Articles

Student Resilience as a Dynamic Process: Individual, Family, and School Protective Factors

Veronika Pavlíková, Štefan Chudý

Abstract

The aim of the study is to analyze selected individual, family, and school resources potentially related to resilience and positive adaptation among students in socially disadvantaged areas. The research sample consisted of 1,273 respondents: 644 students, 543 parents, and 86 teachers from selected elementary schools in the Moravian-Silesian Region. Standardized questionnaire instruments were used to assess resilience, coping strategies, perceived social support, socioeconomic status, parental acceptance, and teachers' beliefs. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and correlation analysis. The results showed relatively high levels of perceived social support, particularly from parents and teachers; frequent use of active and support-oriented coping responses; a relatively high level of parental acceptance; and predominantly positive teacher beliefs regarding students' abilities. A statistically significant but very weak positive association was found between resilience and parental social support. Given the low internal consistency of the CD-RISC scale, the results regarding resilience must be interpreted with considerable caution. The study highlights the potential importance of individual, family, and school resources in a socially disadvantaged educational environment.

Keywords: resilience; social support; school environment; socially disadvantaged regions.

Odolnost žáků jako dynamický proces: ochranné faktory na úrovni jednotlivce, rodiny a školy

Abstrakt

Cílem studie je analyzovat vybrané individuální, rodinné a školní zdroje potenciálně související s resiliencí a pozitivní adaptací žáků v sociálně znevýhodněných oblastech. Výzkumný soubor tvořilo 1 273 respondentů: 644 žáků, 543 rodičů a 86 učitelů z vybraných základních škol Moravskoslezského kraje. Pomocí standardizovaných dotazníkových nástrojů byly sledovány resilience, copingové strategie, vnímaná sociální opora, socioekonomický status, rodičovské přijetí a přesvědčení učitelů. Data byla analyzována pomocí deskriptivní statistiky, analýzy reliability a korelační analýzy. Výsledky ukázaly relativně vysokou vnímanou sociální oporu, zejména ze strany rodičů a učitelů, časté využívání aktivních a na podporu orientovaných copingových reakcí, relativně vysokou míru rodičovského přijetí a převážně pozitivní přesvědčení učitelů o schopnostech žáků. Mezi resiliencí a rodičovskou sociální oporou byla zjištěna statisticky významná, avšak velmi slabá pozitivní souvislost. Vzhledem k nízké vnitřní konzistenci škály CD-RISC je nutné výsledky týkající se resilience interpretovat s výraznou opatrností. Studie poukazuje na potenciální význam individuálních, rodinných a školních zdrojů v sociálně znevýhodněném vzdělávacím prostředí.

Klíčová slova: resilience; sociální opora; školní prostředí; sociálně znevýhodněné oblasti.

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Introduction

Social inequalities in education remain a significant challenge, particularly in contexts where a family's socioeconomic background and regional disparities influence students' educational opportunities. In the Czech Republic, poverty, housing insecurity, and structural inequalities may contribute to unequal educational pathways and outcomes (Münich et al., 2020). These challenges are particularly relevant in socially disadvantaged regions, where students may be exposed to multiple sources of disadvantage.

In this context, resilience is an important concept for understanding positive adaptation to adverse circumstances. Resilience is not viewed as a stable individual characteristic but is understood as a dynamic process resulting from interactions between individual capabilities and environmental resources (Masten, 2001; Qin, 2026). From

this perspective, coping strategies, social support, family relationships, socioeconomic conditions, and school-related resources may all be relevant to students' adaptation. Existing research emphasizes the importance of individual, family, and school resources in supporting children and adolescents facing challenging circumstances (Alfaro-Vásquez et al., 2022; Azpiazu et al., 2025; García-Martínez et al., 2022).

