Social Studies Teachers' Experiences

A comparative study on teachers

in Korea and Norway

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Abstract

Teachers are one of the main factors that determine the quality of education. Their way of teaching and perceiving can influence student development in many ways. In this regard, it is important to explore the experiences of teachers and the various factors that have influenced the shape of their experiences. According to The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2013), Korean teachers have reported less job satisfaction than that of Norwegian teachers (OECD, 2014). To compare the educational reality between Korea and Norway, this study focuses on the experiences of Social Studies teachers (SSTs), and divides them into five main areas: perception of the subject, class practices, interactions with students, interactions with colleagues, and working environments.

This study adopts a qualitative strategy and comparative case design. Data was mainly collected through semi-structured interviews with five Korean SSTs and four Norwegian SSTs. Participant observations and document studies were also conducted in order to gain more contextual understanding. The data analysis was guided by thematic analysis and through the lens of 'reflective practice' as well as Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory.

It has been found that both groups of SSTs in the two different countries often regard the goal of Social Studies as fostering independent thinking with critical attitudes in their students. They also recognize that Social Studies deals with a variety of changes in society, and consequently prefer to conduct an activity-oriented class based on horizontal relationships with their own students. The differences between the two groups mainly derive from their respective social context, in which educational policies as well as socio-cultural aspects have significantly influenced the shape of their experiences in teaching. Especially, the two different grading systems, *the Relative* in Korea and *the Absolute* in Norway, play a big part in the differences because it impacts the teachers' class practices and interactions. For the Korean teachers in this study, it has been especially difficult for them to harmonize the activity-oriented class with the required assessment. Compared to the Norwegian teachers, the Korean teachers have a less communicative culture and more intensive workloads. In this regard, it can be said that Korean teachers experience more pressure in their careers than that of their Norwegian counterparts.

Keywords: Social Studies, teachers' experiences, upper secondary education in Korea, upper secondary education in Norway, reflective practice, Bronfenbrenner

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List of Abbreviations

CSAT	College Scholastic Ability Test
EST	Ecological System Theory
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICCS	International Civic and Citizenship Education Study
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KCUE	Korean Council for University Education
KDI	Korea Development Institute
KEDI	Korean Educational Development Institute
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NABO	National Assembly Budget Office
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
RISS	Research Information Sharing Service
SST	Social Studies Teacher
SSTs	Social Studies Teachers
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
USS	Upper Secondary School
Vg	Videregående skole

1 Introduction

I have worked as a **Social Studies teacher** (SST) in public secondary schools in South Korea (hereafter, Korea) since 2007. When I was a newly appointed teacher, I was busy absorbing the existing norms of school climates, wherein summarizing and delivering the contents of textbook were often regarded as the best way of teaching and having students under control was recognized as a virtue of a competent teacher.

After years of experience in the first school I taught in and in the midst of moving on to a second school to teach, I realized the idealized notion of what a competent, skilled instructor was and the ability to focus on controlling a classroom had been something I grew to disagree with. I realized that cramming knowledge led to fragmented understanding and the distance between students and what I meant to teach had grown farther apart. The harder I worked in my profession, the more exhausted I felt. I was confused about whether the way I was conducting myself as a teacher was sustainable or not. This uncertainty has led me to reflect on the kind of teacher I was, why I chose to teach Social Studies, the main goal of Social Studies, and what ways I could build good relationships with my students.

Teachers are one of main factors that determine the quality of education (Lee, H., 2013), where the teachers' way of teaching and perceiving can significantly influence student development. Looking back on myself in this regard, I realized that I had been losing my confidence as a teacher and drifting without a clear vision of *being* and *working* as a teacher. I wondered if I had been the only one to experience this kind of drift or whether it had only been a common concern among Korean teachers. I also wondered if this had been common in other countries as well. As a result, this study emerged from the personal concerns I had accumulated since I started working as a teacher in Korea, and these questions brought me to Norway to broaden my perspectives on teaching and to look for a new way of educating.

According to the results of The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2013), an international survey of lower secondary teachers implemented by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 66.5% of Korean teachers reported their profession as valued in society, the third highest rank out of TALIS countries, whereas only 30.6% of Norwegian teachers reported this (OECD, 2014). In addition, the ratio of upper secondary teacher's salary to earnings for full-time, full-year workers with tertiary education aged 25 to 64 is 1.34 in Korea, the second highest among OECD countries which has the average of 0.89, whereas 0.75 in Norway (OECD, 2013, p.390).

In terms of teachers' job satisfaction, however, the result was reversed as 94.9% of Norwegian teachers were satisfied with their job, ranked at the fifth highest, while 86.6% of Korean teachers did so, ranked at the bottom fifth (OECD, 2014). In detail, Table 1 presents the specific comparison of teachers' job satisfaction between Korea and Norway.

Table 1. Teachers' job satisfaction in TALIS 2013

Questions	Korea (%)	Norway (%)	Average (%)
1. The advantages of being a teacher clearly outweigh the disadvantages.	85.8	91.2	77.4
2. If I could decide again, I would still choose to work as a teacher.	63.4	76.7	77.6
3. I would like to change to another school if that were possible.	31.2	11.6	21.2
4. I regret that I decided to become a teacher.	**20.1**	**8.3**	9.5
5. I enjoy working at this school.	**74.4**	**96.8**	89.7
6. I wonder whether it would have been better to choose another profession.	40.2	38.2	31.6
7. I would recommend my school as a good place to work.	**65.6**	**91.3**	84
8. I think that the teaching profession is valued in society.	66.5	30.6	30.9
9. I am satisfied with my performance in this school.	**79.4**	**96**	92.6
10. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	**86.6**	**94.9**	91.2

Source: TALIS 2013 Database (OECD, 2014)

The above Table 1 tells that a smaller proportion of Korean and a larger proportion of Norwegian teachers were satisfied with their job relative to most other TALIS countries. Especially in the results of questions shown in bold (4, 5, 7, 9, 10), we could know that Norwegian teachers were more satisfied with their job compared to Korean teachers.

What makes this difference between the two countries? In order to look at the reality of upper secondary school teachers, I attempt to explore Norwegian contexts where high standard of social welfare, human rights, and the quality of life have been achieved (Jung & Kim, 2015). Granted that fostering a democratic citizen is one of main goals of Social Studies, Norway can be a good example (Mathé, 2016). What does it mean to work as a Social Studies teacher in the context of Norwegian society?

To sum up, this study intends to explore the educational reality of Korean and Norwegian teachers by focusing on their experiences. Through the comparison of their experiences, this study aims to grasp the meaning of working as Social Studies teachers in the two societies, and then suggest a way of constructing more sustainable teaching environments for Korean teachers.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study is conducted by a teacher in order to represent the voices of in-service teachers in public education sector. This means it may describe and analyze the reality of teachers more vividly and accurately in terms of school contexts and atmosphere. In this regard, this study can become a cornerstone when it comes to preventing school fields from being otherized.

Working as a teacher in Korea over the last ten years, I have longed for a new perspective on educating. Escaped from an existing way of thinking, to be more flexible in dealing with a problematic situation, I had hoped to gain insights on the philosophy and methodology of pedagogy. Namely, this study reflects my personal desire to be an experienced teacher and to implement and practice good teaching.

This study intends to identify the experiences of Korean SSTs from an insider's point of view, wherein the reality of the Korean school context is interpreted through the lens of someone who clearly understands the Korean school environment. It can also serve as an opportunity for Korean teachers to reflect on themselves and the context in which they work. In addition, Korean teachers may gain some inspirations in solving their educational issues through observing how teachers in Norway perceive their experiences and issues in the classroom, rather than being overwhelmed by the reality of the Korean school environment and thus taking it for granted. Namely, this study intends to suggest a general direction to my fellow Korean SSTs in their educational practices.

To sum up, this study aims to recognize the reality of Korean teachers by exploring their experiences as well as to suggest a better way for working by exploring the experiences of Norwegian teachers. For this reason, this study targets Korean teachers as the main audience.

1.2 Definition of Terms

This study compares the experiences of upper secondary Social Studies teachers in their educational practices. Given that it is set out to compare Korea and Norway, it is necessary to clarify the definition of 'upper secondary school' and 'Social Studies' as well as the meaning of 'teachers' experiences'. The definitions are as follows:

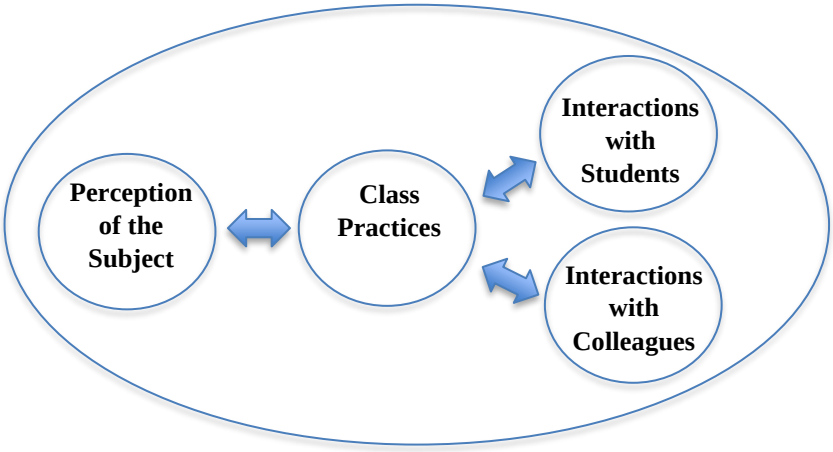
Upper secondary school (USS, Korean: *go-deung-hak-gyo*, Norwegian: *videregåendeskole*) refers to the final stage of the School Year System, just before higher education. It corresponds

to grades 10-12 of the 12-year-education in Korea, and grades 11-13 of the 13-year-education in Norway. When the term 'USS' is mentioned in this study, it refers to 'General high school' in Korea and 'General study programs' in Norway.

Social Studies is a school subject in both countries. In Korea, it refers to the General Social Studies subject (*il-ban-sa-hoe*) comprising Integrated Social Studies (*tong-hap-sa-hoe*), mandatory for first-year students, and three electives: Politics & Law; Economics; and Sociology & Culture. In Norway, Social Studies also consists of several specific sub-subjects: Social science (*Samfunnsfag*), mandatory for first-year students, and two electives: Sociology & Social anthropology; Politics & Human rights. One difference is that, in Norway, Economics is not included within the subject of Social Studies. That is, Korean SSTs teach Economics whereas Norwegian SSTs do not.

Dewey (1938) conceptualized the meaning of 'experience' as "the interaction between external and internal conditions of a person" (as cited in Eom, 2011). Following the concept of Dewey, this study defines **teachers' experiences** as 'life experiences as a teacher through various interactions' and limits its scope into teachers' educational practices in their ordinary school life.

Figure 1. Teachers' experiences (in educational practices)



Note: This figure is made by the researcher based on the operational definition of the concept in this study.

As seen above Figure 1, the aspects of teachers' experiences in this study consist of the following: (1) perception of the subject, (2) class practices, (3) interactions with students, and (4) interactions with colleagues. More specific details are presented in Chapter 4.1.

1.3 Research Question

Teachers practice their class teaching (hereafter, class) with pedagogical content knowledge and make relationships with students and colleagues in the space of school, in which the subject, class, and interactions with students and colleagues can be the main area of taking important parts of teachers' educational practices. Their narratives, however, can be somewhat different depending on their social contexts. Therefore, the experiences of Social Studies teachers in Korea and Norway need to be interpreted within their own context. In this regard, in order to fully comprehend what they have experienced, a research question is raised:

What are the similarities and differences between the experiences of upper secondary Social Studies teachers in Korea and Norway?

The experiences of SSTs are examined with an emphasis on their subject, class, and interactions with students and colleagues: 1) how they perceive the subject of Social Studies; 2) how they have practiced a class teaching; 3) how they have interacted with students and colleagues.

To sum up, this study explores and compares the experiences of Social Studies teachers, focusing on the reality of Korean teachers and referencing the reality of Norwegian teachers. The similarities may deepen our understanding of the educational reality of teachers, and the differences may give us an opportunity to see the existing problems that have not been recognized before. Thus, this information can help us find a new way of understanding education.

1.4 Limitations and Delimitations

This study focuses on the voices of Social Studies teachers in terms of what experiences they have and how they perceive them. With this regard, interviews were adopted as the main instrument of data collection. The interviews, however, were only conducted with teachers (five Koreans and four Norwegians), which means school authorities, students, parents, and policy makers were not included due to the constraints of various situations.

As a qualitative research study, the results cannot be generalized to the rest of the respective populations. The teachers interviewed for this study work in a big cities, Daegu, Korea and Oslo, Norway, which means they may have different experiences and spatial contexts from those in the rural areas in their respective countries.

Also, it is evident that there is bias due to the fact that I have worked as a teacher in Korea. Because of my experiences, I have the advantage of grasping sensitive details and understanding the contexts in a clearer way, especially when it comes to the Korean school contexts. On the other hand, this makes it difficult as a researcher to be objective in this study. Especially, in the process of sampling, three Korean participants were teachers that I had already met through an in-service training program; it is possible that this may influence the study in some way.

Another limitation of the study was language. Since I am Korean, the approach to literature written in Norwegian was challenging. As a result, there could be gaps in understanding the previous research on Social Studies and teachers in Norway. Inevitably, this study relies heavily on literature written in Korean and English, and the overall content of this study focus more on the Korean side. Also, by conducting interviews with Norwegian teachers in English and Korean teachers in Korean, it may naturally result in some language discrepancies in my understanding and communication with the two teacher groups.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This study comprises of nine chapters. Chapter 1 states a brief introduction to the topic and purpose of this study. The definition of main terms and research question as well as the limitations of this study are also presented. Chapter 2 provides a brief account of background information of Korea and Norway. Chapter 3 presents contextual frameworks regarding the education system, upper secondary education, and the Social Studies subject in Korea and Norway, respectively. Chapter 4 presents an account of the literature relevant to this study in accordance with teachers' experiences and Social Studies teachers in Korea and Norway. Chapter 5 presents two analytical frameworks of this study, *Reflective Practice* and *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory*. Chapter 6 unfolds the arrangement of the proposed qualitative research methodology: the selected research strategy and design, sampling, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness of the research process, and the ethical considerations of this study. Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 consist of the main findings and discussion of this study. Chapter 7 focuses on illustrating the findings of the acquired data and information obtained from the semi-structured interviews, and Chapter 8 carries out an interpretation and analysis of the findings based on the research question, reviewed literature, and the frameworks. Chapter 9 draws conclusion and presents policy recommendations. It also contains recommendations for further research.

2 Background of the Countries

As Simola (2005) mentioned that education and schooling are deeply rooted in sociocultural and institutional factors of the society, the experiences of teachers cannot be explained without relating them to the societies in which they belong. In this regard, to compare the experiences of teachers in Korea and Norway, this chapter presents background information of the two countries focusing on demographic, political, economic, and social aspects with the use of research, national reports, statistical data, and news articles. In the social aspect, specifically, Koreans' high aspiration of education and Norwegians' culture of egalitarianism are presented.

Figure 2. The geographic location of Korea and Norway in the world map

Source: http://leehyekang.blogspot.kr

2.1 Korea

Demographic aspect

Korea is a peninsula located in East Asia with a total area of 100,210 km^2, and a total population of 51.36 million as of 2017. Seoul, the capital of Korea, has a total population of 9.77 million, about a half of total population along with its neighboring region, Gyeonggi-province of 12.79 million (Statistics Korea, 2019a). The population density is 513 P/km^2 (ibid.), 23rd highest in the world as well as 34 times denser than that of Norway. Even though Korea has been gradually changing into a multi-cultural society since 1990s, de facto, the demographics are close to a homogeneous society. As of 2018, about 2,360,000 foreigners resided in Korea,

where their proportion had been increased to 4.57% of a total population compared to that of 2014, 3.50% (Statistics Korea, 2019b). The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has dropped significantly from 2.64 in 1978 to 1.55 in 1988; 1.45 in 1998; 1.19 in 2008; and 0.98 in 2018 (Statistics Korea, 2019c), which has been recognized as a serious problem causing a wide range of crises throughout society including a drastic decline in the number of students and a difficulty of mapping a demand and supply for teachers.

Political aspect

During the thirty years of authoritarian rule since 1962, Koreans had been under restriction of freedom of speech. To achieve a democratization, citizens had shed a lot of blood and sweat during the Gwangju Democratic Uprising (May 18, 1980) and the June Uprising (1987). Since the launching of a civilian government in 1993, Korea has accomplished a democratic political system (The Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index, 2019).

Economic aspect

Korea has achieved economic development with a rapid growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by an average of 7.3% a year during 1970-2010 (Korea Development Institute, 2012). In the early stage of industrialization, government wielded strong influence on the market, from which Korean economy has been driven and strategized as an export-oriented economy where the main items of exports have upgraded from light goods to heavy and chemical products, and then to high-tech sectors such as semiconductor (Lim, H., 1999). Since 2000s, the annual growth rate has been about 3.4% (Bank of Korea, 2019). As of 2018, the nominal GDP was $1,655.608 billion, the eleventh largest economy in the world, and the thirtieth largest GDP per capita of $32,046 (International Monetary Fund, October 2018).

Social aspect

A coined word, *Education Fever* (*gyo-youk-yeol*), is a useful term to explain Koreans' aspiration for education, referring to "an intensified social disposition and orientation that reinforces and exaggerates the pursuit of higher academic attainment" by Lee and Shouse (2008) (as cited in Kim & Bang, 2017). This "overheated" aspiration for education in Korea has been widely spread and intensified throughout the rapid economic growth period between the 1960s and 1990s (ibid.), during which academic credentials played a key role for employment as well as social relationships, and which continues to function as social capital (Kim, W., 2014).

Consequently, a huge market for private education such as cram schools (*hak-won*) and tutoring (*gwa-oe*) had been created, and as of 2018, costed about $16.3 billion (KRW 19 trillion 500 billion, $1=KRW1,190) in total and about $270 (KRW 321,000) a month per one upper secondary student (Statistics Korea, 2019d). Nearly 72.8% of students participated in private education, for which they spent 5.3 hours a week (ibid.).

In other words, this excessive aspiration for education has caused a severe dependence on private education, creating a heavy financial burden for parents as well as promoting a constant competition among students based on their academic performances (Park, E., 2018 March 19). The result of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) reflects the reality of Korea, wherein academic performance has been ranked near the top since 2006. In contrast, the life-satisfaction of students has ranked much lower and the anxiety related to schoolwork has ranked higher than that of the average in OECD countries based on the survey of 'Student well-being' (OECD, 2016). It may be said that excellent academic performance comes as a result of parents' excessive expenditures on private education as well as a great deal of pressure on students (Kwon, J., 2014). Indeed, Korean society is overwhelmed by education, and this is seen in the competition for college admittance. In this social context, Korean teachers are continuously being challenged in their practices of education resulting in less autonomy (Uhm, K., 2013).

2.2 Norway

Demographic aspect

Norway is located on the Scandinavian peninsula in Northern Europe, with a total area of 387,000 km^2 and a population of 5,320,000 (Statistics Norway, 2019a). Compared with (South) Korea, Norway has about four times larger land area and ten times less population. The demographic of Norway had been homogeneous originally, but there has been a significant level of immigration over the last thirty years. As of 2019, the immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents account for 17.7% out of the total population, equivalent to 940,000, among which Western backgrounds are about 469,000 (49.7%) and non-western backgrounds are about 474,000 (50.2%) (Statistics Norway, 2019b). Norway has a relatively stable Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 1.77 in 1978, 1.84 in 1988, 1.81 in 1998, 1.96 in 2008, and 1.56 in 2018 (Statistics Norway, 2019c), contrasted to Korea where the TFR has been sharply declined.

Political aspect

Under the long-term of ruling by the Labor Party (1945-1981) aligned with strong labor unions, Norway has established a corporative characteristics in a social system, wherein macro-levels of agreements on the national finance, public-sector employment, and social security network have been coordinated between the labor and capital forces, in which the state has intervened the process of social agreements as a mediator (Jung, B., 2012). Along with the balance of the above tripartite forces, Norway has made it a welfare state on a basis of social democracy with less inequality than any other Western countries (ibid.).

Economic aspect

As of 2018, the nominal GDP of Norway was $441.439 billion, ranked at the 28th highest, and its GDP per capita was $82,372, ranked at the 3rd highest in the world (International Monetary Fund, October 2018). Oil and gas industry have become very important element of Norwegian economy, since the discovery of North Sea oil in 1969, accounting for 12% of GDP and 47% of its exports (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017).

Norwegian government has created an oil fund, *the Government Pension Fund Global*, since 1990 to shield the fluctuation of oil revenue and to serve as a financial reserve as well as a long-term plan for future (www.nbim.no). The fund accounts for about 1 % of the world capital with its clever strategy of financing. Simply put, Norway has become a representative welfare state model ensuring high quality of life with abundant natural resources and its stable management (Kwak, N., 2016 September 26).

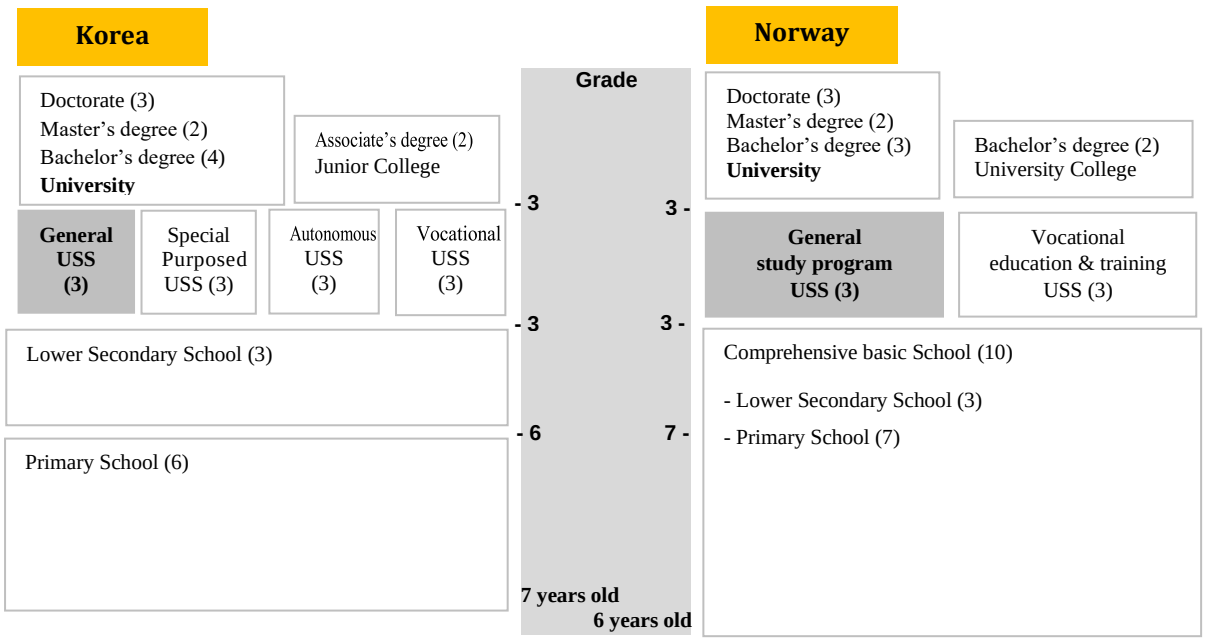
Social aspect

“Egalitarianism” is often perceived as a characteristic feature of Norway and the other Nordic countries (Gullestad, 2002). In Norwegian society, equality and equal rights are highly valued as systematic efforts, and an example of this can be seen in the education and given wages that uphold gender equality. In addition, the culture of informality is widespread in workplaces and schools as Norwegians perceive themselves equal (Hjellbrekke, Jarness, & Korsnes, 2015) and have a “passion for equality” (Graubrad, 1986; as cited in Ljunggren, 2017). So, they follow a “code of modesty”, which means an indicating of hierarchical standings is treated as a moral threat to social interaction (Gullestad, 2001; as cited in Ljunggren, 2017). Thus, formal titles and social positions in Norway are not valued as important as in Korea where the competition for such social capitals is fierce, represented as the form of education.

3 Contextual Framework

In order to have contextual understanding of the settings where Social Studies teachers work, this chapter presents some information on the school system, upper secondary education, and Social Studies subject in Korea and Norway, respectively. First of all, an overview of the school system covering the first twelve or thirteen years of education is presented with statistics on the quality of education and school management. And then, upper secondary education is introduced focusing on its curriculum and college entrance system. Lastly, the Social Studies subject is elaborated on its placement, scope, goal, and contents in its curriculum. The context of Korea is unfolded first and then Norwegian's. Figure 3 is a brief presentation of the school system in Korea and Norway.

