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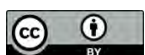
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Investigating the Relationships between Preservice Teachers' Teacher Readiness, Attitude towards Teaching Profession, and Organizational Attraction through Structural Equation Modeling

Hakan Polat 

ABSTRACT

Background/purpose – The study aimed to investigate relationships between preservice teachers' teacher readiness level, attitudes towards the teaching profession, and organizational attraction perceptions.

Materials/methods – Relational survey method, one of the quantitative research methods, was employed in the study. The sample of the study consisted of 341 fourth-grade students at Firat University's Faculty of Education. The Preparedness to Teach Scale, Attitudes Towards Teaching Profession Scale, and Organizational Attraction Scale were used to collect the study's data.

Results – The research revealed a positive and significant relationship between the participants' teacher readiness level, attitudes towards the teaching profession and organizational attraction perceptions. In addition, it was found that the attitude towards the teaching profession had a mediating effect on the relationship between levels teacher readiness and organizational attraction.

Conclusion – The study concluded that preservice teachers' teacher readiness level and attitudes towards the teaching profession directly affect their willingness to join educational organizations. Therefore, it is vital for educational organizations that preservice teachers possess higher levels of teacher readiness and sufficiently positive attitudes.

Keywords – organizational attraction, preservice teachers, teacher readiness, attitude towards the profession

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1. INTRODUCTION

Societies can only develop based upon its available skilled human resource pool, which is ensured through the education of its population. Teachers are therefore the most important actors in the educational process as they help to pave the way to both individual and social change and progression in society. The teaching profession, as the education provider, plays a pivotal role in shaping societies, and is therefore widely regarded as an important and valuable profession of the modern-day civilization.

Education systems have a number of elements, including students, teachers, educational programs and curricula, institutional administrators and managers, educational experts, educational technology, as well as physical and financial resources. However, teachers are the most fundamental element of the entire system, and thus the quality of education largely depends on the quality of the teachers (Şişman, 2007). Faculties of education in Turkey are responsible for the training of preservice teachers, and have been restructured since 1996 for that purpose and their programs revised several times in the pursuit of training qualified teachers to join the profession. In addition, seeing that students entering university with high scores are preferring education faculties for their studies indicates that the teaching profession has begun to regain some of its former prestige and legitimacy in today's society (Doğan & Çoban, 2009).

The teaching profession requires its members to exhibit positive attitudes and regular habits, as well as the requisite knowledge and skills. Therefore, preservice teachers are expected to acquire values and attitudes related to the teaching profession during their initial teacher education, in addition to their subject and pedagogical knowledge (Çeliköz & Çetin, 2004; Karakose, Kocabas, & Yesilyurt, 2014). Preservice teachers' professional attitudes reflect the values they attach to the profession (Gürses et al., 2005) and therefore play a significant role in their later success as teachers (Ünişen & Demirel, 2018). Determining prospective teachers' teaching profession attitudes provides insight regarding the attitudes that should be developed during undergraduate teacher education (Üstüner, 2006). Prospective teachers' positive and negative teaching profession attitudes reflect their thoughts about teaching and therefore have an effect on the professional behaviors they subsequently exhibit (Çapri & Çelikkaleli, 2008; Temizkan, 2008). In this sense, Çeliköz and Çetin (2004) argued that if preservice teachers are appropriately trained to exhibit a positive professional attitude, then they will be more likely to fulfill their duties, treat their students more positively, become researchers in their area, develop as creative thinkers, and bring innovation to the classroom as part of their role once they become inservice teachers.

An individual's choice of profession is based on several variables such as potential income, status, working environment, talent, opportunities, and their own personality traits. Choosing a profession that is compatible with the personality of the individual leads them to do their job with a greater degree of satisfaction. In this sense, as a first step in training qualified teachers, those who express a love for teaching and who openly want to be teachers should be selected as prospective teachers (Ekinci, 2017; Karakose et al., 2021). Organizations should be aware of the expectations of their employees (Ng & Burke, 2005) and aim to meet their material and moral needs (Currivan, 2000). The aspiration of preservice teachers to work within educational organizations depends on the meeting of these needs, and the degree to which their expectations are met may affect their willingness as employees to continue working for an organization. Additionally, the attractiveness of an

organization to be worked for is also affected by the needs of its employees being adequately met.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitude towards the Teaching Profession

