FROM SOCIAL ESTEEM TO SCHOOL PRACTICE: A FIVE-DOMAIN FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING TEACHER PRESTIGE

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Abstract. *Teacher prestige is often treated as a self-evident policy goal, yet the term combines several distinct forms of recognition. Formal status, public esteem, relational trust, cooperation with schools, and teachers' own professional experience do not necessarily move together. Drawing on doctoral research on teacher prestige and social-institutional cooperation in Uzbekistan, this article develops a school-community diagnostic model that keeps those dimensions analytically separate. Five domains are specified: cognitive understanding of teachers' work, emotional-evaluative trust and respect, behavioral cooperation, institutional support, and outcome-oriented professional consequences. The model is designed as a profile rather than a popularity score. It combines stakeholder surveys with documentary, behavioral, and qualitative evidence so that disagreement between teachers, parents, school leaders, and community actors becomes part of the diagnosis rather than noise to be averaged away. A 30-item pilot structure, domain-level scoring rules, an evidence-to-action workflow, and a staged validation strategy are proposed. No psychometric claims are made in the absence of field data. The contribution is a practical way to study teacher prestige without reducing it either to occupational status or to a single measure of respect, while keeping school-level use developmental and non-punitive.*

Key words: *teacher prestige; social trust; professional identity; school-community relations; measurement; mixed methods; Uzbekistan.*

1. Introduction

Teacher prestige has a familiar place in educational debate, but it is less straightforward as a research construct. Respect, status, authority, reputation, and social recognition are often used as if they were interchangeable. Hoyle (2001) cautioned against that conflation by distinguishing occupational status, prestige, and esteem. A teacher can occupy a formally protected role yet feel publicly undervalued; an individual teacher can also be highly respected in a community even when teaching as an occupation is perceived as low status. Kamalov (2026) makes a related distinction among formal social status, professional reputation, and a broader social-pedagogical conception of prestige. Measurement becomes useful only when these differences are preserved.

International evidence shows why the distinction matters. In TALIS 2018, 26% of lower-secondary teachers across participating OECD countries and economies reported that teaching was

valued by society, while job satisfaction was much higher (OECD, 2020). The two indicators clearly describe different aspects of professional life. The 2024 TALIS cycle continues to report professional experience through several separate measures rather than one global status score (OECD, 2025). UNESCO and the ILO likewise frame teacher status through a combination of professional rights, working conditions, development, and social recognition rather than public approval alone (International Labour Organization & United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1966; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2024).

The practical problem is therefore not whether prestige matters, but how it can be observed at the level where school-community relationships are actually lived. National opinion polls can describe broad attitudes, and employment indicators can describe conditions of work, but neither reveals why one school community sustains strong professional trust while another experiences conflict, weak participation, or symbolic recognition without institutional support. A school-level diagnostic approach needs to distinguish the mechanism behind the pattern it records.

This article asks: how can teacher prestige be translated into interpretable school-community indicators without turning it into a popularity ranking? The answer developed here is a five-domain profile grounded in Kamalov's (2026) social-pedagogical model and connected to research on professional identity, relational trust, family-school partnership, and teacher retention. The proposed instrument is intentionally provisional. Its value lies in the design logic and the validation pathway; reliability and validity must be established empirically before comparative claims are made.

2. From professional status to a relational conception of prestige

A workable definition of teacher prestige has to capture more than favorable opinion. Professional standing is formed at the intersection of what people understand about teaching, how they judge teachers' competence and integrity, how they act in relation to schools, and whether institutions reinforce or undermine professional legitimacy. Research on relational trust is especially relevant because judgments of respect, competence, personal regard, and integrity emerge within relationships rather than in the abstract (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Professional identity is similarly shaped through continuing interpretation of experience and interaction with others (Beijaard et al., 2004).

This relational view also separates expressed attitudes from enacted behavior. A parent may say that teachers deserve respect while rarely participating in school activities or communicating only when conflict has already escalated. The reverse pattern is possible as well: a parent may challenge a particular decision yet continue to recognize the teacher's professional legitimacy and cooperate constructively. Studies of school-family partnership show that involvement is expressed through concrete practices, not simply positive sentiment (Epstein et al., 2018), and meta-analytic evidence links forms of parental involvement with educational outcomes (Jeynes, 2007). For prestige research, the implication is simple: attitudes and behavior should not be collapsed into one indicator.

