

2020

## Middle and High School Teacher Perceptions of Training to Manage Disruptive Students

Kelly Elizabeth Mero  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Kelly E. Mero

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Middle and High School Teacher Perceptions of Training to Manage Disruptive Students

by

Kelly E. Mero

M.S., Walden University, 2019

M.A., Springfield College, 2008

B.S., Springfield College, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Health Psychology

Walden University

August 2020

## Abstract

Schoolteachers report a lack of resources and training to manage disruptive student behavior that presents as antisocial, problematic, and/or symptomatic of mental illness. Disruptive student behaviors have a negative impact on students socially and academically. The social cognitive theory and social learning theory guided the research questions to examine differences in perceptions of 195 urban general and special educators in middle and high school regarding their skills to manage disruptive student behavior and teachers' need for professional training to manage disruptive student behavior. A 2X2 between-groups nonparametric survey research design was used, and the two dependent variables were measured using the Skills and Needs Inventories in Functional Behavior Assessments and Interventions (SNI-FBAI). Data were examined for distributional properties and reliability analyses were conducted to verify internal consistency before combining items to form the two scales. Inferential statistics produced no significant differences between middle and high school teachers' capacity to manage disruptive student behavior. However, there was a significant difference between means of special and general educators' perceptions of their ability to manage disruptive behaviors. Additionally, there was no significant difference between middle and high school teachers' reports in terms of their need for training to manage disruptive student behavior, but there were significant differences between special and general educators' reports in terms of training need. Administrators may use the findings from this study to improve education reform efforts focused on teacher development by learning which topics involving professional training teachers identified as needed to improve their capacity to manage disruptive student behavior.

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, Harrison and Shirley Mero. Shirley has always encouraged me to be my best self and Harrison always showed me how. It is dedicated to my children, Reggie, Riece, and Rylan Mayo because they were my inspiration to obtain the optimal degree. Finally, to my husband, Patrick Ridenhour, because he pressed and pulled me with love and encouragement to type the last word.

## Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge that I did not get to this point in my life without my source for strength and survival, my saviors God and Jesus Christ. I am a survivor of 23 years of domestic violence and I know that I was saved by God's grace. When I was trying to figure out how to revise my life, I was also working to write this dissertation. It was very difficult to simultaneously do both. However, I know now that working on myself and this dissertation helped me to stay focused on achieving a goal that will make my family proud and increase my potential to provide for them. Thank you, Walden University, for giving me second and third chances to do it. Speaking with the staff at Walden University was the first time that I was willingly honest about what was happening in my life – prior to speaking with the staff at Walden I would nod, deny, or use one word answers when speaking with police, pastors, family, and friends. I will always be grateful to Walden for listening to me and working with me through a very dark and frightful time in my life. I cannot believe how much the light in my life has brightened in over just a few years. That light was brightened through the love and hugs of very special friends and supportive family members. It is important that I say thank you to Dr. Sandra Mahoney for not giving up on me. You pushed, you emailed, you encouraged, and you worked as my guide through this arduous process. Finally, thank you to Dr. Susan Marcus for recognizing what needed to be done and for showing me how to do it.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Schoolteachers provide instruction to students to increase their academic ability and improve their social skills at every grade level. However, disruptive student behavior interrupts the classroom environment (Pace, Boykins, & Davis, 2014). Schoolteachers from pre-school to college report a lack of resources to use to manage disruptive student behavior and report feeling insufficiently trained to manage students who display disruptive behavior (Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016; Collins et al., 2015). Classroom management is associated with supporting students' behavior as well as their social and academic growth because failure to effectively manage the classroom can have a negative impact on students (Back, Polk, Keys, & McMahon, 2016; Spilt, Leflot, Onghena, & Colpin, 2016). This work includes managing students' disruptive behaviors, which exist in students from preschool to late adolescence at high rates (Baker & Blacher, 2015; Simon, 2016). Students who display disruptive behavior are from both general and special education classrooms who may or may not have diagnosed mental health conditions (Wood, Evans, & Spandagou, 2014). This is particularly relevant to the current research because all classrooms have the potential to include students with disruptive behavioral problems.

Chinelo and Nwanneka (2015) indicated that working with students who present problematic behaviors is challenging for teachers. Teachers do not receive training on how to manage disruptive, challenging student behaviors and implement effective support services (Khasakhala & Galava, 2016). Teachers' attitudes and teaching effectiveness improves with training and support (Stough, Montague, Landmark, &

Williams-Diehm, 2015). Disruptive student behavior is prevalent in schools, has a negative impact on students' academic achievement and social skills, and interrupts pedagogical performance (Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016; Teyfur, 2015; Wood et al., 2014). Both regular and special education teachers perceive that lack of resources and support reduces their ability to manage the class and influence academic success (Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016; Stough et al., 2015). In this study, the terms educators, teachers, and schoolteachers interchangeably describe professionals who work in classroom settings. This study examined the differences between two groups of teachers to determine if there were interactions between special and general educators by grade level (middle and high school) and participation in professional training to manage challenging behaviors and training needed to increase their capacity to manage students' behaviors. The results of the study have the potential to influence education reform efforts focused on teacher development so that public schools know how to provide teachers with nonacademic supports for student success and universities will include professional training for students who study general education as they do for students who study special education. I did not locate research-based evidence regarding differences between middle and high school teachers' perceptions of their ability to manage disruptive behaviors and the resources they need to increase their capacity to manage disruptive student behavior. This topic was important to study in order to provide school districts actionable recommendations for administrators to allocate resources for professional development focused on behavior management strategies.

Disruptive student behaviors in the classroom are one of the most important problems faced by educators, and preventing and solving disruptive behavior is challenging for schools (Korpershoek, Harms, de Boer, van Kuijk, & Doolaard, 2016; Scott, Hirn, & Alter, 2014). When students display disruptive behavior, they impede their learning and the learning of their peers (Scott et al., 2014, Simon, 2016). Disruptive behaviors are categorized into a disorder known as disruptive behavior disorder. The disorder involves aggressive acting out behaviors and includes the diagnosis of several mental illnesses such as oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and conduct disorder (Simon, 2016). Disruptive behaviors are multifaceted and include delinquency, substance abuse, poor family relationships, and low school performance (Simon, 2016). Additionally, disruptive student behaviors have a negative impact on classroom climate, which is a challenge for teachers (Back et al., 2016).

### **Background of the Study**

Student behavior is a concern for educators today (Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016). Chinelo and Nwanneka (2016) investigated the influence that students' behavior in the classroom has on the teaching and learning process and reported that the techniques used by secondary Science Technology and Mathematics (STM) teachers in controlling undesirable behaviors in their classrooms included office referrals, punitive punishments, and in-class monitoring. Additionally, Chinelo & Nwanneka reported a significant difference in the mean rating of experienced and beginning teachers use of various behavior management techniques with experienced teachers reporting higher use of

behavior management strategies than beginning teachers and suggested professional training in behavior management for new teachers. Teachers do more with fewer resources for classroom management or problematic student behavior. This is relevant when classes include students who display disruptive behavioral problems because Back et al. (2016) reported that challenging student behavior impedes instruction; Chinelo & Nwanneka (2016) reported that challenging student behavior requires nonacademic supports; Pas, Cash, O'Brennan, Debnam, & Bradshaw (2015) reported that student behavior has a negative influence on classroom climate; and Teyfur (2015) reported that classroom organization and instructional practice are important when creating a teaching and learning environment.

Classroom management and student control is critical to educational growth because a well-managed classroom helps to facilitate teaching, learning, and social growth (Back et al., 2016; Korpershoek, et al., 2016); assists with student development of social/emotional skills (Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016); reduces the amount of time students are removed from the instruction (McDaniel & Flower, 2015); and avoids interruption to the academic process (Qahtani & Sultan, 2016). Classroom management strategies support public schoolteachers in establishing routines, clarifying expectations, and managing student behavior (Back et al., 2016; Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016). However, schoolteachers do not receive formal training to work with students who present problematic behaviors and therefore, they have difficulty responding to and managing disruptions (Qahtani & Sultan, 2016). According to Garwood and Vernon-Feagans (2017), kindergarten through third grade teachers report that they do not have

effective skills to manage students who display sustained behavior problems. Garwood and Vernon-Feagans found that when teachers maintain a high quality of classroom management during students' first 4 years in school, then male students' reading scores were significantly influenced while girl students' reading scores were unaffected. Scott et al. (2014) investigated the behavior of elementary and high school students and teachers to determine the relationship between effective instruction and managing challenging student behavior. The researchers reported that there is a positive relationship between teacher performance, student engagement, and students' academic and social performance. These studies describe classroom management from elementary school to high school. There may be a difference between general education and special education teachers' perceptions of their current skills to manage student behavior and training needed to increase their skills to manage student behavior, however, a comparison of these groups has not been examined.