Figure 3. School system in Korea and Norway



Note: made by the researcher adapted from Kim, Y. (2016)

3.1 The Korean Education System

The contextual information of the Korean education system is presented here with diverse statistics on the quality of education. The first twelve years of school system is introduced, and then upper secondary education is elaborated on through focusing on its assessment and college entrance system, key elements explaining the context of upper secondary schools in Korea. Finally, Social Studies, the school subject of teachers in this study, is clarified with its scope and content.

3.1.1 School System in Korea

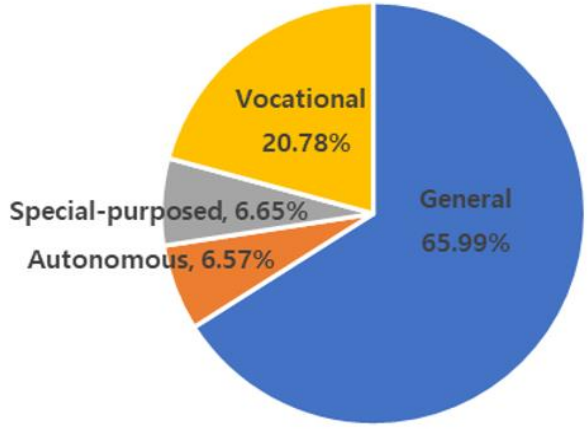
The structure of the Korean school system is divided into three parts: six years of primary school (*cho-deung-hak-gyo*, grade 1-6, age 7-12), followed by three years of lower secondary school (*joong-hak-gyo*, grade 7-9, age 13-15), and then three years of upper secondary school (*go-deung-hak-gyo*, grade 10-12, age 16-18). Both primary and lower secondary schools are free and compulsory. Upper secondary education is not compulsory though, its enrollment rate was about 92.4% in 2018 (Statistics Korea, 2019e). In addition, since the second half of 2019, the upper secondary education is becoming tuition free (Ministry of Education, 2019a).

In order to grasp the recent condition of education, it is important to review the relevant statistics. The following is the overall statistics for 2018. In order to improve the quality of education, the Korean government allocated a high budget for education, which accounted for 14.9% of the total national budget (National Assembly Budget Office, 2018). The enrollment rate was 97.4% in primary, 97.9% in lower secondary, 92.4% in upper secondary, and 67.6% in higher education. The average number of students in a class was 22.26 in primary, 25.74 in lower secondary, and 26.24 in upper secondary school (Statistics Korea, 2019f). The average number of students per teacher was 14.5 in primary, 12.1 in lower secondary, and 11.5 in upper secondary school (Korean Educational Development Institute, 2018a). As of 2018, the proportion of public school was 98.78% of all primary, 80.28% of all lower secondary, and 60.41% of all upper secondary schools. Among a total number of teachers, the ratio of public school teachers was 99.05% of primary, 83.78% of lower secondary, and 61.35% of upper secondary education (KEDI & MoE, 2018). Both public and private school teachers are paid by the state, which means the state has great influence over policy-making and its implementation; this includes the national curriculum, the college entrance system, and teacher recruitment.

3.1.2 Upper Secondary Education in Korea

According to the regulations for *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* in Korea, upper secondary schools (USS) are classified into four types: General USS (*il-ban-go*), Special-Purposed USS (*teuk-su-mok-jeok-go*), Vocational USS (*teuk-seong-hwa-go*), and Autonomous USS (*ja-yeul-go*) (KEDI, 2019). This classification is based on its diversity of curriculum and degree of autonomy in school management (ibid.). Figure 4 presents the proportion of the four types as of 2018.

Figure 4. The proportion of USS in Korea



Note: made by the researcher, source from KEDI (2019)

General USS deals with general subjects such as Korean, English, Mathematics, Natural and Social sciences, and so on.

Autonomous USS has more autonomy in implementing its curriculum and school management, compared to that of the *General* USS, i.e. Autonomous USS has free allocation and organization of school subjects.

Special-Purposed USS provides in-depth education in order to foster talented students in the field of natural sciences, foreign languages, arts, and sports. *Vocational* USS provides training programs on animation, cooking, mechanic-technology, agriculture, tourism, and other vocation-focused subjects (Heo, Y., 2015).

This study focuses on the *General* USS where majority of students aim to go to college. As of 2018, 77.7% of the graduates from the General USS entered college (KEDI, 2018b). According to the *2015 Revised National Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2015a), the first-year students at *General* USS follow a common curriculum comprised of the following subjects: Korean, English, Mathematics, Korean History, Integrated Social Studies, and Integrated Natural sciences. Since the second year, elective curriculums are provided with advanced courses in Social sciences & Humanities and Natural sciences, respectively.

School-based Assessment

In terms of school-based assessment, there are two types: *Regular* and *Formative*. The Regular assessment is implemented twice in a semester, usually in the format of multiple-choice questions. The Formative assessment is conducted during classes evaluating students' performances in various activities through debates, team-projects, essay writing, presentations, and so on. Teachers determine the weight of Regular and Formative assessment when calculating academic results, usually weighing results as such: 60-70% from the Regular assessment and 30-40% from the Formative assessment.

The academic results are indicated by grade 1 to 9, based on the *Relative grading system* on the curve in each subject and semester (Ministry of Education, 2019b). Table 2 shows the nine grades. Grade 1 means its academic result is ranked within the top 4% among all students in the subject.

Table 2. Relative grading system (on the curve)

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Percentage	4%	7%	12%	17%	20%	17%	12%	7%	4%
Aggregate Percentile	4%	11%	23%	40%	60%	77%	89%	96%	100%

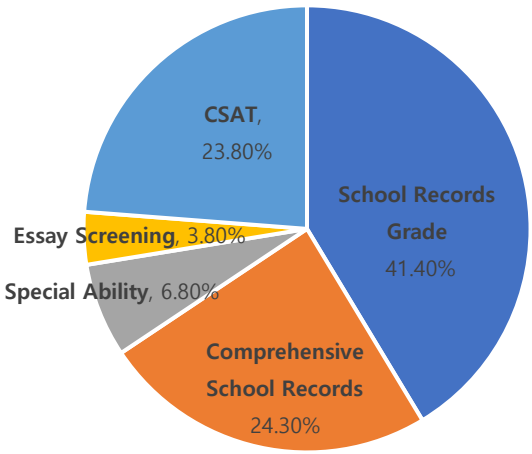
Note: made by the researcher, source from MOE (2019b)

The transcripts of Upper Secondary School Records (*hak-saeng-bu*, henceforth School Records) is an official document that comprehensively records a student's three years of grades and extracurricular activities, thus being used as very important data for one's entrance to college. It entails the student's high school life, academics, volunteer activities, certificates, award history, and so on (MoE, 2019c).

College Entrance System

According to *2019 College Entrance Plan* (Korean Council for University Education, 2017), the admission types of college entrance are largely divided into two categories: the *Early* Admission (*su-si*) and the *Regular* Admission (*jeong-si*). Figure 5 shows the distribution of students in the 2019 college entrance plan, where the Early Admission accounts for 76.2% and the Regular Admission accounts for 23.8%. With an increase of 2.5% compared to the previous year, the Early Admission type focuses on students' performances during their school life, wherein there is a tendency to prioritize this (ibid.).

Figure 5. Distribution of Students in the 2019 College Entrance Plan



Note: made by the researcher, source from KCUE (2017)

In the *Early* Admission, applicants can apply for up to six colleges in September, thereafter the colleges announce the result of their screening in December. There are four ways of applying for colleges in the Early Admission: 1) School Records Grade (*hak-saeng-bu-gyo-gya*) only considers a student's academic records (*nae-sin*). 2) Comprehensive School Records (*hak-saeng-bu-jong-hab*) takes into account a student's non-academic performances (*bi-gyo-gya-hwal-dong*), their cover letter, recommendation letter, and an interview in addition to their academic records. 3) Special Ability Screening (*teug-gi-ja*) is the process used to select talented candidates in linguistics,

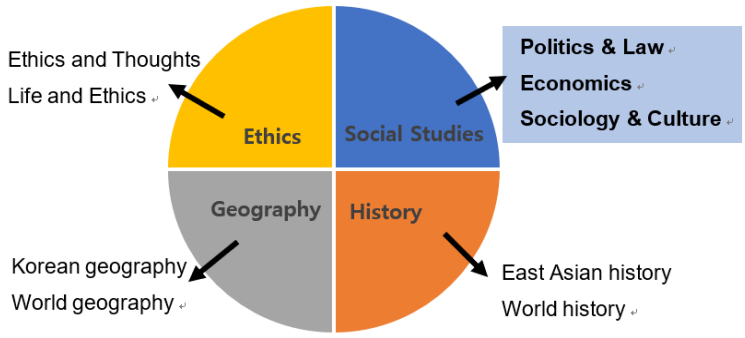
science, and so on. 4) Essay Screening (*non-sool*) only considers the result of an essay test held by respective universities.

In the *Regular* Admission, the record of College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT, *su-neung*), a standardized national test for college admittance, is the most important and relevant data for the screening. The test is implemented every November, comprising of six sections: Korean language, Mathematics, English, Korean history, Elective Subjects (Social sciences/Natural sciences/Vocational Education), and Second foreign languages/Chinese characters. Except for the Korean history subject, all sections are optional so candidates can choose what they want to take, based on the requirement of the college they hope to enter.

3.1.3 Social Studies subject in Korea

Under the *2015 Revised National Curriculum*, first-year students in the USS take a common course called *Integrated Social Studies*, a combination of General Social Studies, Geography, and Ethics. Since the second-year, students specialize in advanced courses of elective programs in either Social sciences & Humanities or Natural sciences. Figure 6 shows the advanced nine sub-subjects of Social sciences & Humanities.

Figure 6. Advanced sub-subjects of Social sciences & Humanities



Note: elaborated by the researcher

This study focuses on the Social Studies (the same as General Social Studies). The scope of Social Studies covers Politics & Law; Economics; Sociology & Culture; and some parts of the Integrated Social Studies.

The *2015 Revised National Curriculum* (MoE, 2015b) defines the Social Studies as follows:

> "Social Studies is a subject that fosters students as democratic citizens by helping them acquire knowledge and skills necessary for their social life, so that they can recognize social phenomena critically and have the values and attitudes required as members of democratic society."

It needs to clarify the meaning of knowledge and skills necessary for social life as well as the values and attitudes required to be a democratic citizen. The curriculum of Social Studies

presents details of democratic values and attitudes: respect for human rights, a spirit of tolerance and compromise, a realization of social justice, a sense of community, and a sense of participation and responsibility. It also suggests a reasonable problem-solving ability on personal/social issues as the skill of democratic citizen. The curriculum specifies that the contents of Social Studies should be composed of concepts and principles of social sciences; social institutions and cultures; social problems and values; and research methods and procedures, so that students can understand and explore social phenomena in a comprehensive manner (MoE, 2015b).

The specific contents of Social Studies are as follows: 1) Integrated Social studies: Human and Community (human rights, markets, justice), Social change and Coexistence (culture, globalization, sustainable life), 2) Economics: Economic living and Economic problems, Market and its economic actions, Nation and its economic actions, Global market and Trade, Finance, 3) Politics & Law: Democracy and Constitutional Law, Nation and Government, Political process and participation, Personal life and law, Social life and law, International relations and Korean peninsula, 4) Sociology & Culture: Inquiry of socio-cultural phenomena, Individual and Social structures, Culture and daily life, Social stratification and Inequality, and Social changes.

3.2 The Norwegian Education System

Parallel to the explanation of Korean education system, the contextual information of the Norwegian education system is also presented with diverse statistics on the quality of education. The first thirteen years of the school system is introduced, and then upper secondary education is elaborated through focusing on the assessment and college entrance system, thus being comparable criteria to the context of Korea. Finally, Social Studies subject in Norway is also clarified with its scope and contents.

3.2.1 School System in Norway

Compulsory education covers education for students aged six to fifteen, from grade one to ten. It is divided into two: primary school (*Barneskole*, grade 1-7) and lower secondary school (*Ungdomsskole*, grade 8-10). Upper secondary education and training (*Videregåendeskole*, grade 11-13, age 16-18) is not mandatory but voluntary. Both compulsory education (grade 1-10) and upper secondary education (grade 11-13) are free of charge and regulated according to national curricula.

As of 2017, the enrollment rate was 99.88% in primary, 95.58% in lower secondary, and 92.3% in upper secondary. 35.4% of the 19-24-year-olds were enrolled in higher education (Statistics Norway, 2019d). 97.7% of 16-year-olds were directly transferred from lower to upper secondary education in 2017 (Statistics Norway, 2019e). As of 2016, the average number of students per teacher was 10.15 in primary, 9.13 in lower secondary, and 10.19 in upper secondary school (OECD, 2018). As of 2013-2018, incompletion rate of students in upper secondary education was 13.4%, in which 5.1% in General studies and 22.8% in Vocational studies (Statistics Norway, 2019f).

The proportion of private schools in Norway is relatively lower than that of Korea. As of 2017, 8.57% of all primary/lower secondary schools were private schools and 3.76% of all students were enrolled in private schools. 20.90% of all upper secondary schools were private[1] schools, which holds 7.79% of Norwegian upper secondary school students (Statistics Norway, 2019g). Private schools are mostly established to conduct a religious, alternative, and/or internationally accredited curriculum, which must be approved by the government. These private schools, similar to those in Korea, are fully funded by the government, which means schools in both countries are under control of their respective governments.

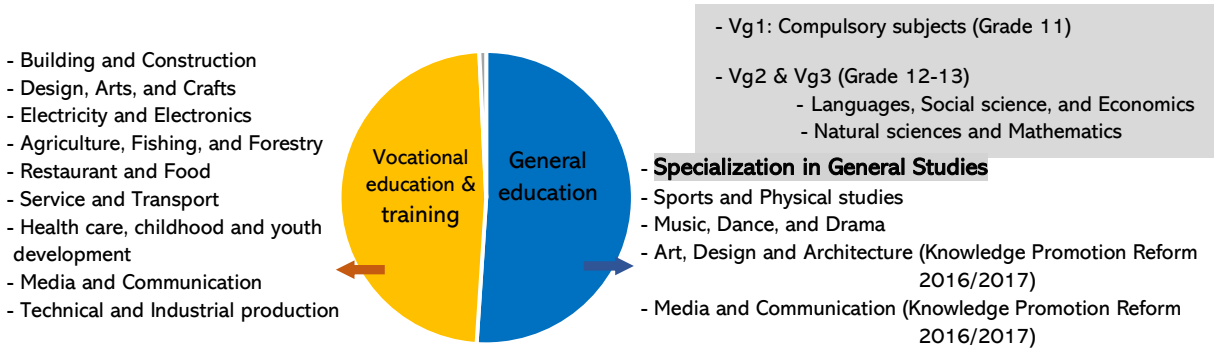
Unlike Korea, Norway does not have an independent local office of education. Instead, each local government takes responsibility for its local education. The local authorities, schools, and teachers practice its education within a national curriculum for basic education (Eurydice, 2019).

3.2.2 Upper Secondary Education in Norway

Upper secondary education and training includes *Vocational education and training* and *General education*, divided into three levels: Vg1, Vg2, and Vg3 (in a few cases four years with a Vg4). According to the Statistics Norway (2019h), the both education programs enroll approximately half the students, respectively: 48.19% taking the vocational and 51.05% taking the general education. Figure 7 shows the whole programs of upper secondary education in Norway as of 2018, when the main data collection of this study had been conducted, which means the figure 7 as well as the contents of this study are not based on the new revised Core Curriculum from the 2020-2021 school year.

[1] Approved under the Private Education Act and qualifying for state subsidies. Facts about education in Norway 2019 – key figures 2017, p.13. Retrieved from http://www.ssb.no/

Figure 7. Programs of Upper Secondary Schools in Norway as of 2018[2]



Note: made by the researcher based on the data from http://www.ssb.no/

Vocational education and training usually consists of two years of school-based learning and two years of apprenticeship training at the end of the program, providing nine program areas as indicated in the above figure 7. *General education* takes three years, divided into three levels of Vg1, Vg2, and Vg3, which provides five program areas: Specialization in General Studies; Sports and Physical studies; Music, Dance, and Drama; Art, Design and Architecture; Media and Communication in accordance with the Knowledge Promotion Reform 2016/2017 (Statistics Norway, 2019g). Students who complete the General education programs can get a qualification for college admission (Eurydice, 2019).

This study focuses on the program area of *Specialization in General Studies*, painted gray on the above figure 7. In which, students in Grade 11 are supposed to learn compulsory core subjects: Norwegian, Mathematics, English, Social studies, Natural science, Geography, Religion and Ethics, History, and Physical education. From Grade 12 to 13, students begin to specialize in either *Languages, Social science, and Economics* or *Natural sciences and Mathematics*.

Students in Norway are required to meet certain conditions in order to pass a subject and/or be admitted to Grade 12 and 13, including both degree (achieving the score of 2 or better out of grading scales of 1-6) and attendance. If students have an absence of more than 10 % of the

[2] From 2016, the education program 'Media and Communication' is included in general areas of study. Before 2016, it was included in vocational studies. Source: Facts about education in Norway 2019 and http://www.ssb.no/

hours the subject has been taught, they fail the subject (vilbli.no). This is different from that of Korea where students are automatically promoted if they attend a school for 2/3 of 190 academic days without a grade (score) limitation. As a result, the drop-out rate of General upper secondary students in Korea tends to be very low, e.g. it was 1.3% in 2017 (KEDI, 2018c).

Assessment and College Entrance

The assessments in subjects of *Specialization in General Studies* consist of Periodic assessments and Final assessment. The Periodic assessments are continuously implemented throughout the course of teaching in the subject, given in writing and/or orally, including a Half-year assessment and a Self-assessment. The Half-year assessment is carried out in the middle of the course at every level, and is also implemented at the end of the teaching year in a common core subject. The Self-assessment is based on active participation of students in their work, competence level, and academic development in order to reflect on and become aware of their own learning (vilbli.no).

The Final assessment is used to aggregate a student's overall grades they have received including examination grades at the end of the education program (usually after Vg3), which is recorded on the Certificate of Upper Secondary Education. Among the subjects of final examination, Norwegian and at least two other subjects are implemented on a national-scale written test, centrally evaluated by experienced teachers. The other subjects are assessed orally, being operated by the students' class teacher but graded by external assessors.

A grade scaled from 1 to 6 is marked when assessing subjects, both for the Periodic and the Final assessment. The grades are based on students' performance achievements according to criteria which teachers specified in advance, indicating from very poor (grade 1) to excellent competence (grade 6). Teachers also have to provide descriptive feedback and guidance on students' competences in the subject.

Students who complete a 3-year of General Studies are entitled to get a Certificate of Upper Secondary Education that leads to certification for universities and university colleges admissions. In the Certificate, a student's completion of Common Core subjects, program subjects related to specialization in one's program area, and other electives are specified with overall achieved grades and final examination grades. Especially, program subjects in foreign languages and natural sciences are awarded bonus points for admission to higher education (vilbli.no).

3.2.3 Social Studies subject in Norway

Social Studies is one of the school subjects, encompassing Sociology, History, and Geography in ten years of compulsory education from primary to lower secondary. However, in upper secondary education, Social Studies does not cover History and Geography, having one of common core subjects in Vg1 as Social science (*Samfunnsfag*) and two elective subjects in Vg2 and Vg3 as Politics & human rights (*Politikk og menneskerettigheter, muntlig,* hereafter Politics) and Sociology & Soc. Anthropology (*Sosiologi og sosialantropologi,* hereafter Sociology). According to Børhaug (2010), Social Studies in Norway can be corresponded to a civic education with a shift from constitutional matters and formal structure of governmental institutions to political participation, democracy, and critical attitude through the 1970s, and then finally to the active participation in various conflicts and issues today.

It needs to examine the curriculum of Social science (*Samfunnsfag*), as it represents the subject of Social Studies as a common core subject in which all students in Vg1 are supposed to learn. And its scope covers basic concepts of Sociology, Politics, and Economics. The goal of the Social science (*Samfunnsfag*) is as follows:

> "to create understanding and belief in fundamental human rights, democratic values and equality, and to encourage the idea of active citizenship and democratic participation. So, it shall deepen learner's understanding of the relationship between social and personal life and stimulate recognition of the diversity in social forms and ways of living. The students shall be provided with an ability to think freely, from many perspectives, in a critical and tolerant way. By influencing the desire to seek knowledge about society and culture, the subject will also promote the ability to discuss, reason and solve social problems" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2010a).

The curriculum for Social science (*Samfunnsfag*) in Vg1 is divided into five topics and each has its main concepts that need to be taught (see Table 3 below). Among students who choose the program area of Language, Social science and Economics (*Språk, Samfunnsfag og økonomi*) in their Vg2 and Vg3 (Grades 12 and 13), they can specialize in one of these three areas. In which, Social Studies offers an advanced course of Politics as well as Sociology as an elective subject of the specialization in Social science.

Table 3. The curriculum for Social science (*Samfunnsfag*)

Topics	Main concepts
The individual and Society	socialization, personal finances, forms of cohabitation and criminality, who and what influences young people today
Working and Business life	business and industry, companies, found an enterprise, career choices and unemployment, organizations in working life, how wages are set, contemporary working life and the principles and values
Politics and Democracy	the political system on all levels and the welfare state: the political parties and what can threaten a democracy, connections between the system of government, the state governed by law and human rights
Culture	the multicultural society and the role of religion in culture, indigenous peoples, ethnic and national minorities, how xenophobia and racism can be countered
International affairs	international cooperation, terrorism, conflicts, conflict solving and peace work, globalization, distribution of resources, sustainable development, Norway's role on the international stage

Source: Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2010b.

Different from that of Korea, Economics is not included in Social Studies in Norway. Students specializing in Economics in their Vg2 and Vg3 are supposed to choose more in-depth elective subjects in Economics such as Social economics (*Samfunns økonomi*) and Business economics (*Næringslivs økonomi*).

4 Literature Review

Attained knowledge about the main ideas and how the chosen area of interest has been researched previously are necessary things to be done before developing new research. This chapter reviews related literature, examines the relevance of concepts, and consists of two main parts: 1) A narrative review on the concept of teachers' experiences will be presented with four related areas where teachers accumulate their experiences usually. 2) The literature on the main interest of this study, Social Studies teachers, will be reviewed focusing primarily on the cases of Korea and Norway.

4.1 Teachers' Experiences

The goal of this section is to explore what research has been done about the concept of teachers' experiences. To do this, some literature on why teachers are needed to be studied and what the concept of experiences means has been reviewed. Goodson (2014) states that the research on teachers is important so that the quality of education can be improved, i.e. teachers' diverse experiences can affect how they interpret the world and how they teach. In line with this, Van Manen (1986) says that a teacher unconsciously teaches based on who he or she is, which means teachers are the main actors of education, and practice the education itself (Tickle, 1999). In essence, the voices of the teachers must be considered through a holistic perspective.

This study follows a concept from Dewey (1938), in which *experience* occurs when an individual is feeling, going through, and perceiving something via interactions with the external world. Namely, he conceptualizes the experience as "the interaction between external and internal conditions of a person" (as cited in Eom, 2011). In a world constantly changing in an unexpected way, Dewey (1938) considers the meeting and interaction with others as important in that, through which, the individual begins to re-build the meaning of one's existing world and to expand itself. Through this process, the individual gets to have a progressive change where their actions, emotions, and thoughts are organically integrated into a single whole without being interrupted by its mechanical routine. Dewey (1938) defines it as an "experience" through which the individual gets to learn and generates new meaningful experiences as an ongoing process.

Based on Dewey's concept of experience, I view teachers' experiences as life experiences through various interactions. Teachers continuously interact with various people such as students, colleagues, and parents, and encounter a variety of challenges and difficulties.

Because of this, they are put in a position to continuously think about themselves, which means they have no choice but to 'experience' something. In other words, teachers' experiences can be regarded as an ongoing process of living their educational lives. Hence, exploring their experiences can be beneficial to understand them holistically (Yang, E., 2000). To have more explicit understanding of experiences as a teacher, Seo, S. (2008) points out the importance of teachers' reflection on their experiences. This is in line with the concept of *reflective practice* of Schön (1983) in that, being away from one's conventional and perfunctory way of education, teachers can create meaning out of their educational practices and keep changing through their ongoing reflections.

Many studies on teachers have been conducted fragmentarily, dividing topics into various factors such as personal attributes (Park, J., 2016), training experiences (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974), values and attitudes (McEwan, 2003), teaching practices (Stronge, 2018), and teaching contents and methods (Sirelkhatim & Gangi, 2015). These studies, however, have emphasized the verification of the effect of teachers, the correlation between various factors of teachers and students' academic achievement. This is a kind of process-product approach that works to measure the efficacy of teachers (Oliva & Henson, 1980), which is disagreeable because teachers are regarded as functional beings from a perspective of behaviorism, and thus are not regarded from a holistic point of view.