Attitude refers to the tendency to reflect or react to a positive or negative emotion towards an object or thing (Garrett, 2010; Philipp, 2007; Robbins & Judge, 2013). According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), attitudes reflect feelings, beliefs, and behaviors towards a particular object, being, or other entity. Attitudes have three components: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. The cognitive component of an attitude provides a description or belief about the object, whilst the emotional component explains the emotive part of the attitude, and the behavioral component describes the intention of the attitude to behave in a certain way towards the object (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Attitude is of crucial importance for organizational behavior since it is directly related to behavior. The teaching profession refers to a certain position within an educational organization, requires a set of behaviors to be developed that are expected for that position, and expresses the status, duties, and relations of the position (Üstüner, 2006). Individuals aiming to become practitioners of the teaching profession need to fulfill the necessary conditions of the profession effectively if their professional attitudes are to be appropriately positive (Demirtaş et al., 2011; Karakose, 2015; Üstüner, 2006). Behavioral science has revealed that the personality of the teacher is the most significant variable in the classroom, and that students are consequently influenced by their teacher's attitudes and behaviors (Gültekin, 2020; Ünişen & Demirel, 2018). While teachers provide education to their students in accordance with their acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes, they also influence them based on the behaviors that they exhibit. A friendly, understanding, and patient attitude of a teacher encourages students to think more positively, whereas negative behaviors will likely have a negative effect on their students (Güçlü, 2000). If preservice teachers demonstrate having a positive towards their teaching profession attitudes, they will be more able to facilitate their students' motivation for intrinsic learning, be able to communicate with them more efficiently and effectively, and become more involved in the diversification and personalization of learning (Andronache et al., 2014). In this sense, the attitudes of teachers are of critical importance for students.

Attitude towards the teaching profession consists of exhibiting love and respect in adopting the role of teaching (Pehlivan, 2008). Şişman (2007) argued that the basic qualifications required by the profession has teachers embracing the teaching profession, being proud to be part of the teaching profession, and appreciate the ethics of the profession. However, those having negative perceptions of the profession may lack these qualities. In this regard, teachers should be offered appropriate training that will help to strengthen the positivity of their attitude towards the teaching profession during their initial teacher education. In Turkey, teachers are trained within the education faculties of universities. During their teacher education, preservice teachers acquire the essential knowledge and skills, as well as develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards the teaching profession. Many studies have been published in both the national and international literature that have examined the professional attitudes of both inservice and preservice teachers (Alkhateeb, 2013; Andronache et al., 2014; Bedel, 2008; Bozdoğan et al., 2007; Chakraborty & Mondal, 2014; Çakır et al., 2006; Çapa & Çil, 2000; Çeliköz & Çetin,

2004; Dabat, 2010; Demirtaş et al., 2011; Doğan & Çoban, 2009; Gürbüz & Kışoğlu, 2007; Karakose, 2022; Kaya & Büyükkasap, 2005; Semerci & Semerci, 2004; Şimşek, 2005; Üstün et al., 2004; Üstüner et al., 2009). For example, Alkhateeb (2013), Bedel (2008), Kaya and Büyükkasap (2005), and Üstün et al. (2004) all reported that prospective teachers' teaching profession attitudes were positive, indicating that they started out in the profession with positive emotions, thoughts, and behaviors towards and within their chosen career.

Teacher Readiness

The growth in service jobs has resulted in the requirement for numerous novel employability skills, which are also identified as readiness skills and include problem solving, decision making, communication, flexibility, self-confidence, social skills, teamworking skills, professionalism, and self-management (Apparaju, 2016; Aşk, 2016; Carnevale, 1991; Doria et al., 2003; Lim et al., 2016; Peddle, 2000; Robinson, 2000; Tewari & Sarma, 2016; as cited in MacDermott & Ortiz, 2017). University education plays a key role in formulating students' employment readiness (MacDermott & Ortiz, 2017). In addition, work and internship opportunities at universities, which allow students to practice what they have learned during their education, can help make them feel more prepared for their professional working life after graduation (Karakose, 2021; Seymour & Ray, 2014).

Teacher training is a very comprehensive process that includes topics such as the selection of students for education faculties, preservice teacher education, practicum and the monitoring-evaluation during this period, and inservice training (Çelikten et al., 2005). The readiness level of preservice teachers can be considered as a reflection of the education received during their undergraduate education. Readiness refers to the acquisition of essential prerequisite behaviors in order to be open and ready to learn something (Ülgen, 1997). Teachers readiness is related to how well teacher education prepares them to cope with the challenges posed by the profession (Black, 2003). The readiness of preservice teachers for teaching or their self-readiness level play a vital role in managing the problems they will encounter during their professional career (Brown et al., 2015). In this regard, Gordon (2010) argued that teachers should possess a number of basic competencies in order to be equipped to fulfill the responsibilities of the profession. Thus, prospective teachers should gain these qualifications and be ready for the profession prior to gaining their initial inservice experience (Taşgın & Sönmez, 2013). In order to develop a good teacher identity, both preservice and inservice teachers are expected to be aware of the qualifications and competencies required by the profession and to maintain this awareness throughout their career (Forte & Flores, 2014; Korthagen, 2017). Before inservice practice, prospective teachers are required to develop professional skills and feel ready to teach during their initial teacher education in order to have the requisite high self-efficacy levels to be effective teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Teacher competence plays a key role in the quality of teaching and therefore their students' success. In short, preservice teachers essentially need to acquire adequate content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and professional knowledge (Bouley et al., 2015).