Teachers' attitudes and teaching effectiveness improves with training and support. McDaniel and Flower (2015) researched an alternative special education K-12 school with a more restrictive setting than what is available in public schools for students who display disruptive behavior. They found that professional teacher training in behavior interventions is required to help teachers manage their classrooms, decrease disruptive student behaviors, and increase students' academic performance. Teyfur (2015) researched disruptive behaviors exhibited by primary students and the methods that teachers used to manage the behaviors. The results of the research support the prior work of Scott (2014) in that Teyfur found that the level of engagement between the teacher and

student influences students' behavior. The work also identified teachers' methods for managing undesirable behaviors included walking around the classroom, maintaining eye-to-eye contact with students, searching for the reason of the behavior, and having private one-to-one meeting with students to discuss desirable behavior. Korpershoek et al. (2016) analyzed the effects of classroom management strategies on students' academic, behavioral, and emotional outcomes in primary students. They found that focusing on teachers' pedagogical performance, classroom rules, students' social-emotional development, and positive teacher–student relationships had the largest impact on improved student behavior. I compared special and general education teachers in an urban school district by the levels of middle school and high school and prior professional training in order to examine their perception of their current skills managing disruptive student behavior. I also examined their perception of training needed to improve their skill to manage disruptive student behavior. This topic was important to study to provide actionable recommendations for administrators to allocate resources effectively.

Classroom management can minimize the negative impact that disruptive behaviors have in classrooms (Back et al., 2016; Spilt et al., 2016). Teacher training on classroom management is necessary because classroom management is important to create a safe, effective teaching and learning environment that encourages academic, social, and emotional growth (Teyfur, 2015) This is especially true for new teachers because many new teachers are not well prepared to manage difficult classroom behaviors (Stough et al., 2015). According to Stough et al., 60% of novice special

educators report that they needed assistance managing challenging student behavior during their first year of teaching and 83% of novice special education teachers reported that they would like to work with a mentor to manage disruptive student behavior. Schoolteachers may benefit from professional training so that they can efficiently recognize the onset of disruptive behaviors and manage their classroom through disruptions (Stough et al., 2015). Korpershoek et al. (2016) indicated that classroom management should be inclusive of proactive strategies to use when managing difficult behaviors so that teachers are able to continue their delivery of instruction when managing sustained behavior problems. Back et al. (2016) suggested that teachers be empowered to use classroom management strategies to influence student behavior with techniques such as clear routines, expectations, cultural responsiveness, and an organized classroom. Pas et al. (2015) suggested that school administrators perform classroom observations to identify teachers who have limited classroom management skills and require school psychologists to work with teachers to provide appropriate classroom management strategies and/or effective behavior management training to improve student outcomes. An accurate approach to students' problem behavior that is positive rather than punitive may result in a decrease of negative characterizations of students who present disruptive behavior and an increase in appropriate student social skills (Back et al., 2016; Pas et al., 2015).

In sum, problematic student behaviors such as challenging the teacher's authority, acting aggressively towards teachers or peers, and destroying classroom property have a negative impact on the conduct of regular classroom activities and academic success.

When students display problematic behaviors, they interrupt instruction which causes a disruption in their learning and the learning of the peers (Kopershoek et al., 2016). Scott (2017) researched elementary and high school educators and reported that novice teachers expressed concerns about their training to work with disruptive behaviors. Scott et al. (2014) suggested that time engaged with instruction is sometimes sacrificed when teachers are tasked with accommodating students who display disruptive behavior. Chinelo and Nwanneka (2016) studied secondary classrooms and suggested that teachers receive training in cueing, modeling, and social emotional development to decrease unwanted student behavior. Domitrovich et al. (2016) studied the impact of training teachers who work in K-5 classrooms to use social emotional learning strategies. The results of the research reported that after receiving the training, participants saw an improvement in behavior management and social emotional outcomes for both students and teachers. Prior research identified training needs for teachers. There is a need for research to specify the kinds of support and resources that teachers identify as a need to work with disruptive students and manage their classrooms.

Scott (2017) reported that novice teachers expressed concerns about their training needed to work with disruptive behaviors. Additionally, Scott et al. (2014) suggested that time engaged with instruction is sometimes sacrificed when teachers are tasked with accommodating students who display disruptive behavior. Kirby (2017) reported that special education classrooms are mandated through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for students who are diagnosed or categorized with disabilities but only if the student is identified for specific service. Schools provide intervention services

for students with behavioral disorders if the student has a documented specific learning disability or behavior disorder, or exhibits disruptive behaviors that are symptomatic of mental illness. However, there are no legal requirements for schools to extend special education support to students' when the behavior does not impact their academic standing (Zirkel, 2014). Individual states have autonomy in deciding whether to extend special education services to students who present emotional and behavior disorders (Zirkel, 2014, p. 103). However, in some instances, if the disruptive behavior impacts the child's ability to receive instruction, then the child might be categorized in a special education classroom community (Kirby, 2017; Zirkel, 2014). Special education teachers' skills to manage disruptive behaviors have a direct impact on students' behavior; therefore, teacher training is important (Oliver & Reschly, 2010; Scott, 2017).

There is considerable research regarding the effect that disruptive behaviors have on students' social development and classroom climate. Teachers cite training in classroom management and managing disruptive student behavior as areas of need in that 97% of teachers report concerns with behavior management and 56% of teachers report that they were aware of evidence-based practices (Simonsen et al., 2017). Simonsen et al. trained elementary suburban schoolteachers to use praise as a strategy to manage student behaviors and found that participants reported an improvement in both their behavior and the behavior of the students. Research has not shown if there is a difference between special education and general education teachers across the levels of middle school and high school in terms of their current skills to manage disruptive student behavior and training they need to increase their skills to manage disruptive student

behavior. This current research is important because public schools do not provide specific support services to teachers based on students' behavioral health challenges, nor do teachers receive formal training to work with students who display disruptive behaviors.

### **Problem Statement**

Schoolteachers are expected to provide instruction to students to increase their academic and social skills at every grade level. Disruptive student behavior interrupts the classroom environment. Professional training for teachers helps to manage classroom interruptions; however, there is little information regarding professional training for special and general educators across the levels of middle school and high school that is specific to concepts, skills, and strategies that improve their performance in managing disruptive student behavior. Also, it is not known if there are differences of perceptions of current skills to manage disruptive student behavior between special and general educators across the levels of middle school and high school. Furthermore, specific kinds of professional training that teachers think they need have not been well-researched.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine differences between middle and high school special and general educators' experiences in terms of managing disruptive student behavior. This work was done by examining self-reports of special and general educators across the levels of middle school and high school to determine prior professional training on behavior management, perceptions of current skills to manage disruptive student behaviors, and perceptions of need for training as measured by

The Skills and Needs Inventories in Functional Behavior Assessments and Intervention (SNI-FBAI). This survey is a self-report tool to measure teacher participants' prior training in behavior management, their current capacities to manage challenging behaviors, and their training needs across various areas of behavior management strategies. This tool was appropriate to use in my study because it captured the essence of teacher experiences that the research questions worked to do.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The research questions that guided this study were:

*RQ1:* Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding time spent in professional training focused on classroom management?

*H<sub>01</sub>:* There are no differences between special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding time spent in professional training focused on classroom management.

*H<sub>a1</sub>:* There are differences between special and general educators in terms of self-reports of time spent in professional training focused on classroom management.

*RQ2:* Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding their current skill levels in managing disruptive student behavior?

*H<sub>02</sub>:* There are no differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding their current skill levels in managing disruptive student behavior.

*H<sub>a2</sub>*: There are differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding their current skill levels in managing disruptive student behavior.

*RQ3*: Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior?

*H<sub>03</sub>*: There are no differences between middle and high school special educators and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior.

*H<sub>a3</sub>*: There are differences between middle and high school special educators and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Self-efficacy is defined as the assessment of one's abilities to reach a level of performance on a given task or objective (Bandura, 1993). Bandura's social cognitive theory provides a framework for understanding possible sources of self-efficacy for students and teachers. A person gains knowledge during interrelated social conditions that include observing social interactions, experiences, and outside media influences (LaMorte, 2016; Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Bandura (1993) suggested that social and academic interactions between students and teachers influence self-efficacy and behavior; which contribute to cognitive development and functioning. Mastery of experiences are important because they indicate competency; for teachers this is the sense of satisfaction

with reaching success that comes with training and professional development as it is then transferred into students' skill development.

The social cognitive theory suggests that gaining mastery (e.g., through training and skill development) leads to more confidence and competence in the classroom (Shi, 2014). Conversely, teachers who report low skill levels in terms of managing disruptive student behavior would see themselves as less effective in the classroom. If professional training for teachers provides information on appropriate interactions that support management of challenging student behaviors, then schools and students may benefit. Chapter 2 details professional training for teachers and documents research on the relationship between teachers' professional development and school improvement.

Research by Bandura (1993) and Shi (2014) showed that teachers' belief in their self-efficacy affects student learning and the type of environment they create in that teachers who have high levels of self-efficacy plan for instructional activities that encourage student growth while teachers who have low levels of self-efficacy focus on nonacademic activity and low expectations of student performance. Therefore, the self-efficacy theory was applied to the research questions and hypothesis testing for this research. Specifically, the self-efficacy theory helps to predict interaction effects for two of the three dependent variables: teacher perceptions of skills needed to manage student behavior and specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior.