The aim of this study is to examine selected individual, family, and school resources among students attending schools in socially disadvantaged areas and to explore selected associations with their resilience. Particular attention is paid to coping strategies, perceived social support, socioeconomic status, parental acceptance or rejection, and teachers' beliefs about students' abilities. The study thus seeks to contribute to a contextual understanding of the resources that may be relevant to students' positive adaptation in socially disadvantaged educational settings.

1 Theoretical background

1.1 Resilience as a key protective factor in education

Research has demonstrated that resilience is one of the most significant protective factors that support school adaptation, mental health, and long-term educational outcomes. Systematic reviews emphasise that resilience helps students better cope with stress, school demands, and social pressures, and is associated with increased well-being and academic success (García Pérez et al., 2025).

Conversely, Masten (2001) provides a classic overview of resilience as a research area, showing that it is in fact a common outcome of normal adaptive systems, enabling individuals to achieve positive development despite prevailing risks. Therefore, resilience does not arise in isolation, but in interaction with the environment, especially supportive relationships and structures within the family, school and community.

1.2 The role of social support

Social support is widely recognised as one of the most important external protective factors contributing to resilience. Support from parents, teachers, and peers helps students cope with stress, reduces the risk of school maladjustment, and promotes positive school functioning. While peer support plays an important role in fostering a sense of belonging and social integration, parental and teacher support has been shown to be particularly important for students' motivation, school adjustment, and resilience (Azpiazu et al., 2025).

Similarly, Li & Li (2024) demonstrated that social support from parents and teachers positively influences students' resilience, both directly and indirectly through a stronger sense of school belonging and more positive emotional experiences. Their findings suggest that students who feel supported by significant adults are better able to cope with challenges, whereas fear of failure is associated with lower levels of resilience.

1.3 Social support as a source of coping strategies

Vasquez et al. (2022) in their study, posit that perceived social support is a pivotal resource for the development of coping processes, as it not only alleviates subjectively perceived stress, but also actively promotes the use of adaptive stress management strategies such as planning, problem solving, and emotion regulation. The impact of social support is known to be amplified by the presence of personal resources, with academic self-efficacy being a notable example. This term refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to effectively manage challenging circumstances. This mechanism reflects a broader concept of resilience as a dynamic process in which the individual and their social environment are interconnected and influence each other. Social support, therefore, provides emotional support in addition to functioning as a practical means of mobilising psychological resources. This enables effective adaptation and the prevention of maladaptive responses to stressful situations, especially in a demanding academic environment.

2 Methodology

The research was conducted using a quantitative research design, which is suitable for examining relationships between psychological and social variables and for identifying general patterns in larger data sets (Creswell, 2014). The collection of data was conducted employing standardised questionnaire methodologies, thereby facilitating systematic measurement of the constructs under investigation, including resilience, coping strategies and perceived social support.

The distribution of the questionnaires occurred in two modes: firstly, in paper form, and secondly, via online data collection using the Qualtrics platform. The employment of a combined data collection method resulted in enhanced accessibility of the research for respondents and a reduction in the risk of digital exclusion, a particularly salient issue in socially disadvantaged contexts (Dillman et al., 2014).

The methodological approach that was selected for this study ensured that the conditions under which data was collected were standardised. However, it allowed for sufficient flexibility with regard to the specific conditions of the participating schools and families.

2.1 Sample

The study sample consisted of 1,273 respondents participating in the REFRESH project, including students, parents, and teachers from selected elementary schools in the Moravian-Silesian Region of the Czech Republic. The participating schools were located in socially disadvantaged areas and were selected for the REFRESH project with particular attention to educational environments affected by socioeconomic and structural disadvantages.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents were included in the study after providing informed consent to participate in the REFRESH project and to the associated data collection. Only respondents who met the eligibility criteria and provided the required informed consent were included in the research sample.

- **Students**: A total of N = 644 students from 18 primary schools in socially disadvantaged areas. The sample included 333 girls (51.7 %), 297 boys (46.1 %), 13 respondents with no gender specified (2.2 %).
- **Parents**: A total of N = 543 parents from 22 different schools, of whom 453 were women (83.4 %) and 90 were men (16.6 %).
- **Teachers**: A total of N = 86 teachers from 8 different schools, with the sample consisting of 72 women (83.7 %) and 14 men (16.3 %).