Professional competence remains part of the picture, but competence alone does not produce prestige. Uzbek pedagogical literature has treated mastery, educational values, reflective practice, and quality management as interrelated features of professional work (Erkaboyeva, 2020; Ma'murov, 2017; Mardonov, 2006; Qurbonov & Seytxalilov, 2006; Safarova, 2024). These traditions help explain why public understanding of teachers' work belongs in the construct. Communities evaluate a profession through the work they believe it entails; when teaching is

reduced to visible classroom hours, judgments about effort, expertise, and responsibility are likely to be incomplete.

Institutional conditions must also be separated from individual reputation. Workload, autonomy, recognition, leadership, and employment conditions affect teachers' professional experience and intentions to remain in the profession (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Fuller et al., 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). A low prestige profile can therefore be a property of the surrounding system rather than a deficit in an individual teacher. Treating the construct this way changes the purpose of measurement: the task is to locate a school-community mechanism that can be improved, not to assign a social score to a person.

3. Framework development and design logic

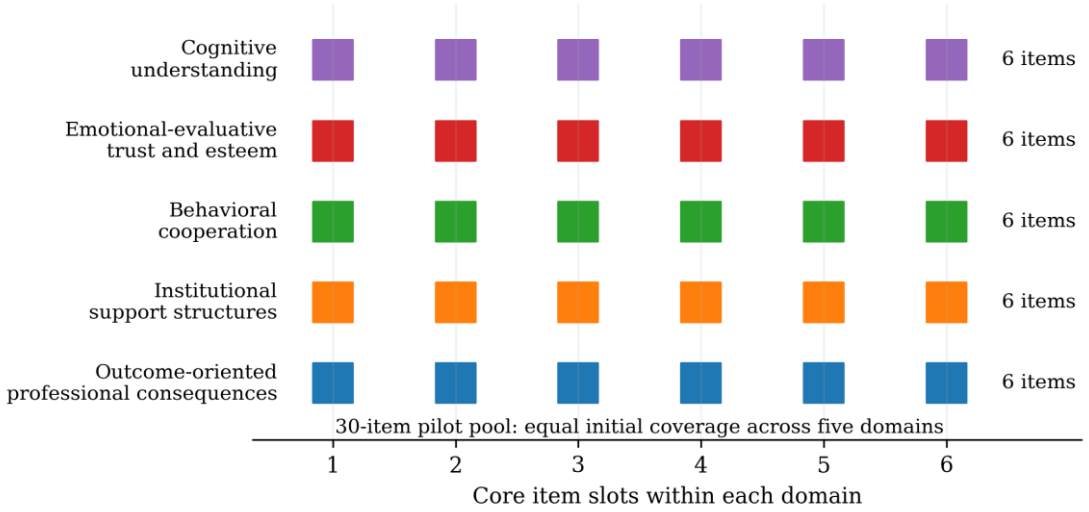
The study uses theory-led conceptual mapping rather than analysis of a new respondent dataset. The starting material was Kamalov's (2026) definition of teacher prestige, five evaluation criteria, model blocks, proposed strategies, and pedagogical conditions. Each criterion was mapped to an observable question: What do stakeholders understand about teachers' professional work? How do they evaluate and trust teachers? How do they behave in relation to the school? Which organizational arrangements support professional legitimacy? What professional consequences accompany the surrounding environment?

The resulting domains are cognitive, emotional-evaluative, behavioral, institutional, and outcome-oriented. The first four describe perceptions, relationships, actions, and organizational conditions. The fifth is deliberately treated as a companion domain: satisfaction, perceived social value, confidence, and intentions to remain may be consequences of a supportive environment, but they do not prove that prestige caused those outcomes. Keeping that distinction visible prevents a diagnostic profile from being mistaken for a causal model.