### **Nature of the Study**

There were two independent variables: grade level and teacher type. The dependent variables were number of hours spent in professional training, teacher

perceptions of current skills to manage disruptive student behavior, and professional training needed to manage disruptive behavior. Teacher perceptions of current skills to manage disruptive student behavior and professional training needed to manage disruptive student behavior were measured on the survey tool used in this study. Teacher ability to manage disruptive student behavior was captured from participants' self-reports of their ability to use specific behavior management strategies. Participants rated their ability to manage disruptive student behavior using a Likert scale of 0 to 3 to rate their ability where zero indicated no skill, one indicated low level of skill, two indicated moderate level of skill, and three indicated high level of skill. Likewise, teacher' perceptions of training needed to manage disruptive student behavior was measured in the survey on a Likert scale of 0 to 3. Teachers rated their need for teacher training on a scale where zero indicated no training need, one indicated low level of training need, two indicated moderate level of training need, and three indicated high level of training need. Descriptive and distributional statistics were gathered on the variables for each research question. Next, a correlational matrix was performed to examine the reliability and validity of the modified survey items. Then, a one-way nonparametric Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the differences of means between the four groups. I used ANOVA to test each independent variable so that descriptive data for each variable could be summarized and the trends could be described. I did a between subjects test because to examine the differences between the independent variables and to determine interaction effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were defined for this study:

*Classroom Climate:* interpersonal relationship between students and teachers as well as the audio and visual educational atmosphere (Toren & Seginer, 2015).

*Classroom Management:* teacher behaviors that create a supportive environment for the academic and social-emotional development of students (Korpershoek et al., 2016).

*Professional Development:* the professional training teachers participate in to continue their learning (Kruger, Van Rensburg, & De Witt, 2016).

*Teacher Performance:* teacher's ability to deliver instruction that produces student outcomes (Mulyadi, Yuniarsih, & Disman, 2016).

### **Assumptions**

One assumption in the research was that I was able to construct a stratified random sample of schoolteacher participants. Another assumption was that schoolteachers who participated independently and honestly responded to the survey items. It was also assumed that the survey instrument was a reliable and valid measure of the constructs under study. Finally, it was assumed that the collected interval and ratio scale variables were normally distributed.

### **Delimitations**

The study involved special and general educators across the grade levels of middle and high school in one urban public school district in a Northeastern state.

Different schools in other areas of the country may have teachers with different abilities and qualities involving classroom management. The results of this study were limited to teachers' perceptions and did not include observational data or reports from teachers and administrators.

### **Limitations**

One primary limitation of the study was the questionable construct validity of the measures, as responses were based on subjective self-report of participants. To address this limitation, 10 experts in the field of school-based behavior management were invited by email to review the SNI-FBAI survey instrument and provide feedback on its content and terminology to ensure content and face validity. Relevance of each of the survey items was determined during the panel discussion with 10 teachers who provided a binomial rating of each item as either being relevant or not relevant to managing disruptive student behavior. I recorded ratings for each item and calculated means of each rating to assign a score of relevancy for each item. The results of the rating determined item relevancy. The panel vote resulted in 70% of the panel voting in favor for each item's relevancy. Also, the panel discussion resulted in adding several items to the survey to fortify its relevance. I received permission from my committee to revise the survey by adding the additional items. An additional limitation was that this study was conducted in one school district in one state, which limits generalizability of results to other schools or districts in this country or another. It was hoped that the random sample produced results that can be generalized within the district studied.

### **Significance of the Study**

This current research has the potential to contribute to filling a current gap in literature regarding middle school and high school teachers' perception of skills and training needs for managing disruptive student behavior. Professional development is needed for public schoolteachers so that they are better trained and prepared to work with cognitive and social deficiencies that sometimes exist in students.

Since 2002 and the No Child Left Behind Act, school reform efforts have influenced public schools to focus on academic advancement of all students despite disabilities and disruptive behavior. School districts' focus on academic advancement has resulted in little time for schools to focus on social and behavioral problems that sometimes exist due to behavioral disorders. Students are removed from their classrooms due to disruptive behavior so that classroom focus is academic achievement. When student discipline occurs outside of the classroom, the removal of the student from the classroom leaves little time for teachers to focus on individual academic and social needs to ensure student success. This is because American schools have increasingly become intolerant of problematic behavior and practice punitive discipline measures such as imposing consequences, scolding, and using school support staff to help guide students' behavior (Teyfur, 2015).

When schoolteachers realize that they have students who struggle due to mental illnesses or disruptive behaviors, they are unprepared to provide behavior support to students who need it. Some schoolteachers do not receive formal training to work with students who exhibit severe behavior problems that present as antisocial which include

poor impulse control (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017), hyperactivity, and disruptive behaviors (McDaniel & Flower, 2015). This research may be useful to public school educators to show how schools can work with teachers to improve the quality of education for students who present behavior problems. The research may be helpful to school administrators in designing appropriate approaches to empower teachers to work with students who present challenging behavior. Information gathered from this research will be shared with the participating school district so that efforts can be made to improve its support for teachers when behavior and academic problems exist in students. The results from this research can be shared with school districts to support teachers' need for professional training to improve their behavior management skills. Finally, social awareness may be raised at the university level and at the district level regarding the need for education reform to include classroom management training for teachers which will support students' optimal academic, behavioral, and social growth.

### **Summary and Transition**

Disruptive student behaviors have a negative impact on teachers' ability to provide instruction, student learning, and classroom climate (McDaniel & Flower, 2015; Pihet et al., 2017; Teyfur, 2015). Teachers receive little training regarding behavior management and positive behavior interventions (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). However, teacher support and teacher training are important components for teacher performance and student growth. Teyfur (2015) reported that if teachers were trained to manage undesired behaviors throughout the day, schools would foster students' social advancement. This would occur if schoolteachers were provided with professional

training and effective strategies to use when students display disruptive behavior. There is a great deal of research on disruptive student behavior, elementary school teachers' classroom management skill development needs, and there is research on areas of deficits in classroom management. However, there are gaps in the literature regarding teacher perception of the professional training they received focused on classroom management, teachers' perceptions of their current skills to manage disruptive student behavior, and there is a gap in teachers' perceptions of training needed to increase their capacity to manage disruptive student behavior. Chapter 2 reviews disruptive student behavior, teacher training, and teacher capacity to manage disruptive student behavior in detail.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Teacher competence to manage disruptive student behavior is a critical classroom challenge. However, it is difficult for teachers to manage disruptive student behavior because they have limited strategies to use as interventions for challenging behaviors. Appropriate and effective teacher responses to student behavior are important aspects of classroom management that contribute to teaching goals, students' academic advancement, social skill expansion, and behavioral development (Teyfur, 2015).

In this chapter, I describe research regarding disruptive student behavior and factors found to influence student behavior. The literature review includes information on the impact that disruptive behavior has on students' academic and social growth as well as the influence it has on teachers' classroom management skills. The chapter includes the literature search strategy, theoretical foundations, and information about disruptive student behavior, classroom management, teacher effectiveness in classroom management, adolescent mental illness, and professional pedagogical needs, followed by a summary and conclusions.

### **Introduction**

Disruptive student behavior is a widespread problem. Chinelo and Nwanneka (2016) studied schools in Nigeria and reported that disruptive student behavior was an occupational hazard of teaching. Teyfur (2015) reported that disruptive student behavior is one of the most important problems in the classroom faced by teachers (p. 2423). Ersozlu and Cayci (2016) reported that teachers perceive that classroom management is a prevalent problem in education. A constant classroom management concern of teachers is

identifying appropriate and effective strategies to use to target undesirable student behavior. This is important because students' social, emotional, and academic development are impacted by teachers' ability to manage their classrooms. While teachers impact yearly academic progress and social growth, it is difficult for them to implement management strategies to work with challenging student behavior (Teyfur, 2015).

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine differences between urban middle and high school special and regular educators' experiences in terms of managing disruptive student behavior. This work was done by analyzing participants' self-reports involving past professional training on behavior management as well as perceptions of current skills and training needed to manage disruptive student behaviors. I used the findings of this study to discuss the perceptions of urban special and general educators across the levels of middle and high school to indicate their skill in managing disruptive student behavior and the training they need to provide appropriate adult responses to disruptive student behavior.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

I retrieved information from the following Walden University Library databases: PsycInfo, PsycArticles, Academic Search Complete, SAGE Articles, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and CINAHL. I used scientific articles and professional journals to complete the research. Keywords used to locate information were *ADHD, adolescent, anxiety, behavior problem, bipolar disorder, children, classroom, classroom management, cognitive development, depression, discipline,*

*disruptive behavior, education, management, mental illness, parents, problem behavior, professional training, self-efficacy, social cognitive theory, schools, Tourette syndrome, teachers, and treatment.* The research I compiled to write this review focused on adolescent mental illness, behavior interventions, classroom management, disruptive student behavior, effective classroom management, managing disruptive student behavior, teacher responses to symptomatic behavior, teacher training, and theoretical foundations of social cognitive theory.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical basis for this research is the social cognitive theory. The social cognitive theory is based on self-efficacy. Bandura originally developed the theory during the 1960s as the social learning theory and it later developed into the social cognitive theory in 1986. The social cognitive theory indicates that individuals acquire some of their knowledge through experiences, by observing others during social interactions, and in media influences on television, in movies or in advertisements, (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018; LaMorte, 2016). Additionally, social cognitive theory is relative to teachers and students. This theory posits that interactions between personal, behavioral, social, and environmental factors influence behavior because people learn to regulate their behavior through control and reinforcement which could be interpreted to mean that students learn the skill of behavior through the reinforcement of the teacher's behavior management strategies (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018; LaMorte, 2016).