The participating schools and respondents thus constitute a non-probability sample within the REFRESH project, which focuses specifically on socially disadvantaged educational contexts. This sample should not be considered representative of all elementary school students, parents, and teachers in the Moravian-Silesian Region or in the Czech Republic. Rather, it provides an empirical basis for examining individual, family, and school protective resources within the specific context of socially disadvantaged educational environments.

The number of valid responses varied across individual questionnaires, as not all respondents completed every section of the questionnaire. Analyses were therefore conducted using the available valid responses for the respective questionnaires. The number of observations included in each questionnaire and analysis is specified in the section on questionnaire completeness.

2.2 Completeness of questionnaires

Before conducting the statistical analysis, the collected questionnaires were checked for completeness and data quality. Questionnaires with incomplete responses to required items were excluded from the relevant analysis. Questionnaires that were filled out incorrectly or contained responses that could not be reliably interpreted or entered into the dataset were also excluded.

As a result, the number of valid cases varied across the individual research instruments. Only valid responses that were sufficiently complete for the given instrument were included in the statistical analyses. Missing values were not imputed; the analyses were conducted using the available valid data for each instrument. The number of valid responses and completed questionnaires for each instrument is shown in Table 1.

This procedure was used to minimize the potential impact of incomplete or incorrectly recorded questionnaire data on the statistical results. Differences in sample size across the various analyses therefore reflect the application of these data quality criteria and the availability of valid responses for the relevant indicators.

Table 1
Completeness of questionnaires

Instrument	n	Complete questionnaires
CD-RISC	618	563 (87.4 %)
CCSC-R	644	563 (87.4 %)
CASSS – parents	583	563 (87.4 %)
CASSS – teachers	584	563 (87.4 %)
CASSS – classmates	582	563 (87.4 %)
Correlation resilience x parental support	560	560 (100 %)
SES index	515	471 (86.7 %)
PARQ	543	471 (86.7 %)
Teacher beliefs	83	83 (100 %)

Source: Authors' own processing based on research data

2.3 Instruments

Standardised psychometric instruments were utilised to collect data, thereby facilitating a comprehensive evaluation of resilience, coping strategies, perceived social support, socioeconomic status, and the attitudes of parents and teachers.

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10) is a 10-item scale measuring resilience and the ability to cope with stress and adapt to change (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

The Children's Coping Strategies Checklist – Revised (CCSC-R) consists of 54 items assessing cognitive and behavioural coping strategies used by children and adolescents in stressful situations (Ayers et al., 1996).

The Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale – (CASSS) evaluates perceived social support from parents, teachers, and classmates through separate 12-item subscales (Malecki & Demaray, 2002).

Socioeconomic status (SES) was operationalized using a composite SES index derived from selected socioeconomic indicators reported by parents. The index was calculated as the average of the standardized values (z-scores) of the relevant SES items (SES5–SES19), which represent the relative socioeconomic status of families within the study sample.

Parental acceptance was measured using the **Parent Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ),** which assesses children's perceptions of parental acceptance and rejection (Rohner, 2005).

Teachers' attitudes towards students' abilities and potential were assessed using the **Teacher Beliefs Scale** consisting of nine items.

2.4 Data analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and correlation analysis. Descriptive statistics included the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), median (Mdn), and range. The internal consistency of scales and subscales with multiple items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) were used to examine the relationships between students' resilience and their perceived social support from parents, teachers, and classmates. Statistical significance was assessed using p-values, and the number of valid observations (n) was reported for each analysis. Given the cross-sectional nature of the study, the identified relationships were interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

Scale scores were calculated only for cases that met the required minimum number of valid responses. Missing data in the correlation analyses were handled using the listwise deletion method, which resulted in varying sample sizes across the individual analyses. Histograms, box plots, bar charts, and scatter plots were used to visualize the distribution, variability, and relationships among the variables.