One of the important factors affecting teacher readiness is having professional competencies and skills. In this sense, in 2017, the Ministry of National Education in Turkey published a guide which identified the general competencies for the teaching profession. The guide consists of three complementary competency areas, namely professional knowledge, professional skills, and attitudes and values, with 11 different qualifications and a total of 65 indicators within these three areas (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [Turkish Ministry of

National Education], 2017). In order to acquire the level of qualifications required by the teaching profession, preservice teachers need to have self-belief in their ability to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of teachers, as well as having gained a solid and good level of education (Yılmaz et al., 2004). As a result of their preservice training, teachers are expected to possess professional competencies that will facilitate their students' learning (Rajić et al., 2015). In order to develop these qualifications, preservice teachers should develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards the profession, as well as receive an appropriate education during their undergraduate years.

The concept of teacher readiness is used interchangeably in the literature based on the premise of having adequate preparedness to teach. There have been a number of studies published on teacher readiness (Arslan et al., 2019; Crosswell & Beutel, 2012; Faez, 2012; Housego, 1990; Karakaya et al., 2019; Mehmetlioğlu, 2010; Pribudhiana et al., 2021; Stites et al., 2018; Şimşek, 2018; Yenen & Durmaz, 2019; Yıldırım & Kalman, 2017). For example, Arslan et al. (2019) found that prospective teachers were considered to be ready for the profession, and Crosswell and Beutel (2012) also concluded that graduated preservice teachers felt themselves prepared to commence their teaching careers. In addition, Karakaya et al. (2019) reported that preservice teachers' readiness differed on the basis of the department and grade. Similarly, Mehmetlioğlu (2010) found that prospective teachers' readiness levels differed according to grade level. Şimşek (2018) concluded that many reasons such as individual characteristics, interest in the profession, and the education received can affect teacher readiness. Pribudhiana et al. (2021) reported that teacher quality had a significant impact on teacher readiness in the implementation of education policy. Furthermore, several studies have investigated preservice teachers' readiness level through different variables. For example, some studies examined the relationship between teacher readiness and teacher efficacy (Brown et al., 2021; Faez & Valoe, 2012; Housego, 1992), and others examined the relationship between teacher readiness and self-efficacy (Aybek & Aslan, 2019; Zientek, 2007). In this sense, Brown et al. (2021) reported that both the readiness perceptions and teaching efficacy of preservice teachers increased significantly during their period of teaching practicum. In addition, Aybek and Aslan (2019) found that prospective teachers had high levels of readiness and self-efficacy belief, and that a moderately significant and predictive relationship was shown to exist between preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their teacher readiness.

Organizational Attraction

Individuals tend to prefer to work within organizations having characteristics that match their own ideals (Cable & Judge, 1996; van Vianen, 2018). Attracting the attention of researchers and business circles, organizational attraction, which covers several important factors such as employment, qualified workforce, firm value, effectiveness, and sustainability, has become a significantly important concept in recent years (Dural et al., 2014). As such, the concept of organizational attraction has been the topic of numerous academic studies conducted in different fields.

Organizational attraction is the whole of an individual's feelings and thoughts about a particular organization in terms of being employed there, and the perceived characteristics of the organization that lead to these thoughts (Highhouse et al., 2003). In other words, the concept of organizational attraction reflects the degree to which an individual considers an organization as a potential place to work, and is generally defined as the individual's positive feelings, attitudes or desires about the organization (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Ziegert &

Ehrhart, 2004). In addition, Kristof (1996) described organizational attraction as the ability of organizations to employ talented individuals. She argued that this ability impacts on the work attitude at both the individual and organizational level, affecting employee turnover, stress, social behaviors, individual performance and, as a result, organizational performance.

Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) investigated why applicants perceive organizations as attractive based on three metatheories: environment processing, interactionist processing, and self-processing. The first one, environment processing metatheory, examines the interpretation of real environment characteristics and the perception of environmental characteristics which lead to attraction. In other words, it refers to the perceptions of an individual about the characteristics of the environment that may lead to attraction by organizing the information acquired within an environment of uncertainties (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). Second, interactionist processing metatheory proposes that the interaction between personal characteristics and environmental characteristics pave the way to attraction. In this sense, the fit of personal characteristics and environmental characteristics affects attraction. The fit between the individual and the organization is examined under two headings: objective fit and subjective fit. It is proposed that an individual's objective fit with their environment significantly relates to subjective fit, which has a direct effect on attraction (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). The third metatheory of self-processing proposes that the attitudes and opinions of individuals are themselves affective. Within this theory, the attitudes or opinions of individuals (self-esteem, self-efficacy, social identity, etc.) are considered very important in order explaining the connection between subjective fit and organizational attractiveness (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005).