Self-efficacy relates to teacher effectiveness. There are factors that affect a person's self-efficacy, which then has an impact on their work in terms of producing

outcomes (Shi, 2014). Teachers' perception of self-efficacy can affect teaching and learning because teacher self-efficacy is important to driving instruction, shaping classroom practices, and managing students' behavior and learning (Shi, 2014). According to Shi (2014), self-efficacy can impact teachers' work in the classroom when they research teaching methods, deliver difficult content through instruction, and remain committed to helping all students learn academically and socially if teachers have a positive self-efficacy; however, in cases where teachers do not have positive self-efficacy then they are less confident in their teaching abilities, set low expectations for students, and have less success managing their classrooms. Using a non-random survey method, Malinen and Savolainen (2016) researched the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, school climate, and student behavior on teacher job satisfaction and burnout in a longitudinal study with lower secondary teachers. The analysis of self-reported data indicated that teachers' self-efficacy in managing students' disruptive behavior had a positive effect on job satisfaction and a negative effect on burnout while self-efficacy in behavior management affected both job satisfaction and burnout.

Self-efficacy affects individuals' beliefs in their ability to handle difficult situations, which helps to explain how teachers' self-efficacy is an important influence on their beliefs about their ability to manage demanding or difficult situations (Shi, 2014). Additionally, teachers with stronger self-efficacy are believed to result in greater classroom efforts, which in turn leads to better student performances (Malinen et al., 2013). Malinen et al. (2013) used Bandura's theory of self-efficacy to explain primary and secondary school teachers' perceived efficacy for teaching special and general

education in inclusive classrooms. They used a self-reporting tool to investigate the role of different sources in forming teachers' self-efficacy. After surveying teachers to determine their experience in teaching students with disabilities, the predictive power of the variables differed yet Malinen et al.'s findings suggest ways to improve teacher education so that teachers have the capacity to respond to different challenges in the classroom such as modifying the instruction and assessment, preventing and managing disruptive student behavior, collaborating with colleagues, and communicating with parents. The theory of self-efficacy is applicable to the current research because this research sought to determine teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy to manage students who display disruptive behavior and identify training needed to increase their capacity to manage challenging student behavior.

The social cognitive theory explains how members of society influence beliefs and actions of their peers through vicarious experiences (Malinen et al. 2013). The social cognitive theory has two components: desired and expected outcomes of performing a certain behavior through modeling and intervention. Kattari (2015) suggested this theory posits that there are people who have the capacity to provide appropriate and effective intervention to promote behavior change. The social cognitive theory is relevant to this research because the research questions are based on teachers' self-efficacy in terms of managing disruptive student behavior to identify their training needs and increase their ability to manage their classrooms when disruptive behavior is present, as well as change students' disruptive behavior. Additionally, I used the social cognitive theory as a

resource for instructional practices and student growth when I approached the third research question (Shi, 2014).

### **Disruptive Student Behavior**

Disruptive student behavior challenges learning environments (Back et al., 2016; Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016; Teyfur, 2015). Chinelo and Nwanneka (2016) reported that disruptive student behaviors such as destructing school property and injuring staff have a negative impact on classrooms worldwide. According to Chinelo and Nwanneka, discipline in the classrooms of Nigeria included disruptive student behaviors such as arriving to class late, leaving seats, cutting class, refusing to follow directions, not completing assignments, cheating, destruction of school property, and injuries to school staff were reported as great hazards for schoolteachers (Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016). Children who present disruptive behaviors during the school day often face rejection from their peers, struggle academically, and have poor relationships with school staff (Baker & Blacher, 2015; Teyfur, 2015). Baker and Blacher (2015) researched the impact that attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) have on diagnosed students and found that children who meet the diagnostic criteria regularly display disruptive behavior in school and have poor relationships with their peers. Kilgus, Van Wie, Sinclair, Riley-Tillman, and Herman (2018) reported that 10-20% of adolescents display depressive symptoms that are associated with low academic performance and poor peer relationships. Teyfur (2015) indicated that disruptive student behavior is detrimental to students' academic achievement and their relationships with both adults and students at school. Teyfur found that teachers'

behavior while managing disruptive students helps solve students' behavior problems in that when teachers are effective with classroom management it is because they establish their expectations with students and work with students to meet them.

### **Disruptive Student Behavior in Postsecondary Classrooms**

Qahtani and Sultan (2016) identified challenging student behavior and the strategies used by faculty to manage the behaviors. Qahtani and Sultan's finding that undesirable student behaviors are considered one of the biggest challenges to novice teachers matches the findings of Stough, Montague, Landmark, and Williams-Diehm (2015) but Qahtani and Sultan's finding expanded Stough et al.'s work to include experienced faculty members in their study and found that student behavior was a challenge for them as well (p. 198). Qahtani and Sultan (2016) found that undesirable student behaviors in post-secondary settings included cheating, being rude to teachers and peers, interrupting the lecture, using cell phones, arriving late to lectures, leaving class, and challenging the authority of professors (p. 199). Qahtani and Sultan reported that classroom management strategies are important to teachers and that classroom discipline is important to instructional strategies and student success.

Qahtani and Sultan (2016) identified three types of discipline practices in college classrooms: preventative discipline, which prevents the occurrence of bad behavior; supportive discipline, which helps students to get back on task; and therapeutic discipline, which corrects the student's behavior (p. 199). Qahtani and Sultan also reported that students prefer teachers who treat them with respect, use direct orders, and keep the class interesting and engaging through interactive learning and teaching relevant topics. The

strategies that students reported as being ineffective included embarrassing or challenging the student in front of the class and/or using punishments. Qahtani and Sultan's findings support those of Baker and Blacher (2015) and Teyfur (2015) whose research reported that managing student behaviors takes up a lot of the teachers' time and interrupts the educational process of other students. Qahtani and Sultan's research supports the current study because it indicated that classroom management techniques affect student behavior. In my study, I worked to confirm what classroom management strategies teachers perceive they already have as well as what classroom management strategies teachers identify they need training to do.

### **Managing Disruptive Behaviors**

Novice teachers report that they are not skilled to manage disruptive student behavior and that the university teacher education does not prepare them for classroom management (Scott, 2017; Stough et al., 2015). Chinelo and Nwanneka (2016) investigated techniques used by novice and experienced teachers to control disruptive student behaviors and reported a significant difference between novice and experienced teachers on their use of discipline techniques to manage disruptive student behavior. Chinelo and Nwanneka reported the classroom management strategies that teachers reportedly used to work with students' undesired behaviors include guidance, positive reinforcement, fear reduction, moral education, and timeout (Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016). Chinelo and Nwanneka's research is relevant to this investigation because they pointed out the need for research on teacher perceptions of the training to manage both their classrooms and disruptive student behavior. It is important to note that Chinelo and

Nwanneka's finding of using positive reinforcement is similar to the recommendations of Garcia and Hoang (2015), Scott, Hirn, and Alter (2014), and Simonsen, Freeman, Dooley, Maddock, Kern, and Myers (2017) who also reported on the benefit of using praise, rewards, and positive acknowledgement in classroom management. Teachers who use praise establish routines, express acceptance and warmth, acknowledge the student's achievements, and have success in managing challenging behaviors (Floress & Jenkins, 2015; Scott et al., 2014; Simonsen et al., 2017).

### **Classroom Management**

Classroom management is a term used to describe techniques teachers use to create a constructive classroom environment that encourages positive student-peer relationships, inspires students to focus on academics, and maintains acceptable student behavior (Back et al., 2016; Korpershoek et al., 2016). According to Back et al. (2016), strong classroom management and behavior management are critical to successful instructional; however Stough et al. (2015) found that teacher education preparation usually includes a small focus on discipline rather than focusing on classroom management as a comprehensive tool. Classroom management is in fact inclusive of both behavior management and academic instruction (Egeberg et al., 2016; Stough et al., 2015). In an effort to encourage teacher preparation programs to focus on classroom management, the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education set guidelines to assess courses based on graduates' performance in classrooms. This is an attempt to ensure that professional standards provide novice teachers with the appropriate skill set to sustain student learning and maintain classroom climate yet, there have been no

developments to ensure that course material and assessments prepare teachers to manage challenging student behavior (Fallon et al., 2011).

### **Effective Classroom Management**

Classroom management includes pedagogical practices, behavior monitoring, and intervening when disruptive behavior occurs. However, teachers who are the most effective managers of their classrooms are teachers who are good at preventing disruptive behavior from occurring in the first place (Egeberg et al., 2016). Preventing disruptive student behavior is most likely to happen because of positive planning during the summer before the school year starts, which includes planning engaging lessons, observing students as they work, and planning behavior management strategies (Egeberg et al., 2016; Lester et al., 2017). Teachers who spend a great deal of time planning during the summer have solid classroom routines and report few discipline problems (Lester et al., 2017).