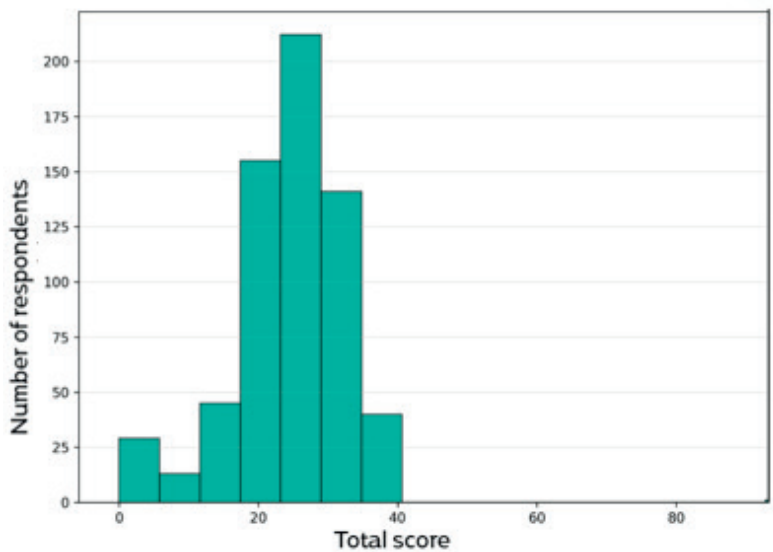
2.5 Results

2.5.1 Resilience

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of students' resilience scores as measured by the CD-RISC 10 questionnaire. The distribution shows that the scores of most students were concentrated in the middle range, while relatively fewer students achieved scores at the lower and upper ends of the observed distribution. The mean CD-RISC score was M = 2.66 (SD = 1.19).

However, the CD-RISC 10 scale exhibited low internal consistency in this sample (Cronbach's α = 0.222). For this reason, the observed distribution must be interpreted with great caution, and the scores cannot be considered a reliable estimate of students' resilience. Conclusions based on this measurement are therefore presented primarily as a description of the observed distribution of scores, rather than as definitive evidence of students' level of resilience.

Figure 1
Level of student resilience



Source: Authors' own processing based on research data

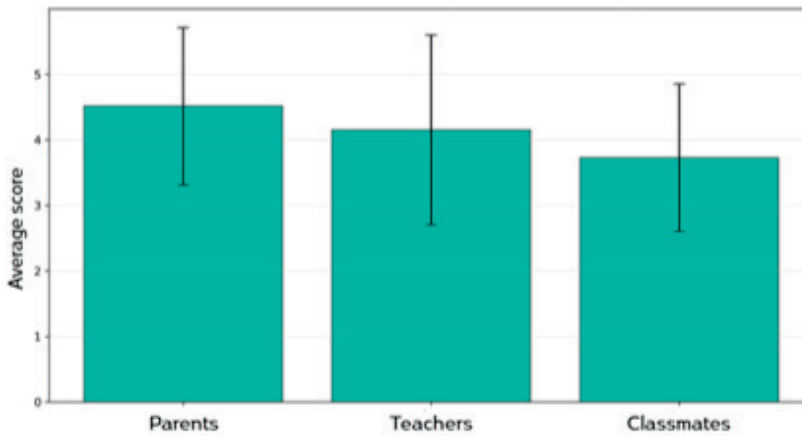
2.5.2 Social support

Figure 2 illustrates the perceived social support that students feel from their parents, teachers, and classmates. The highest level of perceived social support was recorded for parents (M = 4.51, SD = 1.20), followed by teachers (M = 4.15, SD = 1.45) and classmates (M = 3.73, SD = 1.13). Parents thus represented the highest-rated source of perceived social support among all three sources examined.

