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Disruptive behavior displayed by female students

Teachers' skillful coping of disruptive behavior as it appears among female students in the classroom

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Summary

Background

My master thesis is written as part of my participation in the research project: “Teachers’ Skillful Coping with Disruptive Behavior in Norwegian and American Classrooms.” The research project is led by Professor Liv Duesund. The research group conducts research in both Norway and the United States, where the focus is on researching how teachers cope with disruptive behavior in the classroom context. My study addresses and examines how teachers in the United States cope with disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom context.

Research question

My study addresses the following research question:

How do teachers reflect on their coping skills towards disruptive behavior when experiencing this among female students?

Methodology

My study is based on qualitative research methodology. I conducted semi-structured interviews with three teachers in the United States, one teacher from a public Middle School and two teachers from the same public High School. Because my study is part of the research project: “Teachers’ Skillful Coping with Disruptive Behavior in Norwegian and American Classrooms”, I applied an interview guide (Appendix 3) provided by the research project, with the possibility to add interview questions. I created and added three interview questions, where the focus was specifically on teachers’ skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students. The interviews were aimed at acquiring the lived, subjective experiences three teachers have regarding disruptive behavior in the classroom. The interviews lasted from 26 minutes to 46 minutes.

Result

My findings indicate that three teachers in Middle School and High School in the United States, seem to experience disruptive behavior among female students during class, to various extent. All three teachers described female students as potential contributors to disruptive behavior in some way. The three teachers described, to different extent, that female students display disruptive behavior when they: use phones during class, display disruptive talking, are not paying attention during class, come to class late, leave the classroom, and when they seem to be involved in conflicts, both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, the teachers tended, to varying degrees, to describe female students` disruptive behavior as a manifestation of something else going on in the female students` lives.

My findings indicate that the three teachers seem to cope with disruptive behavior displayed by female students, by acknowledging female students` expression of disruptive behavior in the classroom. Examples described by the teachers, indicating that they acknowledge female students` disruptive behaviors, are when they to different extent: proactively address female students` disruptive behavior, by trying to understand what situations female students` find themselves in, both inside and outside the classroom context, that might be causing disruption, point out and redirect female students` disruptive behavior both directly and indirectly, offer choices related to the disruptive behavior, try to collaborate with female students, and make deals about the schoolwork that needs to be done. Another argument is that teacher 2 and 3 seem to cope with female students` disruptive behavior, by expanding their acknowledgment of female students` disruptive behavior to involve acknowledgment of the social relations female students seem to be invested in and part of.

My findings indicate that all three teachers seem to be aware of their coping skills, meaning they reflected on what may appear to be a possible connection between how and why they cope with the disruptive behavior among female students in the ways they do. Based on the reflections teacher 2 and 3 provided, my findings indicate that teacher 2 and 3 seem to sometimes cope with disruptive behavior among female students in a gender-specific way. Teacher 1 mostly referred to *students* in general when he described his reflections. This may be in line with what teacher 1 described regarding that he perceives that coping skills towards disruptive behavior among all students in the class are universal. Teacher 1 also described what seems to indicate that one as a teacher should be a little careful about not doing gender stereotyping, as well as acknowledge that behind students` disruptive behavior there might be gender-related differences, reasons and explanations to the behavior, that teachers do not always know of.

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Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background and theme.....	1
1.2 Previous research and purpose.....	2
1.3 Research question.....	4
1.4 Delimitations.....	4
1.5 Disposition.....	5
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	6
2.1 What is disruptive behavior?.....	6
2.1.1 PISA 2018.....	8
2.2 Who are the female students, when it comes to disruptive behavior?	8
2.2.1 Preschool/Early Elementary School	8
2.2.2 Middle School/High School	10
2.3 The teacher in the classroom.....	12
3. METHODOLOGY	15
3.1 Research design.....	15
3.1.1 Qualitative research	15
3.1.2 Research method: Qualitative interview	16
3.2 Research process.....	17
3.2.1 Participants: who am I studying?.....	17
3.2.2 Data collection	19
3.2.3 Transcription of interviews.....	20
3.2.4 Analysis	21
3.3 Validity, reliability and generalizability.....	25
3.3.1 Validity	25
3.3.2 Reliability	28
3.3.3 Generalizability	30
3.4 Ethical considerations.....	31

4. DISCUSSING MY FINDINGS	33
4.1 Who are the female students when it comes to disruptive behavior?	34
4.1.1 Experiences with disruptive behavior among female students.....	34
4.1.2 What types of disruptive behaviors do the female students display?	36
4.1.3 Explanations to female students` disruptive behavior.....	38
4.2 How teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students during class.....	44
4.2.1 Acknowledging the disruptive behavior displayed by female students	44
4.2.2 Invested in social relations	52
4.3 Why teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students the ways they do..	57
4.3.1 Universal and gender-specific coping skills	57
5. SUMMARY	64
6. LIMITATIONS, POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH	66
7. FINAL REFLECTIONS	68
8. RESOURCES AND LITERATURE	69
9. APPENDIX	73

Number of words: 27 992

Tables

Table 1: **17-18**

Presentation of my sample and their characteristics. Teacher 2 and 3 work at the same High School

Table 2: **24**

Example of one category card I created in the analysis process

1. Introduction

Ever since I worked as an assistant at a summer camp, I will never forget a 12-year-old girl who displayed a behavior both other children, teachers and myself perceived as disruptive. The other teachers were giving her up, but I decided to spend extra time with her and to the best of my ability try to guide her. It was challenging to cope with her behavior, as her behavior caused disruption and noise, she did not do what she was expected to do and ended up in conflicts with peers. At times, the girl's disruptive behavior seemed to become less disruptive and improve somewhat, which seemed promising and encouraging. However, her disruptive behavior persisted. Based on the experience I had with this girl, I left the camp at the end of the summer, knowing that I need more knowledge to cope with disruptive behavior among girls. Although this is almost four years ago, I still think about the girl and wonder: what could I have done differently to cope with her disruptive behavior? Which coping skills are presented by other teachers as part of their toolbox towards disruptive behavior among female students? I need more knowledge on skillful coping of disruptive behavior among girls.

In the sections to come, I will present the conceptual framework, including the background and theme underlying my study. Further, a section providing an overview of previous research and the purpose of my study are presented. Followed by the presentation of my research question and the delimitations of my thesis and study. Lastly, I present an outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background and theme

I was introduced to the research project: "Teachers' Skillful Coping with Disruptive Behavior in Norwegian and American Classrooms", led by Professor Liv Duesund in April 2019. Due to my interest in behavior in general and a desire to explore disruptive behavior among female students in more detail, I happily signed up to be part of the research project. The research project conducts research in both Norway and the United States, where the focus is on researching and examining how teachers cope with disruptive behavior in the classroom context, based on the teachers' experiences.

I have always had an interest in disruptive behavior displayed by girls. I have met more male students than female students with disruptive behavior in schools and I often feel, based on my own experiences in general, that male students are being represented in a larger extent

within disruptive behaviors. My perception is that female students more often are expected to act calm in a non-disruptive way. In their research, Duesund and Ødegård (2018a) report that there seems to be differences between student genders, in the way students perceive disruptive behavior (pp.148). The two researchers discuss the possibility that female students, more than male students, are concerned about maintaining what is described as good behavior (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.148). Related to this, it seems that disruptive behavior could be a more sensitive issue for female students, and therefore could imply a higher degree of acceptance of disruptive behavior in male students (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.148). I do not aim to find out whether female students are more or less disruptive than male students, but I did explore among the two genders where it fell naturally, because of how teachers in my sample reflected on differences in disruptive behavior among student gender. I have a desire to learn more about disruptive behavior among female students, and after reading different literature, I wanted to examine how teachers reflect on female students` disruptive behavior in the classroom context. What perceptions and experiences do my sample of teachers have regarding female students` expression of disruptive behavior? Do disruptive behaviors displayed among female students lead to specific coping skills from teachers? If not, why? If yes, which? Are teachers aware of their coping skills towards female students and why they use the coping skills they do? These questions asked, are what inspired my research and challenge further engagement in exploring teachers` skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students.

1.2 Previous research and purpose

When I searched among some of the literature on disruptive behavior, I found that research has documented that behavior problems in the classroom are stress factors experienced by teachers (Greene, 2009, pp.ix). It is reported that about 2/3 of the students in examined American classrooms have experienced disruptive behavior in the classroom to a great extent. Besides, findings report that corrections from teachers have a limited effect when it comes to ending disruptive behavior, sometimes because disruptive behavior could spread among peers inside classrooms (Duesund, 2017, pp.157,158). When previous research indicates that schools today have a great challenge in coping with the phenomenon of disruptive behavior, it seems important to address the complexity of the behavior and thus try to understand how teachers might cope with the disruptive behavior in the classroom.

The school climate in classrooms is important, as most recently seen in the latest PISA 2018 assessment, because the school climate influences the learning environment, social and emotional environment in schools (Schleicher 2019, pp.47). It is being pointed out that some teachers might be less and insufficiently prepared to cope with the classroom environment and what is reported as difficult students (Schleicher 2019, pp.48). This could indicate that teachers might lack the skills for coping and preventing disruptive behavior inside the classroom environment. PISA 2018 suggests that there is a need for more than just rules to manage classroom environments and cope with behavior, indicating that teachers need to build positive relationships with students, give students support and being role models to promote adequate behavior (Schleicher 2019, pp.48). Teachers` daily professional practice involves and consists of many different aspects, where managing disruptive behavior is just one part of the teachers` complex profession. In order to increase the focus on classroom management, there is a need for support and guidance from educational development programs, because their support might strengthen teachers` classroom management tools and skillful coping within the classroom context (Schleicher 2019, pp.48). This could be related to what Duesund and Ødegård (2018a) point out when they report that: “The focus on disruptive behavior in teacher training is scarce, and the Education Act and curriculums in Norway and the US barely mention disruptive behavior at all (pp.151).

The purpose of conducting my research has been to examine teachers` reflections on how they cope with disruptive behavior among female students. My participation in the research project, presented above, gave me a unique opportunity to expand my knowledge and desire to understand how and why teachers choose to cope with the disruptive behavior among female students in the ways they do. The justification for focusing my research on female students, is that disruptive behavior in girls have been found to appear and increase in adolescence: Kroneman, Loeber, Hipwell and Koot (2009) are addressing and suggesting in their research, that interventions and approaches toward girls` disruptive behavior, should be developed based on specific characteristics of girls` disruptive behavior (pp.267,268). Although findings from Kroneman et al. (2009) could be perceived as based on more severe cases of disruptive behaviors, such as aggressive behavior, my aim has been to examine less severe forms of disruptive behaviors, that all students potentially could display within the classroom context, such as refusing to carry out instructions from teachers. It might be important to research on female students` off-task, disruptive behavior in class and teachers` skillful coping of disruptive behaviors among female students, because less severe disruptive

behaviors of different types, could lead to the development of more severe disruptive behaviors, as girls transition from childhood to adolescence (Kroneman et al., 2009, pp.267,268).

1.3 Research question

My study addresses the following research question:

How do teachers reflect on their coping skills towards disruptive behavior when experiencing this among female students?

The intention of the research question I created, is that I aim to examine how three teachers reflect on their coping skills towards disruptive behavior among female students. I believe that how teachers experience and perceive female students` disruptive behavior, could have an impact on teachers` reflections regarding their skillful coping towards disruptive behavior, when experiencing this among female students. I also believe experiences and perceptions might influence why teachers cope with the disruptive behavior of female students in the ways they do in the classroom.

1.4 Delimitations

The following study took place in the United States, with a sample of three American teachers working within a social setting at either a public Middle School or a public High School. My aim was not to explain the development of disruptive behavior in female students, nor to find causes for female students` disruptive behavior. Rather the purpose was to examine teachers` reflections on skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students. I did not aim to compare differences between male students and female students in terms of disruptive behavior, but still, it became natural to explore differences between student genders where teachers themselves noted something explicitly. This allowed me to report some of the potential differences in disruptive behavior among genders and the coping skills teachers themselves use towards disruptive behavior among male students and/or female students. My selection of interviewed teachers is not a well-balanced field in terms of teacher gender, as I interviewed two male and one female teacher. I aim to explore differences and similarities in

teachers` experiences of skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students, but I do not explore differences in teachers` gender-related coping skills.

1.5 Disposition

My master thesis consists of seven chapters. As the conceptual framework is already presented in chapter one, I will continue in chapter two with a presentation of key aspects underlying my theoretical framework. I begin by presenting the definition of disruptive behavior the way I have used it, before I briefly present some results and aspects from the PISA 2018 assessment, that I believe is valuable and informative for my thesis. Then, based on previous research, I wish to present some aspects regarding who the female students in the classroom regarding behavior are, in addition, to present selected elements constituting the role teachers possess in classrooms related to disruptive behavior. In chapter three, I outline the methodological process of my study. I present my research design, including aspects of qualitative research and semi-structured interviews as my research method. Then, I present my research process, including my participants, data collection, data transcription and my analysis process. After this, I describe the elements I have considered related to the validity and reliability of my study. Chapter three also includes the question of generalizability and the ethical considerations I have taken into account. In chapter four, I present my findings as I discuss them. Based on experiences from three teachers, I aim to present and discuss how three teachers reflect on their coping skills towards disruptive behavior when experiencing this among female students. The fifth chapter includes a summary, while in the sixth chapter I discuss the limitations and possible implications of my study, as well as suggestions for what could be addressed in future research. In chapter seven, I present my final reflections.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I will present my theoretical framework. The theoretical framework chosen is what I believe represent relevant aspects for understanding my analysis of skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students, based on experiences from three teachers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.64). Along with presenting selected elements of disruptive behavior as a phenomenon, I draw on relevant results from the newest PISA 2018 assessment. Previous research plays a role in my theoretical framework, as I describe the picture presented of female students regarding disruptive behavior, in the classroom from preschool/early Elementary School to Middle School/High School. Because reflections from teachers are the essence of this study, I present previous research documenting who the teacher in the classroom is regarding disruptive behavior.

2.1 What is disruptive behavior?

Disruptive behavior as an overarching “umbrella” term, often involves behavior on a continuum from minor to severe disruptive behaviors, including differences in both frequency, severity and intensity. In the event of getting the most precise picture when examining teachers` skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students in the class, it is important to emphasize the term “disruptive behavior” and its content, because there are different definitions of disruptive behavior. Because my study is part of the research project: “Teachers` Skillful Coping with Disruptive Behavior in Norwegian and American Classrooms”, I perceive it as appropriate to use the definition of disruptive behavior, developed in the earlier stages of the research team. The definition of disruptive behavior as I will use it, as being part of the research project, focuses on off-task, disruptive behaviors in the classroom that potentially all students could display, for instance, disruptive talking, as well as behavior that is perceived as disruptive behavior from the teachers` perspective. Whether the off-task behavior in class is related to more severe forms of disruptive behavior outside the school context, is not the focus of this study. The need to distinguish between different definitions of disruptive behavior is something I believe is important, as it probably has an impact on the coping skills teachers use. I have used the following definition of disruptive behavior in my study:

“Any behavior that is perceived as sufficiently off-task in the classroom so as to distract the teachers and/or class-peers from learning activities” (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.141).

Disruptive behavior, as presented above, affects and inhibits learning and teaching activities inside the classroom, and is reported to be one category of disruptive behavior in schools with high frequency (Ogden, 2015, pp.14,15), along with being behavior that is of great challenge to teachers in their role as teachers in schools (Greene, 2009, pp.ix; Befring & Duesund, 2012, pp.456). With the definition above presented to some students aged 15-17 years old, in Norway and the United States, students were asked to share how often they experienced being disturbed in the classroom the previous week. The findings, regarding the occurrence, documented that American students report a higher incidence of disruptive behavior than Norwegian students, nearly two-thirds of American students compared to about one-half of students in Norway (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.148). The same research also indicates that American female students more than American male students report to have been disturbed in the classroom. The American female students, compared to American male students, seem to report higher levels of disruptive behavior in class, which could indicate that female students are more aware of disruptive behavior, perhaps more sensitive towards it (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.148). How disruptive behavior is perceived among the 15-17-year-old students is interesting. Despite the higher prevalence of disruptive behavior in the classroom reported by American students, reports from American students might indicate that American students have higher levels of tolerance towards disruptive behavior, as they seem to perceive disruptive behavior to be: “somewhat” disturbing. Compared to reports from Norwegian students who seem to perceive disruptive behavior in class as more disturbing (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.138,145). Empirical research has documented what disruptive behavior most salient in some American and Norwegian Middle School/High School classrooms, consists of. The typical and most frequently documented off-task behaviors, which interferes with teaching and learning, was identified as students: 1) talking out of turn, not subject related; 2) talking out of turn, subject-related; 3) refusing to carry out instructions from the teacher; 4) interfering with equipment of others, and 5) wandering around in the classroom (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.139). Glock (2016) identified that students who were talking out of turn were perceived, by some preservice teachers, as needing intervention because it causes disruption (pp.106).

