

# PERCEIVED SCHOOL PRESTIGE AND TEACHING EFFICACY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SUBJECTIVE STATUS AND SCHOOL SOCIAL CLIMATE

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## Abstract

*Aim:* This study aimed to explore whether subjective socioeconomic status and school social climate mediate the association between perceived school prestige and teaching efficacy. *Method:* A serial mediation model (PROCESS Model 6) examined whether perceived school prestige is associated with teaching efficacy (a subscale of the Teacher Subjective Well-being Questionnaire / TSWQ) through teachers' perceptions of their subjective socioeconomic status and school social climate (Student relationships and Collaboration and Instructional Innovation, as two subscales of the School-Level Environment Questionnaire / SLEQ). The research sample consisted of 235 teachers ( $M = 43.41$ ,  $SD = 10.78$ ; 85.5% women). *Results:* Higher perceived school prestige was associated with higher subjective socioeconomic status, which in turn was linked to more positive student relations and greater collaboration and instructional innovation within the school. These school climate factors were subsequently associated with higher teaching efficacy. Both the direct and total indirect associations were significant, indicating partial mediation. These findings suggest that teachers' perceptions of school prestige are linked to their teaching efficacy both directly and indirectly through perceived social status and relational characteristics of the school environment. *Conclusions:* The results highlight the importance of school prestige and its ripple effects on teacher outcomes. Schools perceived as prestigious may enhance teachers' sense of social standing and foster positive interpersonal relationships among students, which together contribute to stronger teaching efficacy. Interventions aimed at improving teaching efficacy could benefit not only from professional development but also from fostering a positive and collaborative school climate and reinforcing teachers' pride in their school's reputation. Moreover, school leaders might consider how school branding, community engagement, and internal recognition can shape teachers' perceptions of status and relational dynamics, ultimately supporting more confident and effective teaching practices.

**Keywords:** *Perceived school prestige, subjective socioeconomic status, teaching efficacy, school social climate.*

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## 1. Introduction

Organizational prestige plays a significant role in shaping teachers' perceptions of their schools. When schools are perceived as reputable, teachers tend to demonstrate stronger organizational identification, higher motivation, and improved performance (Yıldız, 2018). It can be hypothesized that when teachers perceive their schools as prestigious, they contribute more positively to the school climate and experience better collegial relationships, as well as higher levels of motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. School climate reflects both institutional and interpersonal aspects of the school environment, including organizational characteristics such as leadership, management, and decision-making practices, as well as relational elements such as collegiality and student teacher relationships (Fang & Qi, 2023). Consequently, understanding teachers' perceptions of school prestige is essential for enhancing school effectiveness (Yıldız, 2018).

Organizational prestige can be conceptualized as consisting of internal and external dimensions. External prestige refers to employees' perceptions of how their organization is viewed by external stakeholders, including the public, competitors, and other institutions. These perceptions influence employees' sense of pride, belonging, and work-related attitudes (Ahmed, Abduljabbar, & Thabit, 2023). In the present study, external prestige is assessed by asking teachers to rate the prestige or reputation of

their school relative to other schools in Slovakia using a ten-point scale. This approach captures teachers' perceptions of their school's standing within the broader educational and social context and aligns with the concept of perceived external organizational prestige.

Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca (2003) emphasized that teaching increasingly functions as an interdependent professional activity grounded in Bandura's theory of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977). Teachers' effectiveness therefore depends not only on individual instructional skills but also on contextual factors such as school leadership, staff efficiency, family involvement, and collaboration among colleagues. Within this framework, the overall functioning of the school and its recognition within the community shape teachers' beliefs about their capacity to influence student learning and educational outcomes. School prestige reflects the collective capacity to fulfill institutional goals and strengthens teachers' perceptions of collective teaching efficacy, while individual professional achievements reinforce personal teaching efficacy.

This study is grounded in the teacher well-being model proposed by Renshaw, Long, and Cook (2015), which emphasizes two core positive dimensions, namely school connectedness reflected in prosocial relationships and teaching efficacy conceptualized as self-efficacy. The teaching efficacy subscale used in this research refers to teachers' perceptions of their ability to effectively manage diverse teaching tasks and evaluates the extent to which their teaching behaviors successfully meet environmental demands (Renshaw et al., 2015).

Previous research indicates that variations in teachers' socioeconomic status are associated with differences in teaching quality and educational outcomes (Lutfiu & Hoxha, 2024). In line with the conceptual distinction between objective and subjective socioeconomic status, objective socioeconomic status refers to measurable indicators such as income and educational attainment, whereas subjective socioeconomic status reflects individuals' perceived social standing within society (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000; Tan, Kraus, Carpenter, & Adler, 2020). Accordingly, the present study focuses on subjective socioeconomic status in relation to teachers' perceptions of school prestige.

Empirical studies simultaneously examining perceived school prestige, teachers' subjective socioeconomic status, school climate, and teaching efficacy remain limited. However, existing conceptual frameworks and partial empirical evidence suggest that perceived school prestige is positively associated, both directly and indirectly, with teachers' self-efficacy.