The internal consistency of the CASSS questionnaire's subscales varied across the individual sources of support. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was α = 0.536 for support from parents, α = 0.544 for support from teachers, and α = 0.701 for support from classmates. The results regarding support from parents and teachers should therefore be interpreted with due caution given their lower internal consistency.

Overall, the descriptive results indicate that students reported perceived support from all three sources, with support from parents receiving the highest average score and support from classmates receiving the lowest.

Figure 2
Perceived social support



Source: Authors' own processing based on research data

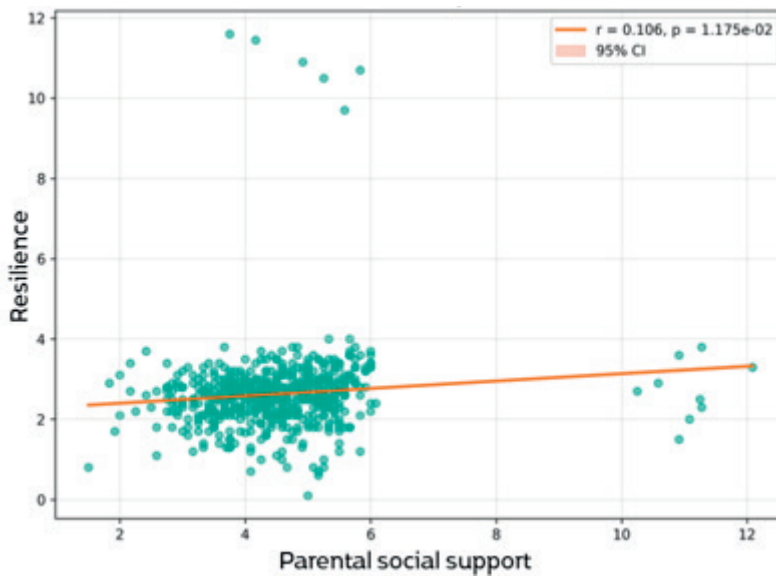
2.5.3 Relation between resilience and social support

Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between students' resilience scores (CD-RISC 10) and their perceived social support from parents (CASSS). Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant but very weak positive association between resilience scores and perceived parental support ($r = 0.106$, $p = 0.012$, $n = 560$). Higher perceived parental support was thus associated with slightly higher CD-RISC scores; however, the magnitude of this association was small.

The scatter plot illustrates considerable variability in resilience scores across different levels of perceived parental support. The regression line represents the direction of the observed association, while the area indicates the 95% confidence interval. Given the low internal consistency of the CD-RISC 10 scale in this sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.222$), the observed association should be interpreted with great caution and should not be considered reliable evidence of a relationship between parental support and resilience.

Figure 3

Relation between resilience and parental social support



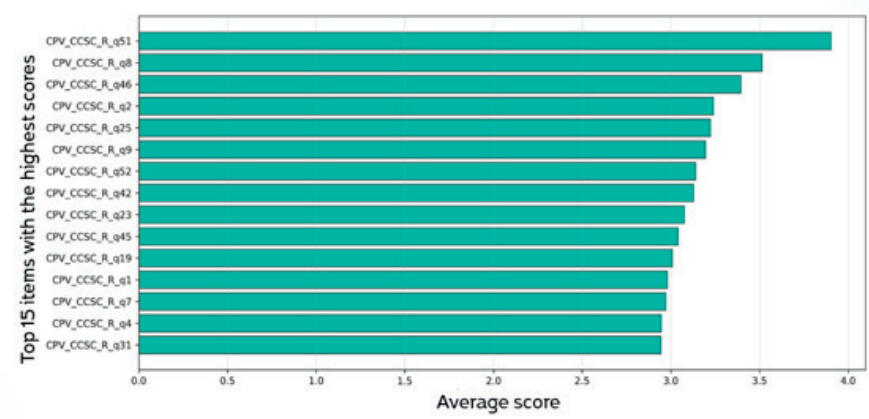
Source: Authors' own processing based on research data

2.5.4 Coping strategies

Figure 4 presents the 15 items from the CCSC-R questionnaire with the highest average scores, which represent the coping strategies most frequently reported by students in the study sample. The items with the highest scores primarily reflected active responses to challenging situations, including thinking about possible solutions, attempting to solve the problem, and looking for ways to cope with the situation. Strategies involving seeking support were also among the more frequently reported ones.