Effective classroom management is inclusive of positive, caring interactions between teachers and students, and is more proactive than reactive (Back et al., 2016; Egeberg et al., 2016; Korpershoek et al., 2016). Back et al. (2016) used the ecological approach to understand the relationship between student behavior, classroom management, and students' test scores. Back et al. studied behavioral challenges presented by students in a large urban school district to identify school level variables that might provide a means for behavior intervention. Back et al.'s data demonstrated a correlation between classroom management, staff relations, and school climate on test scores in an urban setting. Additionally, Back et al. reported that school climate and

classroom management help establish a positive environment that supports students' social and academic skill building and demonstrated how relationships, school climate, and classroom management influence one another as they contribute to student success. Egeberg et al. (2016) reviewed empirical research on the professional standards of classroom management techniques and found that teachers who display caring, creative, and positive classrooms encourage desirable behaviors, motivate student learning, and increase student engagement. Korpershoek et al. (2016) conducted a meta-analysis focused on the effects of classroom management strategies aimed at improving students' behavior and academic ability. Korpershoek et al.'s analysis demonstrated that classroom management interventions have a significant effect on various student outcomes. When schoolteachers develop meaningful relationships with students and work to earn the respect of students then they sustain high quality classroom management (Egeberg et al., 2016; Spilt et al., 2016). Effective classroom management includes providing appropriate support to students including boosting their self-esteem, helping them feel loved, establishing routines, clarifying expectations, maintaining an organized space, managing student behavior, and encouraging them to strive for high academic goals (Back et al., 2016). Well-managed classrooms promote positive social skills for students and provide instruction for self-regulation to assist students to solve problems in a reasonably respectful manner (Back et al., 2016; Egeberg et al., 2016). This is important because teachers typically use reactive strategies such as time-out, removal from the classroom, or other punitive practices that have a negative impact on the

student-teacher relationship and the student's academic and behavior development (Ashley, 2016).

### **Classroom Management Techniques**

Teachers' ability to manage disruptive student behavior is essential to classroom management, addressing academics, and inclusion of special education students into general education classrooms (Scott, 2017). However, teachers receive little to no training on managing challenging behaviors or accessing support services that enable them to respond to challenging student behaviors (Khasakhala & Galava, 2016). Scott (2017) reported that teacher education programs do not prepare teachers to manage disruptive behaviors. Oliver and Reschly (2010) examined course syllabi of special education teacher preparation schools to determine if courses focused on classroom management and behavior management were included in the required studies. In their research, they found only a small number of universities had special education teacher preparation programs that required a course on classroom management. However, Oliver and Reschly found that the majority of the courses in special education teacher preparation contained content that was inclusive of classroom management.

Flower et al. (2017) researched teacher preparation programs to determine if special education, general education, and alternate routes to teacher certification programs contain classes that provide novice teachers with enough strategies during coursework to manage disruptive student behavior. The findings of their study were similar to the findings of Stough et al. (2015) who found special education teacher preparation programs offered course content relative to classroom management and

behavior management, but general educators reported being underprepared to manage challenging student behaviors.

Teachers who have effective classroom management skills encourage student participation, set high expectations, and implement instruction that facilitates rigorous learning (Back et al., 2016; Egeberg et al., 2016). Evidence of classroom management exists in classrooms where prevention and redirection rather than reprimand are the teacher responses to disruptive behavior and students have choices for how to receive instruction (Egeberg et al., 2016; Korpershoek et al., 2016; Spilt et al., 2016). According to Teyfur (2015), classroom management also includes finding effective solutions to disruptive behavior before it occurs and decision making about responding to potential problematic behavior. Teyfur reported punitive responses such as punishing students, reprimanding students, depriving students of affection, changing students' seats, complaining about students to parents, and referring students to the office as effective strategies identified by elementary schoolteachers that lead to a change in disruptive student behaviors.

Effective classroom management can prevent disruptive student behavior (Back et al., 2016; Gage et al., 2018; Teyfur, 2015). Consistency, classroom rules, and daily schedules are important to maintain when working to manage classrooms (Gage et al., 2018). Teachers who work with students who present challenging behaviors can support students by presenting clear expectations, imposing classroom techniques, practicing positive reinforcement, and presenting instruction from curriculum that requires peer interaction skills (Gage et al., 2018; Scott et al., 2014). Prior planning in classroom

expectations is a classroom management technique that teachers should use to sustain student behavior (Back et al., 2016; Teyfur, 2015). This work includes defining appropriate behaviors and setting expectations for students (Back et al., 2016; Flower et al., 2017; Teyfur, 2015). Classroom management techniques include focusing on the social, emotional, and academic needs of the child by creating a classroom that is supportive, safe, and sets clear expectations (Egeberg et al., 2016). When teachers create classrooms where they plan for potential challenges, establish rules and routines, practice praise, manage behaviors, and engage students then classroom management yields positive student outcomes (Egeberg et al., 2016).

Techniques that should be included in teacher training focused on classroom management are strategies that encourage students to maintain on-task behavior, negotiate for things that they want, meet expectations, and transition well (Back et al., 2016; Egeberg et al., 2016; Spilt et al., 2016). Egeberg et al. (2016) reviewed conceptual and empirical research on classroom management. Egeberg et al. clarified that effective classroom management encourages positive classroom environments that are organized, motivate students, involve parents and the community, respect the impact that social, cultural, and emotional factors have on behavior, and focus on positive student-teacher relationships. Egeberg et al. also identified five evidence-based classroom management practices that are supported by empirical studies and have been proven effective: (a) Maximize classroom structure through teacher directed activities, rules and routines, visual displays, creative classroom arrangement; (b) Implement instruction of social skills through positive rules that are taught, modeled, and reviewed throughout the school year

through teacher-student and student-student interactions; (c) Positive student engagement in learning of academic and social skills; (d) Provide positive praise of appropriate behaviors through individual and group encouragement; (e) Respond to disruptive behavior through reminders, redirection, planned ignoring, and logical consequences (p. 6). Egeberg et al.'s research differs from the work that I did because they reviewed research suggestions on classroom management and the professional standards of classroom teachers regarding what teachers are expected to know how to do. My study looked at what skills teachers report they have and what skills teachers report they need training to do.

Classroom management techniques that encourage positive interactions between children will stimulate social development and academic competence (Aspiranti, Bebech, & Osiniak, 2018; Egeberg et al., 2016; Mizuta et al., 2016). Teachers can achieve this through the proactive behavior management strategy of establishing classroom rules and routines that have a positive impact on student behavior (Aspiranti et al., 2018; Egeberg et al., 2016; Mizuta et al., 2016). Aspiranti et al. (2018) examined a proactive behavior management strategy called the Wheel System implemented in second and third grade classrooms which delved into positive, effective classroom management that was inclusive of rules, routines, and behavior expectations. Using the pre and post-test method, Aspiranti et al. created baseline data on student behavior and academic engagement; and then they trained teachers to use the Color Wheel System's behavior management strategy to create classroom expectations and decrease unwanted behaviors. At the end of the study, Aspiranti et al.'s indicated teachers' use of proactive strategies to

manage students' behavior resulted in a decrease in unwanted behaviors. Teachers mainly used rules, routines, and visual cues to manage disruptive student behavior. This is similar to evidence found by Egeberg et al. (2016) who found that positive reinforcement results in positive student outcomes.

### **Strategies That Support Classroom Management**

Classroom management strategies that teachers use to deal with problematic behavior are important to controlling behavior and promoting positive social skills (Aspiranti, et al., 2018; Floress & Jenkins, 2015). Classroom management involves inclusiveness, which culturally caters to different needs by recognizing that behavior is a part of diversity (Egeberg et al., 2016). This work includes training teachers to focus on managing behavior by recognizing that behaviors do not always need to be corrected but simply need to be guided (Egeberg et al., 2016). This lends to the proposal of training teachers to implement instruction while being responsive to cultural diversity, because there is no teacher training for responding to student diversity while managing classrooms (Pas, Larson, Reinke, Herman, & Bradshaw, 2016).

Classroom management strategies includes appropriate teacher responses when intervening during disruptive behaviors in instances when students are from different ethnic backgrounds (Pas et al., 2016). Pas et al. (2016) researched the use of culturally responsive classroom management strategies that may help to reduce the disproportionate number of minority students who receive exclusionary discipline. According to Pas et al., minority students receive disciplinary actions that exclude them from school at higher rates than their peers. This may be because teachers report feeling underprepared to

manage disruptive behavior displayed by students of minority backgrounds (Pas et al., 2016). Furthermore, Pas et al. found that teachers use culturally responsive behavior management strategies that they are trained to implement, however the researchers did not identify if there was a change in teachers' responses to minority student behavior or a change in the disparate number of office referrals for minority students after teachers participated in the training. Pas et al. deduced that there are limited intervention strategies that support the reduction of inequities that sometimes exist in teacher response to student behavior when addressing students of different ethnicities.

### **Teacher Behavior**

Teacher behavior when responding to disruptive student behavior is a key component to classroom management (Spilt et al., 2016). According to Dicke et al. (2014), teachers should focus on self-efficacy related to classroom management when planning their response to disruptive student behavior. Specifically, Dicke et al. suggested that teachers' self-efficacy on managing student behaviors predicts their performance when actually responding to student behavior after they appropriately and accurately appraise a situation. Spilt et al. (2016) investigated whether teacher behavior can induce changes in children's development. They studied the impact that teacher behavior has on children's behavior, social skills, and emotional development. The study examined elementary teacher use of verbal praise and reprimand as a behavior management strategy to change children's social development outcomes. The results of the study suggested that lower levels of reprimands for noncompliant behaviors and higher levels of praise for compliant behaviors were effective enhancements to children's

behavior development over the course of a school year. High rates of reprimand caused increases in children's defiant and noncompliant behavior and low self-concept. The study suggested that low amounts of verbal praise could increase students' low levels of socio-emotional insecurity while consistent verbal praise could influence positive responses from students and less withdrawn behavior. Spilt et al.'s study supports the work of Egeberg et al. (2016) who suggested training teachers to use strategies that work to build positive relationships with students so that the student maintains an affirmative attitude towards school. A student's positive attitude toward school will ultimately make it less likely that the child will experience school failure, exhibit problem behaviors, and display problematic symptoms (Egeberg et al., 2016; Oguz-Duran & Kaya-Memis, 2017).