2.1.1 PISA 2018

PISA stands for the Program for International Student Assessment, and it is the assessment of 15-year-old students around the world and their school situation (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019, pp.30). The disciplinary climate in school environments is what I will draw from the newest PISA assessment from 2018. PISA 2018 describes and defines disciplinary climate as follows: “[...] *the disciplinary climate is measured by the extent to which students miss learning opportunities due to disruptive behavior in the classroom*” (OECD, 2019, pp.66). From the definition, disruptive behavior seems to be an important factor related to the disciplinary climate in schools. The definition of disruptive behavior underlying my study, presented in the previous section, seems to have similarities with the definition of disciplinary climate presented by PISA 2018, indicating how disruptive behavior and disciplinary climate seem to have implications on the school environment and learning opportunities. PISA 2018 report that on average across OECD countries, disorder and noise including students not listening when the teacher speaks, occurred in most lessons, sometimes every lesson, reported by almost one in three students (OECD, 2019, pp.66). Compared to findings presented by Duesund and Ødegård (2018a), who more specifically examined some students 15-17 years old in the United States and Norway, found that disturbance took place one or more times every day during the last week, for the majority of students examined (pp.138,146). Through my thesis, I will include elements from the 2018 PISA assessment where it is relevant.

2.2 Who are the female students, when it comes to disruptive behavior?

2.2.1 Preschool/Early Elementary School

To try to understand what role female students display in an ordinary American Middle School/High School classroom when it comes to disruptive behavior, it could be illuminating to look at gender-related stereotypical behavior in female students, as research presents it from the preschool-age/early Elementary School-age. Most children are said to understand gender roles by the age of five or six, when becoming part of the school system. The process of understanding gender roles, is a process that often further develops through the hidden

curriculum, meaning everything children learn in school outside the official curriculum (Silverman & Ennis, 2003, pp.76-77). Despite the young age, this is a time in children's life where knowledge about how one should behave as a boy or as a girl, and what expectations adults are holding against your gendered behavior, seem to be present. Based on her research, Odenbring (2014) found that girls in preschool were placed near noisy boys to maintain order and reduce disruptive behavior. Girls are being given the role of the "silence keeper", knowing they need to or should help teachers maintain silence among the boys (pp.350-351). It also seems like the child's age plays a role within gender in preschool, as Hellman (2010) found a pattern where preschool teachers interacted with children in gender-specific ways, meaning older girls were expected to be "big girls" in, for instance, their expression of behavior (pp.231,232). Similar research conducted highlights girls' role and behavior, including the level of readiness for school, meaning girls' ability to have their equipment for school with them and being on time when expected someplace: "ideal (pre) schoolgirl" (Lappalainen, 2008, pp.123). This could suggest that some girls know what kind of behavior is expected and valued, which leads some girls to identify with the upcoming school system. Maybe others than the girls themselves, identify girls with the upcoming school system as well. Girls in their early years of school are reported by teachers as being more socially competent and less disruptive than boys (Fossum, Mørch, Handegård & Drugli, 2007, pp.380). Also, problem behavior among girls is at a lower level compared to boys in childhood, which may explain why in elementary school, the majority of girls seem to do relatively good (Kroneman et al., 2009, pp.265). The statement that female students and their behavior is better integrated in school, or the opposite way, the school is better suited for the female students (Damsgaard, 2003, pp.27) is regularly discussed. It is being indicated that female students do better in school and that behavior, where it is expedient to be quiet and pay attention, plays an important role here. The main trend and big picture imply these stereotypical views on female students' role in school, but there will always be exceptions (Damsgaard, 2003, pp.27-28). Because "gender coordinates social relations through shared cultural beliefs about presumed differences" in the behavior of males and females (Ridgeway, 2011, pp.29,54), it could be that female students' behavior is expected to be a certain way on one hand, whereas male students, on the other hand, could be expected to perform another type of behavior. These expectations towards behavior are said to be culturally and socially created association frames and works as a coordinating device almost automatically (Ridgeway, 2011, pp.14,25). Odenbring (2014) report how teachers in her study mainly described girls in preschool as a homogenous group, saying it is more variation, in the case of

being individuals, among the boys. On the other hand, Odenbring (2014) finds this as contradicting, because girls are being, by preschool teachers, regulated into groups with boys most of the time, limiting girls` possibilities to create homogeneous groups of girls for instance when playing (pp.352-353). Giving boys more opportunities to decide groups to play with on their own and placing girls where there is needed among noisy boys, could be illustrating how some preschool teachers view girls and their behavior.

Hellman (2010) writes how society has created the assumption of boys as a gender type which is supposed to be seen, noticed, and heard in a larger extent than girls (pp.228). Girls in preschool are at risk of being invisible (Hellman, 2010, pp.228), and one could ask if this is something that is being transferred into the school. The role girls are expected to pursue might be better illustrated by the fact that so-called passive boys, without the typical boy-stereotype behavior, in research have been identified as being invisible and sometimes taunted for being girly in preschool (Hellman, 2010, pp.228,231). As an illustration, Risman (2017) conducted interviews with several millennials about their gender. One interview with a girl named Lucy illustrates how expected gender socialization regarding behavior could affect young people. Lucy explains how she, during her childhood, broke rules based on gender expectations which were made to her. She did not want to be a boy, but neither treated differently because she is a girl. She said that restricting her to certain behavior because of her gender, made her want to be even more independent (pp.218). Based on the picture of girls` behavior in preschool/early Elementary School, it could seem like some teachers have certain expectations for girls and their behavior early on.

2.2.2 Middle School/High School

Both male students and female students are expected to fulfill their role as students, with expectations related to work performance and proper behavior. These are expectations schools expect students to encounter, but which probably not always are desirable and/or easy to fulfill among students. Holm (2010) has compared data from Swedish Secondary School students` perceptions of gender and behavior in school, from the years 1974, 1992 and 2005. Holm (2010) examined what kind of stability and change is seen in how students perceive gender aspects between the three years compared. I will make use of her findings related to students` perceptions about the behavior of female students inside the classroom. "As a rough measure" (pp.263), to use Holms (2010) own words, the overall picture is pointing towards

stability in students' perceptions of female students as: "responsible for class arrangements, helping others, being quiet" (pp.264), whereas male students are the disruptive ones receiving more frequent reprimands from the teacher than female students. Holms (2010) research on stability could be related to gendered patterns in behavior, which I emphasized earlier about the tendencies of girls in preschool, who were reported to help teachers to keep order. Still, some changes are seen between the years compared by Holm (2010), indicating that the stability meets resistance. In 2005, female students as a group are perceived less silent, taking up larger influential and visible space in the classroom, by raising their voice more often in the classroom, and getting reprimands from the teacher, than the earlier years compared (Holm, 2010, pp.264). This might imply that teachers might need different approaches to female students' disruptive behavior than previous years because behavior among female students inside classrooms could be changing and therefore challenging the perceptions of female students' behavior. This might be related to Risman (2017) when she uses the term *twenty-first century-American individual*. She writes that this term implies individualism and thoughts about free choice, held by both women and men (pp.218). The possible need for autonomy could be linked to what Ogden (2015) is pointing out, when he says that students' disruptive behavior in schools, probably is a reaction to the environment students are part of (pp.14). Female students and male students spend considerable time together in a classroom, which leads to influence from both genders, both on adequate and disruptive behaviors (Halpern, Eliot, Bigler, Fabes, Hanish, Hyde (...) Martin, 2011, pp.1707).

With female students' disruptive behavior in Middle School and High School as the focus of my study, research documents that early adolescence is a period in girls' lives when girls relate to their peer relations. When girls tend to be more oriented to interpersonal relations than boys, this means girls set interpersonal relations higher including loyalty and social approval, in addition to being more sensitive to rejection and influence of others (Kroneman et al., 2009, pp.266,268). Peer relations might be one aspect teachers need to be aware of as part of their coping skills related to female students' disruptive behavior, which I will return to in my discussion chapter. Adolescence is a time when disruptive behavior in girls potentially develops and increases (Kroneman et al., 2009, pp.267).

2.3 The teacher in the classroom

The role of being a teacher contains many elements, which means I will present selected aspects within teachers` profession regarding disruptive behavior in the classroom. Teachers cope with disruptive behavior both as part of a school system and as individual teachers within the classroom context. The latter is the focus of my study, meaning teachers in my sample reflected on their skillful coping within the classroom context. Teachers in general possess different levels of tolerance and resources when coping with challenging behavior within the classroom (Hoff & DuPaul, 1998, pp.not specified).

Students have reported that they experience disruptive behavior in schools (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a). Teachers are also experiencing disruptive, off task-related behavior within the classroom on a large scale, reported by an American study conducted in 2012 by Harrison, Vannest, Davis and Reynolds. Bear (1998) indicates how teachers have been experiencing disruptive behavior within classrooms, and still are concerned regarding disruptive behavior in schools (pp.not specified). Other research has reported findings indicating that American teachers are interfering with disruptive behavior to a larger extent than Norwegian teachers. The findings indicate that 41,6% of American students, against 16,6% of Norwegian students, report that their teacher actively intervenes to stop students when they disrupt during class, by asking students directly if they can be quiet (Duesund, 2017, pp.157). Even though students are reporting that teachers actively try to influence the disruptive behavior, to various extent, it still seems like the coping skills teachers use towards disruptive behavior, have limited value related to ending the disruptive behavior (Duesund, 2017, pp.157).

Teachers have a big and important role inside the classroom. Teachers serve as guides, protectors and role models to students, also regarding behavior (Matsumura, Slater & Crosson, 2008, pp.310). Nash, Schlösser and Scarr (2016) documents that teachers` ability as well as willingness to handle disruptive behavior, is linked to relationships formed between the teacher and the students in the classroom (pp.167). How teachers behave inside the classroom could be affecting the learning environment and the degree of disruptive behavior in class, for instance, related to what is reported about how male students dominate in the classroom and are getting more attention from the teachers than female students do (Holm, 2010, pp.257). A study from 1973 also found similar indications, in addition to documenting how female students in their research received teacher attention when being close to the teacher. They found that teachers, all women and working in preschools in this particular

sample, acted differently towards students` behavior based on the student gender. One of the researchers` findings revolve around responses from teachers towards aggressive behavior: Teachers were less likely to respond when the aggressive behavior came from female students. Through their examination, they also found that male students` behavior received more reprimands and loud instructions from teachers (Serbin, O`Leary, Kent and Tonick, 1973, pp.796,802). This could be indicating that some teachers might consider female students as more independent, self-driven and in need of less help to monitor their behavior, unlike male students. Etaugh and Harlow (1975) reported that male students got more negative responses from both male and female teachers, in the sense that they were more scolded on (pp.163). This could be related to what is said about teachers having expectations towards behavior based on the student gender (Holm, 2010, pp.258), suggesting that gendered expectations are held towards behavior, in terms of defining behavior based on gender. Blaise (2005) indicates how it might be that classroom interactions between teachers and students, are influenced by teachers expecting female students to behave well. This suggests how teachers could be playing an influential role in producing and possibly maintaining gender stereotypes and norms concerning behavior (pp.23).

What do teachers do to reduce disruptive behavior? Duesund and Ødegård (2018b) documents two types of teacher- reactions used most frequently towards disruptive behavior, based on reports from some students aged 15-17 years old in the United States and Norway. Their research documents that the two dominating coping reactions from teachers, with the intent to reduce disruptive behavior among male students and female students in school, are by students reported as: “ask them to be quiet” and “raise their voice and tell them to be quiet” (pp.417). Although these two coping reactions from teachers seem to be frequently used, the effect and influence students attribute to teachers` two coping reactions vary. I choose to focus on selected percentages of how some American female students, 15-17 years old, perceive teachers` two dominating teacher-reactions related to disruptive behavior, towards both genders in the classroom. When teachers ask students to be quiet, 1,6% of American female students reported students becoming more disruptive. 13,8% of female students reported nothing happens, while 26,8% of female students reported that students become quiet. On the other side, teachers` raising their voices and telling disruptive students to be quiet: 3,4 % of American female students reported that students become more disruptive, while 8% of female students reported nothing happens. 27,3% of female students reported that students get quiet (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018b, pp.417). Both asking and telling students to

be quiet is reported by the students as influential, when it comes to reducing disruptive behavior to “less disruptive” (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018b, pp.417). Still, as stated earlier and seen from the numbers presented above, the reactions from teachers do not appear to be enough to stop disruptive behavior inside the classroom. The two coping reactions presented, seem to be coping skills according to what is documented to be the most dominant disruptive behavior displayed inside the classroom: “talking out of turn, not subject-related”, as described earlier (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.139). This might indicate that asking and telling students to be quiet, for instance, to stop talking, might be challenging for teachers when trying to cope with disruptive behavior inside the classroom. Duesund and Ødegård (2018b) indicate that reactions towards disruptive behavior, for instance, based on earlier experience, may not always be part of the teachers` toolbox of coping skills and strategies, ready to be applied in situations with disruptive behavior. In probably many situations inside the classroom, disruptive behavior will arise unannounced or when the teacher is least prepared for it (pp.411). The two researchers define reactions from teachers towards disruptive behavior as follows: “*Any explicit reaction directed towards disruptive behavior when it occurs during class*” (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018b, pp.411).

Regarding disruptive behavior in the classroom as well as teachers` expectations of classroom behavior, I ask: out of the disruptive behavior in the classrooms, what do teachers perceive as disruptive behavior caused by female students? Based on their perceptions and experiences of female students` disruption, how do teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students, and why do teachers cope with the disruptive behavior among female students in the ways they do? My study focuses on disruptive behavior as it appears among female students, but how it is reflected on and coped with by teachers in their daily work as teachers in classrooms. The aim is to examine more closely the coping skills teachers use to cope with disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, I will be documenting my methodological approach. The aim is to provide the reader with both how and why I conducted my research in the ways that I did. My methodological choices were made in collaboration with the research project I am part of: “Teachers` Skillful Coping with Disruptive Behavior in Norwegian and American Classrooms.” I interviewed three teachers in the United States, one from Middle School and two from High School. The aim has been to examine how three teachers reflect on their coping skills towards disruptive behavior when experiencing this among female students.

3.1 Research design

3.1.1 Qualitative research

The research anchoring in this study is based on phenomenology. The justification for this is that phenomenology is the approach that framed my research purpose and research question. Using a phenomenological approach means I aim to seek the teachers` subjective lived experiences on how they understand the phenomenon of *disruptive behavior* in their profession as teachers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.45). The phenomenological qualitative study allowed my participants to reflect on and describe the essence of the coping skills they use towards disruptive behavior among female students, as it is experienced from their perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.64; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.45).

Being part of the research project means that it was decided in advance that I would conduct my study based on qualitative research. The features of qualitative research is characterized by the collection of data in natural settings, focus on learning the meaning expressed by participants and doing research typically inductively by discovering patterns from the bottom up, building data and information into themes and categories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.181,182). The ability to illuminate local processes as well as examine and understand a phenomenon in its context, is one of the strengths associated with qualitative research. Also, qualitative research is suitable for in-depth insight with a few participants (Maxwell, 2013, pp.99). Whereas quantitative research, the other type of research design often used, is more

suitable for examining data through statistical measurement of a phenomenon, for instance through experiments with bigger samples (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.147).

3.1.2 Research method: Qualitative interview

I applied semi-structured interviews as my research method and approach for data collection. The justification for applying semi-structured interviews is related to requirements in the research project I am part of. I used semi-structured interviews as a tool to examine teachers' reflections on skillful coping with disruptive behavior among female students. Semi-structured interviews are suitable when the aim is to gain insights into thoughts, reflections and experiences the participants hold. Semi-structured interviews as a technique for generating data, provides a framework for the conversations by using an interview guide. The interview guide provides structure to the conversations and includes predetermined themes and questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.46). Still, the interview guide, within semi-structured interviews, provides opportunities to add emerging questions in addition to the questions determined in advance. This provides an opportunity for the researcher to ask questions and reflect on aspects the interview guide does not cover, as well to explore emergent and interesting elements provided by the participants during the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.46; Maxwell, 2013, pp.88).

I conducted one pilot interview before I had my first interview with a teacher. Conducting a pilot interview allowed me to practice my interview guide and hear the interview questions out loud. When I heard the answers my practice-participant gave me, it provided me with experience regarding where it would be appropriate to ask follow-up questions and/or elaborate if there were any confusion in how I asked the interview questions. Since I was using a recorder, the pilot interview made it possible to test the equipment in order to get the best sound as possible on the recordings. I tested the sound on the recorder, in addition to different distances between me, the participant, and the recorder. I also got the opportunity to double-check that the recorder would record for maximum 45 minutes without technical problems.