For the above reasons, I put forth *teachers' experiences* as the concept of this study, because this concept can enhance our understanding of teachers in a holistic and contextual manner. This is especially the case when we consider the experiences of teachers in their ordinary school lives. To have more elaborate application of the concept of teachers' experiences, it needs to be narrowed down in scope. Subject teachers meet their students through a medium of class, daily practice of teaching and learning, in which the subject functions as a provider of topics for the meeting. In other words, the class and subject are the main instruments for the meeting between teachers and students. Interaction with colleagues is also an important area of teachers' educational practices in that they share a lot of feelings and thoughts.

Overall, class, subject, students, and colleagues can be the main areas teachers accumulate their experiences as a teacher. With this regard, the scope of teachers' experiences has been divided into four areas for this study: 1) perception of the subject, 2) class practices, 3) interactions with students, and 4) interactions with colleagues. The following is the reviewed literature on these four areas:

4.1.1 Teachers' Perception of the Social Studies subject

In terms of the traditions of the Social Studies subject, Barr, Barth & Shermis (1977) have classified and suggested dominant orientations of the subject as: 1) *citizenship transmission* teaching fundamental knowledge, values, and skills for students to be responsible citizens; 2) *social science* teaching the structure and methods of social science; and 3) *reflective inquiry* encouraging an analysis of value and decision-making through the exploration of social problems and issues. These have been the most accepted traditions of Social Studies in the field.

Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith & Sullivan (1997) focus more on teachers' shared beliefs about the purpose of Social Studies education, categorizing them into four distinctive perspectives: critical thinking, cultural pluralism, legalism, and assimilationism. Teachers who have a *critical-thinking* perspective strongly agree that students should be taught to question the status quo of the society, and not to be unquestioningly obedient to all laws (ibid.). This is in line with Barr et al. (1977)'s *reflective inquiry* in that both emphasize a critical analysis of the existing values and social norms as well as the development of skills for rational decision making. The second perspective, *cultural pluralism,* means Social Studies should ensure students become aware of different and diverse ideas in the multicultural society including political tolerance and open-mindedness. Both the first and second perspectives suggested by Anderson et al. (1997) are all consistent with the concept of Westheimer and Kahne (2004)'s *justice-oriented citizen* in that it stresses "citizens must question, debate, and change established systems that reproduce injustice" and "justice-oriented students must develop the ability to communicate with and learn from those who hold different perspectives" (p.240).

Teachers adopting the *legalism* perspective believe Social Studies should stress obedience and respect for the law and emphasize on teaching information on the basics of government, rights, and the responsibilities of the citizens (Anderson et al., 1997). Teachers holding the *assimilationism* perspective think Social Studies should inculcate students into the dominant culture and values without considering the development of separate cultural identities. These last two perspectives are in line with the orientation of *citizenship transmission* of Barr et al. (1977) in that they commonly emphasize on teaching the existing structures and functions of the society as well as the rights and responsibilities of the citizen. They are also found in the concept of Westheimer and Kahne (2004)'s *personally responsible citizen* described as "citizens must have good character; they must be honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community" (p.240).

4.1.2 Teachers' Class practices

What teachers do in their class practices exercises powerful and direct influence on students' learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). In order to lead a good class, many studies have suggested diverse strategies such as using more effective behavior management (Emmer & Strough, 2001); making students active participants in class activities (Vygotsky, 1978; Burns & Darling-Hammond, 2014), and organizing management structures (Cameron, Connor, & Morrison, 2005). Pianta, Hamre & Allen (2012) suggest making meaningful ties between curricular materials and real-world applications as a way of engaging students in learning.

TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2019) introduced criteria for effective class practices based on empirical data from secondary teachers over many countries, largely represented as four areas: classroom management; clarity of instruction; cognitive activation; and enhanced activities. *Classroom management* indicates "the actions teachers take to ensure an orderly environment and effective use of time during lessons" (p.55). *Clarity of instruction* refers to "explaining to students what they expect them to learn and how new and old topics are related, presenting a summary of recently learned content" (p.56). *Cognitive activation* comprises "instructional activities that require students to think critically, evaluate, integrate and apply knowledge within the context of problem solving" in the main form of group work (p.56). Finally, *enhanced activities* embrace practices that "give students the chance to work independently, using some specific tools such as information and communication technology (ICT), or over a longer period of time" (p.57). The above four criteria can be regarded as a common consensus across countries on what a good quality of class practice is.

In terms of managing strategy of class practice, Sierens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, Soenens & Dochy (2009) argue that "*autonomy support*" and "s*tructure*" strategies are more useful than "*control*" and "*chaos*" for the cognitive engagement of students. In other words, when teachers consider students' interests and intrinsic motivations, and then provide them with clear instruction as well as communication, students can develop their autonomy better than when they are under pressure to think and behave in a specific way. Relating to this, Berger, Girardet, Vaudroz & Crahay (2018) also suggest a concept of *teachers' beliefs* to examine the association between the beliefs and class management. When teachers have *constructivist beliefs*, they view students as active participants whilst emphasizing critical thinking and invest more in student-oriented practices. Whereas, if they hold more *direct transmission beliefs*, they regard students as passive recipients, explaining what the correct solutions are, and focus on making

the class calm and the students concentrated; i.e. they tend to focus more on controlling practices (ibid.).

If we look closely at the above two arguments and relate them to the result of TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2019), a certain association among teachers' general beliefs, strategies, and their way of teaching can be found. That is, teachers prefer to adopt the strategy of "*autonomy support* and *structure*" than "*control* and *chaos*" in their class practices, which means teachers internationally tend to favor *constructivist* over *direct transmission* beliefs (Berger et al., 2018). Overall, based on the constructivist beliefs, teachers can support their students' autonomy and provide them with engaging activities, as well as facilitating their class practices in relation to the global trends.

4.1.3 Teachers' interactions with Students

In a way, teaching can be considered and treated as an emotional practice. The teacher-student relationship takes up a part of teachers' experiences (Shann, 1998), from which the level of competence and/or satisfaction of the teachers can vary from one to the other. If their experiences align with what they idealize in their actual relationship, teachers can feel more competent (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Namely, a meaningful relationship with students gives teachers positive emotions as well as a reward and/or satisfaction (Hargreaves, 2000). According to Spilt, Koomen & Thijs (2011) and Chang (2013), close relationships with students enhance teachers' wellbeing. Teachers who have close relationships with students feel less burned out than those who have more distant relationships (Milatz, Lüftenegger, & Schober, 2015); this is positively related to teachers' emotional joy and self-efficacy (Mashburn et al., 2006; Hagenauer et al., 2015).

On the other hand, a conflict-ridden relationship with students is associated with teachers' self-reported depression and lower self-efficacy (Hamre et al., 2008). Actually, many teachers suffer from burnout (Hakanen et al., 2006) and the teaching profession is perceived as one of the most stressful jobs (O'Connor, 2008). In this regard, teachers' wellbeing has been raised as an important issue, wherein relating to students is deemed important so that a teacher feels competent and supported.

The teacher-student relationship also affects the quality of class. Frenzel et al. (2009) argue that teachers use their enthusiasm as a vehicle of enhancing students' enjoyment within the class. This means that a close relationship between a teacher and a student can play a critical

role in creating a motivating and respectful atmosphere in the class, wherein students can experience joyful learning opportunities and teachers can gain a feeling of effectiveness (as cited in Milatz et al., 2015). As a result, this can cultivate a productive class where students can produce positive outcomes (Davis, 2003) and teachers can feel supported by their students (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005).

With emphasis on the students' experience, Pianta et al. (2012) insist that, in a classroom setting, interpersonal support between teacher and students is a fundamental facet for students' development. For which, they recommend the class teaching itself to be designed in such a way that encourages students' engagement so that the students can relate their real-life experiences to their academic knowledge with a sense of autonomy, choice, and mastery. Valeski and Stipek (2001) is also in line with Pianta et al. (2012) in that they suggest students feel more motivated and engaged in student-focused and autonomy-supportive instruction.

Lastly, school context is also important for the teacher-student relationship. Hargreaves (2000) focuses on teachers' emotion and relates it to school contexts. According to Hargreaves (2000), secondary teachers usually feel more emotional distance from students than those of elementary teachers due to the fact that the teaching environments can be more bureaucratic, curriculum standard-setting is emphasized, and there is an overloaded burden of cognitive content coverage. As a result, teachers experience a difficulty in understanding their students emotionally, and therefore tend to establish relationships that are more "professionally distanced", which means the interaction is highly fragmented (ibid).

4.1.4 Teachers' interactions with Colleagues

Teachers' colleagueship is important in that it motivates them to be introduced to new ideas and to support each other in order to become more proficient in their student guidance (Wiley, 2001). It also encourages teachers to achieve their common goals together (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996). Teachers' collaboration in didactics leads to an improvement of students' academic performance (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). According to TALIS (2013), teachers view the collaboration as a factor of enhancing their knowledge and skills as well as influencing their practices and self-efficacy, which makes teaching less stressful and more satisfying (Burns & Darling-Hammond, 2014). Nias, Southworth & Yeomans (1989) highlight the importance of teachers' interaction where "shared values, mutual acceptance, personal openness, trust, kindness, help and support do not only draw teachers together socially, but enrich and energize

their teaching and their readiness to be innovated" (p. 57). In this regard, supporting teachers' interaction can be a crucial factor of improving the quality of teaching and their long-term commitments (Burns & Darling-Hammond, 2014).

Meanwhile, there are concerns about the culture of the teacher society as well. Lima (2001) claims that teachers' strong personal ties and shared values can act as an obstacle to the professional community, in that it can lead to "groupthink" which causes limited access to alternative ideas and more reluctance to participate in cognitive conflict that could potentially be helpful to move professional thinking ahead (p. 108). Fielding (1999) also argues that "comfortable collaboration" may make teachers reluctant to challenge and question their teaching methods as well as to develop a shared level of practice. Hargreaves (2001), in his study of teachers' emotional interaction with colleagues, tells that teachers tend to avoid disagreements and conflicts in their schools, as they view them as a problem and a source of negative emotion. In this way, different ideas, purposes, and practices tend to be neutralized through the avoidance, which means "masking (their) emotions" (Hochschild, 1983). This tendency of avoidance leads teachers to "keep their distance from one another, avoid interaction, or engage in superficial politeness" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 523) and to be locked in "silent rivalry" (ibid., p. 523), which, in turn, makes teachers more reluctant to share their expertise and professional knowledge (Clandinin, 1986). Burns and Darling-Hammond (2014) also argue that there are still many teachers teaching in isolation and missing the opportunity for collaboration.

In order to escape from such an isolation, a theory of teachers' professional community has been put forth (Smylie & Hart, 2000; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000); this theory emphasizes the importance of teachers' communal learning in their teaching practices and didactics to improve the quality of education (Fullan, 1991). In order to construct the professional community in a school, Louis, Kruse & Marks (1996) have presented two major elements: shared norms and student learning. The shared norms make teachers' roles and goals clear, and the focus on student learning motivates teachers to develop their teaching strategy and methods together. Through the collegial interaction of sharing ideas on students and teaching, teachers get the chance to improve their teaching practices in a more conscious way (Nuthall, 2004). Overall, facilitating teachers' interaction and activating their collaboration is important in that it enhances teachers' reflection on their practices and raises their standard when it comes to teaching performances (Park, Oliver, Johnson, Graham, & Oppong, 2007).

4.2 Social Studies Teachers

Because this study aims to explore the experiences of Social Studies teachers (SSTs), it is necessary to review the relevant literature. This section is organized into two parts; it begins with reviewed literature on Korean SSTs and then follows with the literature on Norwegian SSTs. When reviewing the Korean SSTs, the largest online academic database which is managed by Korean government -Research Information Sharing Service (RISS, www.riss.kr)- was the source that was mainly used. Using the keywords 'Social Studies teacher', 2,158 theses and 1,594 domestic journal articles were retrieved, among which 200 papers were extracted in the order of accuracy and publishing date. In order to fit into the category of 'secondary' Social Studies teachers, these articles were re-extracted and then classified according to its topic.

For the review on Norwegian SSTs, the University of Oslo Library (www.ub.uio.no) and Google scholar (www.scholar.google.com) were primarily used to find theses and articles about 'Social Studies teachers in Norway'. One thing to note is the fact that the materials written in Norwegian were only used as a secondary source from articles written in English. It was also quite challenging to find relevant articles written in English. So, inevitably, there are limitations when it comes to the review on Norwegian SSTs as it was divided into two sub-parts: 'Social Studies subject in Norway' and 'teachers in Norway'.

4.2.1 Social Studies Teachers in Korea

Due to the fact that teachers in Korea usually start their teaching profession after completing a four-year-undergraduate program for teacher-qualification, a master's degree is not a mandatory for them to teach. In 2018, among lower secondary teachers, only 36.1% had a master's degree and 1.1% had a doctoral degree. 37.5% of upper secondary teachers had a master's and 1.9% had a doctoral degree (KEDI, 2018d). For this reason, it can be said that masters' theses on pedagogy usually contain the interests of in-service teachers, which helps in grasping the current issues on their educational practices.

I searched for topics in master's theses regarding secondary Social Studies teachers (SSTs), which was largely classified into three categories: values and beliefs; class practices; and various factors on teaching. The first category, **SSTs' values and beliefs**, includes their understanding of democracy (Na, H. 2008), perception of the Social Studies (Choi, Y., 2014; Lee, S., 2004; Kang & Kim, 2016), self-efficacy (Kim, H., 2012; Park, S., 2009), belief and knowledge (Kim, D., 2015), political orientation (Cheong, S., 2017; Oh, 2015), and the quality

of Social Studies teachers (Lee, J., 2005). As for teachers' perception of the subject, Choi, Y. (2014) is noteworthy in her clarification of the Korean SSTs' educational goals and its related practice patterns, wherein this classification is divided into three types. Teachers who emphasize 'social participation' usually pursue a student-oriented way of teaching. Teachers who value 'social skills' focus more on students' positive self-concepts, cooperation, and relationships. Finally, teachers who stress 'social changes' mainly lead their classes in a way that aims to improve students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Park, S. (2009) focuses more on job-efficacy, which shows that Korean SSTs who have a low self-image and satisfaction as a teacher also have low social expectations and future-prospects in their teaching profession. There are some studies that try to explore teachers' values and beliefs through systematic theorizing. However, most of the studies typically use quantitative methods, and as a result, the opportunity to capture the vivid voices of the school fields are missed.

The second category, **SSTs' class practices**, includes a psycho-analytic study on SSTs' instruction (Kwak, B., 2015), teaching professionalism (Seo, C., 2017; Kim, S., 2010; Park, S., 2006; Min, 2010), cooperative learning (Park, M., 2014), constructivism in teaching (Choi, Y., 2008), the issue-centered class (Lim, E., 2015), pedagogical knowledge (Seong, 2015; Lee, K., 2011; Hong, 2006), student assessment (Cho, 2002), reflection on class teaching (Choi, H., 2012; Kim, M., 2010), human rights & law-related class (Im, 2012; Lee, D., 2012), teachers' teaching community (Ryu, Kim, & Jung., 2013), and class critique (Heo, S., 2013).

As the Innovation Schools (*hyuk-sin-hak-gyo*) have shown a good example of focusing on "whole-person education rather than students' academic performance" (Min, Jung, & Kim, 2017, p.4), student-centered (activity-oriented) class has become a trend in Korea since 2010. Its related studies on class practice and didactics have attracted more attention from teachers who are looking toward building on their practical knowledge. Seo, C. (2017) supports this trend by showing that experienced SSTs tend to change their professional attitudes in order to focus more on creating a student-oriented class as well as fostering flexible relationships with their students. Based on the concept of teacher's practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983), Hong (2006) conducts an in-depth study which focuses on one teacher's class practice in a holistic way. For the purpose of broadening the perspective of class practices, Choi, H. (2012) argues SSTs should not only focus on the micro level of self-reflection in their teaching, but also on the macro level of reflection such as the existing education system and sociocultural aspect.

In regards to the third category, **various factors on teaching** can be presented, which includes in-service teacher training programs (Lee, G., 2014; Jung, Cho, & Lee, 2017), the national curriculum of education (Kim, H., 2015), and the socio-economic backgrounds of teachers (Jang, Hahn, & Kim, 2008). National curriculum is important as it provides guidelines for the scope and depth of a subject and its teaching. According to Kim, H. (2015), SSTs see the curriculum of Social Studies as an illustration of core competencies in an abstract and theoretical way, from which they have challenges in relation to connecting the curriculum with their teaching practices. Jang et al. (2008) suggest that Korean SSTs tend to regard Economics as the most challenging sub-subject and that they are more reluctant to teach Economics when compared to other sub-subjects like Politics, Law, and Sociology. Even though they achieved the necessary credentials for teaching Economics, many teachers, especially those who did not major in Economics, are reluctant to teach it, and in turn, this presents a discussion point on the professionalism of SSTs.

In addition to the above three categories, **international and comparative studies on SSTs** were also examined in accordance with the aim of this study. Comparative studies at the transnational level between Korea and other countries can provide meaningful insight that can broaden our perspectives of Social Studies. However, these types of studies are rather uncommon in today's research, as there are just a few analyses on curriculum (Jo, 2017; Park & Kim, 2008; Lee, J., 2018; Paik, 2014) and in a textbook (Lee & Jeon, 2005; Han & Lee, 2013). There is one comparative study on SSTs, but it is targeted to the United States (Kang, 2018). As such, because of the limitations of existing research, this comparative study on SSTs between Korea and Norway works to shed light on this area of Social Studies research in Korea, whilst bringing a new perspective that goes beyond the existing comparisons between Korea and other East Asian countries or Korea and the United States.

4.2.2 Social Studies Teachers in Norway

As mentioned above 4.2, this section consists of reviews on teachers and the subject of Social Studies in Norway. To begin, the research on teachers in Norway will be discussed. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), a comparative study of 23 countries, shows that Norwegian teachers show a high degree of self-efficacy and student-teacher relationship, however their participation in professional development of class practice is relatively low (Vibe, Evensen, & Hovdhaugen, 2009). The OECD (2011) also indicates

insufficient competencies of the Norwegian teaching profession in their content and pedagogy. Anderson & Terras (2015) focuses mostly on the voices of Norwegian teachers through expressing their burden in paperwork, student guidance, and social pressure: The overloaded paperwork implies teachers' insufficient time for class teaching preparation as well as less interaction with colleagues. Dealing with students' social and emotional problems can be a key factor determining the intensity of teachers' work (Stephens, Kyriacou, & Tønnessen, 2005). The burden of meeting unrealistic social expectations, while having a lowered status and less trust from others because of negative media, as well as low salary, can be less attractive to young people when it comes to choosing teaching as a profession (Anderson & Terras, 2015).

The research on Social Studies in Norway is mainly focused on the study of the textbook and curriculum, in which political content has been dominant (Børhaug & Christophersen, 2012; Lorentzen, 2005; Koritzinsky, 1972; as cited in Vesterdal, 2016). Børhaug is noteworthy in that he has conducted various researches in the field of Social Studies education in Norway. He argues the subject has developed its curricula with an emphasis on critical-thinking ability and issue-oriented contents, whereas, in the field of class practice, the critical perspectives on current issues are not reflected enough (Børhaug, 2010), only the "issues that do not challenge core political and legal institutions" are taught (Børhaug, 2014). This is supported by his previous argument that election and voting are the most thoroughly taught form of Politics education in Norway, in which students get help to find out which party is closest to their preferences rather than a critical approach questioning the weakness and alternatives of the system (Børhaug, 2008).

Mathé (2018)'s research on students' perceptions of the Social Studies is also noteworthy. According to Mathé (2018), Norwegian upper secondary students mainly understand democracy as "a rule by the people, voting and elections, other forms of participation, and rights and responsibilities", politics as "ruling a country, shaping society, and discussion and debates", and the relationship between people and politics as "engagement, passivity, and detachment". When it comes to the subject, the students perceive Social Studies as "helping them understand the world around them", and their preparations for citizenship are mainly influenced by "the enjoyment of Social Studies and teacher's instruction", which gives some implications for teachers to develop their didactics and to use latest issues to engage students in their class.

More focusing on SSTs' teaching practices, Løfsnæs (2000) argues a good class needs to have a balance between formal and practical knowledge, in which a teacher's personal attitude is a critical factor. Özerk (2001) examined the level of verbal interactions between teacher and students in a Social Studies class, where he discovered that a small size class, and through active questioning and answering, was more effective in having students engaged in the subject matter. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) produced a result of The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS, 2009), which indicated that Norwegian teachers aim to encourage students to form and express their own opinions, to solve conflicts in a non-violent way, and to generate knowledge about social, political, and civil institutions (as cited in Vesterdal, 2016).

4.3 Summary

So far in this chapter, a literature review on *teachers' experiences* and of *Social Studies teachers in Korea and Norway* has been presented. Reviewed studies on teachers' perception of a subject, class practices, and interactions with students and colleagues can shed light on the understanding of teachers' experiences while encompassing the topic of this study in a holistic way. The reviewed studies on SSTs, in the Korean school context, were mainly focused on teachers' values and class practice, as most of the studies have been conducted by in-service teachers reflecting the voices of the field. At the trans-national level, comparative studies on SSTs as well as the Social Studies subject itself were rare to find in the field of Social Studies research in Korea. Meanwhile, in the Norwegian school context, the studies on Social Studies have been focused primarily on the subject of Politics, and it was difficult to find relevant research on SSTs and studies conducted by in-service teachers. With the awareness of the existing literature, this study aims to enrich the field of teacher study by reflecting the voices of in-service teachers from a trans-national level as well as interactionist perspectives; this will be discussed in the following chapter.

5 Analytical Framework

Given the broad scope of teachers' experiences, two approaches have been adopted to get a viewpoint of analysis as well as to focus on the interaction between teachers and their environments. The concept of *Reflective Practice* and *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (EST)* can shed light on the comprehensive understanding of the experiences of teachers in this study.

5.1 Reflective Practice

In order to rationalize why research on teachers is needed and to explain how teachers perceive their experiences, the concept of 'reflective practice' is adopted as one of the analytical frameworks of this study. The idea of reflection has been used to describe what goes on in the minds of teachers. Valli (1997) describes reflective teachers as those who "can look back on events, make judgements about them, and alter their teaching behaviors in light of draft, research, and ethical knowledge" (p. 70; as cited in Jay & Johnson, 2002). This is in line with Laboskey in that he argues the reflection on practices is crucial to the professional development of teachers (1993). Zeichner & Liston (1996) also focus on teacher's reflection and its necessity as follows:

> If a teacher never questions the goals and the values that guide his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumptions, then it is our belief that this individual is not engaged in reflective teaching (p.1; as cited in Jay & Johnson, 2002).

As stated above, Zeichner & Liston (1996) see the questioning as the critical point of reflection, which corresponds to "a holistic way of meeting and responding to problems" (p.9). That is, for them, the reflection is not "a set of techniques for teachers to use" but rather an attitude of looking back on one's own "intuition, emotion, and passion" as "a way of being as a teacher" (p.9; as cited in Jay & Johnson, 2002).

To have more fundamental grasp on "what teachers do when they reflect in and on their practice" (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 75), the works of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983) should be explored. Dewey (1933) emphasizes the importance of having a habit of reflection. He views the reflection as an "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge" (p.16) emancipating people from merely impulsive and routine activity. He encourages teachers to consciously reflect on their educational practices rather than accepting

routine and stereotypical ideas (Dewey, 1933). According to him, the reflection is mainly arisen from the feeling of doubt and/or conflict, so he maps out a way of reflection for teachers to observe, review, and examine themselves in light of evidence they can collect from their practices, and then to plan what action they want to take as a result (p.10, as cited in Farrell, 2012). In this way, teachers can grow in their profession by practicing a reflection on their teaching experiences (Dewey, 1933).

Schön (1983) further developed Dewey's notion of reflection by suggesting a concept of *reflection-on-action* and *reflection-in-action*. After an event has occurred, the practitioner conducts a *reflection-on-action,* in which he/she makes explicit evaluation on the action used. Whereas, *reflection-in-action* takes place during an action, in which the practitioner interacts with a 'live' event as it unfolds, and deals with it (Schön, 1983; Hawkridge, 2000; as cited in PPT of Karaliotas, 2000). Given that teachers as the practitioners, through this *reflection on and in action,* teachers become aware of their routine beliefs and actions, so that they can solve their own problems through an ongoing process. In this way, teachers can produce "new meanings, further reframing, and plans for further action" (Clarke, 1995, p. 245).

