monthly reminder by telephone message after training on women's beliefs and practice behaviors regarding breast self-examination: A randomized controlled experimental study	Experimental (RCT)	Women aged 20-69 years in the intervention group (n=41) and control group (n=42)	Information Form, Champion's Health Belief Model Scale and BSE Monitoring Form	It was concluded that the monthly reminder message sent after training was effective in increasing perceived positive aspects of women's BSE behaviour and perceived negative aspects of BSE practice, increasing individual competence in BSE practice, and reducing perceived negative aspects of BSE protective behaviour, and that it increased the number of regular and timely BSE practices.
Leman YILMAZ CESUR, Assoc. Prof. Tulay YILMAZ (2023)	İstanbul University-Cerrahpasa, Master's Degree	The effect of breastfeeding education based on the health belief model given in the third trimester of	Experimental (RCT)	Pregnant women at 27 weeks of gestation and above and their partners (n=220), intervention (55 couples) and control	Information Form, Adult Perceptions of Breastfeeding Scale, Pregnancy Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy Scale - Short Form, and Paternal	HBM-based breastfeeding education has been found to increase the perception of breast milk among pregnant women and their partners, and to be effective in antenatal breastfeeding self-efficacy and paternal breastfeeding self-efficacy.



address topics related to women's health. The inadequacy of HBM-based theses can be attributed to the fact that the majority of model-based doctoral studies are published in the field of nursing and HBM is generally used in topics related to women's health, as well as the fact that models are still relatively new in doctoral studies.

The current research has also determined that the majority of HBM-based theses are conducted at Istanbul University. In the study examining postgraduate theses in the field of midwifery, Ege University, Cumhuriyet University and Istanbul University were determined to be the most productive universities [18,20]. These findings support the current research findings. Furthermore, the universities where the theses in the current research were conducted are well-established universities that started their master's and doctoral programmes many years ago in the field of midwifery [21]. For these reasons, it can be said that model-based studies are more intensively conducted at the universities in the current research.

The majority of thesis supervisors examined in the study were found to be assistant professors. The literature indicates that having an experienced, guiding, and expert research supervisor enhances the scientific rigour and quality of the publication [22]. The low number of professors among the supervisors in this study may be attributed to the fact that the first professorship in midwifery was awarded in 2020.

It has been determined that the majority of theses within the scope of the research employ quantitative methods such as descriptive and experimental approaches. Although the midwifery profession has existed for many years, the pool of scientific knowledge is still developing. Quantitative research is frequently conducted in the field of midwifery for reasons such as its known effectiveness in faster case detection and knowledge accumulation [19]. Studies examining theses in the field of midwifery often find that the reason these theses are descriptive in nature is because they are master's theses [16, 19, 20]. In studies examining theory- and model-based theses conducted in midwifery practice areas, it was generally found that the theses were experimental in design [3]. Similarly, in a study examining HBM-based doctoral theses in the field of nursing, it was determined that the majority of the studies were experimental [12]. It is reported that experimental designs are generally preferred to prove the effectiveness of model-based studies and to test the reliability of the model [13].

When examining the data collection tools used in theses, it has been determined that SIM-based scales are generally used. A review of the literature reveals that there are many SIM-based scales related to the protection and improvement of women's health, such as disease screening and prevention, vaccination, and cessation of negative behaviours, and that these scales are valid and reliable in our country [5,23-25]. Additionally, it is present in scales closely related to the field of midwifery [26-28]. However, scales directly related to the field of midwifery are still insufficient. In fact, midwifery is a key component of preventive healthcare services [9]. It is thought that in the future, SIM could be adapted to many midwifery practices and care settings, and that SIM-based scales could be developed.

HBM is reported to be one of the most commonly used models in early diagnosis and screening [29]. The current study also determined that the majority of HBM-based theses were conducted on healthy individuals and covered early diagnosis and screening topics. In a study examining SIM-based doctoral theses in the field of nursing, it was noted that the majority of the sample group again consisted of healthy individuals and that the theses focused on early diagnosis and screening behaviours [12]. The current research findings are consistent with the literature. The fundamental aim of the midwifery profession is to protect and improve family and women’s health holistically throughout life [30]. In line with this aim, it can be said that HBM in midwifery is not limited to early diagnosis and screening behaviours, but can also be adapted to other areas to protect and improve the health of women and their families

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The model was used effectively in all theses examined within the scope of the research, yielding positive results. This situation demonstrates that the use of the model in the field of midwifery has produced meaningful results by establishing a theoretical framework. HBM is used in postgraduate theses in the field of midwifery, particularly in studies on early diagnosis and screening behaviours in healthy individuals. Theses based on the HBM model are increasing in the field of midwifery. However, there is still a need for experimental, qualitative and mixed-method studies, particularly at the doctoral level. Adapting HBM-based care and measurement tools for pregnant women, childbirth, postpartum, breastfeeding, newborns, etc. in the field of midwifery will be beneficial in terms of protecting and improving public health. This research is expected to contribute to the use of models in midwifery and to serve as a guide, especially for those planning HBM-based studies.

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