Conversely, items reflecting resignation, denial, or significant avoidance were not among the highest-rated coping strategies. These descriptive results suggest that active and support-oriented responses predominated among the coping strategies most frequently reported by students in this sample. However, since the figure presents the individual items of the CCSC-R questionnaire with the highest scores—rather than a comparison among predefined coping dimensions—the results should be interpreted as a description of frequently reported coping responses to a situation, rather than as evidence of an overall preference for a particular coping style.

Figure 4
Coping strategies



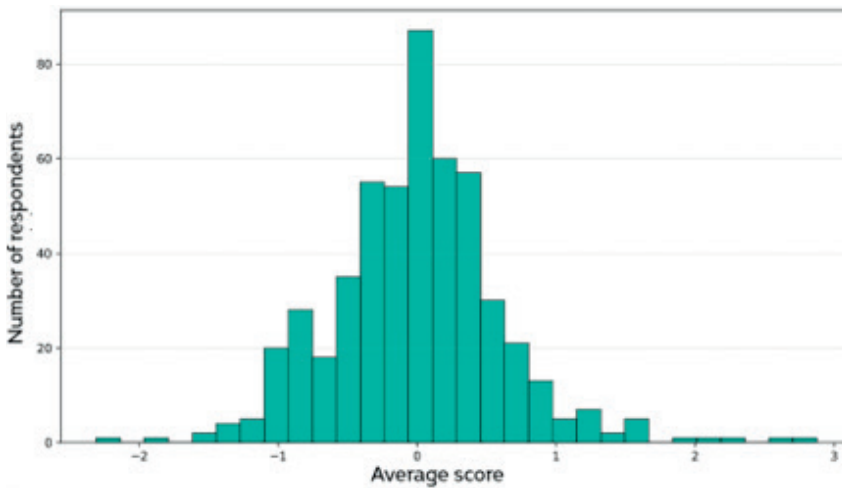
Source: Authors' own processing based on research data

2.5.5 Socioeconomic status

Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of families' socioeconomic status as measured by a composite SES index. The index was standardized within the research sample, with values around zero representing the sample mean, negative values indicating a relatively lower socioeconomic status, and positive values indicating a relatively higher socioeconomic status. The mean SES index was M = −0.00 (SD = 0.61), the median was Mdn = 0.02, and values ranged from −2.31 to 2.88 (n = 515).

This distribution indicates variability in socioeconomic conditions among the participating families. Although the study focused on schools located in socially disadvantaged areas, families in these educational contexts were not socioeconomicly homogeneous and differed in their relative socioeconomic status within the sample.