5.1.1 Applying Reflective Practice to Teachers' Experiences

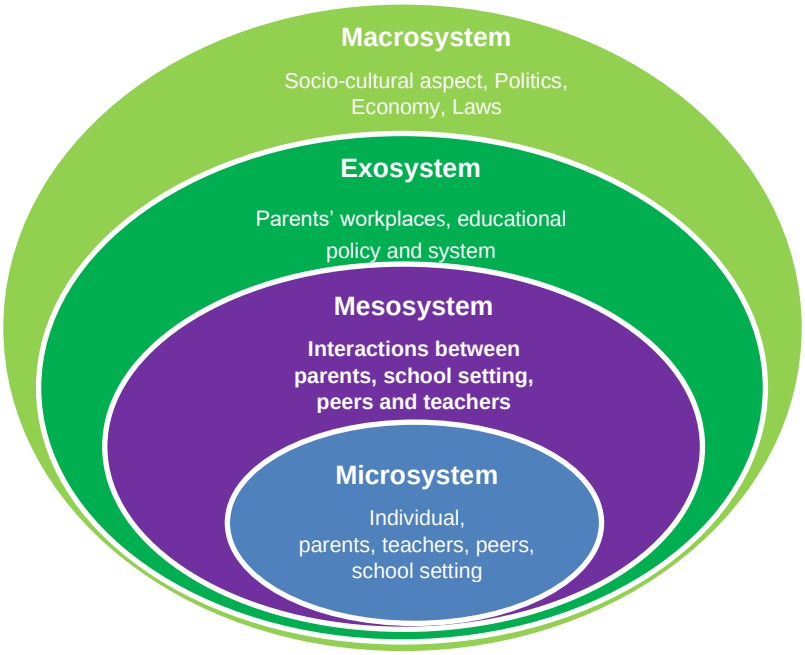
Farrell (2012) says the concept of *reflective practice* has a relevant meaning for teachers in that it is "a rigorous form of thinking whereby a teacher systematically investigates a perceived problem in order to discover a solution" (Farrell, 2012, p. 14). That is, by being a practitioner of reflecting *on* an action and as well as *in* action through one's experiences, one can gain intuitive awareness and professional growth as a teacher.

Given that this study aims to explore the experiences of Social Studies teachers in their educational practices, the concept of *Reflective Practice* can act as a pivot of conducting this study. It rationalizes the necessity of study on teachers and suggests its sub-areas where the reflection is needed from the teachers' work. In other words, the participant teachers in this study can experience their own *reflective practice* by looking back on their own work: "what I do, how I do it, why I do it, and what the impact of my educating (experiences) is on student learning" (Farrell, 2012, p. 14). By providing a place for reflection on their experiences, teachers can rebuild their own ways of educating. The growth comes from a "reconstruction of experience" (Dewey, 1933, p. 87). However, the *reflective practice* less considers how teachers' experiences have been constructed from the interaction with their external-world. To complement this, another concept will be introduced in the following section.

5.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (EST)

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological System Theory (EST) can provide a meaningful approach on how different environments surrounding an individual (child) can influence the development of that particular individual. He illustrates the complexity of the individual's socio-cultural world that affects one's growth and development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris,1998; Cross & Hong, 2012). However, it is important to note that the focus of this study is not on children, but rather on teachers. With that being said, the EST can still provide a systematic way of analysis in which the interactions between an individual and their environments can be understood.

Figure 8. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979)



Note: A modified representation of Bronfenbrenner's EST according to this study (Adapted from Wechsler, 2019).

As the above Figure 8 shows, the EST divides the ecological environments surrounding the individual into "four nested environments" (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem) from near to far distances, and explores the interpretation of the individual in its surroundings. The four nested environments are as follows:

Microsystem

The microsystem in the EST is the most inner layer of the environments, in which the individual lives; within the microsystem, the individual directly and immediately interacts with social agents such as the individual's parents, peers, and school setting (Santrock, 2002). This study focuses on teachers who act as a key factor in the development of the individual (student).

Mesosystem

The mesosystem is the layer that produces the interactions and relations among the individual's microsystems. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines it as "the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates" (p. 25). It is important to see in what ways the microsystems interact with each other in the mesosystem. If they pursue similar goals and support each other, it will influence the individual to feel secure enough to be able to actively develop oneself. On the other hand, if the goals are dissimilar or do not support each other, the microsystems can conflict with each other in terms of the ways of thinking and behaving (Härkönen, 2007). In other words, the individual may recognize this as conflicting forces and feel under pressure. In this study, teachers will be focused on and explored in terms of their experiences with teaching and educating, because they are a part of the mesosystem, wherein their interactions with the school setting will be systematically examined.

Exosystem

The exosystem is a large social system, in which the individual is not directly involved in (Paquette & Ryan, 2001), but can still influence the individual in their immediate context (Santrock, 2002). Namely, the exosystem and its aspects can affect a certain environment in which the individual experiences events and develops. In this study, educational policies such as the evaluation system and college entrance system can be an example of an exosystem, thus affecting the individual in their immediate context.

Macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to "the overall societal culture in which individuals live" (Christensen, 2016), which overarches the pattern of the micro-, meso-, and exosystem. It refers not only to the legal, political, and economic contexts but also to the values of society, patterns of social interchange, and customs of a particular culture and society (Cross & Hong, 2012). Each society can have similarities, but ultimately have a different macrosystem. Although the individuals in a society may assume their experiences as natural, it may be challenging to understand the experiences without considering the macro level of influences that come from their own culture, customs, and values (Cross & Hong, 2012).

5.2.1 Applying the EST to Teachers' Experiences

Bronfenbrenner's EST (1979) is a relevant tool that examines the multiple layers of a general environment and the interactions that surround an individual. In his analysis of the ecological development of an individual (child), the individual is influenced by diverse environments such

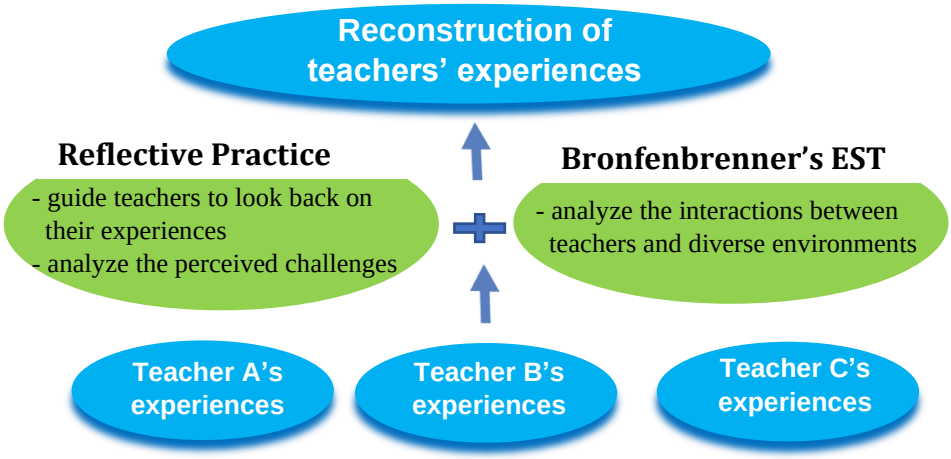
as the parents, peers, teachers, school, education system, socio-cultural atmosphere, and so forth. From the dynamic interactions and relations with the environments, the individual creates one's own development, in which "teachers are viewed as a community of learners and agents of change" (Sheridan et al., 2011, p.416).

In this regard, as this study aims to focus on the experiences of teachers, the mesosystem where teachers interact with diverse school settings, the exo- and the macrosystem that affect them through various social systems and cultural factors will be closely looked into. In other words, the experiences of teachers can be built up through the diverse interactions with students and colleagues in the school setting and can also be influenced by socio-cultural atmospheres and institutional systems in which they belong. Therefore, the meaning of teachers' experiences between Korea and Norway will vary due to the different social contexts and environments.

5.3 Summary

To sum up, this study adopts two frameworks to analyze and discuss the findings; *reflective practice* is used as the rationale behind conducting this study and *Brofenbrenner's EST* is used as the source for an interactionist perspective. Figure 9 shows how these two frameworks are utilized to analyze the findings of this study.

Figure 9. Analytical Framework of this study



Note: elaborated by the researcher

The main concept in regards to the teachers' understanding of what they do and who they are will be illustrated through the *reflective practice* in order to guide teachers to look back on their experiences, and from that, their perceived challenges will be analyzed. Brofenbrenner's EST will be the foundation for understanding the interactions and relations between teachers and the various factors within the different layers of environments. The detailed explanation of research process will be presented in the next chapter.

6 Methodology

This chapter lays out the research design and methods for this study, wherein a qualitative and comparative case study has been selected for the purposes of this research. The data collected in this study is mainly based on in-depth interviews with nine Social Studies teachers along with supplementary class observations as well as document studies. The collected data is then analyzed through a thematic analysis. In conclusion, the extent of trustworthiness and ethical considerations of this study is discussed.

6.1 Research Strategy

This study adopts a qualitative research strategy which takes on inductivist, interpretivist, constructivist, and interactionist perspectives (Bryman, 2012). Even though I had a main direction (intention) of exploring teachers in their class, the subject, and the interactions with students and colleagues, it was quite challenging to decide on what the main concept of this study would be. So, I searched for related studies and found some relevant concepts such as teacher's practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983), teacher's professional identity (Kelchtermans, 1993), and teacher professionalism (Schulman, 1987). However, these concepts were focused more on the very personal aspects of teachers and the teaching practice itself; This, however, was slightly different from what this study originally aimed for. Through continuous reviewing and contemplation, the concept of teachers' experiences (Dewey, 1938) was chosen as the main focal point of the study.

As such, this study attempts to explore teachers' experiences in Korea and Norway. Teachers are active agents constructing their own meaning and life-world (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Through the participant teachers' reflections on their own experiences, it is evident that inter-subjective and shared meanings are expected to be created, in which their social reality that is constructed by various levels of the ecological systems will be interpreted. Considering the above, this study aspires to explore the experiences of teachers within their sociocultural contexts.

6.2 Research Design

A comparative case study has been designed in order to conduct this study, and is relevant to examine a specific case such as a person, a group, and/or an issue with detailed qualitative data (Creswell, 2007). The case cannot be generalized to the population, but, from a rich description

of lived experiences and feelings, it can shed light on particular reality of a specific case (Cohen et al., 2007); in turn, this suggests implications for future research.

The case of this study is divided into two teacher groups teaching Social Studies in upper secondary schools, five in Korea and four in Norway, and because of the study's design, the data of the study cannot be representative of the participants' respective countries. However, the samples in Korea have had an average of about eighteen years of work-experience, which can guarantee a certain high quality of data. In the Norwegian context, in-depth interviews have been conducted, and class observations have been supplemented to enhance the quality of data. By exemplifying the two cases, teachers' experiences on their subject, class, and interactions are expected to be further captured (Yin, 2009). In addition, since this comparative study is on a cross-national level, socio-cultural settings surrounding the cases are thoroughly explored to get a full understanding of how education functions in different social contexts (Bryman, 2012).

Overall, this study is designed as a comparative case study, focusing on the grasp of SSTs' experiences in Korea and Norway and their related socio-cultural contexts. The data was collected from semi-structured interviews, document studies on the education system, and supplementary observations of class teaching. Then, the collected data has been analyzed through the tool of *thematic analysis* to fully explore the nature of teachers.

6.3 Level of Comparison

According to Bray & Thomas (1995), comparative education studies have three-dimensional ways of classifying: geographic/locational levels, nonlocational demographic groups, and aspects of education and society, which tends to be weighted more towards macro-level phenomena rather than micro-level. In essence, they have stressed the necessity of multilevel analysis. In this regard, this study adopts a geographic (cross-national level of comparing Korea and Norway) and multilevel (from micro to macro level) comparison to "achieve more complete and balanced understandings" (ibid., p.8). As people are "related to each other in predictable ways according to the parameters of the society" (ibid., p.7), teachers, regardless of the sample size, in one society tend to be considered as having a certain similarity as they share social circumstances including national curriculum, educational policies and social dynamics. And school is often likened to a microcosm of society (Alexander, 2001). Thus, this cross-national as well as multilevel comparison can shed light on the understanding of teachers in the two countries.

6.4 Sampling

This study adopts in-depth interviews as the main tool for data collection, so sampling relevant participants is a key factor determining the feasibility of the research. For this reason, I took purposive sampling so that those sampled were optimized to understand the research question (Bryman, 2012). I set up the sampling criteria to meet the following: 1) teachers that teach Social Studies at the public upper secondary school level, due to Norwegian context wherein most schools are public. 2) teachers who have more than five years completed in their career in order to ensure that they have adequate experience as a teacher. From the sampling process, five teachers in Korea and four in Norway had met the above criteria in order to participate in the individual interviews. To guarantee the participants' confidentiality, their names were replaced with randomized numbers such as K1, K2 for the Korean teachers and N1, N2 for the Norwegian teachers.

The sampling procedure, between Korea and Norway, was different as I had different accessibility to schools. As a teacher from Korea, I was able to find Korean participants quite easily. Five teachers from five schools in Daegu, the fourth largest city in Korea, participated in the interview individually. I had already known three of them (K1, K4, K5) through an in-service teacher training program that was operated by the city office of education, and as a result, they were chosen as relevant participants. K2 and K3 were recommended by K1, and thus, exemplifies snowball sampling wherein participants were added during the research process (Bryman, 2012).

Oslo was chosen as a research site in Norway, because it shared a particular similarity with Daegu in terms of urbanity; both cities have a large population in their own respective countries. Due to the fact that I did not have the same access to schools in Oslo as I did in Korea, the sampling was proceeded over four steps: 1) I asked a former Social Studies teacher, a friend of my friend, to recommend relevant participants. She introduced my letter of invitation (see Appendix C) to her ex-colleagues, among which two teachers gave me a positive response. However, only N1 participated in the interview consequently. 2) I googled 'Oslo high school', and then emailed twenty-seven principals of upper secondary schools in Oslo. I was able to obtain their official e-mail address from their school's website. I requested to deliver my letter of invitation to their Social Studies teachers, and through these requests, I received two positive responses. However, because of the teachers' busy schedule, the interviews were postponed on several occasions, and then, were ultimately cancelled due to these schedule conflicts. 3) I

found a school posting teachers' subjects on its website, so I directly emailed five Social Studies teachers, however, I did not receive a response. Lastly, I emailed seven head teachers whom I assumed were in charge of Social Studies based on the information on the webpage. Through this, I finally received a positive response from two schools (NS2, NS3), thus being able to proceed to have interviews with three teachers (N2, N3, N4) from these schools. Table 4 shows a specific information of the participants.

Table 4. Information of the Participants

Nation	School	Name	Gender	Teaching Period	Related-subjects
Korea	KS1	K1	Female	19	Social Studies (Politics, Sociology, Law, Economics)
	KS2	K2	Male	20	Social Studies (Politics, Sociology, Law, Economics)
	KS3	K3	Female	20	Social Studies (Politics, Sociology, Law, Economics)
	KS4	K4	Female	24	Social Studies (Politics, Sociology, Law, Economics)
	KS5	K5	Female	11	Social Studies (Politics, Sociology, Law, Economics)
Norway	NS1	N-1	Female	5	Social Studies (Samfunnsfag), Norwegian
	NS2	N-2	Female	12	Politics, Region and Ethics
	NS3	N-3	Male	9	Sociology and Social Anthropology, History
		N-4	Female	9	Social Studies (Samfunnsfag), Media

Note: elaborated by the researcher, teaching period (as of 2018)

6.5 Data Collection

The aim of this study is not to evaluate the teachers' teaching skills but, rather, to explore how they perceive their overall experiences as a teacher. Hence, semi-structured interviews have been regarded as the best approach for data collection in this study since it allows for a high degree of flexibility and space for the interviewee to answer (Bryman, 2012). To have relevant interviews, document studies on the education system in Korea and Norway have been conducted in advance and were precisely illustrated as a contextual framework in Chapter 3. In addition, participant observations in Social Studies classes were supplemented for the purpose of this study to gain a contextual understanding of the Norwegian schools.

After having pilot interviews with one teacher in Korea and one student teacher in Norway, I completed a final version of the interview guide (see Appendix A, B). The participants participated voluntarily and were assured of their confidentiality and their rights to withdraw at any time; this was specified in the Written Agreement of Participation (see Appendix D).

Based on the interview guide, I followed the participant responses in a natural way without intervening often, added further questions, and asked again about some details in their descriptions. They exhibited great passion while answering my questions, which I have come to really appreciate.

I visited Daegu to collect data for a month, where the interviews with five teachers were conducted individually, face-to-face, from September 17th to October 4th in 2018. Each interview was conducted in a quiet place of each interviewee's school, except K4 at her house. Korean was the language used in the interviews with the Korean teachers, and the average running time of the interviews was approximately 83 minutes, with all the interviews ranging from 63 to 112 minutes long. Each interview was recorded with the consent of the participants and the audio-recorded data was transcribed verbatim, which produced 87 pages of A4 paper.

In Oslo, I had interviews with four Norwegian teachers individually, face-to-face, from November 7th to December 6th in 2018. Each interview was conducted in a quiet place of each one's school. English was the language used in the interviews with Norwegian teachers, and the average duration of the interviews was 106 minutes, with all interviews ranging from 88 to 124 minutes long. Each interview was recorded under the consent. I transcribed all the recorded data verbatim, generating 96 pages of A4 paper. Due to the fact that I had less contextual understandings of the Norwegian school context, I had prepared more questions for the Norwegian teachers to fill in those gaps of understanding. As a result, the interviews ended up taking 20 minutes longer than the interviews with the Korean teachers on average.

After having the interviews with N3 and N4 from the same school, I was luckily invited by N4 during lunch to participate in an observation of her class and later was invited to observe N3's class as well. Thanks to them, I was able to observe some of their classes, specifically, four classes conducted by N3 and one class by N4. It is worth noting that N3 proceeded to run the classes in English in order to provide me with the opportunity to grasp his class practices fully. N4 gave me the chance to observe the students' weekly presentation and its related debate activity. In both classes, it was evident that students were active in asking questions and that they were able to express their thoughts freely. Namely, because the classes were conducted in a rather informal and liberal atmospheres, the teachers could readily provide enough space for their students to be engaged in the class. Another valuable experience during my visit to this Norwegian school, was that N3 gave me the opportunity to teach three classes about Korean culture and history. The experiences I gained through participant observation and class teaching were helpful in triangulating the collected data as well as in broadening my

understandings of Norwegian school contexts and class practices. However, this was not originally designed as the main tool of data collection for this study, so, as a result, it is now regarded as supplementary data collection.

6.6 Data Analysis

This study adopts *thematic analysis* as a method of analyzing qualitative data. As noted by Braun & Clarke (2006), in the thematic analysis, 'identifying patterns (themes) within data' is a focal point, 'organizing the data set in detail' and 'interpreting various aspects' are followed in a flexible manner. Through the process, all of the interview transcripts are categorized into core themes that reflect on the overall contexts, which is useful to understand how individuals make meaning and how context impacts these meanings.

I specifically chose to employ *deductive* thematic analysis as informed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The "deductive thematic analysis would tend to be driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven." (ibid., p.12). In other words, deductive thematic analysis facilitates the organization and interpretation of identified *themes* and patterns in a more systematic way. I came to the data with my *preset topics* ("pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions", Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.12) which is comprised of the perception of the subject, class practice, and interactions with students and colleagues. Based on these preset topics, I set out to conduct data analysis following Braun & Clarke's six steps: familiarization; coding; generating themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and writing up (2006), among these steps, I have adopted five of the following steps:

Step1: Familiarization

To get a thorough overview of the data, I read all of the transcripts several times and cross checked them with the audio-recorded interview data to ensure accuracy. I also took note of my initial thoughts on the data which I viewed as significant and interesting.

Step2: Coding

I coded all the data by highlighting meaningful phrases and sentences and by abbreviating (labelling) them into short words. Again, I went through all the transcripts and tried to identify any meaningful and interesting aspects within the codes.

Step3: Generating Themes

Before generating any *identified themes*, I sorted through all the coded data according to my

initial preset topics: perception of the subject, class practice, interactions with students, and interactions with colleagues. Specifically, these codes that have been sorted and its related phrases/sentences were copied into a document which had four matrixes representing the four preset topics, respectively. For example, all of the sorted codes and relevant phrases/sentences regarding *teachers' perception of the subject* were put in the matrix 1. In this way, all sorted codes regarding *class practices* were put in the matrix 2. By using these classified four matrixes, I tried to refine the codes by comparing, deleting, merging, re-organizing, and modifying. Afterwards, I transformed these codes into specific themes. A *theme* can be defined as "something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.10). In brief, I excluded irrelevant or vague codes and merged many codes that had similar patterns, from which I extracted themes.

Step 4: Defining and Naming Themes

Within the scope of each preset topic, I attempted to further elaborate and clarify the themes. I went back through the collated data set for each theme and re-organized the level of themes. Related to this, I focused on searching for similarities and differences of the participant responses among the Korean teachers, the Norwegian teachers, and between both the Korean and Norwegian teachers. In turn, this was a critical part of my study that worked to encompass the research question. In doing so, I was able to refine the themes into more specific clusters and then later categorized them into twelve main categories. During this process, I found some clusters that were not in line with the preset topics. As a result, I added one more topic, *working environments*, which was organized into three categories. In this way, I was able to identify a total of fifteen categories under five preset topics, as follows:

Table 5. Preset topics and Categories for the analysis

Preset topics	Categories
1. Perception of the Subject	Characteristic and Goal of the Subject/ Challenges of the Subject/ Expertise in the Subject
2. Practices of Class	Activity-oriented Class/ Teachers' teaching methods/ Challenges in Korean teachers' class practice/ Evaluation system in Norway
3. Interactions with Students	The meaning of Students/ Challenges in Student Guidance/ The Direction to go
4. Interactions with Colleagues	Lack of Communication in Korea/ Encouraged Communication in Norway
5. Working Environments (added)	Differentiation of Schools/ Likelihood of Transferring schools/ Homeroom teacher and Administrative tasks

Note: elaborated by the researcher

Step 5: Writing Up

I extracted relevant statements from the raw data (interview transcripts) as the evidence of each theme within the fifteen categories, after which I related them to the research question and literature. With all of the analyzed data, I then started to write about the Social Studies teachers' experiences in Korea and Norway.

6.7 Trustworthiness of the Research

This study adopts a qualitative research strategy with an emphasis on the in-depth understanding of the subjective aspects of a human-being. To assess the rigorousness of the research process, I adopted four criteria of 'trustworthiness' as proposed by Lincoln & Guba: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (1985; as cited in Bryman, 2012).

Credibility refers to the acceptability of the accounts to others in terms of how relevant the accounts (findings) are with social reality. Consequently, this entails a kind of confirmation that the researcher has correctly understood the social world from others (Bryman, 2012). Related to this, I employed a triangulation of data collection by utilizing participant observation five times and class teaching three times along with the semi-structured interviews. Triangulation means "using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena" (Bryman, 2012, p.393). In addition to this, the fact that I am a teacher helped ensure the quality of the collected data in terms of its level of reflection on Korean contexts. It has also helped in creating more detailed questions for the Norwegian teachers regarding their class practices and educational reality.

Transferability refers to what extent the findings can be transferred (or generalized) to other backgrounds. For which I, as suggested by Lincoln & Guba (1985), tried to describe comprehensive accounts of contextual framework in Chapter 3. Also, at the end of the primary data analysis, I returned to the reviewed literature in order to compare the literature with the results of this study. Given that this study is based on a small sample, the result cannot be generalized to the greater population. To some extent, however, some similar patterns can be transferred as a meaningful insight to similar circumstances and contexts.

Dependability is a parallel to reliability in quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommends a peer's auditing action in order to criticize the procedure of research; I conducted a pilot interview twice before conducting the interviews with the nine teachers in this study. I also asked the first interviewee to evaluate whether the interview can be applicable

to others or not. From her feedback, I was able to refine the interview guide to be more relevant to future interviewees. Through peer examination, the supervisor of this study reviewed a full description of all the data that had been analyzed.

Lastly, confirmability refers to when the researcher prohibits personal values or theoretical aspiration that may influence the conduct of research (Bryman, 2012). In order for me to ensure this, I tried to keep in mind the attitude of suspending judgement on the general belief (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Retrieved on 21 March, 2020), so that my bias was minimized during the process of data collection and analysis.

6.8 Ethical Considerations

To assure that the ethical issues are clear, several efforts have been made. Regarding the data collection methods, this study received ethical clearance from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). All participants were given both a letter of invitation (see Appendix C) so that they could be informed about the research and a consent form (see Appendix D) to sign. The consent form included the purpose of the study, research design, and the right to withdraw at any time. Personal identification was replaced with numbers such as K1 and N1, and sensitive issues regarding personal history were kept confidentially. The data from this study has been kept in a password-protected file on OneDrive from the university account. Lastly, all the personal data, including audio-recorded data, will be eliminated at the end of this study.

6.9 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodological details of this study. By taking a qualitative research approach, this study was designed to be a comparative case study dealing with cross-national levels of review as well as multilevel aspects of comparison. The case of this study is divided into two groups, Korean teachers and Norwegian teachers, wherein both groups have experience teaching Social Studies at the upper secondary school level in each of their respective countries. Both the purposive and snowball sampling have been used in this study to gain participants. In terms of the tools for data collection, document studies have been used to explore the education systems in both Korea and Norway, and semi-structured interviews and participant observations have also been conducted. From there, the steps of thematic analysis were followed closely, and the collected data had been analyzed consequently. The trustworthiness of this study has also been presented, and the ethical considerations were briefly discussed.