3.2 Research process

3.2.1 Participants: who am I studying?

The selection of teachers as my source, were recruited through the research project I am part of. The recruitment of teachers was made through purposeful sampling (Maxwell, 2013, pp.97). This means that the teachers were not chosen randomly, rather recruited based on the criterion that they teach at either a public Middle School or a public High School in the United States. The teachers were *not* recruited based on whether they experience or not experience disruptive behavior among specifically female students in their classroom, as my study examines. Instead, teachers were recruited through an invitation to participate in a research project, where the purpose is to examine how teachers cope with disruptive behavior when it occurs in class. In total, I ended up with three teachers drawn from a total pool of nine teachers in the United States, that agreed to be interviewed. The other six teachers in the total pool were participants to other master`s students conducting research on other topics within disruptive behavior, in the same research project as me, in the United States. I contacted the two males and one female teacher myself and scheduled an interview with each of them individually.

Teacher	Gender	Years of experience	Information about the schools` teachers work at	The role of the teacher in the school
1	Male	More than 20 years	Public Middle School in the United States: sixth to eighth grade	<p>Case manager within the special need`s education staff.</p> <p>Not a classroom teacher but supports students` when they are in the classroom or teach small groups of students.</p> <p>Teacher 1 said that students with special needs are integrated in regular classrooms, meaning he works within different and regular classrooms, with a mixed group of students with different needs, not only students with special needs.</p>
2	Male	More than 20 years	Public High School in the United States: ninth to twelfth grade	<p>Teaches regular, specific classrooms each week, with a mixed group of students.</p> <p>Subject teacher in Literature and English.</p>

3	Female	4 years	Public High School in the United States: ninth to twelfth grade	Teaches regular, specific classrooms each week, with a mixed group of students. Subject teacher in English.
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Table 1: Presentation of my sample and their characteristics. Teacher 2 and 3 work at the same High School.

Since I have examined teachers` experiences and focused on teachers` perspectives, this justifies my choice not to focus on and distinguish between who the students are. Teachers in my sample work within classrooms characterized by a diverse student group, in terms of for instance abilities. Although student characteristics are important elements, and I acknowledge that who the students are might be relevant to know when examining how teachers cope with disruptive behavior, such an approach was beyond the scope of the present study. The teachers did not differentiate between the students in detail, but where they did do that and it may be illuminating for my research question, I will also highlight in the discussion who the students are. Apart from this, the only difference in characteristics I mainly take into account among the students is their student gender. This is because the female students are the focus of the study and I also mention male students where it is relevant to explore.

Still, I want to reflect on how it could be important to take into consideration that one of the teachers, teacher 1, is a special needs teacher. This could indicate that the coping skills he chooses to use, might be influenced by who the students are and the students` needs. It could potentially be of importance to reflect on students with and without special needs, as far behavior goes, because some students` special needs might influence the level of disruptive behavior that some teachers might expect and/or experience. A teacher within special education, for instance, teacher 1 who said that he works with students that display disruptive behaviors, might have different experiences and reflections compared to a teacher who experiences very little of disruptive behavior. However, all three teachers in my sample described that they work within classrooms with mixed groups of students, from minor to major needs, where everyone is potential contributors to disruptive behavior. By clarifying this, I believe I am justifying why I will not differentiate between students with and without special needs, in my discussion about teachers` coping skills towards disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom.

As I acknowledge the school system the teachers work within, my study does not address how the school as an institution cope with disruptive behavior. I aimed to examine coping skills

teachers use as individual teachers towards disruptive behavior within the classrooms they teach in.

3.2.2 Data collection

The research project I am part of, provided me with an interview guide I was required to use. The interview guide is divided into four main topics: 1) questions about how the teachers experience disruptive behavior in school: 2) questions about how the teachers cope with disruptive behavior: 3) questions about the teacher's profession as a teacher: 4) questions about classroom management.

In addition to the questions in the original interview guide, I got the opportunity to add interview questions to the original interview guide. Maxwell (2013) reports that the interview questions not necessarily need to be a translation of the research question, yet the interview questions need to illuminate the research question (pp.100). Considering that the main purpose of my study was to examine teachers' skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students in school, I chose to create three additional interview questions about female students. The interview guide has questions about the whole student body in general, so by adding questions, I had three additional interview questions where the purpose was to examine how teachers reflect on their coping skills when I specifically asked about female students' disruptive behavior. One of the interview questions I created is part of topic number one in the interview guide (question number two in the interview guide), and two of the interview questions I created are part of topic number two in the interview guide (question number seven and eight in the interview guide). The original interview guide, including the three interview questions I created and added, can be viewed in appendix 3.

The context my research was carried out within, was at one public Middle School and one public High School, represented by three teachers, located in a city in the United States. I spent three separate days at the two schools, within two weeks, collecting data by conducting formal interviews. The teachers were given the choice to decide the location and time they wanted to conduct the interviews. All three teachers chose to conduct the interviews at the school they teach at. It was important for me that the teachers I interviewed felt they had the time to meet with me and feeling positive about the interviews. Therefore, I adapted to the teachers, by respecting their busy schedules. The teacher and I, either sat in front of each other

or a bit sideways, with the audio recorder placed between us during the interview. Only the teachers themselves and I were present during the interviews. I used the first part of the interviews to briefly inform the teachers about the research project that my study is part of. With the intent to remove any potential pressure experienced by the teachers due to the interview situation, I emphasized that there are no right or wrong answers to my interview questions, as I am interested in the reflections and experiences the teachers themselves have regarding disruptive behavior. Further, I named a few important points from the letter of consent (Appendix 2), before I gave the teachers the time to read and sign the consent form. The teachers were given the opportunity to ask questions if they had any questions and I also asked the teachers one more time if they were comfortable with me using an audio recorder. Also, I provided the teachers with information about how the audio recordings would be stored and about confidentiality. As a final step, I read the definition of disruptive behavior out loud, with the intention that the teachers would get the opportunity to potentially have the definition fresh in mind, the same definition as presented in the theoretical framework of this thesis. All three teachers answered all the interview questions in the interview guide. During or after the interviews, I asked the teachers if they had anything they wanted to add. The interviews lasted from 26 minutes to 46 minutes.

I did my best to represent a researcher identity where I displayed respect and humbleness towards the teachers and their professional work, by showing that I want to learn from their experiences, not examine the quality of their work as teachers. I believe this was important for me as a researcher to have access to the teachers' reflections and for the teachers to want to share their experiences with me. I perceived that there was a good social and emotional atmosphere during the interviews, where the teachers and I understood each other. The teachers provided me with feedback saying they felt good about the interviews.

3.2.3 Transcription of interviews

When I had conducted my three interviews and had them fresh in mind, I wrote down my thoughts and early interpretations about possible categorizations for my analysis. I uploaded the audio files into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software, where I listened to the interviews and transcribed them. An advantage with the NVivo program was that I could adjust the speed and the volume of the audio files, which I perceive increased the quality of what I heard and noticed from the audio recordings, while transcribing the interviews. To

transcribe means to transform from spoken language to written language (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.204,205). Through transcription, the interview is structured for the analysis to come (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.222). During the transcription of the interviews, I left out names that could identify the teachers, students and places, by marking: “(...)”, in the transcriptions. To make sure I did my best to include everything from the interviews, I conducted a process of several steps with each interview and each transcription: I started with listening to the interviews at a slow speed and transcribed verbatim what I heard. The slow speed on the recordings helped me to pay closer attention to the dynamics between the written language and the spoken language, for instance, the sentence structures (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.211). Further, I listened to the interviews by taking several breaks in the recordings, to think through what I heard and add more elements to my transcriptions. When I had listened to the interviews at a slow speed, I listened to the interviews while I switched between slow speed and normal speed. This allowed me to edit my transcriptions and add aspects to the transcriptions I might have missed. After this, I listened to the interviews without taking breaks, which provided me an indication of the entirety of the interviews. I was early on aware of the differences between the written and the spoken language, and therefore strived to be loyal to the oral statements when I wrote them down (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.204,205). After a few days, I listened to the interviews one more time, to check if I had missed any important aspects presented by the teachers. I learned that for every new round of listening to the interviews, I discovered new elements in the interviews and in the interpretation process. In addition to what the teachers verbally expressed during the interviews, I wrote down some field notes while conducting the interviews. In retrospect, the notes have been helpful when I have analyzed my findings.

When I had the three transcriptions written down, I read through the transcriptions to get an overall understanding of the material. I proceeded to use the program Microsoft Word, where I did my analysis based on the transcriptions.

3.2.4 Analysis

The purpose of the analysis is to examine and develop potential meanings in the interview material, where the researcher presents the phenomenon that is examined with new perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.222). In my case, this means that I analyzed the experiences of three teachers and their reflections about coping skills towards disruptive

behavior among female students. I have used what is called a *content analysis*, as the analysis procedure in my analysis process. The essence of this analysis procedure is about breaking down the transcriptions into categories and themes. To categorize means to collect the data material into groups that consist of content concerning the same theme (Jacobsen, 2005, pp.193). Categorization is used to get a systematic overview of a text material, such as interview transcriptions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.226,228). By assigning units, that consist of content from the interviews, to different categories, it is possible to explore similarities and differences between the content within the categories (Jacobsen, 2005, pp.193). I found this way of structuring and analyzing my data material as the clearest and most systematically organized procedure for me.

Because I use an interview guide, Jacobsen (2005) describes that some categories are already created before data are gathered (pp.194). Therefore, my categorization process began with predetermined, main categories and themes, based on the three additional interview questions I created for the interview guide. An interview study is characterized by multiple levels of analysis, often hierarchically (Jacobsen, 2005, pp.195). To further structure the reflections from the teachers, I proceeded to create subcategories to my predetermined, main categories. I read and considered all the answers that emerged from the questions in the interview guide, from the three interviews, when I developed subcategories. Still, I did not develop subcategories based on all the interview questions in the interview guide, due to my focus and aim of the study. But, within the subcategories, I included the teachers' answers from different parts of the interviews, that I perceived could illuminate my research question. Since my research is based on phenomenology, it is not the nature of phenomenology to have all the categories created before the interviews are conducted. This means that because I aimed to examine lived experiences from three teachers, I needed to be open to the teachers' reflections towards disruptive behavior and not have all the categories for the analysis created before the interviews. That is why my subcategories are developed and based on experiences from three teachers. I used the teachers' reflections and quotes from the interviews, to concretize and define the meanings and interpretations of the main categories I had made (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.205). I did this with the purpose to categorize each main category into more nuanced subcategories, so that it became clearer what the categories entail and what arose from the main categories (Jacobsen, 2005, pp.199). The following is an illustration of parts of my categorization process, including the three main categories:

Who are the female students in the classroom, when it comes to disruptive behavior?

- Experiences with disruptive behavior among female students during class
- What type of disruptive behaviors do the female students display?
- What explanations do the teachers attribute to female students` disruptive behavior?

How teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students during class

- Acknowledgement
- Invested in social relations

Why teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students in the ways they do

- Gender-specific coping skills
- Universal coping skills

The analysis procedure underlying my research, content analysis, supports the use of Microsoft Word. I made category cards in Microsoft Word, where each category card represents categories I had created. This means that when I had created categories, I assigned data from the interviews to category cards (Jacobsen, 2005, pp.197,198). I extracted elements from the interviews and placed them within category cards, that I perceived could be a good fit. Sometimes, the same data material could fit into more than one category card. The categories should not be so general that all of the data material fits, or too narrow so that only small parts of the data material fit the category (Jacobsen, 2005, pp.197). After I have described how selected quotes are written and presented in this thesis, I will illustrate an example of one category card I created: “*experiences with disruptive behavior among female students during class.*”

I use “[...]”, to illustrate where I have excluded repetitive words and elements which points beyond the core of what I aim to illustrate with the selected quotes. I use “...”, to illustrate that these are breaks in teachers` responses, for instance where they took a break to think. Teachers were given a number from 1 to 3 (as presented in table 1, section 3.2.1), where I use “(Teacher 1, 2 or 3)” at the end of each quote in the discussion chapter, to illustrate which one of the teachers I have extracted the quote from. I decided to use *male and female students*

where it was appropriate in my thesis, instead of *boys and girls*, although the teachers and I used *boys and girls* during the interviews. The questions marked in green color, are follow-up questions asked by me.

Category: Experiences with disruptive behavior among female students during class:	
Teacher:	
1	<p>«Ooh... girls just for whatever reason seem to have less disruptive behavior...but, you can have some low levels[...]"</p> <p><i>If you should reflect about the other teachers that are more often in the classroom, would you say that they experience girls as disruptive? "Definitely in general in the school population, we've had girls who can be di...who are just as disruptive."</i></p>
2	<p>"Girls... girls are more "talky" than boys, generally... although it doesn't mean boys can't be "talky" [...] ... girls tend to be more verbal... is an observation that I would make. That's it."</p> <p><i>If you should reflect what other teachers think about especially girls` disruptive behavior. Does something come to your mind? "No."</i></p> <p><u>Later in the interview teacher 2 said:</u></p> <p>"... girls are more disruptive than boys [...] girls [...] are more mature, more observative, more verbal[...] than boys"</p>
3	<p>«... Hmm..... [...] a lot of my girls will come into class late ... and miss some instruction, because they are outside talking about something, some drama, something stupid that happened. Or someone is very upset [...] I have a student who leaves and is very upset and three girls will get up and go to support."</p> <p>"[...] they still miss the instruction, you know, I have a lot of girls that do that (leave the classroom). I don't, I almost never see my boys have that kind of behavior [...]"</p> <p><i>If you should reflect what other teachers think about any potential differences between boys' and girls` behavior? "... I wouldn't say it's a boy or a girl thing, mostly."</i></p> <p><u>Later in the interview teacher 3 said:</u></p> <p>"... And so, I would say, typically I have had more destructive, disrespectful behavior from boys. Not all the time, ha ha ha... but definitely those kinds of like violent, rage disruptive behaviors come from boys."</p>

Table 2: Example of one category card I created in the analysis process

The reason I chose to begin with the *experience* category, was to identify and get an overview of the experiences the teachers have with disruptive behavior among female students during class. I perceived it as appropriate to begin with categorizing experiences teachers have, because the experiences, perceptions and reflections teachers have regarding female students` disruptive behavior, might influence what coping skills the teachers describe that they use and why.

During the analysis, I categorized both similarities and differences in the teachers' reflections and experiences, by exploring between the reflections and experiences on skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students, addressed by three teachers, within the different categories. I was able to explore between my interviews because I used an interview guide where I asked the same main interview questions, and because my participants possibly share some similar reflections in the context of working as teachers in the United States. At the same time, qualitative interviews are characterized by the relation between the context and each participant, which could mean that differences between the teachers' reflections may have arisen because of the specific context they work within (Jacobsen, 2005, pp. 198). The potential limitation of categorizing is that one could be making structural changes in the original interviews. The contexts and meanings conveyed by the teachers could be lost or changed, by placing their answers in different categories with different order. That is why I was aware of this during the analysis and asked myself why I placed the answers from the teachers in the categories that I did. It is important to monitor the original contextual relationships from the interviews (Maxwell, 2013, pp.112).

3.3 Validity, reliability and generalizability

In this section, I want to address and convey the considerations I have taken to minimize possible threats and possible measurement errors, to try to strengthen the quality, credibility and accuracy of my research, with the aim of trying to make my findings trustworthy (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.276).

3.3.1 Validity

Maxwell (2013) says that “the concept of validity has been controversial in qualitative research”, because many believe that the concept of validity is based on quantitative logic, therefore more appropriate for quantitative research. Others say that validity concerns are important but different in its meaning for qualitative and quantitative research (pp.122). As the field of validity is an ongoing debate (Maxwell, 2013, pp.122), I will focus my discussion of validity exclusively on qualitative concerns, as referenced in the literature on qualitative research: often referred to as the strength, legitimacy, solidness, trueness, accuracy and

credibility of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.272,276; Maxwell, 2013, pp.122). Maxwell (2013) is introducing validity by asking “how might you be wrong?” (pp.121). Assessing validity threats means assessing whether what is being measured and examined, is the concept that I intend to measure and examine (De Vaus, 2013, pp.52). Validity is not something that is evaluated at the end. More importantly is it to consider validity threats throughout the whole process when conducting research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.277), to ensure the credibility of the research.

One way I have tried to elevate the validity of my study is the awareness of *researcher bias*. Researcher bias is about my expectations, ideas and pre-understandings as a researcher, and how these elements could influence how I interpret the data presented to me by the participants (Maxwell, 2013, pp.124). It is questioned if objectiveness and the objective knowledge is realistic to produce and strive to achieve in qualitative interview research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.272). There will always be a chance that the research could be influenced by subjective pre-understandings and ideas the researcher holds, when interpreting data. Therefore, instead, it is important to be aware of how the subjectivity and pre-understandings of the researcher might influence the selection of data and interpretations, rather than trying to eliminate the researcher`s existing beliefs (Maxwell, 2013, pp.124). By being aware of my subjectivity and how it might affect, I have tried to elevate the validity of my research by asking myself what is underlying my interpretations. I tried to be aware of the assumptions I had and what role my ideas might play in the process of interpreting. Another way I tried to be aware of the possible validity threat regarding the influence of my expectations and subjectivity on the data material, was by sometimes presenting my interpretation of the teachers` answers back to the them, to verify that I had understood correctly what the teachers were saying. This way, the teachers were provided the opportunity to confirm my interpretation or correct possible misunderstandings related to what they were saying.