The pilot survey is specified as a 30-item core pool, with six items assigned to each domain at the development stage. Parallel forms can be written for teachers, parents, school leaders, and community representatives; student voice may be added when age-appropriate wording, consent procedures, and ethical approval are in place. Most core items can use a five-point agreement scale, while behavioral and institutional evidence should also draw on factual records and documentary sources. The equal six-item allocation is a starting design choice, not an empirical claim about the relative weight of the five domains.

Figure 1

Pilot blueprint for the 30-item teacher-prestige survey



Note. The figure shows planned item coverage only. It should not be read as an empirical distribution or a validated weighting scheme.

4. The five diagnostic domains

The five domains are best read as a coordinated profile. Each addresses a different question about the social ecology around teaching, and each is strengthened by evidence that comes from more than one source. Table 1 summarizes the intended content and the most useful forms of corroborating evidence.

Table 1

Domain definitions, illustrative indicators, and evidence sources

Domain	Diagnostic focus	Illustrative indicators	Useful evidence
Cognitive	Understanding of teachers' professional work	Role complexity; planning and assessment; family communication; continuous learning; ethical responsibility; social contribution	Stakeholder survey; interviews
Emotional-evaluative	Trust, respect, and professional credibility	Confidence in professional judgment; fairness; integrity; gratitude; willingness to hear teachers' reasoning	Stakeholder survey; focus groups
Behavioral	Enacted cooperation around education	Constructive communication; participation in school-family activities; joint initiatives; dialogue before escalation; community support	Survey; participation records; observation where appropriate
Institutional	Structures that protect and recognize professional work	Mentoring; recognition procedures; feedback channels; partnership arrangements; protection of professional rights; public communication practices	Policies and records; leadership survey; interviews
Outcome-oriented	Professional consequences associated with the local environment	Perceived social value; professional confidence; satisfaction; willingness to engage publicly; intention to remain; stability of cooperation	Teacher survey; longitudinal follow-up; relevant administrative records

The cognitive domain asks whether respondents recognize teaching as complex professional work. Item content can address planning, assessment, pastoral responsibilities, communication with families, professional learning, and ethical obligations. The aim is not to test respondents' factual knowledge in a narrow sense; it is to detect whether expectations of teachers are grounded in a realistic picture of the role. OECD work on the teaching profession has

repeatedly treated professional expertise and working conditions as central to teacher status (OECD, 2005, 2020).

The emotional-evaluative domain comes closest to everyday ideas of obro' or esteem, but it should avoid language that equates prestige with deference. An item such as "Teachers' professional judgments deserve respectful consideration when learning decisions are discussed" is preferable to a statement that teachers should never be questioned. The first wording captures professional legitimacy within a relationship; the second confuses prestige with immunity from criticism. Relational trust theory supports attention to competence and integrity together (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

The behavioral domain records what stakeholders actually do. Participation, constructive communication, joint initiatives, and willingness to seek dialogue before escalation are observable expressions of cooperation. Social-capital theory provides one rationale for treating networks and reciprocal participation as resources for schools (Coleman, 1988). Here, however, participation is not interpreted as obedience. It is evidence that education is being treated as a shared responsibility.

The institutional domain shifts attention from goodwill to infrastructure. Mentoring, transparent recognition, parent and community partnerships, feedback procedures, professional protection, and communication protocols matter because prestige can be reinforced or weakened by routine organizational practice. This domain has particular relevance in Uzbekistan, where the Law on the Status of the Teacher recognizes teachers' professional rights and dignity and includes provisions on mentoring and protection of professional activity (O'zbekiston Respublikasi, 2024).

The outcome-oriented domain records the professional experience that accompanies the wider environment. It includes perceived social value, confidence, satisfaction, public engagement, and intention to remain. These indicators should be interpreted cautiously. They are useful for convergence and follow-up, but they are influenced by workload, autonomy, leadership, pay, and other conditions in addition to prestige (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). For that reason, outcome scores should not be used as stand-alone evidence that teacher prestige is high or low.

5. Scoring, triangulation, and interpretation

At the pilot stage, interpretation should remain domain-based. Agreement items can be scored on a 1-to-5 scale and summarized as a mean when enough responses are present, but there is no strong reason to force the five domains into a single total before field validation. A total score would combine understanding, attitudes, behavior, institutional conditions, and professional consequences even though these may have different relationships to one another. The more informative output is a profile that shows where the school-community pattern is coherent and where it is not.