7 Findings

This chapter presents the findings from data collection that have been yielded by using thematic analysis. As shown above presented in Table 5, fifteen categories were identified under the five preset topics: perception of the subject, practices of class, interactions with students, interactions with colleagues, and working environments. In the following, the identified categories will be illustrated according to its related preset topic. Each category has minor sub-categories without numbering. For the sake of readability, the minor sub-category is also subdivided into a part for Korean teachers and Norwegian teachers.

7.1 Perception of the Subject

Examining teachers' perception of their subject is important in that it helps us understand what their interests and values are. Three categories were identified under this topic, which were characteristic and goal of the subject, the challenge the subject is facing, and efforts to develop their expertise.

7.1.1 Characteristic and Goal of the Subject

> I can't teach the same thing every year… It's changing… It needs to be relevant to what we teach our students. We can't have examples from…15 years back. It needs to be what's happening now… (N4).
>
> I think it is most important to be a person who can think, decide, and put it into action on one's own (K2).

Teachers in both countries characterized the Social Studies as a subject of dealing with a variety of 'changes' in the everyday world, since its contents are supposed to reflect current issues in a given society. Consequently, the teachers were rather sensitive about social issues and political changes in general. In regards to this, they often mentioned the importance of 'independent thinking', which is a concept intended to encourage students to have the ability to think critically and make decisions about various social issues and phenomena as opposed to accepting them as they are. Furthermore, depending on what the teachers decided to focus on most, a subtle difference was detected in regards to the aspect of change and independent thinking; this is indicated in the following descriptions:

Korean teachers

The Korean teachers tended to focus more on the cognitive aspect of change. Because lecture-oriented classes make up most of the common practice of teaching in Korea, teachers put a lot

of energy into introducing constantly changing issues in society. This can put pressure on all the new information before delivering it to their students. For this reason, they often mentioned and revealed the burden of acquiring knowledge within the subject they teach.

> In this ever-changing part of the Social Studies subject... the basic contents of the subject such as electoral system and law have been often changed… If I lose my concentration on them, the knowledge I already knew tends to be completely wrong and false… So, it makes me feel at stake… (K4).

As the following excerpt shows, their emphasis on the cognitive aspect was also reflected in their view of 'independent thinking', as replied as "the eyes that can *read* the world" and "to *grasp* social issues or phenomena".

> I want to keep telling my students that they can doubt and think differently of those looked obvious and clear… The eyes that can *read* the world… or find one's own criteria in a decision-making situation… I feel like the goal of the Social Studies subject is that… developing one's ability to *grasp* social issues or phenomena in a more wise and sensible way (K5).

Norwegian teachers

Meanwhile, Norwegian teachers focused more on the practical aspect of change in society. They tended to produce material based on the changing issues in the form of a class-activity, namely, they preferred to assign student presentations on the social issues rather than deliver information through direct lecture alone (as will be seen in Chapter 7. 2). As a result, they may feel less pressure when it comes to the ongoing acquisition of knowledge, as they are less required to memorize and deliver all the details of the issues.

> I like to make the subjects feel like 'this is happening right here and now.', not just like, 'this is here. You have some information' (N1).

The practical aspect was also seen in their thoughts on the goal of the subject. As already mentioned above, they have regarded the ability to think independently as the goal of Social Studies. Through this, they encourage the students "to question", "use the right", and become "active participants" rather than just having the ability to "read" and "grasp" information. [N4] hopes her students can grow to become independent people who actively change their society, instead of just settling in their present situation with satisfaction.

> The ideal goal of this subject is to…um…give my students the ability to navigate in the world … not passive but active citizens both in their personal life but also in the society… They have to be critical to question our leaders, the way our system works, the fake news, and to what media presents… um… I think… democracy is at threat… And if they (students) become passive, if they don't use the right to vote… we can't really call it a democracy. So, they have to know that they are active participants of the society (N4).

To sum up, Norwegian teachers tend to stress the practical aspect of the subject more than the cognitive one, when compared to the Korean teachers. Through this, it can also be interpreted

that Norwegian teachers tend to value competence-building above everything else, whereas Korean teachers like to focus on cognitive-development.

7.1.2 Challenges of the Subject

Teachers interviewed in both countries have noted that the share (influence) of Social Studies has been decreasing due to the fact that fewer students choose to study the subject. They often mentioned that it is related to the current trends wherein the area of science-technology is becoming more preferred in society. The shrunk share of Social Studies, especially, stands out in a choice among the elective subjects in the CSAT in Korea and in the differentiated policies in Norway:

Korean teachers

As indicated in Chapter 3.1.2, Social Studies is one of the electives in the Inquiry (*tam-gu*) section of the CSAT, a national level of college entrance test. Students specializing in Social sciences and Humanities can choose two sub-subjects out of the Inquiry section consisted of nine sub-subjects: Ethics (Life and Ethics, Ethics and Thoughts); Geography (Korean geography, World geography); History (East Asian history, World history), and Social Studies (Politics and Law, Economics, Sociology and Culture). The choice of sub-subjects has been reduced from originally four to three, and then to two. As seen in the below excerpt, if students decide not to choose the sub-subjects of Social Studies, teachers can lose their chance of teaching and as a result, they have less influence on students.

> Less influential than before... We've shrunk... I feel like it's because of the CSAT… If students don't choose the subject at the CSAT, they just plug their ears no matter what I try… With an exception of six or seven students in a class, the rest falls asleep or studies other subjects… It's a matter of the college entrance system itself, but in that, Social Studies subject has been shrunk even more… (K3).

Korean teachers said that the reduced choice of sub-subjects has made the level of CSAT more difficult due to its *relative grading system* on the curve. As the choice of electives per student has been decreased from four to two, the number of populations per one sub-subject has also decreased. As a result, in order to identify students' relative position within the smaller populations, the CSAT examination has become more difficult. Teachers view the difficulty of the examination as beyond the upper secondary education level; this is noted in the quote below.

> Compared to other sub-subjects, Economics in the CSAT is too academic. The questions are not practical at all, and too difficult. There are a lot of calculating questions with many graphs and numbers… To screen students' grades from first to ninth grade in a situation of the reduced two electives… the exam presents insanely difficult questions (K5).

> The original purpose is to choose what they are interested in. However, they just end up choosing some subjects considered as easy so that they can get a good grade… They happen to make a strategic choice (K4).

The increased level of difficulty has resulted in students choosing the sub-subjects of Social Studies far less than before, with Economics being the least chosen due to its level of difficulty. It has led many schools to opt out of teaching Economics, which then naturally leads to less opportunities for SSTs to gain more teaching experiences when it comes to this subject.

Norwegian teachers

In Norway, from the second year of upper secondary school, *general study program* students begin to choose their elective subjects that they would like to specialize in. Sociology, one of the electives, is not often chosen, because students regard it as a less promising subject in terms of future job-hunting, this is exemplified in the quote below as "you don't become anything".

> As the students were about to choose which subject they would have in the second grade, I saw no one has chosen Sociology and Social anthropology. I said "is it no one gonna choose this? It's really fun and it's really… It's…" I tried to… I tried to… understand why no one had chosen it… One student said… "well… you don't become anything studying Social science, do you?" … I was kind of shocked when that student told me that you don't become anything, and I was like… I don't know. I have totally failed (N2).

The students' lower preference for Social Studies, which runs contrary to their high preference in Natural sciences, may reflect the current social context where economic forces have taken hegemonic power in a globalized world, wherein the labor market is highly dependent on their needs. In this situation, many students naturally consider specializing in Natural sciences as more beneficial when it comes to broadening their options for future careers. As seen below, teachers believe this trend has accelerated because of the government's educational policy.

> If they choose Math (Natural sciences), they will have additional two points just from having that… That stimulates more students to take those classes… That's how the… the… you know… big system controls kind of… try to stimulate what after… what the society needs (N2).

> You are supposed to teach them cultural differences, work life and economy, and politics… There are so much and it's so difficult… It's a lot of different topics. And it takes a lot… In Nature science, they have five hours a week. Social science has three hours (N1).

Namely, Norwegian students gain an advantage (extra point) when it comes to college admittance if they decide to take a Natural sciences course. In addition, the common curriculum for the first-year students in upper secondary education allocates five hours of Natural science studies a week, whereas for Social Studies, they are only allocated three hours; as a result, it could be that not enough time is allocated to cover the wide range of the contents that Social Studies has to offer and this is exemplified in [N1's] statements above.

7.1.3 Expertise in the Subject

Developing teaching methods and pedagogical content knowledge are crucial for teachers to improve their expertise in the subject; it was evident that the teachers who were interviewed in this study were deeply engaged in developing these methods and content knowledge. In terms of the main source regarding expertise, Korean teachers typically used in-service teacher training programs, while Norwegian teachers shared their ideas with their fellow colleagues.

Korean teachers

The Korean teachers usually use in-service training programs to develop their expertise. The program presents a variety of detailed on/off-line courses, and these programs are mainly provided by the provincial office of education. They are also supplemented by several organizations and companies. Since the training hours have been utilized as one of the main criteria for teacher-evaluation, and activity-oriented classes have received more attention from teachers, the average hours of participation in the training program account for ninety hours a year per teacher (MOE, 2019d).

> I wanted to practice a debate class, but I did not know how to do it… I mean… the debate that is well-organized… Then, I just found out there was an in-service teacher training program… I participated in that program… They explained how to organize a debate and then let us do it ourselves… After the experience, ah! This is it… I just realized it would be better for students if I do not explain but just let them experience themselves (K1).

As seen above, the training program has introduced diverse teaching methods such as School as a Learning Community, Havruta, Flipped Learning, and Visual Thinking Strategies, and these methods have influenced the teachers' expertise in a particular way. Another thing to note was that Korean teachers often discussed their growing concerns about the burden of acquiring content knowledge than Norwegian teachers.

> I was willing to teach second-year students, if possible, to get a chance of teaching new sub-subjects. Since I became a teacher, I have dealt with all the sub-subjects of Social Studies. In this regard, I feel like it is one of my strengths. I don't feel like I teach well… but I do not have a sub-subject that I have not taught yet… So, I feel like there is nothing that I cannot teach… So, if I am in charge of teaching *a certain sub-subject*, I can teach it *without fear*… (K2).

When reflecting on the phrases above, and the fact that the teacher emphasizes "a certain sub-subject" and teaching "without fear", makes it possible to speculate that teachers can become stressed about continuously acquiring the content knowledge. This is, perhaps, related to the scope and the depth of Social Studies in Korea, comprising of the three sub-subjects: Economics, Politics & Law, and Sociology.

Norwegian teachers

While Korean teachers mainly used the in-service training program, Norwegian teachers were more accustomed to sharing ideas with their colleagues, especially the teachers who taught *Samfunnsfag*, a subject in Social Studies for the first-year students; these teachers were actively engaged in developing a common teaching plan, as exemplified in the quote below.

> When I started here, we had a team in Social science. We worked together… What kind of test we're gonna have, what kinda ideas do we have, how do we wanna teach… That makes it easier to not get so lonely in planning and doing things in the classroom. Because we are a team… That's kind of like something that I think it is really good (N1).

The Norwegian teachers that were interviewed mentioned no specific teaching methods, and only discussed the common activities such as small group discussion, questioning and answering, presentation, and debate. They seemed to regard the above activities as their ordinary class practices, consequently focusing more on creating an environment where students can express their thoughts freely. As a result, there was less pressure in preparing and conducting a class.

In terms of the sub-subjects that SSTs are in charge of, aside from one unit on personal economy in '*Samfunnsfag*', Economics is not included in the subject area of Social Studies. It exists as an independent subject unlike Korea wherein Economics is considered a part of the Social Studies subject. The domain of Economics teachers is deemed separate from that of SSTs.

> So, for the lessons I teach… It is a Sociology & Social anthropology and Politics & Human rights. We are not too much concern with Economics. That would be another, another teacher and another subject. So, they will have more focus on the economy and things like that. I don't know much about that… (N2)

The fact that Economics is taught separately from Social Studies might be another reason as to why the Norwegian teachers have expressed less burden on the acquisition of content knowledge when compared to the Korean teachers.

7.2 Practices of Class

Preset as the second topic, class practice is one of the most essential parts of the teacher experience. The following four categories were identified under this topic: activity-oriented class, teachers' teaching methods, challenges in Korean teachers' class practice, and the evaluation system in Norway. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study focuses more on the Korean school context,

and targets Korean teachers as the main audience. That is why Korean teachers' challenges were examined in more depth, whereas the Norwegian evaluation system was only introduced. To present the analyzed data more clearly, unnumbered subtitles were additionally used under the four categories.

7.2.1 Activity-oriented Class

Teachers in both countries valued an activity-oriented class more than a lecture-oriented one. They believed students' active communication was the key for a successful class, and because of this belief, they have made efforts to create an environment where students can be engaged. One small difference to note regarding choosing to lead an activity-oriented class is that Korean teachers have gradually been transitioning to it from the lecture-oriented approach, whereas Norwegian teachers have practiced the activity-oriented approach since they began teaching as a profession. In this section, the Korean teachers' decision to shift from a lecture-oriented class to an activity-oriented one will be explored. This section will also look into why Norwegian teachers value the activity-oriented class.

Korean teachers

The Korean teachers were in the midst of a transition in class practices, from the lecture-oriented approach to the activity-oriented style; this was mainly driven by a change in student characteristics. [K1] had once led her class with full of charisma, but started to feel helpless when many students disturbed the class and/or fell asleep instead of participate.

> About ten years ago… one third of students tried to sleep during my class… I really wanted to know what they were thinking. So, I tried to change my class so that students could talk more actively… In order to do it, I needed to change my point of view… It was an observation of what a student was doing during my class, not focusing on how excellent I led the class. How far the student was engaged in my class… how the student spent an hour during that class… I just focused on the student to reflect on my class practices. In doing so, I was able to change my class gradually… (K1).

Reflecting on the statements above, [K1] tried to understand why her students refused to participate in class, and from there, she decided to adapt her class into a more activity-oriented one. She was able to do this through reflecting on her video-recorded class. According to [K3], students themselves are a driving-force for teachers in order to break their existing prejudices and try new methods. As shown below, [K3] received positive feedback from her students, which led her to be more courageous and to try new experimental teaching methods.

> In the supplementary essay class, I met students different from their usual… I mean… more active than usual. Being away from the multiple-choice questions, they were active in expressing their thoughts in the class. I just realized that they did it better than my expectation, which was so fascinating to me… I was very satisfied with the class and I thought that 'Ah! It would be so nice if I could work like this'... Since then, I have tried to organize that kind of activities in my regular class. In the beginning, I was so worried about whether it works or not, but it has been worked out so far (K3).

This transition of class practice was also accelerated by education policy. Since the early 2010s, the ministry of education has promoted activity-oriented and student-engaged methods for leading a class. [K5] had no choice but to conduct an activity-oriented class, because her school was designated as a model school for debate class. She was reluctant to do it, because she felt confident in her lecture-oriented class. Another reason for her reluctance, was the fact that she was also uncomfortable with the top-down influence that policy had on her teaching. This kind of policy driving has the potential to lower teachers' impetus due to the fact that it does not come from their own teaching initiatives.

> The school authority pushed me to conduct a debate class, which I hated it. Because I was accustomed to lecture-oriented teaching, and I had a kind of self-conviction that… 'I have been working so hard, and students must, of course, concentrate on my class'… Anyway, I was supposed to take the in-service training program on debate class and then, to implement it. As doing it for about two years… I could realize that it's so meaningful… Students learn something for themselves by preparing for their own debate… by asking and answering each other… They just solved everything by themselves. I thought it was very good (K5).

In terms of promoting the activity-oriented class, policy driving has been moderately effective in Korea, as [K5] illustrated above. In other words, policy has served as a momentum for teachers to experience a new way of teaching, consequently, to broaden their perspectives on the students they teach.

Norwegian teachers

Norwegian teachers also focused more on the activity-oriented class than the lecture-oriented one. As mentioned earlier, they have practiced the activity-oriented class from the beginning of their teaching career.

> When I was at this stage (student), it was all about memorizing. The Norwegian schools have changed very much the last two decades… still we have, of course, old teachers who do it in the old way… but the government does not want to be that way… It is a line process we change the whole school… I am not interested in making students engage the name. That is not the issue… So, it is more important to teach to be critical, how to think, how to gather information. It is more important than teaching them to memorize (N3).

As is seen above, Norway has promoted the activity-oriented class as the standard of teaching over the last two decades, so it makes sense that the teachers interviewed, with an average of about nine years of experience, have the activity-oriented class as their prototype.

> If you have a lecture, you are kind of in control… I can say… 'check here. I have been through this area'. But if I kind of… instead of saying it, making students find out… it is kind of a bit out of my control. It is more difficult, but I think that the students learn more. They do not learn necessarily just because I have said it. It does not mean that they have learned it. So… then, we have to think differently about how I can find out what they actually learned (N4).
>
> Social science is supposed to make students be able to find the process of information, what is good and bad information, how you balance it, who brought this page, and what they would want. They practice those things through the subject. So, I try to have minimum of lectures (N1).

[N4] suggests that it is important to think about the meaning of students' learning. According to her, students' learning is not directly derived from a lecture. Instead, learning comes from being motived and encouraged to "find out" new information. This is in line with [N1] who believes students could attain a balanced view when they found and analyzed the information independently and for themselves. Consequently, she attempted to minimize lecturing. All in all, the teachers interviewed held the view that students could learn more when they have experienced self-learning in a class.

7.2.2 Teachers' teaching methods

Given that the activity-oriented class was preferred in both countries, it is worth looking into what kind of activities were actually practiced. Korean teachers focused more on debate and the Socratic way of leading a class, whereas Norwegian teachers have included more diverse activities with less obstacles. To understand what made the difference, I supplemented the circumstances of the Korean school context later.

Korean teachers

[K1] and [K3] have tried a variety of debate activities as they regarded them as one of the core activities in a Social Studies class that encourages students to express their thoughts and to engage in social issues. They have made efforts to develop a well-organized debate class so that their students can learn something by doing the work and experiencing the issues for themselves.

> Since a decade ago, I have been focusing on how to practice a good debate class… Well-structured debate class with evidence presentation, argument re-establishment, refutation, and summarizing, etc. The important thing is to make an environment where students can naturally experience and learn something by themselves (K1).
>
> When a new chapter begins, I used to introduce its related issue and get students to do some research on it… Then, they can keep the issue while they are learning the whole chapter. About a month later, when the chapter ends, we have a debate class regarding the issue mentioned earlier (K3).

[K4] and [K5] have emphasized active discussion through questioning and answering in class. [K4] described her class as a Socratic dialogue. As shown below, she tries to find subject matters, core concepts, and issues from everyday life to stimulate her students to see all the familiar things in an unfamiliar way.

> I just try to capture meaningful moments in everyday life… If a certain sentence comes into my mind… Even while watching TV soap opera or documentary, I often use it as a class material… I just try to make students keep thinking during my class through curious and diverse questions (K4).

> In Economics, when they (students) found a concept they already knew, they usually asked me why the concept in a textbook is not matched with the everyday reality… I attempt to answer all the questions (K5).

[K5] believes her students enjoy asking questions, and because of this, she has attempted to create an environment where her students can ask a question freely; this kind of environment is not typical in the Korean context. Namely, it is uncommon to see students taking initiative and asking questions, and to see teachers accepting this kind of discussion within the classroom. Usually, students keep silent and the teacher are busy with proceeding their teaching plan due to a lack of time.

Norwegian teachers

In order to encourage cooperative activities among students, [N1's] school has been operating a type of buddy group program, i.e. small groups of students assigned to help each other and share the responsibility. The groups change every three weeks so that students can interact with a different set of different students each time. According to [N1], this program has worked well in that it helps students reduce their preconception against others and relieve their sense of alienation.

> We switch every third week so that they work together with a lot of people in the class. And the thought is that if you have worked with different many people, you do not feel that 'oh, no, I got in a group with him or her'. You are supposed to see it as like everyone is work buddy, and also you feel safe socially in the class. It is easy you to kind of relax and learn actually. That is why we'd like to do it as a whole in the principle (N1).

When [N2] teaches her Politics class for third-year students, she conducts group debates on various social issues so that her students can be engaged in real politics. For instance, one group assignment was focused on investigating political parties in Norway. Then, in a class debate, each group had to represent various social issues and advocate the party they were assigned to, this is illustrated below:

> I assign them (students) all different political parties in small groups. They will have to learn about their ideology, ideological background, what their main issues are, who they might wanna work within government, how big they are in parliament, somewhat about its history. And then, we will debate on immigration (N2).

According to [N2], writing is also important in Politics, because it can develop a student's ability in both critical and logical thinking. The third-year students in Politics take a national level of written exam, which is in the format of an article. Therefore, the topics on 'how to build a structure' and 'what is a good article' were important issues in her class, by focusing on these topics, students can familiarize themselves with article-based writing early on.

> In Politics, they are only supposed to write one type of text which is an article… Before the main test, I give them some suggestions… how to build a good structure in the text… I give them a recipe for what is a good text in Politics… You have to have an introduction. You have to explore to explain the main issue. And, you have to debate different sides, and you have to have conclusion when you rounded it up (N2).

[N3], in his Sociology class, lets students do the social science research by themselves. Outside of the classroom, students must find information in various fields in order to collect data, and with this data they must proceed to conduct a data analysis in the same way a sociologist would.

> In Social science... okay… now I want to do… why do people commit crime? Give me the answer. Now we can spend two weeks on this. And you go out, find the information, write me on something. Or they can choose if they want to write or do it orally. They can choose. And they find something, and then they discuss… (N3).

The research discussed above was not implemented as a home-assignment, but rather as a class activity within a timetable. [N3] wanted his students to experience the process of social science research by going outside to examine the issues they were interested in more depth and to meet people relevant to the issue they were researching. [N4] also wanted her students to experience something practical and has organized every Friday as students' presentation day.

> They have to choose from what has happened the last week. They have to read about it, check different sources, and present it for the rest of the class. And we discuss it, why this is important… We get through many of the… subjects in society… criminology… world society… conflict, and maybe something about work… you know, so that way, I think we cover a lot (N4).

Through the presentation assignment, she expects her students to deal with the diverse topics surrounding them, which can be helpful when it comes to broadening the perspectives of her students as well as encouraging them to be more active on social issues. The cases of [N3] and [N4] tell us that creating an environment where students can experience various issues by actively working on it themselves, should be prioritized by teachers.

Comparison of the Circumstances

I found some distinctive differences regarding the teachers' circumstances in their class practices. The first difference is about the form of the Politics test. As mentioned by [N2], the third-year students in Norway have to take a written-exam which requires them to express their thoughts critically and logically. Whereas, in Korea, students take the national level of Politics exam in the form of a multiple-choice test. Taking this into account, the way a teacher teaches can be influenced by the type of these final exams. Between the article-writing arrangement and multiple-choice format, which of the two is more appropriate to use when examining the competence of students?

Regarding the field research activity in [N3's] class, it can be difficult to fit this within the Korean context where the physical boundary of school is distinctive. In other words, it is challenging for teachers in Korea to assign students to conduct field research within a regular timetable. In order to make field research a possibility, they would have to deal with the timetable arrangement, get fieldtrip approval from the principal, and receive guidance when it comes to students' safety. If there is an accident during the field research activity, the teacher and school authorities will have to take full responsibility for it. For this reason, teachers tend to be reluctant to try something new like the field research activity.

On the other hand, the weekly presentation activity in [N4's] class is something that can be implemented in classes in Korea, as it provides students with an opportunity of learning by doing. It is, however, not easy for teachers to implement it every week, because they can feel like they are under pressure when it comes to the time schedule of the subject's contents. To conclude, it is important to note that all of the students of the same grade (year) take the same test in Korea, and thus, teachers must focus on keeping up the pace with their colleagues in terms of the time schedule. As a result, these circumstances lead to less teacher autonomy in terms of what they are able to do in their planning of class practices.

7.2.3 Challenges in Korean teachers' Class practices

Even though the activity-oriented class approach in Korea has been recommended by educational policy and accepted by the teachers as a way to improve the quality of class, there are still difficulties that exist in practicing this type of approach. The reality is that some of these structural limitations go beyond the efforts of an individual. The following sections help illustrate these particular difficulties:

Students' complaints and resistance to the activity-oriented class

The Korean teachers interviewed often faced complaints from students about the activity-oriented approach. In Korea, where the cramming style of teaching is still pervasive, students have become more accustomed to attending lectures because they receive more refined and digested information from a teacher. In the activity-oriented class, on the other hand, they are required to express their thoughts and to solve problems themselves. As a consequence, some students, especially those who are among the top-ranked students, complain that the activity-oriented class yields time-consuming and tiresome works. Because there is less difficulty in acquiring knowledge from lectures alone, they typically regard the activity-oriented assignments as less efficient when progressing through the curriculum.