One other way I tried to elevate the validity of my study was to be aware of how my presence and the interview setting might shape and influence the answers the teachers provided me, called *reactivity* (Maxwell, 2013, pp.124,125). The aim is not to eliminate the influence I have as a researcher, but rather be aware of how my role and identity as a researcher in the interview context, possibly could influence the teachers (Maxwell, 2013, pp.125). Doing qualitative research means that there will always be a possibility that we influence our participants. I strived to accommodate this potential validity threat by being conscious of how

my presence could potentially influence and interfere with the answers provided by the teachers. I was aware, during the interviews and when analyzing, the possibility that the teachers could perceive my role as a researcher the way that they are influenced to answer what they think I want to hear: the “correct, ideal answer” and to avoid answering honestly (De Vaus, 2013, pp.52). What the teachers told me could be different from what they mean and what they actually do when coping with disruptive behavior. Still, my aim is to get hold of and understand the teachers` reflections as they are described to me by the teachers themselves, not to examine precisely what teachers do in class and/or what happens during class. To try to accommodate the validity threat of my influence as a researcher, where the teachers potentially could be answering interview questions based on the interview situation, the teachers did not know my research question, specifically examining skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students. However, teachers in my sample were aware of the nature of the research project I am part of, where the purpose is to examine how teachers cope with disruptive behavior when it occurs in class.

Lastly, I believe it was important for the validity of the study that the teachers had the same definition of disruptive behavior as me, before I interviewed them. Kleven (2002) is saying that validity threats towards terms and concepts, is about the degree to which there is a compliance between how the concept is defined theoretically and how the researcher manages to operationalize the concept (pp.150). Since my definition of disruptive behavior is based on and related to the research project I am participating in, the definition of the concept of disruptive behavior is set. What could potentially be a threat to validity here, is related to how I succeed in clarifying and presenting the concept of *disruptive behavior* in practice, in order to conduct the study, so that I examine what I aim to examine in the interviews. I experienced that the teachers had a positive reaction when I reread the definition of disruptive behavior out loud before the interviews started. By re-reading the definition, I tried to elevate the validity associated with the concept of *disruptive behavior*, by trying to clarify and present the definition, so the teachers get the opportunity to have the definition fresh in mind. This way I could, to some extent, check if the teachers understood the definition, by giving them the opportunity to ask questions about the definition of disruptive behavior before the interviews started. At the same time, it is challenging to be sure that the teachers have the definition of disruptive behavior, that my study builds on, in mind when they present their answers. This could be because: what is perceived as disruptive behavior depends on the eye that sees (De Vaus, 2013, pp.54). Different sources of error during data collection could potentially reduce

the interaction between the theoretical definition of disruptive behavior the way I aim to examine it and the perceived concept, meaning how teachers define disruptive behavior (Kleven, 2002, pp.151). I interviewed teachers about their lived experiences and therefore cannot assume that the teachers experience disruptive behavior the same way as the presented definition of disruptive behavior. Still, I sometimes had to gently redirect the conversation back to the definition of disruptive behavior, the way I aim to get the teachers to reflect on it. I did this by asking if the teachers had any reflections they would like to add, or I formulated a follow-up question that could potentially lead to reflections the teachers had not told me about. However, I believe there might be a need to distinguish between different definitions of disruptive behavior, since different disruptive behaviors probably have an impact on the coping skills teachers choose to use.

3.3.2 Reliability

The core fundament of reliability is: could my research and findings be reproduced and repeated by other researchers? It is about how trustworthy, consistent and transferable the research findings are (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.276). Befring (2015) states that it is more difficult to reproduce qualitative studies than it is with quantitative studies (pp.56). I have tried to elevate and strengthen the reliability of my study, by following a systematic approach I have thought through, for instance with the help from the project plan I made for my study in advance. I believe I have elevated the reliability of the study, by systematically documenting my approaches and various steps in the research procedure. By addressing the methodological choices I have made regarding my data collection, transcription process, coding and analysis procedure, I aim for openness and insight so that others could follow my procedure and reach the same or similar findings (Yin, 2009 in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.201). I have tried to strengthen the reliability of my transcriptions by listening to the audio recordings several times, recorded with an audio recorder I had previously tested the quality of, and by this tried to do write down what is actually said in the interviews. Regarding the categorization process, the question of reliability could be related to the fact that different segments of an interview could be categorized differently by different researchers (De Vaus, 2013, pp.52). It is therefore important to be aware of my influence on the research process. Situations, experiences and teachers could change as time goes by. De Vaus (2013) says that “if people answer a question the same way on repeated occasions then it is reliable” (pp.52). I

did not aim nor had the possibility to interview the teachers in my sample on several occasions. Also, I cannot be sure that the time I interviewed the teachers, is a time when I was provided with answers the same way as other researchers would have been provided with answers, or if the answers would have changed if it had been a different research setting. It might be that if other researchers had interviewed the teachers, that they would have received different answers than I did, due to differences in procedure, approach and implementation, for instance, different follow-up questions. The level of disruptive behavior among female students, during the time frame of two weeks when I conducted interviews, might have influenced how the teachers reported their skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students, to me. It could be that if I had interviewed the teachers some weeks later, they would have had similar or different answers. This is an aspect that could affect and make it more difficult to achieve the reproduction of reliable research, in qualitative research.

I want to discuss my reliability as the interviewer, in the context of leading questions, as a conscious part of the interview technique in this study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, 2015, pp.276). Question seven and eight in the interview guide are the additional self-created interview questions, that might be perceived as leading questions, influencing the participants' answers. I asked: "when" girls display disruptive behavior, rather than "if" girls display disruptive behavior. On one side, when I asked: "*when* girls display disruptive behavior", there might be that I suggest that girls actually are disruptive at some point, something I cannot know for sure know before the interviews. This could mean that I potentially influence the teachers' responses with assumptions, through the way I formulate and ask two of my interview questions (Maxwell, 2013, pp.75). On the other side, the justification for asking "*when* girls display disruptive behavior", is because the purpose of my study and the two interview questions is about examining teachers' skillful coping of female students who actually are perceived and experienced by teachers as displaying disruptive behavior in the classroom. Therefore, I perceive that the way I asked the questions, is not necessarily a threat that is crucial to the reliability of my study. If it had been the case that the teachers do not experience female students as displaying disruptive behavior, I believe that they possibly would have told me that. For instance, teacher 1 in my sample mostly referred to *students* instead of *girls*, when describing how and why he copes with disruptive behavior in the classroom. It is important to reflect on whether the wording of the questions are leading, without indicating that my way of questioning is necessarily a reliability threat. I have reflected on the questions and tried to make them clear, by acknowledging the potential

influence my way of wording the two additional questions could have on the participants' answers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.201,202). Still, when it is controlled and conscious use of potentially leading questions, the questions do not necessarily reduce and impair the reliability in interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.200,201). I have tried to elevate my reliability as a researcher, by being aware of the possible influences of how I asked the two self-created interview questions, which I provided all three teachers as I aimed for a systematic approach and consistency between the three interviews.

3.3.3 Generalizability

Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) are asking “why generalize?” (pp.289), as interviews provide unique data, and generalizability is about the transferability of the findings to other situations and people. It could be argued that aiming to understand a phenomenon in a specific context through research, does not necessarily need to automatically indicate generalization to other contexts. Positive outcomes of framing the research “questions in terms specific to the setting or participants included in your research”, have according to Maxwell (2013) advantages (pp.79). Maxwell (2013) argues how the focus on specific participants could protect the researcher from generalizing inappropriately and assume similarity. The nature of the research question is what guides the conclusions, indicating that generalizations are not always the goal in qualitative research (pp.79). Because generalization in qualitative research not necessarily always is a goal itself, it is more relevant to discuss generalizability related to quantitative research. Still, I want to point out one element often discussed concerning qualitative research and generalization, which is the question about the number of participants. Few participants could mean less data and thus make generalizations less useful and applicable. At the same time, qualitative methods legitimize the use of a few participants, and therefore it is not necessary to always generalize. On one side, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) are describing that generalization with few participants is difficult. On the other side, if the aim is to make an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon within a context, not to aim for universal knowledge, then a small number of participants could be an advantage (pp.148). When relying on a small number of selected participants, the researcher has no guarantee, when presenting data, that the seemingly valid views presented by purposefully selected participants are typical views representing the rest of the population. This is called “key informant bias” (Pelto & Pelto, 1975, in Maxwell 2013, pp.99,100).

When addressing generalization, elements such as my sample size as well as how the teachers were recruited, complicate the possibilities of generalizing in this study. This is because my sample size of three teachers, connected to the context at two schools in the United States, does not form a representative basis for transferring the findings directly to how the teacher population in the United States cope with disruptive behavior among female students. I explored three teachers' reflections and experiences related to their skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom context. Instead of trying to generate absolute truths on how teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students (Maxwell, 2013, pp.79,81). However, the transfer value of my study might be appropriate to understand or explore in further detail, disruptive behavior in the specific context the three teachers work within. This is because the three teachers, probably to some extent, share the same school and teacher environment with other teachers they work with at the two schools I visited.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are integrated into all phases of an interview study and related to my role as a researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.95). To ensure that research is conducted within the framework of good ethical practice, conducting research means that I need to follow ethical considerations and guidelines on how to conduct proper research from the beginning to the end. Since I am part of a research project, the research team reported the research and submitted applications on behalf of everyone that is participating in the research project. This included applications to The Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) and the Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS), the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of California Berkeley. The two independent boards approved the applications, meaning they approved the implementation of the research project, and the handling and storing of research data. Although I did not submit the applications myself, I carried out my responsibilities where I read ethical guidelines and assessed my ethical responsibilities regarding the American and Norwegian ethical regulations (American Educational Research Association [AERA], 2009; Den nasjonale forskningsetiske komité for samfunnsfag og humaniora [NESH], 2016). I considered my ethical responsibilities in both countries, because I conducted my research in the United States, while at the same time being part of the University of Oslo. I have only included the approved application from CPHS,

IRB, from the University of California, Berkeley (Appendix 1), because it was decided in the research project I am part of, that researchers who had researched in the United States were not supposed to attach the approval from NSD.

One of the ethical considerations I have emphasized in my study is related to how I have taken precautions to minimize the risks related to confidentiality (NESH, 2016). I have tried to protect my participants and their answers, by leaving out the teachers' names and the name of the schools where they work. Instead, I gave the teachers a number from 1-3, which I also informed the teachers that I would do. The transcriptions from the interviews were anonymized and kept separate from the audio files that were anonymized with a number, each on their own secured physical encrypted hard disk, with a password only I knew of. In line with the information on the letter of consent, the audio files will be destroyed, and transcriptions securely saved. The participants were made aware of the research project and the intentions of how data will be used and for whom the data will be displayed, when they signed the letter of consent (Appendix 2). The consent forms were kept separate from the encrypted hard disks.

The participation in the research project was voluntary, as presented in the letter of consent. At any time, my participants knew they had the possibility to withdraw from the research, without any consequences for them. The reasons for optionally withdraw from the research are private and part of the rights they have as research participants. Throughout the writing of my thesis, I tried to monitor that the data from my participants remained protected properly responsibly. I have tried to oversee every step of the research process, asking myself if there is something in my study that could potentially be damaging for my participants. Since ethical dilemmas in research do not automatically follow with associated, unique solutions, it is up to every researcher to carefully evaluate and follow ethical requirements to the best of their ability (Borge, 2003, pp.107). I believe the confidentiality of the teachers in my study is adequately taken care of, and that there is minimal risk of negative outcomes for the teachers participating in my research. I believe this because the responses and reflections I received from the teachers, about their skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students, do not expose confidential aspects of their lives.

4. Discussing my findings

In this chapter, I will be discussing my findings in light of data from three interviews, as well as related to selected elements from the previously presented theoretical framework. I gathered experiences from three teachers working at either a Middle School or a High School. I will be presenting and discussing my findings in accordance with my research question:

How do teachers reflect on their coping skills towards disruptive behavior when experiencing this among female students?

The findings that emerged from my analysis will be presented and discussed within three different subchapters. Each subchapter in the discussion either have one, two or three sections, where I discuss the topic of the subchapter. The first subchapter presents who the female students in the classroom are, when it comes to disruptive behavior, based on reflections from three teachers. The second subchapter will describe how three teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom context. The third subchapter will describe why three teachers cope with the disruptive behavior of female students in the ways they do. The quotes I have chosen to use, exemplify the lived experiences and reflections three teachers hold, thus, form the frame of reference and the basis for my analysis.

The teachers tended to compare male and female students, which means that on certain topics I will be exploring between male students' and female students' disruptive behavior, with emphasis on female students. Related to the teachers' comparison of student gender, my intention is not to compare, rather to explore, disruptive behavior of male students and female students, as expressed in three interviews. The following provides a discussion of my findings.

4.1 Who are the female students when it comes to disruptive behavior?

In this first subchapter, I aim to describe disruptive behavior among female students inside the classroom, as expressed by three teachers. This includes describing the experiences three teachers have with disruptive behavior among female students (section 4.1.1), what types of disruptive behaviors the female students are described to display (section 4.1.2), and what explanations three teachers attribute to female students` disruptive behavior (section 4.1.3). The main argument in this first subchapter of the discussion is that the three teachers seem to have different experiences with disruptive behavior among female students, but they all described female students as potential contributors to disruptive behavior in some way. Also, I perceive that teacher 1 and 3 tended to explain some female students` disruptive behavior as a manifestation of something else going on in the female students` lives. Teacher 2 also sometimes described some female students` disruptive behavior as a manifestation of something else going on in the female students` lives, in addition to providing other explanations as well.

4.1.1 Experiences with disruptive behavior among female students

My findings indicate that the three teachers seem to have different experiences with disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom context, but they all described female students as potential contributors to disruptive behavior in some way. In addition to what the teachers verbally expressed, my perception of the teachers` nonverbal communication, when I asked about their experience with disruptive behavior among female students, are in my opinion indicating something about the possible impact of using “girls” and “disruptive behavior” in the same question. It is said, but regularly discussed, that female students and their behavior is better integrated in school, or the opposite way, that the school is better suited for the female students. Also, it is being indicated that female students do better in school and that behavior, where it is expedient to be quiet and pay attention, plays an important role here (Damsgaard, 2003, pp.27,28). What is said here, could be supporting my perception about the change I perceived, both verbally and nonverbally, in how the three teachers communicated their answer to my interview question, about their experience with female students` disruptive behavior during class. All three teachers seemed to notice my

question about girls` disruptive behavior specifically, which followed my question about teachers` general experience of disruptive behavior during class. All three teachers took a break to think during their response, regarding their experience with female students` disruptive behavior, which they did not do as much when I asked about their general experience of disruptive behavior during class. The three teachers tended to reference to male students` disruptive behavior when they reflected on disruptive behavior in general. Whereas the teachers tended to describe disruptive behavior among female students when I specifically asked about female students` disruptive behavior.

Teacher 1 reacted a bit surprised and said “*ooh*”, when I asked about his experience with disruptive behavior among female students during class, where he followed up by saying that female students for whatever reason seem to have less disruptive behavior. After a short break, teacher 1 added that: “*but, you can have some low levels*”, of disruptive behavior among female students. I asked a follow-up question asking teacher 1 to reflect on whether other teachers, that are more often in the classroom, would say that they experience girls as disruptive. Teacher 1 answered by saying that: definitely in the school population in general, the school has had female students who can be and who are just as disruptive. When teacher 1 said: “*who are just as disruptive*”, this could indicate that teacher 1 is comparing female students` disruptive behavior to the disruptive behavior of someone else, maybe the male students in school.

Teacher 2 reacted with whispering “*girls*”, which seemed to me like he was thinking out loud when I asked him about his experience with disruptive behavior among female students during class. After a short break, teacher 2 said that female students are more “talky” than male students, generally. He followed up by saying that although female students are “talky”, it does not mean that male students cannot be “talky” as well. Teacher 2 described how an observation he has made is that female students tend to be more verbal. I asked teacher 2, a follow-up question about his reflections on what other teachers might think about female students` disruptive behavior. Teacher 2 answered my question by saying: “No.” Later in the interview, when I asked about how teacher 2 approach and cope with female students` disruptive behavior, teacher 2 said: “*... girls are more disruptive than boys [...] girls [...] are more mature, more observative, more verbal[...] than boys.*” I will return to what teacher 2 said here, in my discussion about how and why teacher 2 copes with female students` disruptive behavior. As teacher 2 was the only teacher who reported that female students are more disruptive than male students, this could be related to Ogden (2015) when he describes

how some girls in adolescence increasingly have acquired behavior patterns, usually seen in boys, indicating that the gender gap may have narrowed over the years that have passed (pp.201).