In addition to organizational attraction, prestige, reputation, image, person-organization harmony, as well as instrumental and symbolic features are among the topics frequently studied in the literature (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Akçay et al., 2013; Cable & Turban, 2003; Carless, 2005; Chapman et al., 2005; Devendorf & Highhouse, 2008; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2001, 2005, 2007; Rynes & Cable, 2003; Schreurs et al., 2009; Slaughter et al., 2004; Turban & Cable, 2003; van Hove & Saks, 2011). For example, Highhouse et al. (2003) argued that although organizational attraction, intention to work within a certain organization and corporate reputation are each separate concepts, they are also interrelated. However, studies on organizational attraction have mostly been conducted within private businesses or institutions (Brunner & Baum, 2020; Luce et al., 2001; Roque Gomes & Gonçalves Neves, 2010; Tyagi, 1985; Younis & Hammad, 2020), with only a few studies having focused on educational organizations (Atalay et al., 2019; Sever & Atik, 2021). In this sense, there is a need for further studies to be conducted on organizational attraction within educational organizations.

Conceptual Model

In the current study, it was assumed that teacher readiness may directly and indirectly affect organizational attraction, and that teaching profession attitudes can play a mediating role in this attraction. The concepts of teacher readiness, teaching profession attitudes and organizational attractiveness were studied in different ways in a number of studies. However, there have been only a limited number of studies that have investigated the relationship between these concepts, or even indicated that they are related. For example, a few studies have shown that organizational attraction leads to positive attitudes towards the organization (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Highhouse et al., 2003; Murugantham et al., 2020). In addition, preservice teachers need to gain appropriate attitudes and values, which

are among the requisite professional competencies, in order to be ready for a career in teaching.

Although it is stated in the literature that a relationship exists between organizational attraction and attitudes towards the organization and job, there have been no studies that have examined the relationship between educational organizations and the teaching profession. In addition, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there have been no studies published on the mediating role between teacher readiness, attitude towards the teaching profession, and organizational attraction. Therefore, the current study aims to make a significant contribution to the literature. The conceptual model of the current study was based on previous research findings, with teacher readiness (TR) determined as the independent variable of the study, organizational attraction (OA) as the dependent variable, and attitude towards the teaching profession (ATTP) as a mediating variable. The conceptual model tested in the current study is presented in Figure 1, followed by four hypotheses.

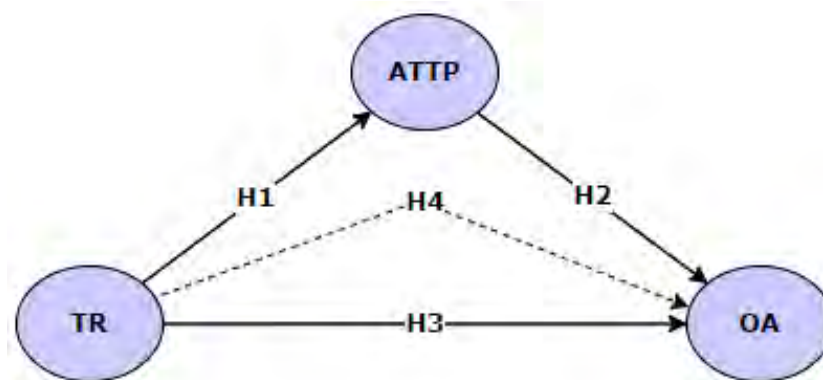


Figure 1. Conceptual (Hypothetical) Model

- H1: Preservice teachers' teacher readiness level positively and significantly predicts their teaching profession attitudes.
- H2: Preservice teachers' teaching profession attitudes positively and significantly predict their attitudes towards organizational attraction.
- H3: Preservice teachers' teacher readiness perceptions positively and significantly predict their perceptions of organizational attraction.
- H4: There is a mediating effect of preservice teachers' teaching profession attitudes in the relationship between their teacher readiness level and organizational attraction perceptions.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the relationship between preservice teachers' teacher readiness, professional attitudes, and organizational attraction perceptions were examined. Hence, the relational survey method, a quantitative research method, was adopted in the study. According to Karasar (2007), the relational survey model aims to determine whether or not a relationship exists between two or more variables, and the level of any existent relationship. In relational survey models, also known as correlation research, the aim is to describe the relations between variables and to predict the results (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In relational studies, the existing situation is described and the relationship between the variables is investigated (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was also employed in order to test the proposed model for the relationship between preservice teachers' teacher readiness level, their teaching profession attitudes, and their organizational attraction perceptions. SEM is a comprehensive method that identifies and confirms causality between several variables and combines different types of analysis such as multiple regression, path analysis, and factor analysis (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

Working group

The universe of the study consisted of fourth-grade students studying in their final undergraduate year at Firat University's Faculty of Education during the 2021-2022 academic year. They were selected due to their being the closest candidates to the teaching profession having completed their period of teaching practicum. In the selection of the study's participants, purposive sampling method was employed. It is stated in the literature that 200 participants are considered adequate to form a sufficient sample size for structural equation modeling studies (Bayram, 2010; Hair et al., 2010; Jackson, 2003; Kline, 2011). It is recommended for the maximum likelihood method that the sample size should be between 100 and 400 since when the minimum sample size is 100-150 or exceeds 400, the method becomes overly sensitive and the goodness of fit values are weakened (Hair et al., 2010). Initially 359 preservice teachers participated in the current study. However, it was found that 18 had not fully completed the scales and thus were excluded from the study. As a result, 341 preservice teachers were involved in the current study, which was accepted as a sufficient number. Of the 341 participants, 235 (68.91%) were female, 106 (31.09%) were male, and that their age ranged from 21 to 37 years old with a mean age of 22.16 years. The participants' demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' demographic information