## 2. Aim

This study aimed to explore whether perceived subjective socioeconomic status and school social climate mediate the association between perceived school prestige and teaching efficacy.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Sample and procedure

The sample consisted of 235 teachers, 85.5% of whom were women. Participants' mean age was 43.4 years ( $SD = 10.78$ ), and they had an average of 16.37 years of teaching experience. Data were collected via a Slovak agency in October 2025.

### 3.2. Measures

#### School social climate

A shortened version of the School Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ; Johnson, Stevens, & Zvoch, 2007) was used, comprising 17 items on a five-point scale across four subscales: Collaboration (6 items), Student Relations (4 items), Decision Making (3 items), and Instructional Innovation (4 items). A four-factor solution met the Kaiser criterion, but the fourth factor included a single item and was excluded. The Decision Making subscale was also removed due to low internal consistency and conceptual heterogeneity. Principal axis factoring (PAF) was then conducted on the remaining 14 items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure was 0.779 and Bartlett's test was significant,  $\chi^2(55) = 1575.72$ ,  $p < .001$ . Three additional items with low sampling adequacy were removed, leaving 11 items. PAF with Promax rotation yielded a two-factor solution explaining 56.7% of the variance: Collaboration and Instructional Innovation (7 items,  $\alpha = .847$ ) and Student Relations (4 items,  $\alpha = .899$ ), supporting construct validity and internal consistency.

#### Teaching efficacy

Teaching efficacy was assessed using a four-item subscale of the Teacher Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire (TSWQ; Renshaw et al., 2015), rated on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (almost never) to 4 (almost always;  $\alpha = .830$ ).

### Teachers' perceptions of their subjective socioeconomic status

Participants rated their perceived socioeconomic status on a 10-point scale, where 1 represented the lowest status (least money, education, and prestige) and 10 represented the highest status (most money, education, and prestige), indicating their relative position compared with others in Slovakia.

### Teachers' perceptions of their school prestige

Participants rated the prestige or reputation of the school where they work on a 10-point scale, where 1 represented the lowest prestige (worst school) and 10 represented the highest prestige (best school), relative to other schools in Slovakia.

### 3.3. Statistical analyses

Data analyses included correlation and multiple regression, as well as a serial mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro (Model 6; Hayes, 2018) in SPSS version 25. Confidence intervals were estimated with 5,000 bootstrap samples at the 95% level.

## 4. Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations. Teaching efficacy was positively related to all study variables, whereas the association between subjective socioeconomic status and collaboration and instructional innovation was weak and nonsignificant.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between study variables.

	PSP	SES	CaI	SRel	TE
PSP	1	,393***	,266***	,402***	,323***
SES	,393***	1	0,098	,309***	,307***
CaI	,266***	0,098	1	,435***	,293***
SRel	,402***	,309***	,435***	1	,342***
TE	,323***	,307***	,293***	,342***	1
Mean	6.60	6.20	24.69	13.34	13.45
SD	2.05	1.71	3.88	3.02	2.00

Note: PSP = Perceived school prestige, SES = Teachers' perceptions of their subjective socioeconomic status, CaI = Collaboration and Instructional Innovation, SRel = Student relationships, TE = Teaching efficacy, \*\*\*p < 0.001

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the associations between perceived school prestige, teachers' perceptions of their subjective socioeconomic status, student relationships, collaboration and instructional innovation, and teaching efficacy (Table 2). Prior to analysis, the assumptions of linear regression, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, were evaluated and met. The results indicated that all examined factors were positively and significantly associated with teaching efficacy. Specifically, teachers who perceived higher school prestige and greater subjective socioeconomic status, who reported more positive student relationships, and who engaged in higher levels of collaboration and instructional innovation demonstrated higher teaching efficacy.

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression Model Examining Teaching Efficacy.

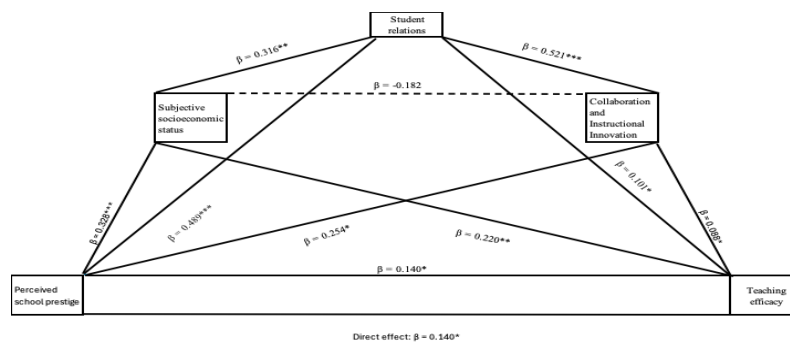
	B	SD	Beta	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Perceived school prestige	0.14	0.066	0.143	0.037	0.009	0.271
Teachers' perceptions of their subjective socioeconomic status	0.219	0.076	0.187	0.004	0.069	0.370
Student relationships	0.101	0.047	0.152	0.032	0.009	0.193
Collaboration and Instructional Innovation	0.088	0.034	0.171	0.010	0.021	0.155