Teacher 3 reacted a bit confused when I asked about her experience with disruptive behavior among female students during class. After sorting out the misunderstanding, where teacher 3 asked if I meant disruptive behavior specifically for girls, teacher 3 understood that I was asking about disruptive, off-task behavior displayed by female students inside the classroom. Teacher 3 took a break to think and answered my question saying: “*Hmm*”, clearly indicating that she was thinking about the question. After a short break, teacher 3 continued answering my question about her experience with female students` disruptive behavior, by providing specific examples on typical behavior female students` in her class would display: “... [...] *a lot of my girls will come into class late ... and miss some instruction, because they are outside talking about something, some drama, something stupid that happened. Or someone is very upset [...].*” Not being in the classroom and being upset, which often involves both leaving the classroom and involves other female students in the classroom as well, are behaviors displayed by some female students, which teacher 3 later in the interview explained and defined as disruptive behavior in her class. I will return to this later in my discussion. I asked teacher 3, a follow-up question about her reflections on what other teachers might think about any potential differences between female and male students` behavior. Teacher 3 answered by saying that she would not say it is a boy or a girl thing, mostly. Teacher 3 did not provide the explicit expression about her perceptions of female students as less disruptive or more disruptive in the student population, like teacher 1 and 2 more explicitly expressed. What teacher 3 did express, later in the interview, was how she typically has had more destructive and disrespectful behavior from male students than from female students. Teacher 3 added: “*Not all the time, ha ha ha...but definitely those kinds of like violent, rage disruptive behaviors come from boys.*”

4.1.2 What types of disruptive behaviors do the female students display?

All three teachers reflected on different types of disruptive behavior they perceive as displayed by female students in the classroom. Still, teacher 1 reflected more about students in general than he did about female students` disruptive behavior, which could be related to what

he expressed about how female students seem to have less disruptive behavior. When teacher 1 did reflect concrete about female students, the term *girl(s)* was used. The examples teacher 1 described about disruptive behavior among students, included: yelling at the teacher, storm out of the room, tossing things, disruptive talking, becoming aggressive and getting defiant. Since teacher 1 described that students, in general, could potentially display the above disruptive behaviors, it could indicate that female students might display the behaviors as well. The disruptive behavior of storming out of the room, is something teacher 1 could be having in common with teacher 3, as teacher 3 described that she experiences female students` disruptive behavior to involve leaving the classroom.

Because teacher 2 explicitly expressed that he perceives female students as disruptive in class, he also explicitly presented what types of disruptive behaviors female students display. He described that female students' disruptive behavior consists of using phones when they are not supposed to and disruptive talking. Teacher 2 described how some female students do not want to collaborate and work in groups with certain peers in class. Teacher 2 also described that some female students display disruptive behavior with an attitude, where some female students are “upfront.” This means some female students will be saying to teacher 2, that they are not doing the activities teacher 2 has planned for the class, or that some female students will be saying that they are not paying attention to what is going on in the classroom. Refusing to carry out instructions from the teacher, is through previous research, identified as one of the typical off-task behaviors in some American and Norwegian Middle School/High School classrooms (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.139).

Teacher 3 provided examples about typical disruptive behaviors female students in her classroom would display. Teacher 3 described that it is disrupting, off-task behavior when some female students come into class late because they are outside talking about something, not subject related, and when female students often will leave the classroom and miss instruction in class, often because they are upset. This could indicate that some female students are disrupting, when they are wandering in late into the classroom and wandering out of the classroom. Teacher 3 described that female students in her class are not: “*in your face*”, towards her, rather they can be dismissive or leave the classroom. This seems to be different from what teacher 2 described, when he described female students as being “upfront”, in their expression of disruptive behavior in the classroom. It could be suggested that teacher 2 and 3 have some coincident experiences of female students as displaying off-task, disruptive behavior, when the female students are somehow dismissive and do not pay attention to what

is going on during class. Like teacher 2, teacher 3 also explained that female students' disruptive behavior consists of female students using their phones when they are not supposed to.

The typical and most frequent off-task behaviors, disrupting teaching and learning, most salient in American and Norwegian Middle School/High School classrooms were identified as students: 1) talking out of turn, not subject related; 2) talking out of turn, subject-related; 3) refusing to carry out instructions from the teacher; 4) interfering with equipment of others, and 5) wandering around in the classroom (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.139). If I relate these categories of disruptive, off-task behavior to my findings, it could be suggested that teachers in my sample, to varying degrees, provided descriptions indicating that they are experiencing female students who display four of the five off-task behaviors, apart from interfering with the equipment of others, in the classroom context.

4.1.3 Explanations to female students' disruptive behavior

Without specifically asking why female students are disruptive, teachers tended to attribute meaning to female students' disruptive behavior, by providing reflections and describe what they perceive as underlying female students' disruptive behaviors. I perceive that teacher 1 and 3 tended to explain female students' disruptive behavior as a manifestation of something else going on in the female students' lives, meaning the disruptive behavior was related to something outside of the disruptive behavior itself. I interpreted, from parts of the descriptions provided by teacher 1 and 3, that some of the female students' disruptive behaviors are not necessarily displayed with the intention to disrupt, *but* it is still being described as off-task, disruptive behavior by teacher 1 and 3. Whereas teacher 2 attributed explanations related to female students' disruptive behavior, by both describing some of the disruptive behavior as a manifestation of something else going on in the female students' lives, but also related to the female students' expression of disruptive behavior itself. I believe that the explanations teachers hold towards female students' disruptive behavior, could be influencing both the coping skills teachers choose to use and why.

Teacher 1 explained that when some students are disruptive in the classroom, this is because some of the female students have disabilities, trauma or other significant challenges in their lives. Teacher 1 described that the reasons underlying students' disruptive behavior, like

presented above, often have built up over time and could be triggered by one demand too many inside the classroom and lead into disruptive behavior. Teacher 1 described a concrete example of one female student, where the female student's disabilities is explained as the reason for her disruptive behavior:

So, in my case now there is this girl in (school name) who has significant disabilities and she still working on reading a room. So, she may come into a classroom, she may transition to a room late or in the middle of a class, and she doesn't read the room. So, if the room is silently reading, she may come in and in a really loud voice say: "hello mister whoever", "hello mister (teacher's name), how are you?" Not realizing that the room is quiet and that by her doing that... but then that's just something, that's not a disrupt, that's not a behavior that has the intention to disrupt, but it's still disruptive. It's just less ... it's just ... less malicious. (Teacher 1)

What teacher 1 describes in the quote, could indicate that this female student is causing disruption because of her disabilities, not necessarily because she has the intention to be disruptive. Befring and Duesund (2012) say that schools often practice an attitude that indicates that students behave as they do with pure will (pp.449). It might be suggested that this is not the case for teacher 1, as he seems to practice an attitude where he describes this female student's disruptive behavior related to her disabilities.

Teacher 3 described that most of her male and female students are either affected by trauma, negative family and negative home situations, low academic skills or difficulty with social interaction. Teacher 3 said that when some female students leave her class, it will often be related to how some female students are upset, because the female students are experiencing problems in their lives. Teacher 3 said that when female students leave the classroom, it is not necessarily because of something related to the classroom context itself. The following quote illustrates how teacher 3 described some female students' disruptive behavior:

[...] ... so, I would say that most of my off-task behavior is because of something like that, like the girls that all leave together to go [...] often that is because a student had a very upsetting home situation happen the night before and they're loud and upset, but they know that they don't wanna disrupt my class so they go outside, which is respectful. But then, half of the class is like: "oh no" and then they all go out [...] it's not mean, it's not like disrespectful to me, they're trying to be supportive of their friends, but it's still off-task, it still means they miss instruction, they're behind [...]. (Teacher 3)

What I interpret from the explanations to female students` disruptive behavior presented by teacher 1 and 3, is that the two teachers tended to explain some female students` disruptive behavior as not intentional. Teacher 1 described that the female student who display disruptive behavior, because of her disabilities, do not display a behavior that has the intention to disrupt, even though it still is disruptive. Teacher 3 reflected on how the disruption of leaving class is not always with the intention to disrupt and be disrespectful, rather it is problematic because it involves other female students in the classroom as well, which means several female students miss instruction and therefore display off-task behavior. Further, teacher 3 described that her students are: “*all trapped in the same class together*”, by which she meant that her students with different challenges are trapped inside the classroom and that this could lead to disruptive behavior. Because students got to school and they have different challenges in life, a lot of disruptive behavior might arise as a result of being many students with different needs in the same classroom. Ogden (2015) is pointing out that students` disruptive behavior in schools, probably is a reaction to the environment students are part of (pp.14).

Teacher 2 provided explanations to female students` disruptive behavior that I perceived as twofold. As teacher 1 and 3, teacher 2 also explained some female students` disruptive behavior in class as possibly related to other challenges in the female students` lives. For instance, teacher 2 said that some female students could be having problems with authorities and that problematic relationships at home, could contribute to the disruptive behavior female students display inside the classroom. On the other hand, descriptions from teacher 2 could suggest that he has a second and different view on female students` disruptive behavior. Teacher 2 described that some female students` disruptive behavior could be displayed intentionally. This seems to be different from what teacher 1 and 3 described, as they provided examples of some female students` disruptive behavior, describing that the behavior is not necessarily with the intention to disrupt. The following quote illustrates what teacher 2 described regarding how female students` disruptive behavior might be displayed intentionally:

[...] boys, if you go by and, see they think they are invisible [...] but the girls they know that [...] and it`s what they`re doing, and that`s in an active will, that it`s a decision [...] you know girls [...] are more mature, more observative, more verbal [...] than boys. (Teacher 2)

Teacher 2 described that female students` disruptive behavior could be: “*in an active will.*” If I relate this to when I asked teacher 2 if he thinks the female students will know that the teacher will notice them, when they are disruptive, he said: “*yeah*”, indicating that female students might know that their behavior is causing disruption. When I asked teacher 2 why he copes with disruptive behavior among female students the ways he does, part of his answer included that a lot of disruptive behavior is attention-getting behavior. I perceived that teacher 2 was talking about both male and female students when he described the attention-getting behavior. But if I only focus on the female students, regarding what teacher 2 described about how a lot of disruptive behavior is attention-getting behavior, this attention-getting behavior could be related to what teacher 2 said about female students being observative. Teacher 1 described that students in general, who are perceived as disruptive, might be disruptive because they want social interaction, attention and success with peers in class. Teacher 1 said that finding ways for that student to get attention and/or success with peers, giving students something proactive to do that gets them to interact with other students, is a way to cope with disruptive behavior in class. This could be related to how Ogden (2015) is pointing out that students` disruptive behavior in schools, probably is a reaction to the environment students are part of in schools (pp.14).

Another element teacher 2 described, regarding explanations to female students` disruptive behavior, was how important the ratio of male students to female students in classrooms might be. Teacher 2 believes that *talking*, as the off-task, disruptive behavior in class, could be explained by the number of female to male students in the classroom. Talking out of turn, both subject-related and not subject related, is identified as typical and dominant off-task behavior among male and female American students, in some Middle School and High School classrooms (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.139). The following quote illustrates what teacher 2 described regarding the level of talking in his class, that changes based on the number of female to male students together in the classroom:

[...] in my sixth period there are more boys than girls...the girls are pretty quiet. And the boys will tend to talk over [...] in couple of other classes where there are more girls than boys, the girls talk over, so I think the numbers matter a great deal [...] I have like 15 boys and 6 or 7 girls in my last period of the day [...] then in one class I have like, 16 girls and like 8 boys. And, the girls, the numbers matter. (Teacher 2)

It could seem that when the number of female students, in the classroom of teacher 2, increases to be higher than the number of male students, the female students dominate the talking, and the opposite way when there are more male students in the class. The experiences described by teacher 2 could be viewed in light of the latest results from the PISA 2018 assessment. Still, it is important to have in mind that my findings are based on reflections from teacher 2, whereas the PISA 2018 assessment is based on several student reports. The results from PISA 2018, document that the disciplinary climate, on average across OECD countries, were reported more positive in schools where more than 60% of the total student population were girls and in gender-balanced schools (40% boys, 60% girls), in contrast to the disciplinary climate reported from schools where more than 60% of students were boys (OECD, 2019, pp.66). Reflections from teacher 2 could indicate that he does not experience that the disruption, concerning talking in class, decreases with the increased proportion of female to male students in the classroom. Whereas the PISA 2018 assessment could be indicating positive outcomes in the disciplinary climate, related to the proportion of female to male students in schools. Again, it is important to remember that the PISA 2018 assessment is based on student reports, whereas I have reflections from teacher 2. Also, the type of disruptive behavior in question and differences in perceived disruption may differ between teacher 2 and the student reports in the PISA 2018 assessment. When teacher 2 described that female students sometimes are talking over male students in the class, this could be related to what Holm (2010) reports to have found, when she compared between the years 1974, 1992 and 2005. She found that female students as a group in 2005, are perceived less silent, taking up larger influential and visible space in the classroom, by raising their voice more often in the classroom, compared to perceptions of female students` role in school from earlier years (pp.264). Teacher 1 and 3 did not share any reflections on the number of female to male students in class, related to the level of talking in the classroom.

All three teachers provided examples of male students` disruptive behavior as well, but I perceive there were differences regarding how the teachers provided examples of female and male students` disruptive behaviors. I perceive that the teachers did not provide explanations to male students` disruptive behavior in class, to the same extent as they did when explaining female students` disruptive behavior in class. The teachers largely described male students` disruptive behavior in class, without explaining the reason and cause for their behavior. The differences I perceived regarding how teachers presented disruptive behavior between the different student genders, could be because of how behavior often is related to how: “gender

coordinates social relations through shared cultural beliefs about presumed differences” (Ridgeway, 2011, pp.29,54). Female students could be expected to perform their behavior a certain way on one hand, whereas male students on the other hand could be expected to perform another type of behavior. Hellman (2010) writes how society has created the assumption of boys as a gender type which is supposed to be seen, noticed and heard to a larger extent than girls (pp.228). This could be related to what Holm (2010) reports: that teachers have expectations towards behavior based on the student gender (pp.258). Which might indicate that the way teachers perceive students` behavior, may influence the explanations they have for the students` behaviors. There might be differences between the extent to which teachers, in general, experience being disrupted and the extent to which students display disruptive behavior. Teachers might sometimes possibly attribute greater meaning to the disruptive behavior than the disruptive behavior itself. Other times, teachers might possibly raise the threshold for what they consider to be disruptive behavior.

4.2 How teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students during class

In this second subchapter, I aim to present and discuss how three teachers described their coping skills towards disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom. The main argument in this second subchapter of the discussion, is that all three teachers in my sample seem to cope with disruptive behavior displayed by female students, by acknowledging the disruptive behavior female students display inside the classroom (section 4.2.1). Another argument is that teacher 2 and 3 seem to cope with female students` disruptive behavior, by expanding their acknowledgment of female students` disruptive behavior, to involve acknowledgment of the social relations female students were described to be invested in and part of (section 4.2.2). The three teachers seem to acknowledge female students` disruptive behavior, by proactively address female students` disruptive behavior, as part of their coping skills. This might be related to research documenting that some American teachers are intervening and actively trying to stop certain disruptive behaviors in the classroom (Duesund, 2017, pp.157).

Before I move on to my discussion, I want to briefly define *acknowledgment* the ways I will use the term, in connection with teachers` skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom. Acknowledgment is said to be an attitude (Ulleberg, 2014, pp.183). Teachers` acknowledgment of female students in the class could involve teachers` ability to listen to the female students, to meet the female students with openness and understanding, and to confirm the feelings and needs the female students may have. Acknowledgment could also mean that teachers are tolerant and show acceptance towards the female students, as well as trying to affirm the female students on their perspectives and what they express. Acknowledgment from teachers might help some female students to feel ownership and to have influence over their own lives, in this case, the life they have as students in school (Schibbye, 1996, pp.533-536).