Department	Gender				Total
	Female	<i>f</i>	Male	<i>f</i>	
Classroom Education	41	12.02	10	2.93	51
Preschool Education	18	5.28	17	4.99	35
Elementary School Mathematics Education	30	8.80	6	1.76	36
English Language Teaching	16	4.69	37	10.85	53
Guidance and Psychological Counseling	28	8.21	6	1.76	34
Art Education	22	6.45	2	0.59	24
Social Studies Education	33	9.68	11	3.23	44
Turkish Language Education	47	13.78	17	4.99	64
Total	235	68.91	106	31.09	341

Data Collection Tools

The study's data were collected through the Attitudes Towards Teaching Profession scale, the Preparedness to Teach scale, and the Organizational Attractiveness scale. Since SEM was conducted in the study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed in the examination of the scales.

Attitudes towards Teaching Profession Scale (ATTPS)

ATTPS was developed by Kahramanoğlu et al. (2018) as a 12-item, single-dimension, 5-point, Likert-type instrument with no reverse-coded items, and a Cronbach alpha value of

.85. CFA results in the current study confirmed the one-dimensional structure of the scale ($\chi^2 / SD = 2.954$; RMSEA = .076; GFI = .927; AGFI = .888; NFI = .872; CFI = .910; SRMR = .0575). It was also found that the scale had acceptable fit values, and the scale's Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as .843.

Preparedness to Teach Scale (PTS)

PTS was first developed as a questionnaire by Silvernail (1998), and then adapted to the Turkish context by Yildirim and Kalman (2017). The scale consists of four dimensions and 20 items, and is formed as a 5-point, Likert-type instrument ranging from 1 = *very insufficient* to 5 = *very sufficient*, with no reverse-coded items in the scale. The Cronbach's alpha value for the whole PTS is .923, with .827 for the first factor (Effective Learning Environment), .806 for the second factor (Designing the Teaching Process), .838 for the third factor (Technopedagogical Competence), and .739 for the fourth factor (Understanding the Learner). CFA performed as a part of the current study confirmed the four-dimensional structure of the scale ($\chi^2 / SD = 1.956$; RMSEA = .053; GFI = .916; AGFI = .892; NFI = .906; CFI = .951; SRMR = .0371). It was found that the χ^2 / SD and SRMR values had good fit, whilst the RMSEA, GFI, CFI, NFI, and AGFI values had acceptable fit. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .944, and for the sub-dimensions they were .826, .869, .824, and .914, respectively.

Organizational Attraction Scale

The Organizational Attraction Scale was developed by Highhouse et al. (2003) and later adapted to the Turkish context by Dural et al. (2014). The scale consists of three dimensions and 15 items, and is formed as 7-point, Likert-type instrument (ranging from 1 = *not at all appropriate* to 7 = *totally appropriate*), with no reverse-coded items in the scale. The Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was calculated as .89, plus .64 for the first factor (General Attractiveness), .64 for the second factor (Intentions to Pursue), and .82 for the third factor (Prestige). CFA performed as a part of the current study confirmed the three-dimensional structure of the scale ($\chi^2 / SD = 3.115$; RMSEA = .079; GFI = .905; AGFI = .864; NFI = .959; CFI = .971; SRMR = .0355). It was found that the NFI, CFI, and SRMR values had good fit, whereas the χ^2 / SD , RMSEA, GFI, and AGFI values had acceptable fit. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as .965 for the whole scale and .826, .869, and .914, respectively, for its three factors.

Data Analysis

In the study's data analysis, IBM's SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 22.0 were utilized. SPSS was used to test the normality of the data and to perform correlation, regression, and Bootstrap analysis with PROCESS macro, whilst AMOS was used for the maximum likelihood analysis. Sample size and multicollinearity problem are prerequisites of SEM and this requires examining the normality and extreme values of the dataset to be analyzed (Çokluk et al., 2016).

Based on these assumptions, the normality of the data was tested according to skewness and kurtosis values within the range of -1.5 to +1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Missing data and extreme values were examined prior to the data analysis. Accordingly, the Z-score was calculated and those data not within the ± 3 range were considered as extreme values (Çokluk et al., 2016) and as a result 18 items were excluded from the analysis. The normality values of the variables are presented in Table 2, which shows that all of the variables and their sub-dimensions had normal distribution.