Teachers' behaviors influence classroom management and student learning. According to Gage et al. (2018), when teachers implement a lesson and interact with the class, it is likely that the class will engage with the lesson. Furthermore, Gage et al. recommended that small group instruction and interesting seatwork increases the likelihood that students will be engaged with learning which decreases the opportunity for disruption.

### **Teacher Effectiveness in Classroom Management**

Schoolteachers work to support students' gains academically, behaviorally, and socially; yet the negative impact that disruptive student behavior has on teachers' ability to efficiently managing their classrooms is a main concern (Back et al., 2016; Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016; Teyfur, 2015). Back et al. (2016) focused on the impact that effective classroom management can have on teachers' expectation and ability to intervene when

students display disruptive behavior. Garwood and Vernon- Feagans (2017) reported that students who display disruptive behaviors also have low academic levels. The researchers also reported that teachers who have no classroom management skills contribute to negative student outcomes. In their study of the effects of classroom management on reading achievement, Garwood and Vernon-Feagans (2017) performed a longitudinal study that investigated the impact that high quality classroom management had on students' literacy scores. High quality classroom management includes organizational and emotional support. The researchers considered the degree to which teachers created caring and respectful classrooms focused on student engagement and they found that the longer children experienced high quality classroom management the higher their reading scores were. In their findings, Garwood and Vernon-Feagans reported a need for classroom teachers to receive professional training in classroom management.

Teyfur (2015) reported that challenging student behaviors are one of the most important problems that teachers work with and the finding was supported by the studies of Chinelo and Nwanneka (2016) and Garwood and Vernon-Feagans (2017). Schools are encouraged to build teachers' capacity to be effective in managing their classrooms, which includes working with students who present challenging behavior and providing professional training, equipment, materials, supplies, and other necessary resources that are supportive to teachers (Mizuta, Noda, Nakamura, Tatsumi, & Ojima, 2016; Simonsen et al., 2017). Increasing a school's capacity to support teachers' classroom management skills is important because poor management of students' behavior problems contributes

to poor student academic achievement and low rates of teacher retention (Back et al., 2016; Pas et al., 2015). A problem exists with supporting teachers in classroom management because there is limited information available for educators to use when planning classroom management strategies that include effective behavior intervention (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017; Scott et al., 2014; Simonsen et al., 2017). In the following subsections, I will address the research on teacher training, classroom management strategies, and symptomatic behavior interventions.

### **Adolescent Mental Illness**

Mental health disorders occur during childhood and can have a negative impact on students' behavior. Students who are diagnosed with a mental illness present symptomatic behaviors that result in requiring extra help during school through special education (Odom & Wong, 2015); being suspended because of behavior, earning poor grades, performing poorly on standardized tests (Sibley, Altszuler, Morrow, & Merrill, 2014); and dropping out of school (Zendarski, Sciberras, Mensah, & Hiscock, 2017). Schools can help students who are diagnosed with mental illness by using strategies such as modeling desirable behavior, breaking down complicated tasks, prompting, using extinction (ignoring the challenging behavior), and other evidence-based practices such as reinforcement, functional behavior assessments, differential reinforcement, social skills training, peer-mediation and intervention, and parent intervention (Odom & Wong, 2015). Schools are increasing their role to support children who have mental health issues due to a 2002 legislation that suggested the need for schools to improve their

mental health programs because students who are diagnosed with a mental illness, yet are untreated, may experience school failure (Baker & Blacher, 2015).

Symptoms of some mental health disorders may cause disruptive behavioral or emotional problems in the classroom. This is important because teachers rank students with disruptive behavior as one of the top three barriers to teaching (Marquez et al., 2016, p. 89). Schoolteachers can help students who have a diagnosis of a mental illness advance academically and manage their behavior (Temli-Durmus, 2016). Behavior intervention can occur through a classroom management system whereby teachers create classrooms that contain high quality emotional and organizational supports for students that will help them to stay on-task, engage in the lesson, and ultimately improve academically (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Teachers who learn to maintain effective classroom management produce students who grow academically and socially (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017).

### **Teacher Response to Symptomatic Behavior**

Positive classroom supports can stimulate suitable student behaviors (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). It is important for teachers to utilize appropriate classroom management strategies when working to manage behaviors that are symptomatic of mental illness because negative interactions between a child and their teacher can diminish learning opportunities while positive interactions between teachers and students can promote better academic and social outcomes (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Effective strategies to manage behavior and support student success include positive interactions between teachers and students, emotional support to students, individualized

attention, and specific praise (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). At times, teachers' punitive practice of negative and exclusionary responses to behaviors that may be symptomatic of mental illness are inappropriate yet occur because school personnel lack an understanding of the correlation between classroom management and mental health disorders (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). However, Ersozlu and Cayci (2016) reported that success in the classroom for both the students who have a diagnosis of a mental illness and the teacher who works with them is attainable. The teacher can be trained to know the behavior features of different mental illnesses, gain an understanding that the behavior symptoms are beyond the student's control, and take into consideration the interests and needs of the student (Ersozlu & Cayci, 2016).

### **Teacher Training**

Teacher training in classroom management is necessary because behavior management is an area of high concern for teachers when they work with students who present disruptive behaviors (Khasakhala & Galava, 2016; Mizuta et al., 2016; Simonsen et al., 2017). Marquez et al. (2016) identified effective classroom management training to include easy-to-understand information, opportunities for coaching and modeling, and time for participants to practice newly learned skills. However, Marquez et al.'s research is limited because it reported on the style of the teacher training rather than the training topics. In the current research, I studied middle school and high school teachers' reports of the training topics they perceived as necessary to increase teacher capacity in classroom and behavior management. Professional teacher training topics were identified in other studies to include grade level transition conversations that allow for current

teachers to consult with the next year's teacher to provide effective individualized strategies (Gormley & Dupaul, 2015), academic intervention (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017), reduction of the number of distractions in the classroom (Simonsen et al., 2017), regular parent contact so as to provide consistency of expectations at home and in school (Jensen & Minke, 2017), maintenance of consistent classroom schedules that are posted for students to see so that they can plan for the day (Gormley & Dupaul, 2015), goal setting with students (Mizuta et al., 2016), positive praise (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017), and social skill building activities at times during the school day where the students can positively interact with peers (De Leeuw & De Boer, 2016).

Marquez et al. (2016) and Domitrovich et al. (2016) investigated teacher training. Both studies investigated the impact that behavior management training or behavior management and social-emotional training would have on classroom management and found that teachers who had professional training indicated a positive level of self-efficacy in classroom management skills. However, Domitrovich et al. extended their study past that of Marquez et al. to determine the impact that teacher training in behavior management and social emotional learning would have on teachers. Domitrovich et al. found that the teachers who participated in behavior management and social emotional training indicated a greater perception of being able to teach students social emotional competence compared to the group of teachers who participated in behavior management training only. It is important to note that teachers who received training in both behavior management and social emotional training also reported greater personal accomplishments at the end of the school year for behavior management and self-

efficacy. Marquez et al. and Domitrovich et al. reported teachers reported an increase in behavior management and a decrease in burnout when they participated in training on behavior management.

Teachers' skill level to respond to disruptive student behavior is low (Back et al., 2016; Marquez et al., 2016). Back et al. (2016) explored how high school teachers' use of behavior management strategies influence pedagogical practice and student improvement. Back et al. used surveys to assess high school teachers' perception of classroom management, school climate, and students' academic achievement. After the survey was administered, the teachers were trained to use behavior management strategies. Back et al. did a pre and post training comparison of students' scores on district standardized tests and results suggested relationships between classroom management and effectiveness and average test scores because students' scores increased after teachers participated in the behavior management training. These results show a relationship between behavior management and students' test scores. Teacher training in conflict resolution, reinforcement, modeling, mood change, and positive praise might increase teacher skill level to manage behaviors, deflate stressful situations, and intervene when disruptive behavior occurs (Odom & Wong, 2015; Simonsen et al., 2017). Odom and Wong (2015) studied the complexities and challenges that children who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) face. Odom and Wong stated that in the last 10 years, the occurrence of ASD has increased 200 percent. This impacts schools across the country because, according to Odom and Wong, schools report that they are teaching increasing numbers of students with ASD. This is concerning because teachers

do not receive preservice training in managing or instructing students who are diagnosed with ASD yet they are required by the Individuals With Disability Act (IDEA) to use research-based practices to support student's growth academically and socially. Odom and Wong provided a list of evidence-based practices (EBPs) that are solidly supported by the research that includes antecedent-based interventions, functional behavior assessments, modeling, prompting, reinforcement, social skills training, and technologically oriented interventions. Simonsen et al. (2017) suggested that students experience positive outcomes when teachers implement evidence-based classroom management practices. However, Simonsen et al. reported that teachers regularly cite classroom management as an area in which they need support and an area where they receive insufficient training. According to Simonsen et al., poor classroom management contributes to the high rate of teacher attrition as nearly half of teachers leave the field within their first 5 years of teaching. Furthermore, Simonsen et al. reported that a recent survey showed that 97% of teachers reported concerns with disruptive or acting out behaviors, while only 56% of teachers reported that they had heard of "evidence-based practices," yet 21% of teachers reported having no or minimal training in behavioral interventions. After researching the effect of targeted professional development focused on elementary school teachers' rates of specific praise, Simonsen et al. documented low to fairly stable use of specific and contingent praise prior to training and an increase in teachers use of specific praise after training. Although Simonsen et al. suggested that professional development may be an efficient approach to providing a strategy for teachers to use with behavior management, they did not explore if there is a correlation

between the strategy and students' social or academic outcomes. Fossum et al. (2017) investigated the effect that professional development focused on classroom management and preventive intervention had on increasing appropriate behavior in kindergarten students and in schools. After kindergarten teachers participated in behavior management training, their students showed significant improvement in behavior, attention, and social skills. Fossum et al. provided evidence of the positive impact that effective professional teacher training focused on positive teacher-student relationships, parent involvement, the use of praise and encouragement, discipline, and the use of incentives have on promoting emotional, behavioral, and social development in young students. My study expanded existing research because it focused on middle school and high school teachers' reported needs for professional training to manage disruptive student behavior.