Figure 5
SES index



Source: Authors' own processing based on research data

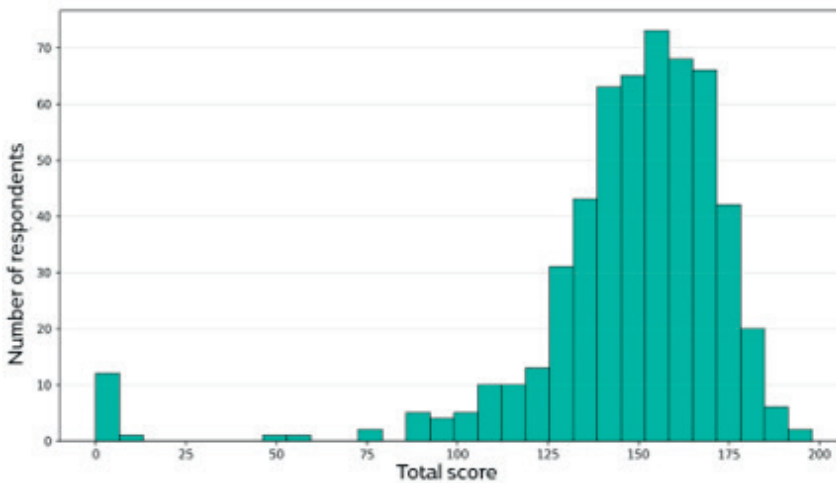
2.5.6 Acceptance-rejection by parents

Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of scores for parental acceptance and rejection. Higher scores indicate a higher level of parental acceptance. The mean total score was M = 146.82 (SD = 30.67), the median was Mdn = 152.00, and the observed range was from 0 to 198 (n = 543). The relatively high mean and median scores suggest that parents' responses generally clustered toward the upper end of the acceptance scale.

This distribution thus suggests a relatively high level of reported parental acceptance within the study sample, although variability among respondents was also observed. Lower scores, reflecting comparatively lower levels of parental acceptance, occurred less frequently.

Figure 6

Acceptance-rejection by parents



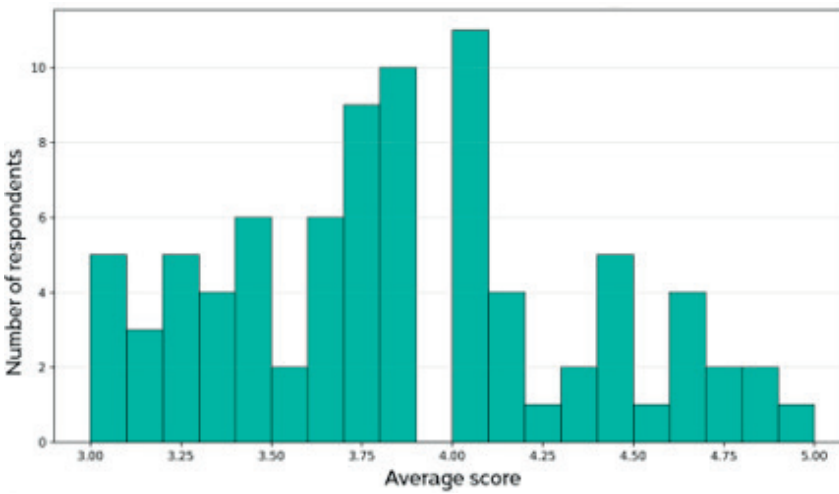
Source: Authors' own processing based on research data

2.5.7 Teacher beliefs

Figure 7 illustrates the distribution of teachers' opinions regarding students' abilities and potential. Overall, teachers' opinions were predominantly positive, with scores concentrated in the middle to upper range of the scale. The average score was M = 3.85 (SD = 0.51), indicating generally positive views on students' abilities among the participating teachers.

The scale measuring teachers' beliefs showed high internal consistency in this sample (Cronbach's α = 0.883). The distribution also exhibited relatively limited variability, with very low scores occurring only rarely.

Figure 7
Teacher beliefs



Source: Authors' own processing based on research data

3 Discussion

The study's findings identify several resources at the individual, family, and school levels that may be important for students' adaptation in socially disadvantaged environments. This is consistent with the ecological conception of resilience as a dynamic process that arises from interactions between individual and environmental resources (Azpiazu et al., 2025; Masten, 2001). However, the very low internal consistency of the CD-RISC 10 scale ($\alpha = 0.222$) significantly limits conclusions regarding resilience and requires cautious interpretation.

Students perceived their parents as their strongest source of social support, followed by teachers and classmates, which confirms previous research on the importance of supportive relationships within the family and at school (Azpiazu et al., 2025; Masten, 2001). However, parental support showed only a very weak positive association with resilience ($r = 0.106$, $p = 0.012$), while associations with support from teachers and classmates were not statistically significant. Social support should therefore be understood more as one of several potential contextual sources rather than as an isolated determinant of resilience.