Table 2. Values of variables

Variable	Min	Max	\bar{X}	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Effective learning environment (ELE)	2.67	5.00	3.968	.571	-.052	-.696
Designing the teaching process (DTP)	1.33	5.00	4.048	.625	-.318	-.323
Technopedagogical competence (TC)	1.60	5.00	4.086	.625	-.513	.264
Understanding the learner (UL)	2.00	5.00	3.979	.609	-.043	-.279
<i>Teacher Readiness</i>	2.40	5.00	4.023	.543	-.217	-.291
<i>ATTP</i>	3.25	5.00	4.415	.426	-.425	-.723
General attractiveness	3.28	6.80	5.275	.784	-.251	-.913
Intentions to pursue	2.00	7.00	5.566	1.117	-.406	-.945
Prestige	2.60	7.00	5.508	1.112	-.355	-.980
<i>Organizational Attraction</i>	2.63	6.93	5.450	.970	-.335	-1.074

In the next step, correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether or not multicollinearity existed among the variables. Correlation values below .90 indicate that no multicollinearity problem exists (Çokluk et al., 2016), and the correlation coefficients between the variables were each below .90 (see Table 5), indicating no initial evidence of any multicollinearity. In order to fully investigate the potential for multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values of the independent variables were also examined (see Table 3).

Table 3. VIF and tolerance values of subdimensions of independent variable

Variable	VIF	Tolerance
ELE	3.909	.256
DTP	3.462	.289
TC	2.651	.377
UL	2.386	.419

A VIF value of less than 10 and a tolerance value greater than .10 in any relationship between the variables would indicate that no evidence was found that identified any multicollinearity problem (Çokluk et al., 2016; Sümer, 2000). In this sense, the correlation values between the variables met the assumptions. In addition, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (r) was employed to investigate the relationship between the variables. Furthermore, path analysis was conducted as a part of SEM to examine the direct and indirect predictive power of the independent variable on the dependent variable. X^2 / SD , RMSEA, RMR, CFI, IFI, NFI, GFI, and AGFI fit indices were used in the path analysis. Different intervals have been used in the evaluation of model fit indices in the literature, whilst in the current study, the values presented in Table 4 were used to evaluate the model fit indices.

Table 4. Model fit indices

Fit Indices	Perfect Fit Values	Acceptable Fit Values
X^2 / SD	$0 \leq X^2 / SD < 3$	$3 \leq X^2 / SD \leq 5$
GFI	$\geq .95$	$\geq .90$
CFI	$\geq .95$	$\geq .90$
RMSEA	$\leq .05$	$\leq .80$

Fit Indices	Perfect Fit Values	Acceptable Fit Values
SRMR	≤ .05	≤ .08

(Adapted from Gürbüz, 2019; Kline, 2011; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Schumacker & Lomax, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001)

4. RESULTS

In the study, first, correlation analysis was performed. Table 5 presents the findings of the correlation analysis.

Table 5. Correlations between variables

	ELE	DTP	TC	UL	TR	ASTTP	GA	IP	PRST	OA
ELE	1									
DTP	.797	1								
TC	.722	.765	1							
UL	.756	.651	.607	1						
TR	.875	.876	.881	.806	1					
ATTP	.462	.462	.427	.368	.490	1				
GA	.251	.226	.169	.227	.244	.301	1			
IP	.338	.323	.291	.280	.349	.273	.878	1		
Prestige	.312	.288	.256	.257	.315	.287	.851	.858	1	
OA	.317	.255	.255	.267	.320	.296	.861	.868	.874	1

$p < .01$; $N = 341$

The findings revealed the existence of a positive and moderate relationship between the participants' teacher readiness levels and teaching profession attitudes ($r = .49$; $p < .01$), between teacher readiness levels and organizational attraction perceptions ($r = .32$; $p < .01$), and between their teaching profession attitudes and organizational attraction perceptions ($r = .30$; $p < .01$). It was found that correlations between variables ranged from .30 to .49.

In the study, the relationship between teacher readiness, teaching profession attitudes, and organizational attraction was examined (see the proposed model presented in Figure 1). In addition, the mediating effect of teaching profession attitudes in the relationship between teacher readiness and organizational attraction was investigated. Modifications to increase the fit indices of the variables were included in the model, and no further modification was required.

The fit indices of the proposed model were found to be $X^2 / SD = 1.977$, $GFI = .912$, $AGFI = .885$, $CFI = .959$, and $RMSEA = .054$. These findings indicate that the X^2 / SD , GFI , $AGFI$, and TLI values had good fit, and that the CFI and $RMSEA$ values had acceptable fit. Consequently, the analyses showed that the final model proposed in the current study was confirmed. The structural model tested by path analysis is presented in Figure 2.