> They (students) just feel comfortable if they just sit and listen to what a teacher is saying. In my class, however, I give them an assignment to figure it out together with friends… So, they think it is hard time… They feel, rather, more comfortable with the lecture-oriented class. That is why they resisted to me like… "Do we really have to take this kind of class?" I used to get that kind of reaction from them… (K1).
>
> A student wrote like this… "So far, I have been doing a lot of group activities in class, and those made me always annoyed. There was nothing to learn" … The student must have had a deep distrust of the group activities so far (K2).
>
> It is possible to practice the activity-oriented class for the first-and-second-year students. However, for the third-year students, I can't. No matter how well I made the materials, they used to refuse my class… I feel like they seem to be dead during a lecture-oriented class, but they think it is better… I tried to convince them that, even it's like nothing to acquire, experiencing many activities like debate or presentation can help them learn more. But they just replied that it bothered them and they were used to taking a lecture (K3).

In particular, as the above excerpt demonstrates, the resistance to the activity-oriented class is stronger among the third-year students. Having the CSAT ahead, they just feel like they only need to acquire the refined and digested information from their teachers. [K3], last year, had no choice but to change her class practices from an activity-oriented approach to a lecture-oriented one, because her third-year students expressed dissatisfaction and rejected activity-oriented assignments.

Difficulties in Harmonizing a Class with an Assessment

As mentioned in Chapter 3.1.2 (upper secondary education in Korea), there are two types of school assessment, Regular and Performance assessment. In the case of Social Studies, the final grade for one semester is derived by calculating around 60-70% of the Regular and around 30-40% of the Performance scores, which is classified from the 1st to 9th grade based on the

relative grading scale (which is based on a curve). In short, one's final grade is resulted from the score's relative position in a group, which naturally makes students sensitive about their scores.

> People are so sensitive about their scores and grades… in Korea… It is a culture that stratifies people thoroughly based on their grades and scores… Students usually believe that a small difference of scores can be resulted in a different grade… So, in the end, they become so sensitive about their relative position in a group. Because it is so decisive for their future career or college entrance… (K4).

In regard to the above, students and/or parents often raise an objection as to whether the Performance assessment is evaluated fairly or not. Compared to the Regular assessment, which is calculated automatically in the form of multiple-choice, the Performance one is assessed qualitatively by a teacher. Therefore, the objection may reflect something particular within this social context where there is a lack of trust in teachers as evaluators.

> In terms of an assessment, I feel like parents are more influential. I mean… they complain about the way how teachers give marks and implement the Performance assessment... Because their children should not be disadvantaged from it. There were quite a few appeals from parents last year (K5).

> I think the fundamental problem is… the lack of trust in teachers as an evaluator, the social atmosphere that makes teachers be distrusted, and the society where teachers are not empowered as evaluators (K4).

To prevent the objection, teachers tend to grade in a certain way; i.e. they grade Performance assessment scores in a way that typically makes a small difference in overall distribution of Performance assessment scores. So, no matter how its weight for the final grade is, and it could be as high as 30 to 40%, the final grade for one semester is heavily dependent on the results of Regular assessments mostly. Because of this, a disharmony between class practice and assessment exists. In other words, no matter how actively students are engaged in class, their final grades tend to be determined by the abilities of understanding and memorizing in accordance with the multiple-choice test.

> Recently, the share of Performance assessment has been increased up to 40%. But… the school grading system is based on the relative scale on a curve… For that reason, only one student can be graded at the first top level and two students at the second grade among 40 students in Economics class. So, students are very sensitive to the grade… Very sensitive... So, I do not want to make a big difference in the result of the Performance assessment. Because they really work hard for it… Therefore, in the end, I end up being in a situation where I have to differentiate students' scores with the Regular assessments… I don't know how to solve this situation… I always end up making the Regular assessment difficult by adopting the form of CSAT (K5).

Because the weight of Regular assessment is relatively increased, teachers tend to create very difficult multiple-choice questions in order to differentiate the scores of the students, which can easily screen the relative position of students on a curve. In some cases, teachers tend to transform the Performance assessment into a quantified or short-answer test in order to make the grading process convenient and to be able to score objectively. This way of grading is unsuitable for evaluating students' diverse competences, because it has been minimized to a measure of fragmentary knowledge only.

Refused class in the final semester

The Korean teachers interviewed have commonly experienced that their students are less engaged during the final semester. No matter how much efforts they made, they noticed that there were only five to ten students paying attention to the class while the others end up falling asleep or use their attention by studying other subjects.

> There were only ten students who were participating in my class, and the rests were fallen asleep or studying other subjects like English… in the final semester of high school… there is such a strange feature that I cannot say anything… If any student says that 'I would like to do this', then I have no choice but to accept it (K1).

> Um… It is hard to keep the class in the final semester… This is one of the elective subjects in the CSAT… so… if students say that they will not choose Social Studies for the CSAT or they've already applied for the Early Admission, I have nothing to say. So, naturally, if I do my lecture… what can I say… The number of students who participate in my class is just a few (K2).

As mentioned above, the lack of motivation in class during the final semester is caused by two main reasons. One reason is that school records for the Early Admission which accounts for about 76.2% of college admittance are completed right before the final semester. Therefore, students who have chosen the Early Admission route do not engage in the class during the final semester. In addition, the final semester class tends to focus on the CSAT which is used for the Regular Admission accounting for 23.8% of college admittance. Thus, many of the students who do not need the CSAT scores take the class in the final semester less seriously, which shows, to a certain extent, the reality of education in Korea as functioning only in accordance with college admittance.

The second reason is that Social Studies is one of elective subjects in CSAT. That is, if students do not choose it as their elective in the CSAT for the Regular Admission path, they hardly have any motivation to take part in the class. Because of these reasons, the Social Studies classroom

becomes a place for students to take a nap or a place for them to study other electives for the CSAT.

> In the final semester… I feel like I become helpless in my class... They just close their eyes and ears if they don't choose my subject for the CSAT. No matter what I do… (K3).

Between teachers and students, the refused class in the final semester might be perceived differently. Seeing how [K3] expressed that she felt "helpless" above, this indicates that passionate teachers have a difficult time accepting the situation where they are disregarded by their own students. This is realization teachers come to face, as the fundamental mutual trust they believe they had with their students crumbles. They may also realize that as teachers, they may have only functioned as a means to each other. In this regard, Korean teachers can often share a certain sentiment which can be somewhat described as strange and bitter.

On the other hand, students may have different feelings about why they refuse the Social Studies class during the final semester. Because the burden of school records has been lifted, they may feel a sense of freedom during the final semester. In addition, the students who prepare for the CSAT may find it more reasonable to study their prioritized electives. For these reasons, students in the Social Studies class during the final semester come to refuse the class itself as they are occupied with other subjects or have come to lose motivation to engage in school completely.

7.2.4 Evaluation System in Norway

The challenges Korean teachers have experienced in their class practices are mainly related to the evaluation system as seen above. Both school records and CSAT in Korea are based on the *relative grading system* (which is on a curve), and this causes difficulty for teachers when it comes to harmonizing their classes with assessments. Meanwhile, compared to that of Korea, the evaluation system in Norway produces somewhat different circumstances for teachers in four ways. To begin, teachers in Norway are not required to implement a common examination for the students within the same study year. Each Social Studies teacher can decide their own way of examination for the students that are in their class. Therefore, when it comes to testing, teachers are not required to agree on a date, a method, and a reflection rate with their colleagues, and this relieves the burden of having to come to an agreement on the way assessments should be implemented. As a result, teachers can directly link their class activities with their own assessments.

> We can talk about something in a meeting. If I think I do not want to do it this way, I do not do it that way… We have full autonomy of how to evaluate it (N3).

In addition, most of the examinations are based on written and/or oral tests rather than multiple-choice tests, thus, this paves the way to consider various aspects of students' competences. As quoted below, [N2] wanted her students to develop their own arguments when they take the written test. [N4] changed her perspective on the evaluation from measuring students' outcomes to observing their everyday moments of learning, so, for her class, she has chosen to implement oral assessment only.

> They will get one… one thesis to debate and they will write an article… It is more like to develop their… how they make their argument or maybe to see both sides of an issue or to highlight the most important things… The main test for this semester, they will have all sources available, the textbook, note, internet. They are not allowed to communicate and cooperate with, but they will have all sources open. That is why it is important for them to actually have their own argument and thoughts… (N2).

> It is an oral subject. It is with an oral exam… We are trying to change the way we think about… evaluation like… not having a lot of tests… but maybe try and do it like… think that they are in training… So, using the evaluation during the year for learning, not for getting results… So, I have told my students that I… I look at their achievements where I find them. They have every opportunity at every minute to show me their achievements of this subject (N4).

Grades are calculated from 1 to 6 points based on the *absolute grading system*, instead of the *relative grading system* on a curve which is used in Korea. This means the rank or stratification of a students' grade is not considered. This naturally guarantees teachers' autonomy and discretion in an evaluation, which made the above two statements of [N2] and [N4] possible.

> In theory, all my students can get the lowest grade, or all my students can get the top grade. So, we do not think that 'oh, no, I have 5% of top grade'. We do not… It was like that in the Norwegian school but that was maybe 20 years ago (N3).

Lastly, feedback is important when it comes to evaluation. Students get feedbacks from their teachers as to why they got the grade that they did as well as their strengths and weaknesses on the exam. Norwegian students also have the option to raise an appeal regarding their exam results, for which teachers are then required to give them feedback with concrete comments.

> My job is to explain why they got that grade. And I will point out what they did well and which… which element of their answer was good, and I will also say 'it will be good if you had explored this point a bit more…' (N2).

7.3 Interactions with Students

Moving on to the third preset topic, it is evident that teachers' interactions with students constitute a large part of their experiences. The following three categories that were identified under this topic are: the meaning of students, challenges in student guidance, and the direction to go. To clarify, these categories refer to how teachers perceive their students, what challenges they face when guiding their students, and the direction they choose to go with their students. In order to illustrate the analyzed data clearly, each category was divided into two accounts based on the Korean teachers' descriptions and the Norwegian teachers' descriptions.

7.3.1 The meaning of Students

The teachers interviewed in the two countries have mentioned that their relationships with students is a critical factor when determining the nature of their school life and class practices. The following is about how the teachers perceive their students.

Korean Teachers

When discussing the meaning of their students, the teachers interviewed have said that they have been affected by their students in many ways. Students have been the driving force for them to change their class practices as well as to reflect on themselves. Moreover, they have shared about the growth they have experienced together with their students.

> As students began to tell their thoughts, I could keep discovering their potential such as 'wow! that student has that kind of idea'. That was really amazing… I could feel a sense of bond even without speaking… a kind of trust… In such a relationship, I was happy that I could see each student in more detail (K1).
>
> I am a type of person who do not mix a business with pleasure… After all, for students, I am not regarded as being on their side. I'm just trying to keep my principles, but it ends up being minus in the relationships with students… I feel like I am stupid (K4).
>
> I think teaching-profession is good for my own growth. It is an encounter with people having full of curiosity and fresh ideas… Since I've been with them, I also get to have a new question… I feel like it is really good for my own progress, and from time to time I got a sense of comfort from them (K5).

As the excerpt above shows, students were the motivation for [K1] to change her class practice. She had no choice but to listen to what they said and to better understand them, especially when they began to fall asleep or lose motivation in her class. From these experiences, she could finally escape from the way she used to think about teaching which promoted cramming

information. Instead, she had been motivated to attempt something new, such as a communicative class. For [K4], thinking about the way her students function in the classroom has given her the opportunity to continuously reflect on herself, especially when she was struggling to build a good relationship with them. She initially regarded her principled attitudes as the reason for being estranged from students before. In the teacher-student relationship, she reflects and questions to what extent discipline and acceptance should be exercised. In the case of [K5], she felt intellectually stimulated and emotionally supported by her students. To satisfy her students' curiosity, she has broadened her scope of knowledge beyond the textbook. She has also found pleasure in working on something together through active communication with her students.

Norwegian Teachers

The teachers interviewed prioritized their relationship with students more than class instruction alone. They believed that a class functions better when there is mutual respect and trust. In this regard, their relationships with their students were vital to start a class itself.

> I missed the class. Because I like speaking with the young people. So, I am quite personal with them. I tell them things of my life and I like if they tell things about their life… If you get the good personal relation with the students, then they will want to teach for you. Then, they can also accept if some of the classes are boring. Because they like you as a person… They both know that we like each other and we treat each other with respect. So, I think it is very very important. If they are not fond of the teacher, they are more critic to the teaching, critic to the classes. Ye… I found that very very important… That's why I liked to be a teacher (N3).

> The most important thing is to get that kind of relationship with them… 'I am not here to judge you… I am here as your teacher to help you do the best you can do'… (N1).

> Having the relationship is first to make them trust me. It took two months. And after two months, they said 'I think maybe you like us.' I said 'ye… finally, you understand. Now we can start to work with the subject'… and I also did a lot to talk to them when I met them outside of the classroom… Relationship is so important, if they don't like the school. It is so important (N4).

According to the above excerpt, [N3], who had moved from school to the city office of education before, missed the students he taught and decided to come back to school again. For him, having a class means having sincere conversations with students based on mutual respect. In this regard, students exist as an axis that makes the class possible to teach. [N1] mentioned that it was necessary to make it clear to students that teachers are not in a position to judge, but rather in a position to help students reach their potential. [N4] also agreed with the idea that building good relationships with students needs to be prioritized. This belief is based on the previous experiences she had in which she found herself struggling with students. She

emphasized the importance of expression as encouraging students to reach their potential, and from there the students will have a greater chance of being motivated and engaged in class. Namely, she believes students are the key agent that makes teaching the class possible.

7.3.2 Challenges in Student Guidance

The classroom is the main setting where teachers and students interact, wherein teachers can face potential challenges when it comes to student guidance. While Korean teachers reported to have challenges with students who lack motivation and working in a competitive social atmosphere, Norwegian teachers reported that they often meet students' disruptive behaviors during a class and regional gap within a city.

Korean Teachers

The teachers interviewed were concerned about the social reality of students, wherein nobody can truly be free from competition and stratification. Students are prone to identifying themselves through comparison with others and then, get stuck in either a sentiment of superiority or inferiority. [K4] pitied her students that fell into the trap of meaningless competition, because it makes it difficult for her students to lead their own lives. Indeed, she perceived the competition in Korea as a vehicle that produces helpless and otherized students.

> I feel sorry for them… I feel like they are doing a kind of meaningless competition. They seem to be trapped in a race without their own aim… Just trapped in a frame of competition, students live in a way they actually did not want… being a slave of cram school… There are quite a few students that I wish for them to do what they really want… Parents' anticipation, social success, society with lack of alternatives… (K4).

Also, teachers interviewed commonly pointed out that it was challenging to guide students who fell asleep in class. This happens regularly in Korean upper secondary classrooms. Students may end up falling asleep in class due to various reasons such as late-night cram sessions, online gaming, and/or part-time jobs. However, in some circumstances, sleeping in class can be an act of protest in a class they perceive as boring (Uhm, 2013).

> I feel like the sleeping students are the hardest one to guide… indifferent students… Because I can't wake them up every time. And they feel annoyed, too. It seems like there's about three sleeping students per one class in general. Is it ten percent, then? Because it is three out of thirty (K3).

The teachers had different ideas about what to do with students who fall asleep in class. [K4] did not agree with leaving students alone and allowing them to stay asleep after dozing off in class, i.e. she believed this was not the right thing to do as a teacher. Therefore, she often feels

inclined and obligated to wake up the students who happen to fall asleep in her class. On the other hand, [K5] held a more flexible position when it came to dealing with sleeping students and considered situation first. If waking up the students would be disturbing to the rest of the class, she would then choose to leave the sleeping students alone. From a practical point of view, she prefers to give the other students a chance to learn and the opportunity to concentrate in class.

> I am a little more strict with the sleeping or disturbing students than other teachers, and do not let them fall asleep (K4).
>
> The criterion is, when I wake up the sleeping student, whether it is expected to disturb the class or not (K5).

The difference between [K4] and [K5] on how to handle students who fall asleep in class is a matter worth discussing: To what extent should teachers intervene and take responsibility for these students?; What is a teacher's role in this?; What is an educational action in this regard?

Norwegian Teachers

While Korean teachers pointed out the competitive social atmosphere and trouble with students who fall asleep in class, Norwegian teachers had different challenges that they discussed. Norwegian teachers often mentioned disruptive pupils and problems that arose from regional differences. As seen in the statements below, [N4] struggled to get her students involved in class for the first two months, because many of them had a negative image towards school and teachers. She had no choice but to be patient and keep trying to communicate with them in a positive way. [N1] had discussed a difficulty she had with a disruptive student who decided to lay down on the floor during class. This kind of disruptive behavior not only interrupts the flow of class, but also confuses teachers about how far they should intervene when there is a student disrupting the class.

> There were so many times where I just wanted to lower my eyes and think… 'ah… guys… You are so immature… Do you really have to throw your condom around the room? Ah'… But, that's what they wanted. That's what they expected me to do. They tested me. Of course, they did (N4).
>
> We discussed it today. I don't know what to do with that. It is five. Five students in one class… rest of them pay attention. But those five, they don't have that. One of them actually lay down on the floor and then, he just lay there. It's kind of trying to get a reaction or something… It is hard to know how to handle it (N1).

In addition, there are regional differences between the schools in the east side of Oslo and the schools in the west side of Oslo when it comes to handling students and their behavior.

According to [N3], disruptive behavior in class is quite common in the east side schools. According to [N3], because academic achievement and student motivation are relatively low in the east side schools, teachers have to be skilled in leading a class and guiding their students, otherwise the class would be difficult to continue to teach.

> When I was working in the east side of Oslo, almost all classes were trouble makers… You have to get silence first… If you lose control in the east side, it is a very big problem in the class. You will be able to do nothing. It would be total chaos (N3).

Meanwhile, according to [N1], some students in the west side of Oslo struggle to manage their academic burden for different reasons. Because they are under pressure for future success, they often reveal a kind of low self-esteem and/or a fear of failure. In this regard, [N1] was more concerned about those students. The regional difference will be further discussed later in chapter 7.5.1.

> Some of them are so pressured, even though they are some of the best students. I am more kind of worry about them, the kids who want the best grades, who you know are stressed out. They almost cry and they have panic attacks and they lose their hair in their seventeen years old (N1).

When comparing the challenges the teachers have met in the two different countries, the students who fall asleep can equivocate to them not being interested in the class or outwardly protesting class participation through falling asleep on purpose. Whereas disruptive behavior can be read as a kind of provocation to test the teacher's capacity or to draw attention to themselves and away from the teacher. From the students' perspective, being required to stay seated with no other options may lead them to fall asleep in class or disturb the class in order to express their control of themselves or, a kind of resistance because they feel helpless. For teachers, however, these types of behavior are difficult to deal with in the classroom as they have to consume a lot of energy to do so, which ends up making them feel tired and wounded.

7.3.3 The Direction to go

Teachers in both countries regarded building a good relationship with students as the most fundamental in their class practices. Both teacher groups pursued a 'horizontal relationship' with their students.

Korean Teachers

By transforming a class into an activity-oriented one, teachers said they could experience new opportunities to look further into students' various abilities, and in turn, this has led them to gain a certain trust in their students. The transition also works to dismantle the monopoly of

words spoken in the class, as they have learned to focus more on listening to what the students have to say. Consequently, these teachers have experienced an improved relationship with their students and continue to build horizontal relationships.

> I saw the students, who used to fall asleep, being so excited to speak in a class debate. Since they share their stories and thoughts… it was such a pleasure for me… seeming like finding a hidden treasure (K1).
>
> At first, I assumed that they were just chatting. Because it was so loud. But, when I approached them, I realized that they were actually talking about the topic of the class (K3).
>
> I think one of students' purpose coming to school is to make a relationship. I feel like… If they think of me as a person who try to listen to what they say, they also try not to do that kind of disturbing. I think it is very important to ask them why they did it and to listen to what they say (K5).

When [K1] and [K3] changed the style of their classes to the activity-oriented style, their position as a teacher had also transformed into a facilitator. Because the reliance on them to hold all the knowledge and to lead the class through lecture had gone, they naturally came to assist their students on how to speak freely. That is, they focused on encouraging their students to create and obtain new knowledge by providing them with the stage to share their own ideas and thoughts. Naturally, this experience broadened their understanding of how their students work and built up faith in their students' potential. According to [K5], building rapport is important in the horizontal relationship, for which listening to what students have to say is the key virtue that teachers must discover for themselves. A class that is less communicative and less interactive could become an oppressive space for students and be difficult to bear. All in all, the Korean teachers have made many efforts to conduct a more interactive class through the horizontal relationship with their students.

Norwegian Teachers

The Norwegian teachers were more active when it came to building of horizontal relationships, and this was evident in their response to students' questions and criticism. In case the teachers did not know the answer to something, they believed it was important to be honest with their students and tell them when they had no idea. [N3] preferred not to emphasize authority, but rather to enhance the mutual relationship, so that, in his words, teachers could "create an environment where we (teachers and students) are allowed to be fail". If teachers and students could be vulnerable with one another, this shared vulnerability could act as a cornerstone for mutual understanding and consideration.

> "Well, that is an interesting question. I actually do not know the answer. But I will try to find it" Then I will ask "anyone know? If anyone does not know the answer, I will check it for the next class. And I come back to you" … You can tell that into a good thing to show myself as vulnerable… Then, they do not have to be a perfect student in front of a teacher. So, you have to… try to create an environment where we are allowed to be failed. We do not have to be perfect. It is very difficult with young people. Because they want to be perfect. Then, it is more important for me to show that I am not perfect (N3).

They also argued that students should be encouraged to even be critical of what teachers say. Namely, if students disagree with a teacher's comment, they should be able to raise objections and to challenge teachers at any time.

> What I need the students to know is that… "I love it if you disagree with me. I will never put your grade down" … I say "this is why you are here. You have to be critical even to what I say. Of course, you have to be critical. So, do not think that I have all the answers" (N4).

> Actually, in this school, I would like them to rebel a bit more. Because they are youth people. "Why are you so polite all the time? You must not always trust all I say. You must have questions to what I say, because I do not have all the answer… You have to rebel a bit more than now" (N3).

Deducing from the above excerpt, the Norwegian teachers consider resisting and challenging an existing system as the basis of their students' own growth. They perceived any criticism of the status quo as a starting point in changing society. That is why they argued that students needed to question what teachers say. With this in mind, pursuing horizontal relationships with students can lead to anyone being able to share one's thoughts and opinions freely.

7.4 Interactions with Colleagues

Preset as the fourth topic, teachers' interaction with colleagues is also important in that it shapes their school life and experiences. In other words, this topic explores how the interviewed teachers describe and perceive their communication and collaboration with their colleagues. Two categories were identified under this topic and were clearly comparable in terms of communication; these categories are titled as 'lack of communication in Korea' and 'encouraged communication in Norway'.

7.4.1 Lack of Communication in Korea

There has been a recent trend in Korea where teachers meet to cooperate and collaborate on class practice in lower secondary schools, however the teachers interviewed said that they usually prepare for a class by themselves and seldom share any of their class materials with other colleagues. These teachers only have a few meetings scheduled in the beginning of a

semester in order to distribute teaching hours. Namely, aside from personal closeness, sharing ideas and collaborating for class practice are not common in upper secondary schools in Korea. The following examples show the common patterns:

> I feel like most teachers prepare for a class by themselves. If there are two teachers in charge of Sociology for third-year students, they usually split the units, so that they do not have to discuss what and how to teach (K1).

> Even in the case several teachers needed to teach students at the same grade (year) level, we usually split the units to make it clear the area of each one's responsibility… I feel like we only get together to adjust the exam setting such as degree of difficulty, number of questions, and correction of errors… to prevent potential problems (K3).

As quoted above, Korean teachers prefer to clearly separate one's own area of responsibility. They usually split the unit of what to teach according to the table of contents, which naturally reduces the need for cooperation. The reduced cooperation is also a result of teaching different sub-subjects by grade (year) level, such as Economics for the first-year students, Politics for the second-year students, and Sociology for the third-year students.

The clear division of what to teach has reinforced teachers to stick to their own teaching style, as it has led to a lack of opportunity to communicate with each other. [K3] mentioned this tendency was particularly strong among teachers who have taught the third-year students for a long time. Because they have built up their experiences at the forefront of college entrance, they stand self-convicted in their strong preference for teaching lecture-oriented classes. As a result, they have a low tolerance for other ways of teaching including using activity-oriented methods.

> I feel like almost half of them seem to be negative about the activity-oriented class. It is, especially, more obvious from teachers who have been teaching the third-year students for a long time… They used to say that "activity-oriented class is of no use. No matter how hard you've tried the activities in a class for the first-and-second-year students, you end up having no choice but to lecture due to the CSAT" … The communication among teachers is not that activated… Teachers having taught the third-year students for a long time usually adhere to teach the third-year students only, which is why the culture has not been changed a lot (K3).