Training for teachers on planning appropriate responses to challenging behaviors may be effective when designing discipline strategies as shown by Back et al. (2016). Appropriate and effective responses to challenging student behaviors include: effective parent involvement (Teyfur, 2015), social-emotional learning focused on teaching students coping skills to deal with emotions (Ashley, 2016), classroom accommodations that are supportive of students who receive special education services (De Leeuw & De Boer, 2016), and strategies to use for meaningful discussion with students to objectively discuss the behavior (McDaniel & Flower, 2015); mechanisms to use to implement social skills and violence prevention information into classroom discussion (Fossum et al., 2017); and techniques to use when working with children and families of different

ethnicities (Pas et al., 2016). Teacher training on responding to disruptive behavior is important because training may enable teachers to use effective discipline strategies that help to maintain a classroom environment that meets the needs of all students. Training would empower teachers to adjust the rules, routines, and responses to adverse behavior so to create a flexible learning environment that meets the academic and behavioral needs presented by students (Ashley, 2016; Gormley & Dupaul, 2015; Odom & Wong, 2015; Teyfur, 2015).

Teacher training to provide positive practices that will support students emotionally, academically, and socially is also important. Training in positive practices will help teachers learn to adjust their classroom expectations so that they are aligned with students' abilities and moods, which might support students' mental health and ensure students' success academically and behaviorally (Ashley, 2016; Khasakhala & Galava, 2016; Mizuta et al., 2016; Simonsen et al., 2017). The training would extend teachers' observations during class time so that they record and report the times during the day when the student's behavior changes or when problem behavior is likely to occur so as to empower teachers to recognize the triggers and prepare appropriate behavior consequences to be used for the student's success (McDaniel & Flower, 2015).

### **Teacher Training for Managing Symptomatic Behavior**

Teacher training that is focused on prevention and intervention techniques to use with students whose mental health diagnoses cause symptomatic behaviors that are disruptive to learning and have a negative impact on the classroom is needed (Mizuta et al., 2016). For example, substance abuse, poor peer interactions, and low-level academic

ability are common in adolescents who have a diagnosis of depression. Teachers who work with students who have a diagnosis of a mental illness would benefit from classroom management training that includes conflict resolution training (which would provide the teacher with strategies to use to maintain control of a situation when a student's temper has been triggered (Khasakhala & Galava, 2016). Valdez and Budge (2012) studied adolescent depression to determine the effectiveness of in-service training for teachers focused on identifying depression and providing appropriate support for students. Valdez and Budge reported that teachers need training to identify the symptoms of depression and strategies to use in the classroom to support students when symptomatic behaviors of depression impede instruction. Valdez and Budge also found that teachers need training in the areas of referring students to the school counselor and collaborating with appropriate community providers so to ensure maximum growth and development. Egeberg et al. (2016) reported that collaboration between teachers and school health workers may help to promote mental health services for students and result in an increase in the teacher's capacity to understand the students' needs.

Teachers should be trained in the emotional element of symptomatic behaviors and learn how to react quickly, diligently, appropriately, and effectively (Khasakhala & Galava, 2016; McDaniel & Flower, 2015). Khasakhala and Galava researched elementary school classrooms attended by students who were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and they focused on the relationship between teachers' perception of causes of challenging student behavior and their choice of behavior management strategies. Khasakhala and Galava found differences in teachers' responses to behavior

based on their perception of the cause of the challenging behavior and they provided examples of strategies that teachers might use to successfully support students to improve their behavior. The strategies included assisting students to reflect on their behavior, setting up individual targets for students, and providing students with strategies to self-regulate their behaviors. McDaniel and Flower (2015) worked directly with elementary school students to help them critically identify their behavior and learn strategies to self-regulate it. The training might include the use of positive proactive strategies such as rules (Korpershoek et al., 2016), routines (Khasakhala & Galava, 2016), praise (Simonsen et al., 2017), social skill curriculum (Domitrovich et al., 2016), and classroom organization (Khasakhala & Galava, 2016) as effective approaches to managing behavior (Simonsen et al., 2017; Valdez & Budge, 2012). The use of positive proactive strategies can increase the amount of time a student is in the classroom and decrease the amount of time a student spends in an administrator's office; which supports the student's access to academics, allows the student time to practice peer interaction, and gives the student an opportunity to learn behavior management skills (McDaniel & Flower, 2015). Simonsen et al. (2017) and Ashley (2016) provided evidence on the need to train teachers to use positive and proactive behavior management strategies to prevent problem behavior. In their study, Simonsen et al. (2017) investigated training school staff to intervene when students display disruptive behavior and suggested that teacher training include use of specific praise as a management strategy that encourages desired behavior. The research design included pre and post-studies of teachers in two New England suburban schools. The researchers observed teachers use of specific praise in the classroom and then

provided training to teachers on how to use specific praise to change students' challenging behavior to desirable behavior. Teachers' use of specific praise increased significantly after the training and teachers' self-monitoring behaviors increased after the training. The researchers did not report if student behaviors improved after teachers participated in the study.

Teacher training to understand children with mental illness is critical. Training for schoolteachers that explains how to identify challenging behavior as disruptive or as a symptom of mental illness and intervene before the behavior manifests would influence student success (Gormley & Dupaul, 2015). Children who are diagnosed with mental illness sometimes have extreme behavior problems that are triggered by conflict with their peers (Baker & Blacher, 2015) and learning disabilities that result in academic challenges (Odom & Wong 2015). Therefore, teacher training to meet students' needs or to respond to challenging behavior would support student growth (Chinelo & Nwanneka, 2016; Khasakhala & Galava, 2016).

Schoolteachers do not receive professional development training focused on how to work with students who have a diagnosis of a mental illness. However, training and support services for teachers during the school day would help teachers to be better prepared to implement interventions, manage the students' academic and behavior growth, and maintain control of the classroom (Gormley & Dupaul, 2015). Gormley and Dupaul (2014) indicated that teachers have little information and understanding of students' treatment plans. This fact is supported by the work of Sibley, Altszuler, Morrow, and Merrill (2014) which indicated that traditional school-based treatments for

students who are diagnosed with a mental illness have limited success in middle school and high school. Therefore, providing prescription and counseling treatment information to teachers would serve the needs of students who have a diagnosis of a mental illness. Also, there is little information available to teachers on positive proactive interventions that will improve teacher engagement and interaction with students who are diagnosed with mental illness even though positive proactive behavior management strategies have been suggested to be effective (Ashley, 2016). Egeberg et al. (2016) presented information on positive interactions in the classroom. Egeberg et al. suggested approaching classroom management by creating safe and supportive classrooms that promote physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally healthy environments. In addition to positive interactions in the classroom, Simon (2016) found that many public schools recognize that small class size minimizes the frequency of problem behavior while increasing teacher time spent on instruction; however, schools are not able to financially maintain the small classroom size that are beneficial to students who are diagnosed with mental illness. Symptoms of some mental health disorders may cause disruptive behavioral or emotional problems in the classroom.

Khasakhala and Galava (2016) investigated the causes of disruptive behavior in elementary school-aged children in Kenya who had a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. To determine the relationship between teacher perception of the causes of challenging student behavior and teacher choice of behavior management strategies Khasakhala and Galava used descriptive survey and a correlational research design to investigate elementary teacher response to challenging student behavior. The study

involved 106 elementary school teachers who worked with students who were diagnosed with ASD. The study found that teachers' perception of the causes of challenging student behavior was moderately correlated to teachers' choice of management strategies. Causes of challenging behavior were found to be functional, learned, reinforced, or symptomatic of autism spectrum disorder. Khasakhala and Galava found that teachers' perception of the cause of challenging student behavior was a major variable for teachers to consider when choosing responsive, behavior management strategies. Teyfur (2015) also studied the causes of disruptive behavior in elementary school-aged children by using a survey to determine teacher perception of the causes of problematic student behavior and the methods teachers use to manage challenging behaviors. Teyfur identified that some of the challenging behaviors exhibited by elementary school students included disrespecting the teacher, engaging poorly with peers, talking without permission, and walking around the classroom. Teyfur identified that teachers reported reasons for undesirable student behaviors are due to poor parent behavior such as parents interfering in the educational process, parents spoiling their children, parents comparing their children with their peers, and parents forcing them to participate in various courses. Teyfur's study identified the methods that teachers reported as efficient with managing problematic student behavior. The methods included calling out the student's name, encouraging the student to recognize the need for an apology, involving administrators in the student's behavior, reminding students of classroom rules, reporting the student's behavior to the parent, tracking the source of the problem, and visiting the student at home.