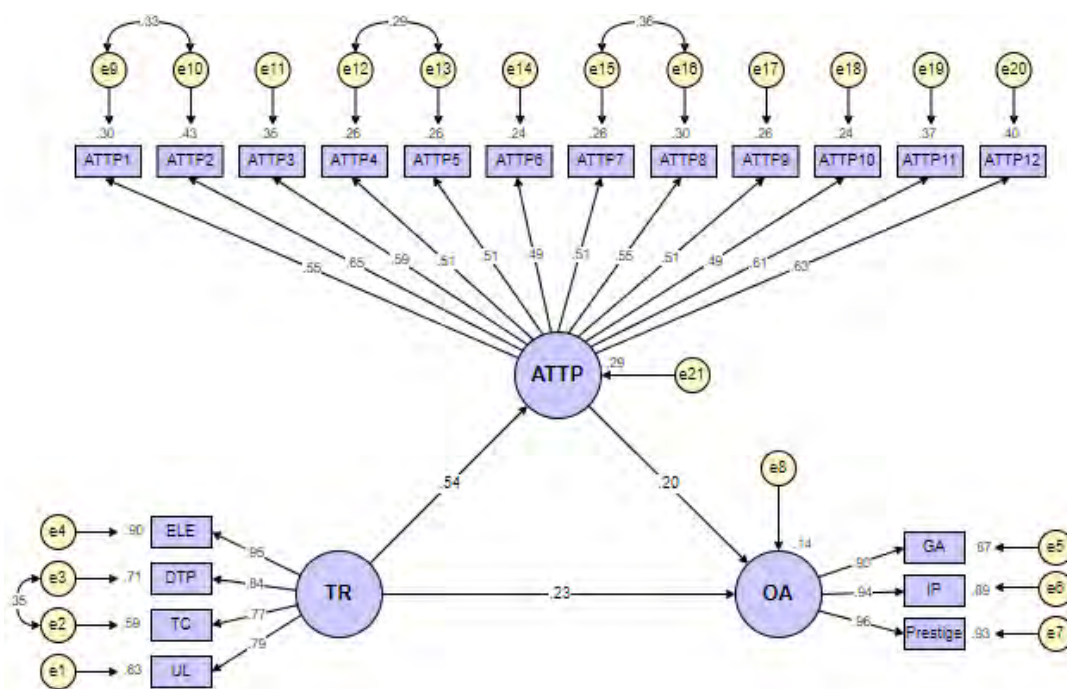


Figure 2. Structural Equation Modeling (created using <https://www.diagrams.net/>)

The standardized regression coefficient between teacher readiness and teaching profession attitudes was calculated as .54 ($t = 7.113, p < .001$). Teacher readiness explained 29.2% of the variance of the attitude towards the teaching profession, which indicated that teacher readiness positively and significantly predicted attitude towards the teaching profession. Based on these results, the first hypothesis of the study (H1) was confirmed.

Path analysis showed that the standardized regression coefficient between the attitude towards the teaching profession and organizational attraction was .20 ($t = 2.731, p < .01$), which revealed that teacher readiness positively and significantly predicted organizational attraction. Therefore, the second hypothesis of the study (H2) was confirmed.

The standardized regression coefficient between teacher readiness and organizational attraction was found to be .23 ($t = 3.439, p < .001$). Teacher readiness explained 14.4% of variance of attitudes towards organizational attraction. These results suggested a positive relationship between teacher readiness and organizational attraction. In this sense, it can be put forward that teacher readiness positively and significantly predicted organizational attraction. Accordingly, the third hypothesis of the study (H3) was confirmed.

Mediating Effect

Bootstrap analysis was performed with PROCESS macro in SPSS in order to investigate the mediating effect between teacher readiness, teaching profession attitudes, and organizational attraction. The evaluation of effect sizes was based on Kline's (2011) classification, which suggests that a large effect is sized over .50, a medium effect between .30 and .50, and a small effect size is between .10 and .30. The significance of the indirect effect is determined by the confidence intervals. The fact that both lower and upper bootstrap confidence intervals are below or above zero, in other words, the absence of a zero between these values indicates the significance of the effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Bootstrap analysis was performed with a 95% confidence interval based on a sample size of 5,000, and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Bootstrap analysis results

Effect Type	β	SE	Bootstrapping 95% confidence interval		Mediation Type
			LLCI	ULCI	
Total	.571	.092	.390	.751	
Direct	.411	.104	.206	.615	Partial
Indirect	.160	.054	.053	.267	

Table 6 showed that the total effect of teacher readiness on organizational attraction was large and significant ($\beta = .571$) at the 95% confidence interval. The finding also revealed that teacher readiness had an indirect effect on organizational attractiveness ($\beta = .160$), which was significant according to confidence interval. In addition, based on Kline's (2011) effect size classification, the indirect effect size of teacher readiness on organizational attractiveness was found to be small. In addition, Bootstrap investigated whether the mediating role of teaching profession attitudes was partial or full. Even though the effect of teacher readiness on organizational attractiveness was significant ($\beta = .571$, $t = 6.217$, $p < .01$) before the attitude towards the teaching profession was included in the model, the effect decreased with the inclusion of teaching profession attitudes ($\beta = .411$, $t = 3.950$, $p < .01$). The mediation analysis indicated that teaching profession attitudes had a partial mediating role in the relationship between teacher readiness and organizational attraction, which confirmed the fourth hypothesis of the study (H4).