4.2.1 Acknowledging the disruptive behavior displayed by female students

For the most part of his interview, teacher 1 did not distinguish between male students and female students regarding disruptive behavior. Where teacher 1 specifically reflected on

coping skills related to female students, I will be highlighting this in my discussion by using the term *female student(s)* instead of *students*. Teacher 1 seems to cope with disruptive behavior inside the classroom by acknowledging all students, meaning teacher 1 described that he gives every student a choice inside the classroom. For instance, teacher 1 offers students the choice to take a break from the work they are doing in class, when teacher 1 sees that some students are displaying off-task, disruptive behavior. It could be interpreted that teacher 1 does not ignore students, rather he acknowledges students when they are upset, as part of their disruption in class. If students are defiant, acting out or is in a conflict in the classroom, teacher 1 acknowledges students by pulling them aside to clarify and try to understand the situation the students find themselves in. The following quote illustrates how teacher 1 emphasized the importance of acknowledging students that are disruptive during class:

[...] if a student is sitting in front of a piece of work and they clearly don't wanna do the work ... I may say: "I see you are upset [...] leave the work here and let's step outside for a minute", so that the thing that causes the trigger gets removed physically, by taking them to another space and then have a conversation with them there [...] and then try and remembering to dig down, which is hard sometimes. But like, a student is disruptive on this day and then maybe three days later they are disruptive again. What's critical is to, to make sure you're, you're paying attention to when the behavior is happening and what happened [...] like just check-in [...] so, it's just doing the work of understanding what's triggering it [...] the next thing is also consistency, making sure you, if you're gonna give them a choice this day, make sure you are offering choices all the time. (Teacher 1)

Teacher 1 explains how he is trying to understand what might be triggering students' disruptive behavior, as part of teacher 1 and his acknowledgment of disruptive behavior. Teacher 1 described that as a teacher, you need to have in mind what might have triggered the behavior and why, to cope with disruptive behavior. For instance, if you know that trauma is affecting the student, teacher 1 said that going at the disruptive behavior directly is not going to help. Coping with disruptive behavior directly is not always going to work because some students that display disruptive behavior might be stressed or anxious, and therefore not rational and reasonable, teacher 1 said. That is why teacher 1 described that he needs to reduce the students' anxiety and remove the stimulus that is causing students to be disruptive in class. Teacher 1 described that he will leave the classroom with students who display disruptive, to another space, where they can have a conversation, so that: “[...] the thing that

causes the trigger gets removed physically, by taking them to another space [...].” I interpret that giving students the possibility to take a break from the classroom, could be related to what teacher 1 said about offering choices when students are disruptive. When students are upset and dysregulated, teacher 1 said that his ability to address students` disruptive behavior directly will be affected. For instance, teacher 1 described how skillful coping of disruptive behavior, displayed by a female student with disabilities in his class, is not going to work if he directly points to this female student`s disruptive behavior. Instead, teacher 1 said that he will be using, towards all students, distraction, redirection and disarming to avoid the straight directive: *“Stop talking, stop making noise.”* This could seem to be one example of an alternative way of coping with disruptive behavior, other than what Duesund and Ødegård (2018b) are documenting, based on student reports: two types of teacher-reactions used most frequently towards disruptive behavior among students, in some Middle School/High School classrooms in the United States and Norway. The two dominating coping reactions from teachers, with the intent to reduce disruptive behavior among male and female students in school, were identified as: “ask them to be quiet” and “raise their voice and tell them to be quiet” (pp.417). Instead, teacher 1 will try to use the 5 to 1 ratio of positives to negatives as a coping skill towards students` disruptive behavior, which could mean that teacher 1 is addressing disruptive behavior indirectly. The 5 to 1 ratio of positives to negatives, as teacher 1 is using it, might imply acknowledgment of students, in the sense that teacher 1 sees the students, not just the students` disruptive behavior. In the following quote, teacher 1 explains the 5 to 1 ratio of positives to negatives as his coping skill:

[...] so, the best way to stop that behavior is to distract, to sort of defuse it through distraction or through choice or through you know disarming, through connecting [...] I mean redirection is [...] the most common [...] I`m a pretty firm believer in the 5 to 1 ratio of positives to negatives. So, even if a student is acting out, I may try to disarm them a little bit, by saying: "hey, I`m really glad you`re here, I`m sorry you are upset ... [...] I really like the work you were doing earlier today ... those shoes are awesome, but I need you to stop talking." Right, so, I`m gonna, I`m not gonna jump right to: "stop talking, stop doing the wrong thing", I`m going to try to connect with them first, distract them a little bit with, with like the bigger picture of something they did well the other day or something they did well earlier today or just a compliment [...] and then come in with the redirection [...] Just try to avoid the straight directive. (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 reflected more specifically on his coping skills towards disruptive behavior among female students particularly. Teacher 2 described that he experiences female students as being more mature, more observative and more verbal than male students. Because of this, teacher 2 said he uses verbal coping skills, words, towards disruptive behavior among female students. When I asked teacher 2 which measures he generally takes when disruptive behavior occurs in class, he described that the first thing is to point the behavior out and the second thing is trying to talk with the particular student if he can do that. I interpret that pointing all students' behavior out could be related to what teacher 2 said about how he cannot ignore behavior with any of the students. It could seem like teacher 2 acknowledges his students by seeing the students and their behavior. It could be argued that teacher 2 is pointing students' disruptive behavior out more directly than what teacher 1 described with the 5 to 1 ratio of positives to negatives. By this, I mean that, teacher 2, when he said that the first thing to do is point the disruptive behavior out, also added that: *"And then I will get confrontational."* Pointing the behavior out, sometimes by being confrontational, could be related to one of the two types of teacher-reactions used most frequently towards disruptive behavior, in some Middle School/High School classrooms in the United States and Norway: "raise their voice and tell them to be quiet" (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018b, pp.417). It could be related because teacher 2 illustrated how he sometimes raises his voice when he gets confrontational. Teacher 2 described female students as visible actors in his classroom, as Holm (2010) describes in her research about female students as a group being perceived more visible actors inside the classroom in the year of 2005, compared to previous years examined in her research (pp.264). Teacher 2 said that he has to deal with female students in a certain verbal way because he perceives them as more verbal. The following quote illustrates how teacher 2 described that he will use verbal coping skills, raising his voice and be confrontational when coping with disruptive behavior displayed by particularly one female student in his classroom, when she is using her phone:

Last week I had a girl [...] who's constantly saying that I'm picking on her, so I just stopped the class right there and then, I just let her have it. I just said: "you think I'm picking on you, when you do the same stupid thing over and over again? You know the phones aren't supposed to come out. So, no, I'm not picking on you" [...] But I was very confrontational. And I kind of have to do that with this particular student [...]. (Teacher 2)

Maybe because teacher 2 described some female students in his classroom as "upfront" and verbal in their expression of disruptive behavior, teacher 2 perceives that he needs to be

confrontational and verbal to cope with female students` disruptive behavior. This could be related to what I discussed previously, about teacher 2 portraying some female students as sometimes displaying disruptive behavior intentionally. It could be that because teacher 2 described female students as observative and mature, he might perceive female students as mature enough to stop their disruptive behavior, when he is confrontational and verbal towards them. When teacher 2 described that he copes with female students` disruptive behavior in a verbal way, this is different from how teacher 3 described parts of her coping skills, as involving the use of a nonverbal system of points.

Teacher 3 also expressed specific coping skills when approaching female students` disruptive behavior in class. Teacher 3 described that when female students leave the classroom in the middle of class, this is a big part of the disruptive behavior her female students display. Because of the disruption that is being caused when female students leave the class, teacher 3 like teacher 1 emphasized, is giving her students choices inside the classroom, as part of the coping skills towards disruptive behavior. Teacher 3 described that she will involve the female students when making deals about the schoolwork, and provide choices in collaboration with female students, to reduce disruptive behavior in class. For instance, teacher 3 will make deals with female students where she gives them ten minutes to go outside, take care of their thing and then come back to the classroom. It could seem like the ten-minute breaks are what teacher 3 will use to get female students back into the lesson, instead of having them display off-task behavior in class, where they potentially wander around and it could seem like some female students are on their way out of the classroom. Empirical research on disruptive behavior has findings identifying and indicating that wandering around in the classroom, is one of the typical off-task behaviors in some American Middle/High School classrooms (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018a, pp.139). Giving female students a choice, means that instead of female students just leaving the class unannounced, teacher 3 is trying to collaborate with female students by being proactive and influencing the surroundings inside the classroom before disruptive behavior breaks out, as the following quote from teacher 3 illustrates:

“[...] it may be I have to give them a pass to go to the health center or give them a pass to go see a therapist. Sometimes, they don` t need anything, they just need a pass to go walk, you know.” (Teacher 3)

I interpret that teacher 3, as teacher 1, acknowledges that students and the triggers to their disruptive behavior, might need to be physically separated as part of reducing and coping with disruptive behavior. It could seem like teacher 3 sometimes separates the female students from their triggers in class, by giving them a pass to go walk outside the classroom. Whereas the following quote illustrates how teacher 3 other times seems to separate female students from their triggers, by offering some female students to go sit somewhere else inside the classroom, other than where they usually sit in the classroom.

[...] she will have ... emotional breakdowns. If something bad happens in the morning, I can't teach her that day, so, we have a system. So, I have like bean bag chairs over there (points to bean bag chairs inside the classroom). If she is having one of those days, she knows that she can just look at me and be like: "I need to go over there." And I go: "yes, you're gonna have to make up your work, but I know you can do that on your own time". She will do it. And if she doesn't do it, she knows the consequences, right, because they're getting choices. (Teacher 3)

The quote might be illustrating how teacher 3 seems to be giving choices related to disruptive behavior, which involves making deals about the schoolwork they will need to do. Teacher 3 seems to cope with some female students' disruptive, off-task behavior by trusting that they will make up the work they miss. Related to the female student in the quote above, teacher 3 described that making deals about the schoolwork and giving choices, will work better than saying: "no, you need to, you need to sit down, no, no you need to read", because all that leads to is students not learning because they are disruptive. This could seem to be consistent with teacher 1, when he said that he avoids the straight directive when students are disruptive. Teacher 3 described that when she usually can make deals with the female students about leaving the class, they will come back after a break. However, it could seem like teacher 3, not all the time is able to make deals and give choices related to disruptive behavior before the disruptive behavior is a fact and some female students leave the classroom. This could be related to how in probably many situations in the classroom, disruptive behavior will arise unannounced or when the teacher is least prepared for it (Duesund & Ødegård, 2018b, pp.411). It might be the case that some female students in some situations, are less receptive to collaborate with teacher 3. As teacher 1 said, students who are emotionally in distress will not be rational. Teacher 3 described that in the instances where female students leave the class, she will sometimes go walk outside and talk to one of the female students. Here, teacher 3 will try to find out which one of the female students that were having the emotional

experience and have a talk to the student(s). Instead of punishing female students for leaving the classroom, as a way to cope with disruptive behavior, teacher 3 described that she has noticed it is usually easier to get them back to class if she can affirm what they are feeling. It could seem like teacher 3 is acknowledging and trying to understand the female students' behavior when they leave the classroom, as described in the following quote: *"If you can be like: "yes, this is true, this is fine, but you're about to become an adult." "How are you going to get over this for now?"* Later in the interview, teacher 3 described that she can cope with disruptive behavior because she can talk to all students like humans, where she will say: *"I understand, you're having a normal reaction.* Although teacher 3 seems to communicate to female students that leaving the classroom is not something they should do, as they are becoming adults, teacher 3 is nevertheless talking to the female students and acknowledging the feelings female students have behind the disruptive behavior they display. I believe acknowledgment as a coping skill to reduce disruptive behavior, for instance when teacher 3 affirms that the behavior could be caused by negative emotions, is an example of how explanations to some female students' disruptive behavior, could influence the coping skills some teachers use towards disruptive behavior among female students.

Teacher 3 copes with disruptive behavior among all her students in the class, including female students, by using a system of points. The system of points consists of a map with an overview of where the students sit inside the classroom. This system seems to allow both the students and teacher 3 herself, to keep track of how many warnings the students have related to disruptive behavior. The system seems to be a tool to redirect the students' disruptive behavior, just like teacher 1 described he tries to do with the 5 to 1 ratio of positives to negatives, instead of pointing directly to the disruptive behavior. Teacher 2 did not say anything specific about redirecting his students, which could be related to what teacher 2 described regarding pointing the students' behavior out in a more direct and confrontational way in the class. Teacher 3 will use a pen for every day, mark and subtract points, from 25 points a week in total, if the students are absent in class, come into class late, or doing an off-task behavior in class. The system of points teacher 3 uses, seems to give the students a choice to stop displaying their disruptive behavior. For instance, if a female student is on her phone when she is not supposed to, teacher 3 described that making the female student aware of her points, sometimes works as a coping skill to redirect the female student's attention to what she is supposed to be doing in class, instead of being on her phone. Other times, teacher 3 described that the system of points does not work as a coping skill to stop the disruptive

behavior, especially in the context of female students using their phones in class. The only times I perceived that teacher 3 described how female students could be displaying disruptive behavior intentionally, is when female students use their phones in class when they are not supposed to. The following quote illustrates how teacher 3 in a nonverbal and non-confrontational way, use the system of points towards a female student that is displaying off-task behavior when she uses her phone:

[...] when a student is off-task, like this student is on her phone all the time, right. ... it means that, instead of having a conversation where I'm like: "(the girl's name) get off your phone", all I do, I don't speak, I just go: (articulates that she signs the sheet with points) and they don't speak, they don't talk either, they know, right. It's, they know, and they make their choice. She knows I take her points and she's still on her phone. Because she, in her mind, she's like: "I don't care, I want my phone." And I go: "okay, but you lose points." We agree and we agree. (Teacher 3)

Interpreted from the quote, teacher 3 does not appear to be confrontational and direct towards female students' use of phones in class when it occurs, as teacher 2 described he is sometimes. This could be because teacher 3 described that instead of having systems when she started teaching, she would be confrontational towards all student disruptive behaviors and say: *"hey [...] I need you to pay attention [...]."* Teacher 3 perceived that this response did not reduce the disruptive behavior, rather it made it worse because teacher 3 would get mad. Teacher 3 described that after she started picked two, three behaviors, where she would make rules about how she would react to these off-task behaviors instead of getting mad, for instance by using the system of points, a lot of other disruptive behaviors would calm down. It could be that the nonverbal system of points, that teacher 3 uses to cope with disruptive behavior, is used in a way that it disturbs as few others, as well as the leaning atmosphere, in class as possible. It is suggested that management in classrooms include techniques and interventions that are minimal and quick (Glock, 2016, pp.110).

The number of points the students lose, from the nonverbal system of points that teacher 3 uses, will affect the students' participation grade in class. But as the quote above illustrates and teacher 3 expressed, some students seem to ignore the system of points and their participation grade. Which teacher 3 describes as making a choice where they need to accept the consequences: *"You wanna be on your phone, that's fine, but your participation is gonna be very low."* It seems that the nonverbal system of points, as the coping skill teacher 3 uses,

not always reduce off-task behavior in the classroom. I perceive that teacher 3 could be reflecting on the influence she has as a teacher when it comes to eliminating disruptive behavior. Teacher 3 expressed that when students are on their phones and not distracting anyone else, she cannot care about it all the time: *"You wanna be on your phone? That's fine, you feel my class. I can't stop you [...]."* It could be perceived that students who do not follow rules related to behavior inside the classroom, for instance, the female student using her phone that teacher 3 described, may come to defy social expectations and violate norms in the classroom (Ogden, 2015, pp.14,15). Similar to teacher 3, teacher 2 described that those students who do not seem to care about their disruptive behavior, is because the participation grade does not really matter to them. This applies to, for instance, the female student that teacher 2 described as using her phone frequently. Other times, for instance with the same female student that uses her phone a lot, teacher 2 manages to cope with her disruptive behavior. I asked for how long her disruptive, off-task behavior will stop when teacher 2 has managed to cope with it. Teacher 2 answered that it will go for a couple of days and then: *"[...] we'll have the same thing over and over again."* Could it be argued that what teacher 2 and 3 are describing regarding, what I perceive, is the effect of their coping skills towards some disruptive behaviors among some female students in the class, are reflections similar to what research presents: that disruptive behavior is an ongoing challenge inside classrooms and teachers alone have limited value in reducing and ending disruptive behavior? Especially related to what is said about how behavior could spread among students in the classroom (Duesund, 2017, pp.157).

4.2.2 Invested in social relations

Related to how the three teachers seem to cope with disruptive behavior among female students, my findings might indicate that teacher 2 and 3 are reporting how the relational aspect could be playing a role. Therefore, I aim to expand the discussion of acknowledgment as a coping skill. Teacher 2 and 3 seem to expand their acknowledgment of female students' behavior, to consider and acknowledge the social relations female students in their classrooms seem to be invested in. Teacher 2 and 3 described reflections, indicating that they are experiencing female students' disruptive behavior, as being related to social relations female students seem to be invested in.

As presented in subchapter one of my discussion (section 4.1.2), teacher 2 described that disruptive behavior he experiences among female students, is partly related to how some female students do not want to work with other peers in class. Teacher 2 described that he experiences that disruption sometimes comes from outside the classroom, meaning conflicts students bring with them to the classroom. These are conflicts that either could be the students' own conflicts or conflicts that are not the students' own conflicts, teacher 2 said. As teacher 2 described, students will sometimes bring conflicts into the classroom, that belongs to someone else because they are distracted by the conflicts and are not able to leave them outside the classroom. When there are some students in the class that do not want to work with peers in the classroom, teacher 2 described that this will affect what kinds of activities he can plan and do with the class. Meaning that when teacher 2 described some female students as not wanting to collaborate with other peers in class, they are experienced as causing off-task behavior in the classroom of teacher 2. When some female students do not want to work with certain peers in the classroom where teacher 2 teaches, this might be because some female students are experiencing obstacles in loyalty to school expectations versus peer' expectations, considering that girls seem to hold interpersonal relations high and tend to be oriented to interpersonal relations (Kroneman et al., 2009, pp.268). Some female students could be refusing to work with peers in the classroom because there could be a conflict going on, where for instance one female student wants to be loyal to the friends that she stands with in the conflict. If some female students display behavior that is deviant from what other peers might expect from them, a repercussion of this might be rejection from peers and an increase in disruptive behavior in class.