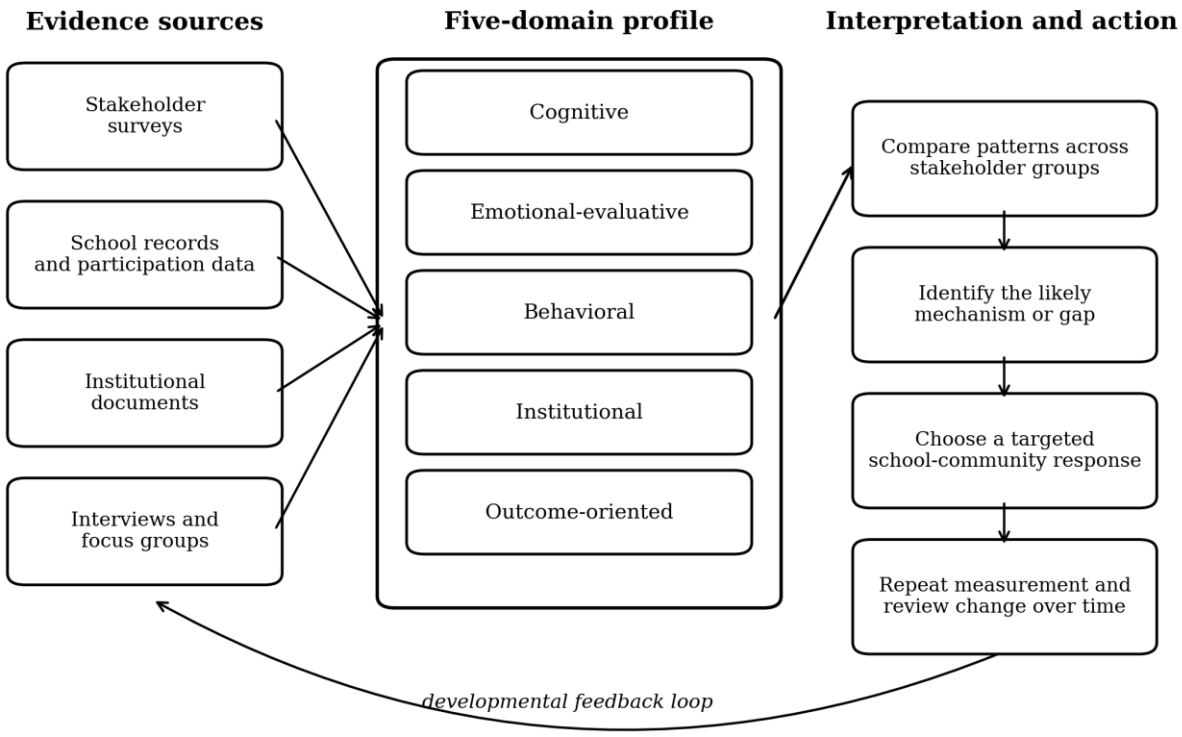
Triangulation is central to that interpretation. Survey responses can be checked against institutional documents, participation records, and qualitative accounts. A school may formally report a mentoring policy that teachers rarely experience in practice; parent surveys may show high respect while participation records reveal little interaction; teachers may feel weak social recognition while parents describe strong esteem. Such discrepancies are substantive findings. They point to communication gaps, access barriers, differences in direct experience, or institutional practices that a single average would conceal.

Comparisons should therefore focus on patterns over time and across stakeholder groups rather than league tables. Teacher-level results are especially sensitive because prestige is relational and context dependent. School reporting should normally use aggregated data, and any

individual feedback should be voluntary, confidential, and developmental. The purpose is to identify a mechanism that can be addressed - for example, limited understanding of teachers' work, weak relational trust, low participation, or an institutional procedure that exists only on paper.

Figure 2

Evidence-to-action architecture for school-community diagnosis



Note. Multiple evidence sources feed the same domain profile. Follow-up measurement is used to review change, not to rank individual teachers.