Active and support-oriented coping strategies predominated among the students, which is consistent with research linking coping to social support and positive self-evaluation (Alfaro-Vásquez et al., 2022; García-Martínez et al., 2022). However, since the relationships between coping strategies and resilience were not directly tested, these findings should not be interpreted as evidence of their protective effects.

At the family level, socioeconomic conditions varied considerably, highlighting the heterogeneity of families in socially disadvantaged educational contexts. Nevertheless, parents reported relatively high levels of acceptance, which is consistent with research identifying supportive family relationships as important resources for children's adaptation (Rohner, 2005; Alfaro-Vásquez et al., 2022). At the school level, teachers reported predominantly positive beliefs about students' abilities, which may represent a supportive characteristic of the educational environment (Azpiazu et al., 2025; García-Martínez et al., 2022).

Overall, these results are consistent with an ecological perspective in which resources at the individual, family, and school levels can collectively contribute to positive adaptation (Masten, 2001; Lavery et al., 2010). However, this study does not demonstrate their direct effects on resilience. Future research should examine these relationships longitudinally using more robust measures of resilience.

3.1 Implications for educational practice

The findings suggest several practical approaches for supporting students in socially disadvantaged educational contexts. Schools should promote active, support-oriented

coping strategies through social and emotional learning activities focused on problem-solving, emotion regulation, and seeking help. Special attention should also be given to strengthening supportive relationships and students' access to social support within the school environment.

At the family level, schools should promote positive communication and collaboration with parents and provide accessible opportunities for parental support and education. Such activities can help strengthen supportive family relationships and parental involvement in their children's development.

At the school level, teacher training and professional development should foster positive beliefs about students' abilities, inclusive pedagogy, and approaches that respond to students' diverse needs. More broadly, schools should create an environment based on trust, safety, supportive relationships, and collaboration among students, teachers, and families.

4 Study limitations and future research

Several limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the results. First, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not allow for causal conclusions and only enables the identification of associations between the variables under study. Future longitudinal studies are needed to examine how individual-, family-, and school-related resources interact and how they evolve over time. Second, the CD-RISC 10 questionnaire exhibited very low internal consistency in this sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.222$), which significantly limits the interpretation of the results regarding resilience. Lower internal consistency was also observed for the parental and teacher support subscales in the CASSS questionnaire. Future research should therefore utilize or validate measurement instruments with better psychometric properties in a specific cultural and educational context.

Third, the study was based on a non-probability sample of respondents participating in the REFRESH project and should not be considered representative of students, parents, and teachers in the Moravian-Silesian Region or in the Czech Republic. In addition, the number of valid cases varied across individual measurements due to missing or incomplete responses, which may have affected statistical power. Finally, several individual-, family-, and school-related factors were examined primarily descriptively and were not directly tested in relation to resilience. Future studies should therefore employ longitudinal and multivariate research designs to examine how these resources interact and contribute to students' adaptation in socially disadvantaged educational contexts.

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Contacts:
Mgr. Veronika Pavlíková
ORCID 0009-0000-2331-852X
E-mail: veronika.pavlikova@osu.cz
Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava
Fráni Šrámka 3, 709 00 Ostrava
Czech Republic

doc. Mgr. Štefan Chudý, Ph.D., MBA
ORCID 0000-0002-5072-8345
E-mail: stefan.chudy@osu.cz
Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava
Fráni Šrámka 3, 709 00 Ostrava
Czech Republic

Mgr. Veronika Pavlíková is a doctoral student of study programme Education at the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy at the University of Ostrava. She works at the Department of Social Pedagogy, where she is involved in several research projects and teaching activities.

doc. Mgr. Štefan Chudý, Ph.D., is the head of the Department of Special Education, the department coordinator for research and development, project activities, and departmental development, as well as the program director and academic advisor for the Social Pedagogy degree program at the University of Ostrava. His fields of expertise are social pedagogy and research methodology. He guarantees various academic subjects and functions as an advisor to doctoral students.