The school where teacher 2 teaches, did research some years ago on fights between students. I will not focus on the fights themselves, but rather focus on what teacher 2 described about acknowledgment related to the fights. Teacher 2 explained that he thinks the fights and conflicts between some female students are related to disruption, and that the disruption is a sign of: “[...] *some relationship thing or something going on [...]*”, that it is deep-seated. Teacher 2 said that when conflicts happen between female students, there is a whole history to it and it lasts longer because it is not something that happens in the hallway for the first time. Rather it could be something that has lasted for a long time where, teacher 2 described, female students could be saying: “[...] *you been looking at me this way, or you do this, or I think you doing this and [...]*.” I perceive that it could be that the same underlying conflicts outside the classroom, might be causing disruptive, off-task behavior inside the classroom as well.

Because the conflicts are described as deep-seated, teacher 2 said that there is something going on where the female students` conflicts might not have been acknowledged. The following quote illustrates how teacher 2 described what the research they did, found on the differences between the fights male students had between each other and the fights female students had between each other:

[...] I also think there`s a difference between boys and girls in terms of [...] they interviewed them 3 months later and 6 months later about the fights. Boys would be friends with the boys they`ve had the...but girls, would say: "I`ll kill that bitch if a see her. She knows to fucking stay away from me." And it didn`t matter whether it was 3 months or 6 months, so the next year that feeling was still there and I think that it was still there because it started and it wasn`t really acknowledged. (Teacher 2)

The quote illustrates the difference they found regarding the duration of the fights between the female students` fighting and the male students` fighting, at the school where teacher 2 works. The difference in the duration of the fights, could be related to the meaning female students ascribe to social relations with peers: girls in adolescence tend to be oriented to interpersonal relations more than boys, including loyalty and social approval from their peers. In addition to girls being more sensitive to rejection and influence from peers (Kroneman et al., 2009, pp.268). Because the fights female students were involved in were described to be deep-seated, where the disruption had started and could continue for six months, teacher 2 reflected on how the feelings underlying female students` fighting might have lasted, because the fights, negative feelings and conflicts had started and it was not really acknowledged. Teacher 2 might be indicating that without the acknowledgment from teachers, regarding social relations, the potential negative feelings and conflicts between female students, the fights and disruption might begin and continue because it is not really being seen and affirmed.

Teacher 3 experiences that female students cause disruption when they leave the classroom and when they come to class late. Teacher 3 said that when one female student has a bad day, it will cause disruption in class by involving other female students in class as well, illustrated by the following quote: *"[...] I have a student who leaves and is very upset and three girls will get up and go to support."* This could be suggesting that female students are performing relational, joint disruptive behavior, as they leave the classroom together. When female students leave the classroom together, as teacher 3 describes, this could indicate that female students might be learning behavior from each other. This could be related to findings indicating that disruptive behavior could spread quickly among peers inside the classroom

(Duesund, 2017, pp.157,158). Also, other research has documented that female students, when at school, tend to spend considerable time with other female students than with male students (Halpern et al., 2011, pp.1707). This could indicate that female students might be learning behavior from other female students, both positive and negative behavior. When female students leave the classroom together, this could be related to the importance of peers as a reference and attachment point, which increases with age, and may involve expectations to do what the group expects from you (Ogden, 2015, pp.19). Female students` loyalty to their social relations with peers, seems to be part of what is causing disruptive behavior displayed by female students. I perceive that teacher 3 is acknowledging female students` disruption, as part of their investment in social relations, when she describes the behavior of several female students leaving the classroom as related to: “[...] *they`re trying to be supportive of their friends [...].*” As teacher 2 described how some female students do not want to work with certain peers in class, this might be indicating that there are conflicts inside the classroom. Whereas teacher 3 did not describe conflicts inside the classroom, rather she often experiences female students to leave the classroom when they are upset, sometimes because of conflicts and situations they find themselves in.

I perceive that teacher 3 acknowledges how social relations could be influencing the level of disruptive behavior in her classroom. Teacher 3 described that disruptive behavior, in terms of leaving the classroom, is something she almost never sees her male students do. Teacher 3 described that when male students display disruptive, off-task behavior in class, it is much more symptomatic of feeling lonely, because they have not been able to talk to anybody about their issues. Compared to female students, which teacher 3 described as having people they can talk to as a resource. Could this be related to what teacher 2 said about female students in his class being more mature than male students, in the sense that female students might be better at creating and maintaining closer social relations with peers? The following quote illustrates how teacher 3 could be indicating that because female students in her class tend to support each other within the social relations they are invested in, more severe, destructive disruptive behaviors in class, potentially displayed by female students, might have been avoided:

[...] I feel like when I have boys who lash out or get upset or get angry ... it`s because they haven`t been able to talk to anybody about what they`re dealing with, and so, they lash out of

nowhere, and you`re like, you know, it can be very, it can be, maybe much more destructive behavior because it`s been pending for a long time [...]. (Teacher 3)

When teacher 3 expressed that she typically has had more destructive, disrespectful behavior from male students, those types of violent and rage disruptive behaviors, it could be related to what teacher 3 described about male students dealing with issues by themselves. Eventually, male students might not be able to deal with their issues alone anymore and let it all out for teacher 3 to cope with, as more severe disruptive behavior inside the classroom. What teacher 3 might be indicating is that, even though female students display disruptive behavior when they leave the classroom together, female students might be using their investment in social relations as a resource and opportunity to deal with potential contributing factors to their disruptive, off-task behavior in class. This could be a possible explanation as to why female students are described to display less destructive and disrespectful behaviors, unlike male students, in the classroom context where teacher 3 works. I interpret that teacher 3 acknowledges and locate female students` social relations both as a contributing cause to female students` disruptive behavior, because it causes female students to leave the classroom together, but also that investment in social relations seems to support female students to sort out their issues.

4.3 Why teachers cope with disruptive behavior among female students the ways they do

In this third subchapter, I aim to discuss how three teachers reported *why* they cope with the disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom in the ways they do. The main argument in this third subchapter of the discussion, is that I believe to have findings indicating that teacher 2 and 3 sometimes cope with disruptive behavior among female students in a gender-specific way. This argument is based on how teacher 2 and 3 seem to provide some reflections regarding the connection of why they sometimes cope with female students in a different way than they do with male students. Teacher 1, on the other hand, mostly referred to *students* instead of *girls* when describing how and why he copes with disruptive behavior in the classroom. Teacher 1 followed up his use of the term *students*, by describing that he perceives that coping skills towards disruptive behavior in the class are universal. Further in the discussion, I choose to use *universal* in the context of how teacher 1 described it: coping skills that are applied towards disruptive behavior among all students, therefore not gender-specific. I believe that how the teachers perceive and interpret disruptive behavior among female students, could be influencing why the teachers cope with the disruptive behavior of female students in the ways they do.

4.3.1 Universal and gender-specific coping skills

Teacher 1 expressed that he copes with disruptive behavior the way he does, because it is what works. This could indicate that his coping skills are not a question about different student gender. When I asked how teacher 1 copes with disruptive behavior among female students, he said that it is: *“pretty much the same”*, as how he copes with male students. Teacher 1 described that coping skills towards disruptive behavior among students is universal, meaning he seems to apply the same coping skills towards disruptive behavior among all students in the class, like the following quote illustrates:

[...] for me personally, I don't think, and I would guess that at this school, there is probably not a lot of difference between how, how the teachers address disruptive behavior between the genders. No, I can't imagine. You know unless, yeah no, I don't think so. I think it's probably pretty universal [...] Not gender-specific. (Teacher 1)

It seems that the gender of the students does not affect which coping skills teacher 1 uses towards disruptive behavior in the classroom. Teacher 1 described that if a female student is disruptive, he as a teacher needs to reduce or remove what is causing the student to be disruptive, and the same goes for male students, therefore universal coping skills. Holm (2010) reports that teachers have expectations towards behavior based on the student gender (pp.258), which could indicate that the way teachers perceive their students, in terms of gender and behavior, might affect the coping skills they use. Blaise (2005) indicates how it might be that classroom interactions between teachers and students, are influenced by teachers expecting female students to behave well. This suggests how teachers could be playing an influential role in maintaining gender stereotypes concerning behavior (pp.23). Because teacher 1 describes how he does not cope with disruptive behavior among male and female students in the classroom in different ways, it may be that potential expectations towards gender and behavior, may not be affecting his coping skills. Perhaps the question of the utility, of differentiating between gender or not when coping with disruptive behavior in the classroom, might explain why teacher 1 described that he copes with disruptive behavior in a universal way. Could it be that different approaches to gender are not practical in the classroom regarding skillful coping of disruptive behavior?

Kroneman et al. (2009) in their research, concerning more severe disruptive behaviors among girls, suggest that there is a need for approaches towards disruptive behavior among girls, based on the characteristics of girls` disruptive behavior (pp.267,268). When research argues that more severe disruptive behaviors among girls could be needing gender-specific approaches, could it be that less severe, off-task behaviors in classrooms also need gender-specific approaches? Asking this question could be related to how research indicates that interventions and prevention regarding disruptive behavior in girls, should have a focus on the period when girls are transitioning from childhood to adolescence, because this could prevent what is documented about how girls might develop more severe disruptive behaviors as they grow older (Kroneman et al., 2009, pp.268). One might reflect on whether it is beneficial to cope with disruptive behavior among students based on their gender, in a universal way or by combining both gender-specific and universal coping skills. Also, reflections on any consequences, and if so, which, that might be associated with the use of universal and/or gender-specific coping skills towards disruptive behavior. I do not aim to come up with answers to these reflections in this thesis. But, if I disregard the severity of disruptive behavior that potentially could be displayed by female students, the following quote may

indicate that there could be a possible gap between earlier research, regarding the suggested need to develop approaches based on the characteristics of girls` disruptive behavior (Kroneman et. al, 2009), and how teacher 1 described his approach to disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom:

... I think, I think it`s just, you got to be a little bit careful on not doing gender stereotyping on how you ... I have two responses: one is like trying not to treat them different if they`re boys and girls, as far behavior goes, but then also acknowledging that there is a difference and that the reasons for the behavior [...] the thing that may be happening in the background that you don`t know of, could be different because of the genders piece ... but a lot of the strategies are gonna be the same I think, a lot of the ways you can defuse and redirect and change and affect change in behavior. Especially negative behavior that you`re trying to get rid of. I think 90 % of those strategies are gonna be the same on the gender ... maybe even higher, 95 %, I think you ... you can deliver the same way. There might be some subtle nuances that you change [...]. (Teacher 1)

The coping skills teacher 1 seems to use towards disruptive behavior in class, except some subtle nuances that one might change, seems to be based on being careful on not doing gender stereotyping. Which could seem to mean to try not to treat students differently because of their gender, as far behavior goes. Teacher 1 described how 90%, maybe even 95% of the coping skills towards disruptive behavior among male and female students are going to be the same. Teacher 1 expressed these percentages, despite that he seems to acknowledge that behind students` disruptive behavior there might be gender-related differences, reasons and explanations to the behavior, that teachers do not always know of. What teacher 1 said about acknowledging that there might be differences regarding what is happening in the background of the behavior, as far gender goes, could be related to what teacher 2 and 3 seemed to reflect on, regarding the acknowledgment of female students` social relations, as social relations could be influencing the background underlying some of the female students` disruptive behaviors.

The reflections provided by teacher 2 appear to be different from the reflections provided by teacher 1, regarding the connection related to why teacher 2 sometimes seems to cope with female students` disruptive behavior in different ways than he does with male students` disruptive behavior. Teacher 2 described that he copes with disruptive behavior among female students the ways he does, because female students` disruptive behavior needs to be acknowledged: “[...] it needs to be acknowledged, you know, they need to know that I see

them, that I'm recognizing them [...]." When I asked a follow-up question, asking teacher 2 to reflect on why he chooses to cope with female students' disruptive behavior, that potentially could be different from how he chooses to cope with disruptive behavior among male students, teacher 2 answered it is because female students are less responsive. Teacher 2 continued describing, by providing an example of a female student that was using her phone in class. The female student kept being on her phone, even though teacher 2 said he could not have her on the phone. That is why teacher 2 said he made it a: "*a big deal*", by being directive, because she kept being on her phone. This could be related to what teacher 2 described about another girl that is using her phone in class, where teacher 2 said that he needs to be confrontational sometimes: "*If she didn't have the behaviors that were disruptive, I wouldn't need to do it (be confrontational).*"

When I asked teacher 3 why she copes with disruptive behavior among female students the way she does, she answered what I perceive is related to female students' disruptive behavior, categorized as leaving the classroom and coming late to class. The following quote illustrates what teacher 3 described regarding, what I perceive as, acknowledging female students when they come back to class, and how she seems to involve the female students if they are having a bad day, by making deals with them about the schoolwork:

[...] And so, when they (girls) do come back to class [...] a day later, two days later [...] I think often times they don't trust that they can catch up [...] They go: "oh, well I'm so behind, she doesn't, she will not even give me the work. I'm done, yeah, I give up." Whereas, if I go outside and be like: "you're gonna be missing class right now. This is clearly a bigger issue for you right now. You will need to talk to me [...] and you're gonna have to make this up, but if you're okay with that [...] then I'm okay with that. You always have a chance, you can come back, we can figure this out." [...] they can send me emails and say: "miss (teachers name) I'm not coming to school today, I'm having a bad mental health day. Can you give me a day? Is there anything we're missing?" Right, they can do it preventively, before it's even a problem. And I have found that that helps, because if they didn't send me the email and say: "hey, I need a day", they would have come in, they would have gotten upset and [...] Cried in the middle of class and cause, you know, disruption. And instead, they go: "no, no, no [...] let me stay home, give me the work, I'll do it myself. (Teacher 3)

In the PISA 2018 assessment, the United States is one of seven countries where more female students than male students, have been found to have skipped school in the past (OECD, 2019, pp.78). When female students do not come to class and leave the class, skipping school,

it is causing off-task, disruptive behavior because they miss instruction, teacher 3 described. Still, teacher 3 seems to be coping with disruptive behavior among female students the ways she does, by acting preventively and proactively, acknowledging that they are having a bad day, as well as support female students with schoolwork when they do come back to class. Teacher 3 seems to be collaborating with female students by giving choices related to the schoolwork. I perceive that this collaboration indicates acknowledgment from teacher 3 and might contribute to female students feeling ownership over their own lives. It could also seem like the acknowledgment that girls are having a bad day, which involves making deals with female students about doing the schoolwork at home, is reducing potential disruption that could have otherwise arisen in class.

I perceive that reflections made by teacher 3 provided interpretative possibilities, when I aimed to examine why teacher 3 copes with disruptive behavior among female students the way she does. When I asked teacher 3, a follow-up question about her reflections on what other teachers might think about any potential differences between female and male students' behavior. Teacher 3 answered by saying that she would not say it is a boy or a girl thing, mostly. Based on the answer teacher 3 provided, it could be perceived that this answer might be in line with what teacher 1 said about universal skillful coping of disruptive behavior among students. Still, what I perceive as different between teacher 1 and 3, is that teacher 3 added "*mostly*", when saying behavior is not a boy or a girl thing. Although teacher 1 said that: "[...] *there might be some subtle nuances that you change [...]*", indicating that maybe some of the coping skills toward male and female students' disruptive behavior could be different in some situations, I did not perceive that teacher 1 reflected on what these potential *nuances* could consist of. While during the interview with teacher 3, despite that she said: "... *I wouldn't say it's a boy or a girl thing, mostly*", I perceived that teacher 3 reflected on some gender-specific coping skills towards disruptive behavior, and by this seemed to describe examples of why she sometimes copes differently between student gender, regarding disruptive behavior. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) are saying that ambiguous responses from participants, might be due to important and real reflections of contradictions in the participants' lived experiences, which may entail interpretive possibilities (pp.48). Therefore, it might be that teacher 3 has reflected on and is aware of using universal coping skills towards students in some situations, but at the same time, she could be aware of how she might use gender-specific coping skills in other situations with disruptive behavior.