6. Validation strategy

Before the instrument is used for comparative or evaluative claims, its measurement properties must be established with field data. The first stage should be a content review by social-pedagogy scholars, experienced teachers, school leaders, parent representatives, community actors, and a measurement specialist. Reviewers should examine relevance, clarity, cultural fit, and whether each item genuinely belongs to its intended domain. Cognitive interviews with a small number of respondents can then identify wording that is technically clear to researchers but interpreted differently in practice.

Pilot testing should examine whether items within a domain behave coherently and whether the proposed five-domain structure is visible in the data. Coefficient omega can be reported as the main internal-consistency estimate, with alpha as a familiar supplementary statistic. Exploratory factor analysis is appropriate during early development; a later independent sample can be used to test the retained structure. The key question is not whether every domain correlates strongly with every other domain, but whether the model preserves theoretically meaningful distinctions among trust, behavior, institutional support, and professional consequences.

Validation should also include relationships with adjacent constructs and outcomes without using near-duplicate measures as proof of validity. Relational trust, perceived autonomy, school-family partnership, and career intentions are plausible external variables because prior research links them to teachers' professional experience (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Epstein et al., 2018;

Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). If scores are compared directly across teachers, parents, or other groups, measurement invariance should be tested first; parallel wording does not guarantee that different groups interpret an item in the same way. Longitudinal use likewise requires evidence that the measure functions consistently across time.

7. Use in Uzbek school communities

Uzbekistan provides a particularly relevant setting for developmental monitoring because formal recognition of teachers is now supported by an explicit legal framework. The Law on Education establishes the broader institutional setting, while the 2024 Law on the Status of the Teacher recognizes professional status, dignity, rights, and organizational protections (O'zbekiston Respublikasi, 2020, 2024). A diagnostic instrument should complement those provisions by asking how formal principles are experienced locally. It should not create a second, informal accountability system based on popularity.

At school level, the profile can be aligned with the three implementation stages in Kamalov's (2026) model. Baseline diagnosis identifies the pattern. The response is then selected according to the domain in which the problem is located: clearer public communication when the professional role is poorly understood; structured dialogue when trust is weak; accessible opportunities for participation when cooperation is low; or changes to mentoring, recognition, feedback, and protection when the institutional domain is weak. Follow-up measurement asks whether the relevant pattern changed after the intervention.

Reporting rules matter as much as scoring rules. Domain results should appear before any optional overall index, and weighting choices should be transparent. Equal weighting is defensible only as a temporary design assumption; it should not be presented as empirically established. Reports should also distinguish statistically detectable change from change large enough to matter in practice, using effect sizes and uncertainty intervals where sample size permits. Most importantly, interpretation should be reciprocal: teachers, parents, and community participants should be able to see how findings were translated into conclusions and to challenge interpretations that confuse professional quality with popularity.

The same approach can support research across school types or regions without turning national teacher prestige into a stereotype. TALIS 2024 itself illustrates that professional experience varies within education systems as well as between them (OECD, 2025). A school-community instrument can complement national indicators by locating the relationships and institutional practices through which policy is experienced on the ground.

8. Discussion and conclusion

The central contribution of the model is not a new prestige score. It is a way of separating phenomena that are routinely compressed into that score. A community may understand the complexity of teaching yet distrust the school; parents may express strong respect while having few practical opportunities to participate; teachers may receive public praise while working in institutions that provide weak protection or recognition. These are different diagnostic problems, and they call for different responses.

The five-domain structure also makes the limits of the current study explicit. The proposed item pool has not yet been field validated, cross-sectional associations would not establish causality, and self-report data are vulnerable to social desirability in settings where respect for teachers carries a strong normative expectation. Institutional records are not automatically objective either: a documented procedure may say little about how it functions in everyday

practice. Mixed methods are therefore not an optional embellishment but part of the construct design.

Future research should test the item pool in diverse Uzbek school communities, examine how the domains relate without assuming they form a single latent continuum, and study whether domain-specific interventions are followed by changes in the expected part of the profile. Until that work is completed, the model is best understood as a disciplined diagnostic proposal. It translates a social-pedagogical conception of teacher prestige into observable questions while preserving a crucial distinction: professional legitimacy can be strengthened through understanding, trust, cooperation, and institutional support, but it should not be reduced to a contest for approval.

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