[K3] also mentioned that teachers' sense of comparison with others as well as their high self-esteem have reinforced them to stay isolated within their class, because they prefer to avoid being conscious of others. As a result, these reasons make teachers more reluctant when it comes to trying something new.

> They asked me to show my class on the Open Class Day, but they did not come. So, I sent them my class materials, but they did not see it. They think their classes are better… In some ways, I feel like it's a matter of self-esteem… I mean… They seem to have a kind of their own comfort zone in terms of class practice. They were just curious about how I taught but never applied it to their class (K3).

In the above excerpt, [K3] interpreted the nonattendance of her colleagues as a matter of protecting one's self-esteem by keeping themselves within their "comfort zone"; this reflects the desire to protect their status quo from being influenced by external factors. Because they want to protect themselves from potential criticism, sharing ideas with colleagues about class practices could be seen as a threat to their self-esteem.

To a certain extent, this sentiment reflects a particular reality in which not even teachers are free from self-consciousness or the perils of social comparison. This view is related to the educational background of many Korean teachers who have been educated in a way that promotes competition and ranking, wherein self-consciousness or thoughts of where one stand in comparison to others have worked as a driving force in their academic lives. Due to these circumstances, if they happened to find a person who was more capable at doing something than themselves, they can easily come to consider themselves incapable or inferior. That is why [K3's] colleagues decided not to come and see her Open Class.

Lastly, the reason for less communication among colleagues in Korean upper secondary schools has to do with the fact that colleagueship is difficult to build. A colleagueship is a close, intimate relationship wherein people can relate to each other based on their age, their hometown, their school, and so on. Without this kind of personal intimacy among colleagues, it can be difficult to challenge others' opinions and to express one's ideas freely. For this reason, it can be challenging to create a culture where teachers can discuss their class practices together.

> There are three Social Studies teachers in my school. It is not easy to come together and share ideas due to different age, gender, familiarity, and inclination… Everyone is busy, so it is hard to make a time available for something together. And the biggest reason is that it is still uncommon to express one's idea and share it (K1).

> If I realized that my colleague was misunderstanding a concept so I tell him/her that "You'd better think it again", they may respond like this "that is my concept, so you do not need to cross the line"… If I say "you have a wrong concept" … I am not sure whether the response would be "do I? thank you for teaching me. I learned it from you" or not… I feel like it does not seem to have been worked well among teachers so far… That is what I really think of as a feature of Korean society, which means a kind of invisible hierarchy based on the work experiences… Because I am the youngest… "If I do something like this, am I look cheeky? If I point out that the question is wrong, won't the one's self-esteem get hurt? Would it be acceptable to the colleague?" … (K5).

As quoted above, [K5], who has less experience of teaching among teachers in her school, has said that she had found herself engaging in self-censorship when she discussed exam questions and pedagogies with her elder colleagues. This kind of peer-conscious attitude fails to foster a communicative culture among teachers, instead, creates a particularly negative atmosphere

among the group. In such a context, each teacher continues to struggle with their class without knowing how to find out the root of their problems, how to solve it, and how to ask for help. Namely, it is rare to see colleagues asking other colleagues about how their class is going, if they can share ideas, or if they can have permission to observe a class.

7.4.2 Encouraged Communication in Norway

The Norwegian teachers often discussed their cooperation with colleagues has also been encouraged by policy from the city government; this policy institutionalizes a weekly meeting at the school. Accordingly, several meetings have been fixed on a timetable which is included in a weekly routine for the teachers. [N3] and [N4] work at the same school where the meetings have become commonplace and frequented. [N3] attends three weekly meetings, one for the entire faculty, one for Social Studies & Economics, and one for History. He thinks the meetings are helpful as teachers can freely share their ideas on class teaching and assessment.

> Since we have these three levels of meetings which we have to do every week, and we have a lot of time to discuss and find out things together… So, this meeting is suggested to be helpful to every teacher. If you are uncertain how to do this, you can get tips. But, if I think I don't want to do it this way, I don't do it that way. So, we have full autonomy of how to do it (N3).

As seen above, the meetings exist as a platform for sharing ideas, and not used to create a unified order. It is backed up by their chosen evaluation system, in which Norwegian teachers are not required to implement a unified assessment. In other words, they do not have to coordinate the way they assess with each other. This also means teachers do not need to compare and compete with each other regarding testing methods, contents, and results. Consequently, the meetings are able to function as a space for sharing ideas that benefits everyone who attends.

According to [N4], the meetings originally did not function well due to formality. There were complaints from busy teachers who had lots of work to do. After the school authorities reviewed the complaints, they decided to improve the meetings by making them more practical so that teachers can actually share their ideas as well as their class materials. Through that process, the weekly meetings have become an established part of the culture in her school.

> Before, it used to be like the… top down for two hours. But now we would like… because we said… "maybe you can write some email instead or you can put that information other places. We don't really get that much you know… I need to evaluate. I have a lesson to do" … So, they actually listened to us and changed it. So, now we use that time more like… um… to actually develop our teaching practice. Sometimes it's some information and stuffs but not as much as before… (N4).

[N1] said her school has cultivated teacher collaboration as an integral part of the school culture in a natural way. Teacher collaboration originally started with a voluntary project led by teachers, in which a topic of 'climate change' was dealt with from the diverse aspects of Geography, Science, Social Studies, and Physical education. As one of teachers who participated in the project mentioned above, [N1] felt very positively about communicating and collaborating with colleagues. She believed teachers would experience less self-isolation within their own class through sharing ideas with each other.

> That is something that works within this school. You know, you use your colleagues. You don't have to know everything yourselves… So, we kind of share information… It is kind of like a culture where we share… like if a teacher comes and asks something like "hey you know, it did the last week. just take it" like… "This is what I did. This is how it works. You can do that". And I will be… "okay… cool" … use it. So, I like that. You can… kind of… make all of us better by sharing ideas (N1).

Of course, it is difficult to generalize the level of Norwegian teachers' cooperation due to the fact that context must be considered. With that being said, [N2] expressed that the degree of teachers' communication and cooperation varies depending on the subject and grade level. For the first-year level *Samfunnsfag* classes, they often collaborate on classes and assessments, because they are usually a group of five to six teachers. However, in the case of Sociology and Politics, usually only one or two classes are offered with only one teacher in charge, and due to cases like this, the chance of cooperation with colleagues is relatively low.

> As not as much now… Because I am the only teacher in that class. There is only one class and one teacher… But I know that the teachers in first-grade *Samfunnsfag*, they will make a… like a year plan together. They will make the plan for different topics together. And they will have more cooperation (N2).

Overall, the degree of teacher cooperation ultimately varies from school to school in Oslo, Norway. When compared to Korea, however, Norwegian teachers seem to be more active in communicating with colleagues by virtue of the weekly meeting policy as well as their willingness to participate voluntarily in collaboration.

7.5 Working Environments

The fifth topic, working environments, was supplemented to look into structural factors influencing teachers' experiences. Four categories were identified under this topic: differentiation of schools, likelihood of transferring schools, homeroom teacher responsibilities, and administrative tasks. Each category is divided into sections that represent the Korean teachers' accounts and Norwegian teachers' accounts.

7.5.1 Differentiation of Schools

The teachers interviewed said that there was an academic gap between schools within the city of Daegu and Oslo, respectively. The gap is usually fueled by policy and accelerates its spatial differentiation. Thus, the working conditions of these teachers cannot be generalized to the population within the same city.

Korean Teachers

> This is my fifth school. The first two schools I worked at achieved high academic performance, whereas the next three schools stayed at poor performance (K2).

Teachers said that there was an academic gap among schools within the city of Daegu, especially, between *Suseong-gu* district and the other districts. The area of *Suseong-gu* is well-known for being an expensive area due to a concentration of nine prestigious upper secondary schools (two public and seven private). Due to the fact that college admittance is becoming more and more competitive, more parents try to move into the area, which makes the area expensive to live in. This phenomenon leads to an academic gap between schools and usually accelerates differentiation of areas within a city, which then makes the academic gap wider through this vicious cycle.

The differentiation of schools within the city was fueled by the previous neo-liberal *Lee Myoung-bak* administration (2008-2013 in ruling), which neutralized the policy of *school equalization* and introduced a new policy of *Autonomous private upper secondary school*. Since then, the stratification of upper secondary schools has been accelerated in Korea, resulting in *General public schools* losing their popularity.

Norwegian Teachers

As mentioned in Chapter 7.3.2 (Challenges in Student Guidance), the teachers often indicated a regional difference between the west and the east part of Oslo. Schools with high reputations are mainly concentrated in the west part which is often referred to as a rich neighborhood. It is possible that there could be a relationship between a student's high socio-economic background and high academic achievement.

> My two last schools I worked at were in the east side of Oslo. It is not comparative. It is too different world. In that kind of schools, the textbook was too difficult. I couldn't use it. Because it was too difficult. In this school, I can't use the textbook, because it's too easy. You understand? So, it's totally different ways to educate (N3).

The differentiation of schools has also been fueled by policy regarding the upper secondary entrance system in Oslo. Students are free to apply for an upper secondary school based on

their lower secondary records, not based on their residential areas. Thus, schools applied by students who have high academic achievement naturally get to have high level of academic results and reputations. These schools are consequently located in the west. Whereas schools on the east side typically have low application rates and serve students who have relatively low academic achievement. In this way, the academic gap between the two sides is getting bigger, and the spatial differentiation within the city is also accelerated.

> At least in Oslo, you get into high school based on your (lower secondary school) grade. This school has fairly high grade level to get in. So, automatically you get kids who are motivated… The other school in east that I worked with, that is totally different situation in which multicultural, a lot of issues, and difficulties in kids. Every kid has much for five meetings like social services and child services (N1).

> That is because of the system in Oslo. You can choose… totally free… which kind of school you want to go to. And, of course then, you get some schools everyone wants to go. And it is very difficult to come in, very difficult to come into this school. And you get some schools where no one wants to go… Then we have schools which children or youth, young people actually doesn't want to go there but they have to go there… That is kind of you know like a… conservative liberalistic politics have ruled this city for a long time. So… you know…free market, the students are consumers, they have to choose… That is kind of thinking in this city (N3).

As seen above, [N3] believes the open application process based on school records has deepened the gap between schools within Oslo. One reason he points out is the conservative city government which has been under a long-term seizure of power pursuing neo-liberal policies.

> There are some schools in this city that the teachers do not like to work there. Because, it is rough and wild. It has a lot of challenges… They don't get as many students… Their classes are not full… They get less money… They have a lot of social problems… Then, it is difficult to be a teacher (N4).

Consequently, the liberal policy has accelerated the gap among schools, which differentiated teachers' working conditions as well. As said by [N4] above, teachers working in the "rough and wild" schools with "a lot of social problems" are more likely to have difficulties in class teaching than her school on the west side.

7.5.2 Likelihood of transferring schools

One noticeable difference in teachers' working environments was whether or not a teacher-circulating system existed. In Korea, teachers are supposed to transfer to another school regularly, whereas not in Norway.

Korean Teachers

Public school teachers are supposed to transfer a school every four to five years. Namely, there is a teacher-circulating system in Korea. A teacher who is about to move out fills out a transfer-document, in which he/she can write three schools they hope to work at. Then, the provincial office of education allocates them by referring to the document. However, the human resources affairs are entirely up to the office. The regular circulating system is meaningful in that teachers can meet a variety of students in different parts of the city.

Norwegian Teachers

Unlike Korea, teachers do not have to transfer a school in Norway. They can keep working at the school they have chosen and where they have been employed. Three Norwegian teachers interviewed, except for [N3], were the case.

> I do not have to change. I am hired by the city. But my workplace is here… There is no system of a circulating the teachers (N2).

Because the amount of financial funding from the government varies depending on the number of students, schools have different levels of accessibility to facilities and resources. As a result, teachers experience different working conditions as well. Given the circumstances above, it is difficult to generalize the working conditions of teachers in Oslo. Therefore, the intensity of work depends on which school they work at. [N3] expressed that leading students in a class was more challenging on the east side, whereas on the west side, more effort is required in terms of teaching practices.

> In the east, every student writes a half of a paper. In this school, they write seven pages… I actually work more hours every week in this school… I have to prepare much more… It is more of challenges work here (west)… Who need a good teacher? Well… That is the students of east side… actually… That is some trouble in my head. Should I work here the rest of my life? Or, should I go back to the east side? (N3).

A benefit of keep working at one school for a long period of time is that it gives teachers a sense of belonging as well as predictability at work. In this case, however, there is less of a chance to experience various neighborhoods and different kinds of students, thus resulting in very differentiated working conditions. As quoted above, [N3] has reflected on his future in teaching, the needs of the students in the East, and the where he should teach in the future.

7.5.3 Homeroom teacher and Administrative tasks

Along with class practices, the teachers interviewed had additional work to do; for example, in Korea they also had the role of a homeroom teacher and in Norway, as a contact teacher. Another responsibility the Korean teachers have was to carry out administrative tasks.

Korean Teachers

In upper secondary schools in Korea, a group of about twenty to thirty students stay together in one classroom (otherwise known as *homeroom*) and teachers have to move class to class according to their timetable. Each homeroom has its own *homeroom teacher* who takes full responsibility for students in the class and meets with the class twice a day, once before class and once after class. Because students share a time and place together all day, there can be a lot that happens in the course of a day and the homeroom teachers have to deal with the many issues that may arise.

Aside from the work that comes with being a homeroom teacher, they are also in charge of administrative tasks. In short, Korean teachers usually partake in three kinds of work: subject teaching; homeroom management; and administrative tasks. Among these tasks, the teachers have stated that the administrative tasks are a big part of the work.

> I have so much perfunctory work to do besides my class teaching. Those are so-called chores. As a head of department, I am in charge of planning a schedule for school events. And I am busy dealing with a lot of tasks under the official notice from the office of education in Daegu. In case I have lots of work to do, I think the proportion of administrative tasks and class practice is 7:3, and it is normally 6:4. The burden of administrative tasks is too big. This should be originally reversed (K1).

As [K1] said above, the proportion of administrative tasks is overwhelming and takes away from the work related to class practice. These circumstances make it hard for teachers to concentrate on developing their pedagogical knowledge. It also reflects on a particular reality in Korea where teachers are highly expected to be public officials with the responsibility of having to deal with the projects put forth by the central and provincial governments.

Norwegian Teachers

The role of the *Homeroom teacher* in Korea is comparable with that of the *Contact teacher* in Norway, because both are in charge of an assigned number of students and have the duty of keeping in touch with the students' parents. The contact teachers meet their students once a week, which is significantly less than that of homeroom teachers in Korea. The difference is

related to the class system in Norway, where students move class to class according to their own timetable. Thus, all the students in one class do not often get together as they have a different timetable.

> Half an hour every week, we meet and talk about the class stuffs (N4).
>
> One class is about thirty-two students… One class has two contact teachers… So, I have about sixteen students. I am the point of contact with their parents… If the students have real problem… then, maybe I can talk to the administration or talk to the psychologist downstairs (N3).

[N1] said that contact teachers for the first-year students have more work to do than other grades, as there happens to be more issues among the new settlers. From the second-year students onwards, half of them turn eighteen years old which is an age where they can take responsibility for themselves and be respected as an adult. In this regard, teachers no longer need to talk to the students' parents.

> It is more work in the first grade. You are supposed to have a talk with them (students and parents) four times throughout the year… But it is not that much for workload I think though. But there is a lot of discussions every year. Because the first grade, it is more to do. Second grade, half of them turn to eighteen, so you don't have to do with their parents anymore. And the third grade, they are all eighteen, so they are adult (N1).

In terms of the administrative tasks, teachers in Norway do not have to do this type of work. There exists a separate department of administration within the school. Therefore, they can concentrate on their class practices as well as their contact teacher responsibilities. Like [N4] said below, they spend most of their time at school doing something related to class practice.

> When I am not preparing or I am not evaluating anything… um… I kind of spend a lot of time… Actually, I spend a lot of time thinking about new project that I want. I actually spend a lot of time reading the news… to be… But that is part of my…class practice (N4).
>
> Except school practice… no… It is only school practice… It is all about school and teaching. If my last class is finished at 2 O'clock and I want to go home, then I go home… It can vary from school to school. It depends on the principal and the administration. But this school, we are quite free (N3).

As [N3] mentioned above, his school is implementing a flexible commute time. Teachers are free to commute based on their timetable, which is possible because they do not have additional administrative work to do. Overall, compared to Korea, teachers in Norway can be said to have more time to concentrate on their class practices, as they have less things to do regarding contact teacher and administrative tasks.

7.6 Summary of Findings

The findings on teachers' experiences relate to the following five topics: perception of the subject, practices of the class, interactions with students, interactions with colleagues, and working environments. The summary of the findings is presented in two ways: one is presented in Table 6 and the other is rearranged as contents around Korean and Norwegian teachers, as shown below.

Table 6. Comparative overview of the Findings

<table>
<tr><th>Topics</th><th>Categories</th><th>Korean SSTs</th><th>Norwegian SSTs</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">1.
Perception of the Subject</td><td rowspan="2">Characteristic and Goal of the Subject</td><td colspan="2">A subject dealing with 'changes' in life-world
Independent thinking</td></tr>
<tr><td>- Cognitive aspect
- Burden of acquiring knowledge</td><td>- Practical aspect
- Less pressure on the acquisition of knowledge</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Challenges of the Subject</td><td colspan="2">Decreased share (influence) of Social Studies</td></tr>
<tr><td>- Less chosen in the CSAT</td><td>- Less chosen in General Studies
- Differentiated policies</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expertise in the Subject</td><td>- From in-service training program
- Economics included in SS</td><td>- By sharing ideas with colleagues
- Economics not included in SS</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">2.
Practices of Class</td><td rowspan="2">Activity-oriented Class</td><td colspan="2">Activity-oriented class preferred over lecture-oriented one</td></tr>
<tr><td>- Currently transitioning from lecture to activity-oriented class
- Driven by students and policy</td><td>- Practicing activity-oriented class since the beginning of teaching career</td></tr>
<tr><td>Teachers' teaching methods</td><td>- Well-organized debates
- Q & A: Socratic dialogue; creating a liberal environment</td><td>- buddy group program
- group debates
- article-based writing
- Social science research
- weekly presentation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Challenges in Korean teachers' class practice</td><td colspan="2">- Student complaints and resistance to the activity-oriented class
- Difficulty in harmonizing a class with an assessment due to relative-grading scale on a curve and heavy dependence on Regular (multiple-choice) tests
- Little to no engagement during the final semester due to the completion of Early Admission and deselection in the CSAT</td></tr>
<tr><td>Evaluation system in Norway</td><td colspan="2">- Do not have to implement a common exam for the same graders
- Written and/or oral test rather than multiple-choice
- Absolute grading system calculated from one to six point
- Detailed feedback on the result of exam</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.
Interactions with Students</td><td>The meaning of Students (to teachers)</td><td>- Motivation to develop their class practices
- Driving force to reflect on themselves
- Giving them intellectual stimulus and emotional supports</td><td>- The existence that makes a class itself possible</td></tr>
</table>

	Challenges in Student Guidance	- Sleeping students in a class - Competitive social atmosphere	- Disruptive students in a class - Regional differences within a city
	The Direction to go	Interactive class through horizontal relationships with students	
		- Giving up the role of being the main speaker in class and becoming more of a facilitator - Building rapport by listening to what students say	- Creating an environment that allows for students to make mistakes and fail: sharing vulnerability - Students encouraged to be critical and to question even what teachers say
4. Cooperation with Colleagues	Lack of Communication in Korea	- Lack of opportunities to communicate with other colleagues - Separated responsibility, stick to one's own teaching style - Sense of comparison with others, big ego - Intimacy-based colleagueship producing open-discussions more difficult	
	Encouraged Communication in Norway	- Institutionalized weekly meetings for various levels - 'No unified assessment' and 'Absolute grading system' producing the meetings as a place for sharing ideas - Teachers' voluntary project classes	
5. Working Environments (added)	Differentiation of Schools	Academic gap among schools fueled by policy and accelerating spatial differentiation within a city	
		- *Suseong-gu* in Daegu - Autonomous private school policy	- The differences between the west and east side of Oslo - Grade-based open apply policy
	Likelihood of transferring schools	Teachers transfer schools regularly	Teachers do not need to transfer to a new school
	Homeroom (Contact) teacher	- Students stay at a same room - Students meet twice a day	- Students move from class to class - Students meet once a week
	Administrative tasks	Teachers undertake administrative tasks	Teachers do not partake in administrative tasks

Note: elaborated by the researcher

The experiences of Korean teachers

The Korean Social Studies teachers perceive Social Studies as a subject that deals with various changes in society. In order to educate their students on how to be active citizens, they encourage independent thinking with critical attitude as foundations of the subject. To gain expertise in Social Studies, they usually participate in in-service teacher training programs. However, as they focus more on the cognitive aspects of the subject, they are typically under pressure when it comes to acquisition of subject knowledge, especially in the area of Economics.

Students have acted as the driving force for the teachers to change their class practices from being lecture-oriented to activity-oriented and also to reflect on themselves. Class debate is the most preferred activity, because it engages students on the topic of social issues. When they lead a class where students can express their thoughts freely, it gives the teachers an opportunity to build a more horizontal relationship with their students. Even if activity-oriented classes promote the reasons stated above, the teachers have often had to deal with complaints and resistance from their students when it came to this type of approach. This kind of resistance happens especially during the final semester, and is because of the 'relative grading scale' on a curve and the 'college entrance policy'. In this regard, being able to harmonize a class with the chosen assessment has been the biggest challenge in their class practices so far.

Because a less communicative atmosphere is considered normal among the teachers, they tend to shy away from initiating collaboration and cooperative activities with colleagues. Thus, sharing class design and other ideas is not common. Since they are assigned to be a homeroom teacher and are responsible for administrative tasks in addition to class practice, they do not have enough time to come together as well. The intimacy-based colleagueship (based on personal commonality) and the tendency to compare themselves with others (high self-esteem issues) have created a peer-conscious attitude and barriers to expressing oneself openly and being able to participate in discussion. In this context, collaboration can be perceived as a generally disruptive activity, and because of this notion, they generally prefer to keep their own area and to clearly divide responsibility and accountability among themselves. Additionally, the teacher-circulation system may also play a part in the reason for the less communicative culture, because many of the school members transfer to new locations every year. However, it gives teachers the opportunity to teach different kinds of students and to teach in various parts of the city as well.

The experiences of Norwegian teachers

The Norwegian Social Studies teachers also regard Social Studies as having to deal with the changes in society. As a result, they encourage independent thinking because they believe it will help their students become an active citizen. Compared to the Korean teachers in this study, they are generally under less pressure when it comes to subject knowledge, because they tend to focus more on the practical aspects by connecting social issues with subject matter through an activity-oriented class approach. This is exemplified through their use of group debate, article-based writing, social science research, and weekly presentations as class assignments

and projects. They experience more autonomy in teaching than Korean teachers in that they do not have to implement a unified examination and the evaluation system is based on an 'absolute grading scale'. It makes it easier for them to harmonize class practice with assessments more consistently. Because they are not responsible for administrative tasks and are not burdened by their responsibilities as a contact teacher, they can concentrate more on class practices.

They prioritize their relationship with their students because they recognize that their very existence makes the class itself possible. By encouraging students to question and to criticize, even what the teachers say, they have been able to promote a horizontal relationship wherein anyone can share their ideas freely. In this regard, the teachers also believe that expressing their own vulnerability as teachers is important, as it can create an environment where anyone can make mistakes and fail. The Norwegian teachers have experienced disruptive student behavior and have reported that this varies from region to region within the city. Because a teacher-circulation system does not exist, their experiences regarding class practices and student guidance are varied depending on which school they work at.

The Norwegian teachers' communication with colleagues has been encouraged by policy through institutionalized weekly meetings in which a culture of sharing ideas and collaboration of class practice have been gradually established. Teacher's freedom to choose their own assessments and the 'absolute grading system' have facilitated the meetings to be an open space for sharing ideas easily.

Having presented the five topics with its categories regarding the experiences of Social Studies teachers in Korea and Norway, the next chapter discusses the findings under the research question and the analytical framework.

8 Discussion

The teachers in this study have participated in questioning their goals, values, and the contexts in which they work in, and this in and of itself has been a kind of *reflective practice* on their educational experiences. Dewey (1933) described the way of reflection as observing, reviewing, and examining one's actual experiences, which is in line with Schön (1983)'s *reflection-on-action*. By providing the space for teachers to reflect on their experiences, this study has tried to help them reconstruct their own experiences.

This chapter discusses points from the findings chapter, and relates to the reviewed literature and the analytical framework, in accordance with the research question: ***What are the similarities and differences between the experiences of upper secondary Social Studies teachers in Korea and Norway?*** That is, the products of teachers' reflection are discussed, revolving around the similarities and differences, and in connection with the multilayered environment surrounding them from an interactionist perspective that comes from Bronfenbrenner's EST. In other words, this study focuses on the area of *mesosystem* where teachers interact with diverse school settings, from which several similarities were found. The differences between the experiences of teachers were largely resulted from different social settings at the levels of the *exo-* and *macrosystem*. Because this study targets Korean teachers as the main audience, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the discussion also focuses on Korean side with two relevant categories: the similarities and differences in the experiences of SSTs.