Note: R<sup>2</sup> = 0.21

A serial mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 6; Hayes, 2018) examined the associations between perceived school prestige and teaching efficacy, with teachers' subjective socioeconomic status, student relationships, and collaboration and instructional innovation as sequential mediators (Figure 1). Perceived school prestige was positively associated with teachers' subjective socioeconomic status, which in turn was associated with stronger student relationships (b = 0.33, 95% CI [0.23, 0.43] and b = 0.32, 95% CI [0.09, 0.54], respectively). Perceived school prestige was also directly associated with student relationships (b = 0.49, 95% CI [0.30, 0.68]), and student relationships were associated with collaboration and instructional innovation (b = 0.52, 95% CI [0.36, 0.69]).

Direct associations of perceived school prestige and teachers' subjective socioeconomic status with collaboration and instructional innovation were weaker or non-significant ( $b = 0.25$ , 95% CI [0.003, 0.51];  $b = -0.18$ , 95% CI [-0.47, 0.11], respectively). When all variables were considered simultaneously, perceived school prestige ( $b = 0.14$ , 95% CI [0.01, 0.27]), teachers' subjective socioeconomic status ( $b = 0.22$ , 95% CI [0.07, 0.37]), student relationships ( $b = 0.10$ , 95% CI [0.01, 0.19]), and collaboration and instructional innovation ( $b = 0.09$ , 95% CI [0.02, 0.16]) were each positively associated with teaching efficacy. Indirect effects of perceived school prestige on teaching efficacy were observed through teachers' subjective socioeconomic status, student relationships, and collaboration and instructional innovation, both independently and in sequential combinations, with the total indirect effect reaching  $b = 0.18$ , 95% CI [0.11, 0.25]. These results suggest that perceived school prestige is associated with teaching efficacy both directly and indirectly, with teachers' subjective socioeconomic status and student relationships serving as central mediators and collaboration and instructional innovation primarily reinforcing these associations in combination with student relationships.

Figure 1. Mediation model.



Note: Dashed line represents paths that was not statistically significant,  $*p < .050$ ,  $**p < .010$ ,  $***p < .001$

## 5. Discussion

The present findings can be meaningfully interpreted within established frameworks of teacher self-efficacy, particularly Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) and its application to teaching contexts (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). A central finding of the study is the prominent role of student relationships, conceptualized as students' observable behaviors related to learning and school, including motivation, cooperation with teachers, discipline, courtesy, and respect for school staff. In self-efficacy theory, such behaviors closely correspond to mastery-related information, the most influential source of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Students' engagement, cooperation, and responsiveness provide teachers with continuous feedback about the effectiveness of their instructional practices and classroom management. The consistent involvement of student relationships across both simple and serial indirect pathways suggests that perceived school prestige is associated with teaching efficacy largely through teachers' interpretations of everyday classroom interactions and student behavior.

The role of teachers' perceptions of their subjective socioeconomic status can also be situated within self-efficacy theory, particularly in relation to social persuasion and contextual appraisal processes (Bandura, 1997; Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2011). Teachers perceived social standing within the school context may influence how institutional prestige is internalized and evaluated, shaping expectations, professional confidence, and the interpretation of classroom experiences. In this sense, subjective socioeconomic status appears to function as a contextual filter that links broader institutional perceptions to efficacy-relevant classroom experiences.

In contrast, collaboration and instructional innovation did not operate as an independent intermediary in the association between perceived school prestige and teaching efficacy. Its contribution was evident primarily when embedded within pathways that included student relationships. From a self-efficacy perspective, this pattern suggests that collaborative and innovative practices may strengthen efficacy beliefs most effectively when they are accompanied by positive student responses that can be interpreted as mastery experiences (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Without supportive student behavior, collaboration and innovation alone may provide weaker efficacy-relevant information, explaining their conditional role in see the observed associations.

Overall, the findings support a view of teaching efficacy as a socially embedded belief system (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), shaped not only by individual characteristics or formal organizational features but by teachers' interpretations of their relational and behavioral classroom environments. By showing that perceived school prestige is associated with teaching efficacy primarily through subjective status perceptions and student relationships, the study extends existing self-efficacy frameworks by clarifying how institutional-level perceptions are translated into efficacy-relevant information through everyday social interactions in schools.

## 6. Conclusion

The results suggest that schools' perceived prestige is not only relevant for organizational functioning but also for teachers' subjective socioeconomic status. Educational leaders and policy makers should therefore consider how institutional reputation, public recognition, and professional status shape teachers' perceptions of their social standing. Strengthening school prestige through transparent communication, community engagement, and recognition of teachers' professional contributions may support higher self-efficacy, a more positive school climate, and improved teacher well-being.

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