Teacher 3 expressed that she does not believe that teachers have the power to control students by saying: “*do this because I am a teacher.*” Instead, teacher 3 described that she needs to convince her students, that they and her have the same goal, because then they will do what she wants them to do. The following quote illustrates how teacher 3, instead of telling students that they need to stop disrupting with their phone in class, will focus on a common goal between her and her students, which possibly also is teaching students why their behavior is disruptive. Teacher 3 does this by using motivational strategies that focus on more adequate behavior:

[...] “You know you can be on your phone if you want, but what we`re learning right now is very important for your ability to do well in a job. So, that`s a poor choice you are making. You can make it, but if I was being smart and wanted to get a job next week, I would be paying attention.” And they go: “Ooh yeah”, you know, and then they put their phone down. (Teacher 3)

I argue that teacher 3 seems to have thought through how she can cope with female students` disruptive behavior in class, sometimes different from how she copes with disruptive behavior among male students in class. My argument is based on how teacher 3 described that she uses different motivation strategies towards female and male students in class, if she experiences students as disruptive and not paying attention. I asked a follow-up question referring to if teacher 3 perceive that her motivation strategy regarding the possibility to get a job, work for both male and female students in her class. Teacher 3 answered by saying that the motivation strategy of getting a job work most of the time for both male and female students but added that female students in her class maybe are less likely to take that motivation strategy compared to male students. The following quote illustrates what teacher 3 described regarding how female students, in addition, need more of the social motivation. To be motivated by making use of, what I perceive, their investment in social relations and be motivated by social gains they might achieve, that could be of importance to them, as a result of displaying appropriate behavior in the classroom:

[...] I think most of my boys are very much like job, money-oriented... and I would say my girls more need social motivation. ... and so like, I will use different tactics on different students, girls in this example [...]: “Hey, like ... I know you don`t think that learning new words is very exciting, but when you`re trying to have arguments and you want to be understood”, you know, “using different words so you can get your point across very clear, is

gonna be very important for you. Don't you, wouldn't you like to be better at that?" And they're like: "Yeah, actually that's probably a good idea." (Teacher 3)

Social motivation seems to be used by teacher 3 as a coping skill to cope with disruptive, off-task behavior among female students in the classroom. Maybe this could be related to what teacher 3 described regarding how female students in her class tend to spend much time valuing social time over academic time. Teacher 3 seems to acknowledge female students' investment in social relations and therefore motivate female students to display adequate behavior in social settings, which might be of importance to them, instead of off-task, disruptive behavior. In situations with disruptive behavior in the classroom and because peers often mean a lot to youth, teachers might make use of this in positive ways, to potentially promote and achieve academic and social learning inside the classroom (Ogden, 2015, pp.20). It could be perceived that teacher 3 seems to do this, by making use of situations where female students display disruptive behavior, combined with their investment in social relations and social motivation, to learn new words. By adding to the discussion what teacher 3 described about how and why she uses different motivation strategies towards some male and female students' disruptive behavior in class, it is with the intention to illustrate the possible connection between how and why teacher 3 sometimes uses gender-specific coping skills towards students in the classroom context.

5. Summary

The purpose of my research question aimed to examine:

How do teachers reflect on their coping skills towards disruptive behavior when experiencing this among female students?

My findings indicate that three teachers in Middle School and High School in the United States, seem to experience disruptive behavior among female students during class, to various extent. All three teachers described female students as potential contributors to disruptive behavior in some way. However, teacher 1 and 3 tended to explain that some of the female students` disruptive behaviors not necessarily are displayed with the intention to disrupt. Teacher 1 reported that female students for whatever reason seem to have less disruptive behavior but that the school has had female students who can be and are disruptive. Teacher 2 reported that female students are more disruptive than male students. Teacher 3 reported examples where she described female students in the context of disruptive behavior. The three teachers described, to different extent, that female students display disruptive behavior when they: use phones during class, display disruptive talking, are not paying attention during class, come to class late, leave the classroom, and when they seem to be involved in conflicts, both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, the teachers tended, to varying degrees, to describe female students` disruptive behavior as a manifestation of something else going on in the female students` lives. From parts of the descriptions provided by teacher 1 and 3, I interpret that some of the female students` disruptive behaviors are described as not necessarily being displayed with the intention to disrupt, because the disruptive behavior could be related to for instance trauma and negative family situations. Still, the behaviors are described as off-task, disruptive behavior by teacher 1 and 3. Teacher 2 also reflected on the possibility that some female students` disruptive behavior in the classroom could be related to problematic situations female students find themselves in. But, in addition, teacher 2 reported that disruptive behavior among some female students could be displayed intentionally.

My findings indicate that the three teachers seem to cope with disruptive behavior displayed by female students, by acknowledging female students` expression of disruptive behavior in the classroom. Examples described by the teachers, indicating that they acknowledge female students` disruptive behaviors, are when they to different extent: proactively address female students` disruptive behavior, by trying to understand what situations female students` find

themselves in, both inside and outside the classroom context, that might be causing disruption, point out and redirect female students` disruptive behavior both directly and indirectly, offer choices related to the disruptive behavior, try to collaborate with female students, and make deals about the schoolwork that needs to be done. In addition, teacher 2 reported using verbal, words, coping skills towards female students, while teacher 3 reported using a nonverbal system of points to cope with disruptive behavior among all students. Another argument is that teacher 2 and 3 seem to cope with female students` disruptive behavior, by expanding their acknowledgment of female students` disruptive behavior to involve acknowledgment of the social relations female students seem to be invested in and part of. Teacher 3 reported what seems to indicate that a lot of her female students are invested in social relations. This means that her female students` support of each other is causing off-task behavior because they tend to value social time over academic time and therefore miss instruction. Teacher 2 described what seems to indicate that some female students` disruptive behavior might occur because of social relations, where the relations could be contributors to conflicts and disruption in the classroom.

My findings indicate that all three teachers seem to be aware of their coping skills, meaning they reflected on what may appear to be a possible connection between how and why they cope with the disruptive behavior among female students in the ways they do. Based on the reflections teacher 2 and 3 provided, my findings indicate that teacher 2 and 3 seem to sometimes cope with disruptive behavior among female students in a gender-specific way. For instance, teacher 2 reported that because female students are less responsive in situations of disruptive behavior, more verbal, “upfront” and observative than male students, teacher 2 copes with female students` disruptive behavior using verbal, sometimes direct and confrontational, coping skills. Whereas teacher 3 reported that parts of her coping skills towards disruptive behavior among female students, involves the use of social motivation as well as coping skills that seem to be related to female students` disruptive behavior, categorized as leaving the classroom and coming late to class. Teacher 1 mostly referred to *students* in general when he described his reflections. This may be in line with what teacher 1 described regarding that he perceives that coping skills towards disruptive behavior among all students in the class are universal. Teacher 1 also described what seems to indicate that one as a teacher should be a little careful about not doing gender stereotyping, as well as acknowledge that behind students` disruptive behavior there might be gender-related differences, reasons and explanations to the behavior, that teachers do not always know of.

6. Limitations, possible implications and further research

I want to address possible limitations related to my study because every research has its limitations and biases, which are important to be aware of and critical of in own research. To some extent possibly reduce the influence of biases in research, is to be aware of the influence these biases could potentially have (Maxwell, 2013, pp.124). Being a young first-time researcher, I have limited experience with conducting research. For instance, I asked follow-up questions, which is a central part of qualitative interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.170). Still, I acknowledge that I could have asked follow-up questions where I did not do so, which might indicate that potential elements were lost during the interviews. Since I conducted interviews, I used myself as a researcher, as the key instrument (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.108). Therefore, a potential limitation, that might interfere with my results, is related to how my subjectivity and influence as a researcher might have influenced the interview setting to varying degrees. I tried to be aware of how my responses could influence the teachers' answers, which made me tone down my contribution to the dialogues as much as I could, and let the teachers have the scheduled time to talk. Still, I tried to assure the teachers that I was listening by nodding my head and making eye contact. This way I tried to assure the teachers that I was responsive and acknowledged their experiences and reflections. Also, I tried to be aware of how my nonverbal communication and emotional expression, could influence the teachers' answers. Conducting interviews, in research, often involves asymmetrical power structures in the dialogue, characterized by a structure in which the researcher is asking and leading the interview and the participant is answering questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp.51,52).

Another potential limitation in my study, is related to the relatively small sample of three teachers, in the context of generalizability and representativeness across a broader population of teachers. The three teachers' subjective, lived experiences and reflections are closely related to the focus and context of the study in question, indicating that findings from my study, based on three interviews, probably is of low generalizability. However, my findings might indicate possible suggestions and be used to gain insight into how some teachers reflect on their coping skills towards disruptive behavior, when experiencing this among female students in the classroom.

The coping skills presented in my study are not promoted as absolute solutions. However, my findings may serve as a possible contribution to educational practice in schools, by possibly generate understanding of the phenomenon of disruptive behavior, as well as possibly contribute to further evolve the knowledge base regarding skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students. A possible implication my study might have is to provide insights into how teachers` acknowledgment of disruptive behavior and social relations, might be parts of possible coping skills towards female students` disruptive behavior. As well as provide insights into the reasoning behind three teachers` choices for coping with the disruptive behavior among female students in the ways they do. Teachers` coping skills may seem to be influenced by whether the teacher experiences and perceives female students` disruptive behavior in need of gender-specific coping skills, or as part of universal coping skills that are applied towards disruptive behavior among all students, regardless of student gender, in the classroom. Maybe some teachers resort to both gender-specific and universal coping skills in the classroom.

Lastly, suggestions for future research may address teachers` skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students with a greater range of teachers than in this study. How several teachers cope with disruptive behavior when experiencing this among female students in the classroom, could be further examined by interviewing, maybe also observing, teachers from different geographical areas and other types of schools in the United States. Examining the potential differences between male and female teachers` skillful coping of disruptive behavior among female students in the classroom remains an intriguing question for future research.

7. Final reflections

I started my thesis by presenting a 12-year-old girl, at the summer camp where I worked one summer, who displayed what I perceived as disruptive behavior. The other teachers were giving her up, but I decided to spend extra time with her and to the best of my ability try to guide her. It was challenging to cope with her behavior, as her behavior caused disruption and noise, she did not do what she was expected to do and ended up in conflicts with peers. Based on the experience I had with this girl, I left the camp at the end of the summer, knowing that I need more knowledge to cope with disruptive behavior among girls. I feel that I have acquired tools, knowledge and coping skills for my toolbox, that I wish to explore more as a teacher within special education. For instance, I might cope with female students' disruptive behavior by acknowledging their disruptive behavior, proactively address and reflect on possible explanations to their disruptive behavior, offer choices related to their behavior, as well as acknowledge female students' potential investment in social relations and use social motivation as part of my coping skills.

As said in the introduction chapter: I believe that how teachers experience and perceive female students' disruptive behavior, could have an impact on teachers' reflections regarding their skillful coping towards disruptive behavior, when experiencing this among female students. I also believe experiences and perceptions might influence why teachers cope with the disruptive behavior of female students in the ways they do in the classroom. For coping skills to become part of the teachers' toolbox, it might be useful for teachers to reflect on their coping skills concerning what works and why. This might help teachers to be aware of how they use their coping skills and maybe increase teachers' reflections on why they cope with disruptive behavior in the ways they do.

The presentation of how three American teachers reflected on their coping skills towards disruptive behaviors when experiencing this among female students, might be a step on the path to further develop teachers' skillful coping towards disruptive behavior in the classroom context.

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9. Appendix

Appendix 1: Approval letter from the Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS), Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of California Berkeley (UC Berkeley)



Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS)
Office for Protection of Human Subjects (OPHS)

1608 Fourth Street, Suite 220
Berkeley, CA 94710-5940
510 642-7461
ophs@berkeley.edu
cphs.berkeley.edu
FWA# 00006252



NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: *January 13, 2020*
TO: *Elliot TURIEL, Education*
Liv Duesund, Sociology, Trond PETERSEN, Sociology
CPHS PROTOCOL NUMBER: *2019-10-12677*
CPHS PROTOCOL TITLE: *Teachers' Skillful Coping with Disruptive Behavior in Norwegian and American Classrooms*
FUNDING SOURCE(S): *NONE*

A(n) *new* application was submitted for the above-referenced protocol. Your submission has been reviewed by the Office for Protection of Human Subjects (OPHS) and granted exemption, as it satisfies the Federal and/or UC Berkeley requirements under category(ies) 2.

Effective Date: *January 13, 2020*

Expiration Date: *January 12, 2030*

Amendments/Modifications: Any change in the design, conduct, or key personnel of this research must be approved by the OPHS prior to implementation. For more information, see [Amend/Modify an Approved Protocol](#).

Please note that although your research has been deemed exempt from full committee and subcommittee review, you still have a responsibility to protect your subjects, and the research should be conducted in accordance with the principles of the Belmont Report. Download the Belmont Report at this link: www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html.

This approval is issued under University of California, Berkeley Federalwide Assurance #00006252.

Note: Exempt determinations are good for ten years. If the study continues beyond the ten-year period, the protocol must be cloned and re-submitted for an updated exempt determination.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact the OPHS staff at 642-7461 or email ophs@berkeley.edu.

Sincerely,

Office for Protection of Human Subjects (OPHS)
UC Berkeley

Appendix 2: Letter of consent provided to participants

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO



SAN FRANCISCO • SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

Consent to Participate in Research *Teachers' Skillful Coping with Disruptive Behavior in Norwegian and American Classrooms*

Key Information

- You are being invited to participate in a research study. Participation in research is voluntary.
- The purpose of the study is to examine how teachers cope with disruptive behavior when it occurs in class.
- The study will take a total of 45 minutes, and you will be asked to take part in an interview and fill out a survey.
- Risks and/or discomforts may include addressing issues that could be uncomfortable to talk about, for example your own teaching practices and/or students' disruptive behavior
- There is no direct benefit to you. The results from the study may inform researchers, policy makers and practitioners on how disruptive behavior is currently addressed in classrooms.

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Professor Liv Duesund. I am a Project Scientist at the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) Department of Sociology and a Professor at the University of Oslo, Department of Special Needs Education. I am working with Professor Elliot Turiel, Graduate School of Education, UC Berkeley and Professor Trond Petersen, Department of Sociology, UC Berkeley. I would like to invite you to take part in our research study, which examines how teachers cope with disruptive behavior in schools.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this research, we will conduct an interview with you at a time and location of your choice. The interview will involve questions about your experience of disruptive behavior in schools, how you cope with disruptive behavior within your profession as a teacher, and classroom management. You will also be asked to fill out a brief survey about similar topics. Total time spent should be about 45 minutes. With your permission, we will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be audiotaped, we will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable or change your mind for any reason during the interview, we can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time. The survey will be in paper-and-pencil. It will be administered at the end of the interview.

Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. It is hoped that the research will inform researchers, policymakers, teachers, and other school professionals on the current situation regarding how teachers cope with disruptive behavior when it occurs in class.

Risks/Discomforts

Some of the research questions may make you uncomfortable or upset. You are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to, or to stop the interview at any time.

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking precautions to minimize this risk. No data will include your name.

Confidentiality

Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personal identifiable information will not be used.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, we will store the recordings on an encrypted computer. Transcriptions will be stored separately from the audiotapes. The answered surveys will be stored in a locked cabinet in a safe location. Consent forms will be stored separated from all other study records. The study records will be accessible to members of the research team (mentioned on page 1), one Postdoctoral Fellow and three master's students from the Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo.

We will transcribe the audio recordings as soon as possible after the interviews, and then destroy the tapes. When the research is completed, we will save the transcriptions and other study data for possible use in future research done by myself or others within the research team. We will retain these records for up to 10 years after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality of this study data.

Your information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Rights

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in the research and whether or not you choose to answer any questions or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me at:

Mobile: (510) 378-8827

Email: liv.duesund@isp.uio.no

If you have any questions about your rights or treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the University of California at Berkeley's Committee for Protection of Human Subjects at 510-642-7461, or e-mail subjects@berkeley.edu.

CONSENT

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

Participant's Name (*please print*)

Participant's Signature

Date

Appendix 3: Interview guide

Teachers' Skillful Coping with Disruptive Behavior in Norwegian and American Classrooms. Responsible: Magnar Oedegaard – Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo. magnar.odegard@isp.uio.no, Liv Duesund, Professor, University of Oslo, Department of Special Needs Education and Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, liv.duesund@isp.uio.no

Interview

This interview is about your thoughts on disruptive behavior in schools. In this case, disruptive behavior is defined as: *'Any behavior that is perceived as sufficiently off-task in the classroom, as to distract the teachers and/or class-peers from learning activities.'*

Questions about your experience of disruptive behavior in school

1. Could you describe your general experience of disruptive behavior during class?
2. Could you describe your experience with disruptive behavior among girls during class?
3. What do you think triggers students to be disruptive during class?
4. How could the occurrence of disruptive behavior during class be prevented?

Questions about how you cope with disruptive behavior

5. If disruptive behavior affects your teaching, could you describe how?
6. Which measures do you generally take when disruptive behavior occurs?
7. When girls show disruptive behavior, what are your ways to approach and cope with their behavior?
8. When girls display disruptive behavior, why do you approach and cope with their behavior the ways that you do?
9. How would you evaluate your own skills in coping with disruptive behavior?
10. What do you think is the best way to approach disruptive behavior?

Questions about your profession as a teacher

11. What do you think is the most important aspect of your work as a teacher?
12. What would you say is your most important skill as a teacher, and why?
13. Could you describe the importance of gut feeling in your work as a teacher?

Questions about classroom management

14. How do you establish rules for behavior in your classroom?
15. How do you think your students perceive those rules?
16. Could you describe how you establish relations to students?
17. Could you describe challenges you encounter in establishing positive relations to students?