8.1 The Similarities in the Experiences of SSTs

Given that an experience is an ongoing process in life via the interactions with external worlds (Dewey, 1938), teachers' experiences can be similar to each other regardless of the countries they teach in, because they both have students as their main external worlds. The findings of this study also present some of the similarities between the experiences of SSTs in Korea and Norway, which is mainly shown through their perception of the subject, the class, and the students. It also corresponds to the area of the mesosystem from Bronfenbrenner's EST. For convenience, this chapter refers to the teachers interviewed from both countries as 'the teachers' and/or 'they'.

To begin, the teachers have experienced that share (influence) of the subject of Social Studies has been on the decline. As students prefer to study Natural sciences instead of Politics and Sociology, less Social Studies classes are offered to students. The decreased share of Social Studies classes has been accelerated by policy at the level of Bronfenbrenner's exosystem, and this reflects the social dynamics changed. In Korea, the number of electives for Social Studies for the CSAT has been reduced from four to two sub-subjects. In Norway, there is also an incentive for students to study Natural sciences because they can get extra points for college admittance. And more teaching hours are allocated in Natural sciences when compared to that of Social Studies. The preference for Natural sciences can also be viewed at the level of the macrosystem where major initiatives in both countries in accordance with global economy come mainly from the economic sector in which there is added value from technology and science. In this context, more students tend to choose the subject of Natural sciences for strategic or particular reasons than based on their interests (Bøe, 2012). In this regard, the SSTs' experiences as a non-mainstream subject teacher can be generally similar and can be seen at the level of the mesosystem, where the overall experience for the teachers is that student interest and engagement in Social Studies has been dwindling: Korean SSTs typically experience low engagement and participation in their classes during the final semester and Norwegian SSTs have less time to teach their students than the Natural sciences teachers do.

The teachers have a similar perception when it comes to the main characteristic and goal of the subject. They think of Social Studies as a subject that deals with *changes* in society, and tend to make connections between existing social issues and their curriculum. The goal of the subject for them is to help their students develop critical *independent thinking*, which is in line with Barr, Barth & Shermis (1977)' *reflective inquiry* in the traditions of Social Studies and Anderson et al. (1997)'s *critical thinking* perspective in teachers' shared beliefs about the purpose of Social Studies education. The two concepts both emphasize critical analysis of the existing values and social norms, and encourage decision-making through exploring social problems and issues. In this regard, the teachers in both countries seem to strongly agree with the idea that students should be taught to question the status quo of their society.

They also both function in the same direction when it comes to class practice, as both groups prefer teaching an activity-oriented class as opposed to a lecture-oriented one. Based on Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem, the class itself is important for teachers to shape their main experiences as a teacher. In order for them to engage students in a class, they have conducted

various activities on social issues, such as small group discussions, class debates, and presentations. [N4's] weekly presentation activities in class, which I did a participant observation, was the very example of what Pianta et al. (2012) suggested as a meaningful tie between curricular materials and real-world applications as a way of engaging students in learning. Mathé (2019) suggested that because Norwegian students' preparations for citizenship were mainly influenced by their enjoyment of Social Studies and teacher's instruction, Norwegian teachers are compelled to develop their didactics and use current issues to engage and motivate their students in a class. Korean teachers' growing interests in the activity-oriented class have also been supported by various topics written by in-service teachers in their these such as cooperative learning (Park, M., 2014), constructivism (Choi, Y., 2008), the issue-centered class (Lim, E., 2015), reflection on class teaching (Choi, H., 2012; Kim, M., 2010), teachers' teaching community (Ryu, Kim, & Jung., 2013), and class critique (Heo, 2013).

In that the activity-oriented class is one of the criteria for good teaching, proposed by TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2019), it can be said that the teachers in both countries are in line with a global trend in educational practice. They also can be regarded as having a *constructivist* rather than a *direct transmission* belief in their class management (Berger et al., 2018) and as preferring *autonomy support* and *structure* instead of *control* and *chaos* strategies in managing class practice (Sierens et al., 2009). Namely, they are trying to develop various class activities where students, as active participants, can think, feel, and behave in an autonomous way based on their intrinsic motivation.

Lastly, they pursue a more egalitarian relationship with their students as a premise of class practice. They believe that the horizontal relationship between the teacher and their students play an important role in creating a motivated and respected atmosphere for the class, wherein students can produce positive outcomes (Davis, 2003) and teachers can get a feeling of support from their students (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Participating in this study as an interviewee has acted as a reflection on their educational practices, among which the reflection on their relationship with students was the most intensive part. This situation is exemplified by Hargreaves (2000) who suggested secondary teachers tended to feel more emotional distance with their students and experience "highly fragmented" (p.821) interaction. In this circumstance, the teacher-student relationship affects the quality of class and vice versa. For Korean teachers, students' refusal to participate in class inspired them to develop a teaching

style that focused on student engagement. In this way, more equal and horizontal relationship with students could be possible to attain. For Korean SSTs, the overall shift in teaching style and new way of looking at teacher-student relationships are the fruits of their reflective practice (Schön, 1983). In comparison to the Korean SSTs, the Norwegian SSTs were typically more invested in maintain a horizontal relationship with their students. They have encouraged their students to be more critical "even to what teachers say", which is largely supported by the Norwegian social atmosphere of "egalitarianism" (Gullestad, 2002).

Overall, the teachers' activity-oriented class based on the horizontal relationship in both countries can allow students to feel more motivated and engaged in class, because it is more student-focused and autonomy-supportive (Valeski & Stipek, 2001). Pianta et al. (2012) also suggest that interpersonal support that comes from student-teacher interactions is fundamental for student development. Thus, it is recommended that class teaching should be designed in a way that encourages student engagement.

8.2 The Differences of the Experiences of SSTs

Bronfenbrenner (1979) illustrates the importance of an individual's development in interacting with its surrounding environments. In this study, this can be observed through teachers who have built up their experiences through continuous and various interactions. Because each society has its own socio-cultural contexts, the experiences of teachers are also influenced by the society they belong to. In this regard, the differences between the experiences of SSTs in Korea and Norway were particularly noticeable at the level of the exo- and macrosystem (ibid.), and can be compared in three different aspects.

Compared to Norwegian teachers, Korean teachers noticeably have a less communicative culture. For the Korean SSTs, collaborating with colleagues on class practice is fairly uncommon and the culture of sharing ideas about class practice is also a rare occurrence in schools. Whereas, in Norway, teachers are more proactive when it comes to sharing ideas on their class practices, which has been naturally augmented by policy through institutionalized regular meetings. The egalitarian sociocultural atmosphere in Norway has also contributed to vitalizing teachers' interaction with colleagues, as the age, academic background, and teaching career are not considered essential to build close relationships.

Because teachers' interaction with colleagues is important in their student guidance (Wiley, 2001) as well as job satisfaction (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996; Burns & Darling-Hammond, 2014),

academic performance (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995), and class innovation (Nias et al., 1989), one needs to look at what makes it difficult for Korean teachers to interact. In general, Korean SSTs prefer to divide the areas that need to be taught among themselves and typically adhere to their own teaching style. This indicates that each of them tends to keep to their own area and protect one's status quo from criticism. It also reveals that they are more sensitive when it comes to comparison with others, and suggests more severe self-consciousness and the constant thought of being better than others.

Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s concept of the macrosystem helps to understand the background of what people tend to do in a society. Korean society is recognized for being competitive in academic achievement (Kim & Bang, 2017). Teachers are not the exception when it comes to this kind of competition. They, too, have been educated in a highly competitive social atmosphere, where ranks are routinized in every aspect of life and competition is internalized in every person. In this type of macrosystem, it can be difficult for teachers to promote cooperation and communication all at once. Even though they put their effort into improving the quality of class practice, they hardly experience solidarity as a group of teachers, thus making them more isolated within their own class.

Another aspect to consider is the grading systems in Korea and Norway wherein teachers experience different levels of autonomy in class teaching as well as interactions with students and colleagues. This exemplifies how the exosystem impacts the level of the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In Korea, teachers teaching the same grade should implement a unified test for all of the students in the same grade (year), as school records are based on the *relative grading system* on a curve. A student is graded according to their ranking in the same year students, which causes students to be highly sensitive to the grades they receive. In this regard, teachers teaching the same grade (year) need to be cautious in coordinating with each other in terms of what and how to assess their students. This consequently influences them to self-regulate on their educational practices. As a result, they tend to give a multiple-choice type of test for the sake of convenience rather than attempting a new way of assessment. For these reasons, Korean teachers tend to focus more on the cognitive aspects of knowledge. In this contexts, the Korean teachers who try to teach with an activity-oriented class approach, often find themselves struggling to balance their class practices with the unified assessment. In turn, they often have to face student complaints about the discrepancy between class practice and assessment.

The *relative grading system* is also adopted for the CSAT, the national level of tests mainly used for the Regular Admission path for college admittance. As the number of electives decreased in the CSAT, the difficulty of the tests has been increased in order to rank student scores into nine grades within a reduced-scale group. It has consequently resulted in students choosing Social Studies less for the CSAT, therefore leading to many teachers who have grown concerns about what to focus on when they teach, especially when they have to consider both the CSAT (mainly used for the Regular Admission) and school records (mainly used for the Early Admission). The former promotes a lecture-oriented class and the latter makes the activity-oriented class more possible. As such, the *relative grading system* based on the dualized *college entrance policy* creates challenges and confusion for Korean teachers when it comes to what to prioritize in their class practices.

In Norway, teachers do not have to run a unified test for all of the students in the same grade (year). They only have to implement an evaluation for the students they teach and are given full access to choosing how to assess as well as what to assess. This is feasible, because the evaluation in Norway is based on the *absolute grading system*, which grades student performance and achievement, instead of where they rank or relative position in the group like in Korea. When compared to Korean teachers, Norwegian teachers experience less peer pressure, because they do not have to coordinate or agree on a uniform assessment together. Instead, they concentrate primarily on their own class practices and create their own evaluations based on what they have taught. This freedom to choose assessment independent from others gives them more autonomy and discretion when it comes to planning a class as well as the scope and the depth of the subject matter and the overall content of the class. Students are more likely to be engaged in a class if their activities are directly connected to the assessment. Unlike the system in Korea, student rank or stratification does not exist in the Norwegian grading system, and this puts less pressure on students when it comes to competing with each other academically. Teachers also have less peer-conscious attitudes as they do not have the tendency or need to compare themselves with their colleagues in terms of scores and grades. Due to the differences between the two grading systems (exosystem), between *the relative* and *the absolute*, teachers in Korea and Norway experience very different 'mesosystems' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Lastly, working environments in Korea and Norway have influenced the experiences of both groups of teachers in different ways. The Norwegian teachers have mostly experienced the

effect of spatial division within their city, whereas the Korean teachers have experienced more labor intensity than that of the Norwegian teachers. As illustrated by one of the elements comprising the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the socio-economic aspect of society can lead to different experiences of the people in the given society. Both Daegu (Korea) and Oslo (Norway) have spatial division to a certain degree, wherein people naturally gather to live with those who have similar socio-economic backgrounds. Both the *Suseong-gu* in Daegu and the west side of Oslo are considered as the wealthy neighborhood in their respective cities. Due to spatial division becoming more distinct, teachers tend to experience different working conditions in terms of their class practices and interactions with students. Depending on the area where they live, students exhibit different patterns in academic motivation, disruptive behavior, and academic pressure. Accordingly, teachers are required to have different strategies for class teaching and student guidance. Compared to the Norwegian teachers, Korean teachers generally tend to experience less influence from spatial division, because it is obligatory to transfer schools regularly via the teacher circulating system. The Korean SSTs have the opportunity to teach different students and within different regions of their city. For Norwegian teachers, it is not common to transfer as frequently and they can continue to work at the same school for as long as they want. Thus, their experiences are highly dependent on which school (area) they work at, and in the case of this study, the experiences reported by the Norwegian teachers are not representative of all teacher experiences in Oslo.

Regarding labor intensity, Korean teachers have a more intense workload, because they are supposed to deal with three kinds of work: class teaching, duties as a homeroom teacher, and administrative tasks. On the other hand, Norwegian teachers experience a lighter workload, because they do not have to spend time on administrative tasks and the duties that come with being a *contact teacher* is not as intense as being a *homeroom teacher* in Korea. In other words, the *contact teachers* only have to meet with their students once a week, whereas the *homeroom teachers* have to meet twice a day. With regards to this, it can be said that the Norwegian teachers have more time to concentrate on their class practices than that of the Korean teachers.

9 Conclusion

This chapter presents concluding remarks about the findings and the discussion. Policy recommendations for Korean Social Studies teachers will be also suggested in this chapter in order to promote a better school environment for teachers to build their experiences. Lastly, recommendations for further research will be suggested.

9.1 Concluding Remarks

This study has explored the experiences of Social Studies teachers in both Korea and Norway. To compare the two cases based on a full understanding of the respective contexts, background knowledge of the two countries was presented surrounding demographic, political, economic, and social aspects. Furthermore, as the contextual framework for this study, the education system of the two countries was illustrated through many document studies covering the upper secondary education as well as the Social Studies subject. By adopting *thematic analysis* as the primary method for data analysis and the *Reflective Practice* and *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory* as the analytical framework, this study has examined the experiences of nine Social Studies teachers in terms of their perception of the subject of Social Studies, class practices, interactions with students and colleagues, and their working environments.

The findings were compared in accordance with the research question which focused on the similarities and differences between the experiences of teachers in the two countries. The similarities found in this study are largely in line with existing literature on the subject of Social Studies and teachers, in that teachers in both countries commonly think of fostering students' *independent thinking* with critical attitudes as the goal of Social Studies. They also perceive the subject as dealing with a variety of *changes* in society, for which they prefer to conduct an *activity-oriented class* based on a *horizontal relationship* with students, as it drives the class to be more interactive, and which also allows for students to be engaged.

The differences between the two teacher-groups are mainly derived from their respective social context. The setting of educational policies and socio-cultural aspects, equivalent to the levels of the exo- and macrosystem, have significantly influenced the shape of teacher experiences at the level of the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Different grading systems such as *the relative grading system* in Korea and *the absolute grading system* in Norway have played a

decisive role in creating differences in teachers' class practices and interactions. Especially in the Korean school context, with the *relative grading system*, teachers have no choice but to heavily rely on a multiple-choice test format so that they are able to rank students in a quantitative way. This approach to assessment has caused challenges for teachers in terms of harmonizing their activity-oriented classes and the following assessments. The competitive social atmosphere in Korea has also been in line with the *relative grading system* as both students and teachers constantly compare themselves with others. Additionally, Korean teachers have a less communicative culture and more intensive workload when compared to the Norwegian teachers. In conclusion, it can be said that Korean teachers generally experience more pressure as a teacher than that of their Norwegian counterparts.

9.2 Policy recommendations for Korean SSTs

Through the comparison of teachers' experiences in Korea and Norway, this study has aimed to shed light on the specific settings in which the teachers have been influenced, and then to suggest some recommendations for Korean school teachers as mentioned in Chapter 1. The detailed recommendations are as follows:

Firstly, the *relative grading system* in Korea needs to be replaced by the *absolute grading system* for both school records and the CSAT. The current system has caused excessive competition among students in terms of ranking, and has reduced teacher discretion in their class practices. If the evaluation is based on the *absolute grading system*, academic results can be assessed based on a student's performance and achievement, instead of their ranking in a group. This can eventually alleviate student competition and pressure as well as the burden teachers have to carry because of the existing conditions of assessment and class practices. In addition, if teachers' feedback is strengthened, students can identify their competencies more clearly, which creates a virtuous cycle between evaluation and learning.

Secondly, based on the *absolute grading system*, assessment must be reformed and teachers should be allowed to lead their own assessments. This is possible, because there is no need to stratify the ranks of all students of the same grade (year). Given that, teachers can have more autonomy and discretion when it comes to what they want to include in assessment and how they want to evaluate their students. This inevitably will create harmony between class practices and assessment. In terms of interaction with colleagues, this kind of reform can reduce peer-conscious attitudes as they will have no need to set up a common test and compare the

results according to the same test. Rather than competing with each other, together they can build a culture of sharing ideas and collaboration instead.

Thirdly, institutionalized teacher meetings need to be scheduled on multiple levels to stimulate communication among teachers. The meetings can serve as a place to discuss teaching methods, relieve one's stress, and support each other. It is especially helpful for teachers who are familiar with a traditional way of teaching, as they can get a tip for various class activities. By fixing the meetings on a timetable, teachers have the opportunity to create a more communicative culture.

Lastly, the administrative tasks need to be reconsidered, because teachers are overwhelmed by these additional tasks in addition to their other roles as a teacher. Unlike the Norwegian teachers who get to spend most of their time focusing on teaching and planning for the class, Korean teachers have to add administrative tasks to their heavy workload. These extra tasks make it difficult for them to keep focused on class practices and also leave hardly any room for interaction with colleagues, because a lot of their time and energy are used to work in this capacity. It may also reinforce the bureaucratic structure of schools wherein the relationship is based on formal encounters. Therefore, in Korea, relieving teachers of administrative work could be a way to focus more on educating and learning.

9.3 Recommendations for Further research

There are several recommendations to consider for further research on this topic. Above all, future research on this topic could shed more light on the study of teachers in general, as it also reflects the voices of students, parents, and school authorities. The data described and analyzed in this study are only from the perspective of nine teachers, so in order to fully understand the ecology of teachers, more teachers need to participate in future studies. Further research may also benefit from examining the Social Studies curriculum, textbooks used, and related policy as well as class observation, from which more holistic data on Social Studies teachers may be obtained. Another recommendation could be the approach of ethnography and/or anthropology to explore the internal world of a teacher in more depth. Research conducted by a teacher itself, such as teacher's *Self-study* (Samaras & Freese, 2006) and *Auto-ethnography* (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), may provide more insight into teachers' experiences, which is in and of itself a way of constructing a vigorous ecology of education.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Guide for Korean teachers

< 사회 교사의 경험 >

항목	질문	
사회 교과	- 사회 교과의 목표는 무엇인가? - 사회 교과를 통해 실현하고자 하는 가치는 무엇인가? - 사회 교과를 통하여 어떠한 수업을 실천하고 싶은가? - 사회 수업을 통하여 학생들이 어떠한 방향으로 성장하기를 바라는가?	
수업 실천	수업 전	- 가르쳐야 하는 주제를 어떻게 선정하는가? - 수업의 지식적인 측면과 활동적인 측면을 어떻게 준비하는가? - 교육 과정과 교과서를 어떤 식으로 활용하는가?
	수업 중	- 강의는 주로 어떤 식으로 하는가? - 지금까지 시행한 활동 수업의 사례에는 어떤 것들이 있는가? - 학생들의 참여를 이끌어내기 위해 사용한 방법에는 어떠한 것들이 있는가?
	수업 후	- 수업에 대해 학생들에게 어떤 식으로 피드백을 하는가? - 평가를 어떤 방식으로 하는가? - 과제를 어떤 방식으로 활용하는가?
상호작용	학생	- 학생들을 대하는 자신의 태도를 살펴본다면? - 수업 중 문제 행동을 하는 학생들을 어떻게 지도하는가? - 평상시 학생들과 어떤 관계를 유지하려 하는가? 어느 정도 선이 적당하다고 보는가?
	동료	-동교과 교사들과 수업 및 학교 생활과 관련하여 어떻게 상호 작용을 하는가?
그 외	- 사회 교사로 일하는 데 있어서, 좋은 점과 힘든 점은 무엇인가? - 사회 교사로 일하는 데 있어서, 사회적 기대 및 제약 등 어떠한 영향을 받는가? - 학교 풍토로부터 어떠한 영향을 받는가? - 사회 교사로서 지속가능하게 일을 하기 위해, 필요한 것은 무엇인가?	

Appendix B – Interview Guide for Norwegian teachers

< Social Studies Teachers' experiences >

Category	Question	
Social Studies teacher & subject	- Could you describe 'social studies = Samfunnsfag', one of the school subjects, in Norway? - What makes you become a social studies teacher? - What steps have you taken to become a social studies teacher? (Major, degree, academic background…) - How would you describe yourself as a professional social studies teacher? (subjects which have taught…) - Are you highly motivated and what kinds of factors encourage you to work? - What do you think of the goal and necessity of social studies subject? - Through your class practice, to which way do you want your students to grow?	
class practice	Before	- how do you prepare your class teaching? (educational curriculum? Textbook? Choice of topic…) - How do you organize lecture and student-activity in a class?
	during	- Could you describe your class practice? (Teaching style, pattern, usual way) - Could you tell me some examples of student-activity you have conducted in class practice. so far? - How do you usually make the students to be engaged in the class? (Tips for participation in the class)
	after	- How do you evaluate students' achievement? - How do you usually give feedback to your students after the class?
interaction	**students**	- Could you describe the relation(interaction) between you and your students? Between a. teacher and students, to what extent do the relationship(distance) have to be set up? - How do you guide inattentive students, those who make troubles during a class?
	colleagues	- How do you interact with other social studies teachers in terms of class practice and school stuffs?
Etc.	- What are the hinders(difficulties) working as a social studies teacher? (elective subject..) - In working as a social studies teacher, what kind of social influences do you have, such as social expectations. and constraints? - How are you affected by the school climate? - what kind of expectations do you have for your future development? - What are the necessary things for you to work as a social studies teacher in a sustainable way? - Could you give some advice for the teacher candidates who want to be a social studies teacher?	

Appendix C – Invitation Letter for Participation

Dear Norwegian Social Studies teachers

My name is Young-ae Park, and I am a Master student of the program Comparative and International Education, studying at the University of Oslo. I have been working as a social studies teacher in Korean secondary school since 2007. Now I'm in study abroad leave.

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview; as part of a study which aims to explore and compare the experiences and perceptions of social studies teachers in Norway and South Korea. This study is for a Master's thesis entitled "Social studies teachers' experiences and perceptions in South Korea and Norway Compared".

More specifically, the interview's aim will be to understand your experiences and perceptions as a social studies teacher, encompassing the following dimensions:

1) view of the subject 'social studies': goal and direction of a subject
2) The actual lived experiences of your class teaching practices: how to choose a topic, design class practice (students' activity and participation), structuralizing the contents, etc.
3) View of the students and same subject colleagues

The interview will be an in-depth and face-to-face one. This means that I will kindly ask you to meet up at silent place which you feel you can talk and think about. All information shared in the interview will be confidential; and your anonymity will be guaranteed throughout all steps of the research, including the publication of the thesis. Only with your consent will the interview be taped and transcribed. You may also withdraw from the study at any point. If you wish, I can share the final thesis with you before submitting it. The interview will be probably taken between 1 and 2 hours at a location of your preference. I hope to meet you eagerly.

Your participation would be highly valued. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Young-ae Park

Email address

Cellphone number

Appendix D – Written Agreement of Participation

Written agreement of participation

Title of a research: (working title) Social studies teachers' experiences and perceptions in South Korea and Norway Compared
Researcher: Young-ae Park
(University of Oslo, Comparative and International Education, Master's course)
Contact: email address/ cellphone number

Hello! My name is Young-ae Park, and I am a Master student of the program Comparative and International Education, studying at the University of Oslo. Thank you for your acceptance of participation in this study.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perceptions of Korean and Norwegian social studies teachers on their thoughts about the subject, class practice, and the relationship with students and peers. Through the process of reflection, it aims to suggest a sustainable way of social studies teachers.

Data collection is planned mainly through in-depth interviews. You can talk about your class practice, thoughts on the social studies subject, and episodes on the relation with your students and colleagues. And you can freely tell me what such experiences have personal implications to you. Additional resources you may provide other than the interview can be also used as a reference.

The interview will take about 60 - 120 minutes at a time. If necessary, additional interviews may be requested. I would like to record the interview in order to describe the contents of the conversation vividly. The contents will never be used for any other purpose except for this research and will never be leaked outside. The data collected in the interview can be quoted in my thesis. Anything that can reveal the privacy of the participant will be treated as aliases in the thesis.

If the participant wants to stop participating, it can be discontinued at any time. Also, if the participant wants to check the contents of the research, it is possible. If it is inevitable to change the purpose or period of the research, I promise to proceed it according to the sufficient prior consultation with the participants. If you have any questions about this research and interview, I, as a researcher of this study, will reply sincerely.

Participating in this research may not return any benefits to you right now. However, through

this research, I believe that your experiences and perceptions as a teacher will be of great help to those who wish to be a social studies teacher and fellow social studies teachers who are willing to build up their capabilities. Therefore, I would like to ask you to participate this research, and if you agree, please sign the signature below.

I understand all of the above notices, I agree to participate in this research.

Date : ___(Day) ___(Month) ____(Year)

Participant : _____(Signature)