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Teachers are the most significant employees in educational organizations. In addition, they play a crucial role in educating qualified people fit for modern-day society. For this reason, preservice teachers who have not yet started in the profession should feel appropriately ready for the profession, have a positive attitude, and be willing to participate within the educational organization, as well as having an education of a sufficiently high standard/quality. In the literature, there have been numerous studies published regarding teacher readiness, teaching profession attitudes, and organizational attraction. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there have been no studies that have examined the relationship between these variables. Hence, the current study aimed to investigate the relationship between preservice teachers' teacher readiness level, teaching profession attitudes, and organizational attraction perceptions. Four hypotheses were put forward by the researcher which were then tested and subsequently confirmed in the study.

The first hypothesis investigated the relationship between preservice teachers' teacher readiness level and teaching profession attitudes. The results revealed that teacher readiness level significantly and positively predicted teaching profession attitudes. In other words, as the teacher readiness level of the participants increased, their attitudes also increased, which confirmed the first hypothesis. In agreement with the findings of the current study, Brown et al. (2015) reported that preservice teachers' teacher readiness perceptions had a significant impact on their teaching practices. Özcan (2020) revealed a moderate and positive relationship between preservice teachers' teaching profession attitudes and their readiness level. In addition, Büyükgoze and Erçetin (2017) argued that

individuals tend to perceive organizations as compatible where they are a closer match to their own values, judgments, attitudes, and history.

The second hypothesis of the study focused on the relationship between teaching profession attitudes and the organizational attraction perceptions. The results showed that teaching profession attitudes positively predicted organizational attraction. In other words, increases in the participants' professional attitudes led to an increase in their willingness to join an educational organization. Based on these results, the second hypothesis of the study was confirmed. It has been stated in the literature that organizational attraction reveals positive attitudes with regards to a particular institution being a suitable place to work (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Highhouse et al., 2003). In this sense, Collins and Stevens (2002) examined students' intention to apply for a job at specific organizations and their perceptions towards the organizations. They found that if applicants had a positive attitude towards an organization, they regarded it as being more attractive. Similarly, Muruganantham et al. (2020) reported that job and organizational qualities played a significant role in job seekers' perceptions and attitudes towards organizational attraction and person-organization fit. Furthermore, İter (2009) stated that most of the preservice teachers in his study had positive attitudes towards the teaching profession and that they considered the teaching profession to be attractive as a career option. A study conducted by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [Turkish Ministry of National Education], 2017) revealed that the value attached to the teaching profession in society was gradually decreasing, that the complaints and disturbance amongst teachers regarding the profession, as well as their working and living conditions were widespread. Additionally, it had been perceived that the teaching profession had lost much of its attractiveness for young people and had become a profession no longer seen as preferable, but only as a last resort career option (Akyüz, 2011; Çapa & Çil, 2000). Therefore, it is concluded that negative professional attitudes decrease the attractiveness of an organization.

In the study's third hypothesis, the relationship between teacher readiness level and organizational attraction perceptions was examined. The results indicated that teacher readiness positively and significantly predicted organizational attraction, which confirmed the hypothesis. As the teacher readiness level increased, the wish to join the educational organization also increased. These results confirmed the third hypothesis of the study. Atalay et al. (2019) argued that a high level of internal motivation in educational institutions increases organizational attraction. There are studies in the literature that have revealed motivation and attitude towards the teaching profession to affect each other positively (Ayık & Ataş, 2014; Çelikkaya, 2022). In this sense, it may be concluded that teaching profession attitudes have a positive effect on organizational attraction.

The study's fourth hypothesis investigated the mediating effect of the participants' teaching profession attitudes in the relationship between teacher readiness and their organizational attraction perceptions. The mediation analysis revealed that the attitude towards the teaching profession had a partial mediating role in the relationship between teacher readiness and organizational attraction. In other words, the fact that prospective teachers with higher levels of teacher readiness also have positive attitudes increases their organizational attraction perceptions. As such, these results confirmed the fourth hypothesis.

As a result, teachers play a significant role in both student success and school development (Stronge et al., 2011). For this reason, it is of crucial importance for prospective teachers to feel ready for the profession and have a positive professional attitude before they commence their duties as serving teachers. Prospective teachers can increase their teacher readiness levels through acquiring the general competencies required by the teaching profession during their undergraduate education. It may therefore be put forward that those having qualifications and positive attitudes required by the profession will result in educational organizations being that much more attractive places to work and their desire to join such an organization will therefore increase. Consequently, it is considered to be very important for educational organizations that prospective teachers have high levels of teacher readiness and positive attitudes.

6. SUGGESTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Although this study revealed significant findings about the relationship between teacher readiness, attitude towards the profession, and organizational attraction, it is not without its limitations. The study was conducted using a sample of fourth-year undergraduate students who were considered as the closest candidates to the teaching profession. However, different professional attitudes and educational organizations could be adopted at different grade levels. The results of the current study were limited to the method employed, the sample, and the obtained data. More comprehensive studies should therefore be conducted using different samples and with different variables thought to affect the attractiveness of educational organizations.

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Data Availability Statement: The dataset obtained and analyzed during this study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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