School resources, teacher training, and additional staff are obstacles that exist for public schools when working with students who present disruptive behavior in the classroom (Ashley, 2016). Ashley reported that when teachers work with students who display challenging behavior, they should refrain from using punitive measures to manage the behavior because it does not manage the behavior, it makes it worse. Ashley also reported that systemic practices in schools that support challenging student behaviors includes relationship building between teachers and students as well as between teachers and parents, ensures culturally relevant curriculum, and offers professional development for teachers that is focused on managing stressful classroom situations. The multi-tiered system of approach, according the Ashley, is most effective in supporting students and teachers when disruptive behavior interrupts the school day.

### **Behavior Interventions**

Academic intervention for low performing students can expand to include behavior support and social skill improvement (Domitrovich et al., 2016; Mizuta et al., 2016; Trussell, Lewis, & Raynor, 2016). Domitrovich et al. (2016) researched behavior management and social emotional training for teachers to identify the impact of teaching social skills along with instructional intervention on student development. Domitrovich et al. reported that encouraging student behavior is a core component of effective teaching as it increases student time on task, increases the quality of teacher-student relationships, and facilitates students' participation during instruction.

Behavior interventions that work with school-age children are positive praise (Simonsen et al., 2017), peer to peer interactions, positive student-staff relationships

(Toren & Seginer, 2015), direct behavioral instruction, objective discussion focused on appropriate behavior (McDaniel & Flower, 2015), family involvement (Teyfur, 2015), rewards (Ashely, 2015), and a system of points and prizes (Spilt et al., 2016). These interventions are important because schools tend to operate in a responsive mode rather than a positive, preventative mode that includes praise and positive reinforcement as a valuable strategy to use when responding to behavior problems (Ashley, 2016). This is a problem because the lack of positive reinforcement, combined with high rates of punitive practice does not solve the problem of disruptive student behavior (Ashley, 2016).

Spilt, Leflot, Onghena, and Colpin (2016) examined the behavior of elementary school educators to determine whether teacher behavior can cause changes in student behavior. Spilt et al. examined one controlled classroom and one intervention classroom. Teachers who worked in the intervention classroom used praise and reprimand according to The Good Behavior Game as behavior management strategies. Teachers in the intervention classroom used fewer reprimands and more praise at post intervention and there was a significant reduction in behavior problems in the intervention classroom. They also found that praise is an effective strategy for classroom behavior management because it resulted in lower levels of written reprimand for non-compliant behavior and higher levels of compliant behavior which enhanced students' development over the course of one year. Spilt et al. inspired me to study middle school and high school teachers because their study identified what Pas, Larson, Reinke, Herman, and Bradshaw (2015) later confirmed: there is little research on behavior management in adolescent classrooms.

### **Family-Centered Behavior Intervention**

The effect of family-involved behavior intervention increases when the communication between teacher and parent is open. When the school and family work together to intervene in challenging behavior, then together they promote successful student advancement in academics and social development (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017; Jensen & Minke, 2016; Teyfur, 2015). Regular communication with students' families helps to provide teachers with information that might help them to work with families to manage behavior (Jensen & Minke, 2016), be more understanding of the problem behavior (Teyfur, 2015), and be more supportive to students when their behavior is problematic (Conderman & Jung, 2015). When the communication between home and school is efficient, students show higher academic achievement, positive social/emotional outcomes, and higher graduation rates (Jensen & Minke, 2016).

Family engagement supports teachers work with behavior intervention (Jensen & Minke, 2016). Jensen and Minke (2016) reported that parent engagement is important to the education and social/emotional growth of students. Students who have support from both their family members and their schoolteachers attain better grades and social skills at school than those who do not (Mizuta et al., 2016; Teyfur, 2015). Toren and Seginer (2015) worked to determine if there was an interaction between classroom climate and parent involvement on students' self-evaluation and academic achievement and found there was an interaction between students' perception of classroom climate and parent involvement and that parent involvement had a positive influence on classroom climate, teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, and educational atmosphere.

### **School-Centered Behavior Support**

Relationships between the school nurse, psychologist, social worker, and the child's teacher are essential in developing a psychosocial environment for children (Mizuta et al., 2016). A collaborative education model is important because student behavior is impacted by their environment, interpersonal relationships, the behavior of others, and intrapersonal factors (Egeberg et al., 2016). It is important for schoolteachers to collaborate with school counselors to ensure proper supports are in place for students who need them and that collaborations with parents and community providers occur to ensure students' growth and development (Mizuta et al., 2016). It is also important for school nurses and counselors to work in a collaborative setting with teachers because a collaborative effort may strengthen the teaching and the treatment efforts (Mizuta et al., 2016). Collaboration is critical because nurses can provide teachers with behavioral health information and strategies that help to manage students when disruptive behaviors are present in the classroom (Mizuta et al., 2016). Finally, nurses and social workers are equipped to provide education strategies to teachers to help them cope with students' emotional outbursts, behavior concerns, and stress while remaining unbiased during students' behavior challenges (Mizuta et al., 2016). School nurses can work with teachers to support classroom management and together they can support students who need anger management skills, behavior modification, and problem-solving skills (Mizuta et al., 2016).

### **Interventions for Symptomatic Behavior**

Schoolteachers spend a significant amount of time with students during the school day and work to support students when behavioral health symptoms are triggered (Mizuta et al., 2016). Disruptive behavior can interfere with students' academic achievement, but teachers can be trained to objectively respond to the behavior and teach the student desirable responses for the future (McDaniel & Flower, 2015). School-based health centers can provide mental health services to students in schools nationwide (Odom & Wong, 2015). Additionally, school health providers such as the school nurse, social worker, or psychologist can work with teachers to discuss behavioral and mental health symptoms (Mizuta et al., 2016).

### **Professional Pedagogical Needs**

Stough, Montague, Landmark, and Williams-Diehm (2015) studied current and former special education teachers' perceptions of classroom preparation to manage their classrooms to determine the extent to which the university training prepared special education teachers for classroom management. The results revealed two things: a majority of special education teachers reported that they would have liked to have received more professional training focused on classroom management strategies and classroom management strategies that teachers used were strategies they developed while working in the classroom. Additionally, participants identified the type of training they desired for classroom management, which included proactive strategies, classroom management theories, and supporting students through transitions. Stough et al.'s research is relevant to my study because it identified special education teachers'

perception of need for classroom management training as reported by a small sample of participants some of whom were no longer working as teachers. However, in my study, I filled the gap identified by Stough et al. and I studied middle school and high school special education and general education teachers to determine what their perception of training needs are for classroom management.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

As discussed in the literature review, disruptive student behaviors are present in schools in high numbers and exist in conjunction with poor performance in academics and problematic peer interactions which impact classroom conduct. Additionally, Ashley (2016) and McDaniel and Flower (2015) which indicated that teachers with more training are better equipped to deal with disruptive students. Schools are appropriate places to address disruptive student behavior by training teachers to use behavioral intervention strategies, recognizing behaviors that are symptomatic of mental illness, and supporting students academically (Gormley & Dupaul, 2015; Simon, 2016; Wood et al., 2014). However, there is a need for additional research that specifies the kinds of support and resources teachers need to increase their capacity to work with disruptive students. Because challenging student behavior impedes instruction and disturbs the classroom climate, it is appropriate for schoolteachers to receive training focused on how to intervene and manage disruptive behavior (Ashley, 2016; Mizuta et al., 2016). If schoolteachers were trained to appropriately and effectively manage behavior problems and address academic concerns, this may increase the likelihood that students will experience success (Baker & Blacher, 2015; Gormley & Dupaul, 2015).

The gap in the literature was the omission of teachers' reports of training received that focuses on managing disruptive student behavior. Missing from the literature was teachers' reports regarding their ability to manage disruptive student behavior and the types of strategies and trainings that teachers perceive would best help them to work with students who display disruptive behavior. The current study filled the gap in existing literature by focusing on the difference between special education and general education teachers' perception of their current skills to manage disruptive student behavior across the grade levels of middle school and high school and the specific kinds of professional training they think they need to increase their skill level to manage disruptive student behavior.

The findings from this study will extend the knowledge in the field by identifying post elementary schoolteachers' efficacy in managing disruptive student behavior and will support education reform by identifying the areas of professional training that are needed for teachers to manage their classrooms. Chapter 3 presents the research questions driving the current study and describes the analysis focusing on middle school and high school teachers' perception of skill to manage disruptive student behavior and training needed to improve their skill. The chapter also includes a description of how an interaction between the variables was determined. Chapter 3 also previews the survey that was used for this study and describes how the data was tested.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### Introduction

The purpose of this between-subjects nonexperimental design was to examine middle and high school special and general educators' self-reports involving training regarding managing disruptive student behavior, their current skills in managing disruptive student behavior, and training needed to increase their capacity to manage these behaviors. This chapter identifies the research rationale and describes the research design, the variables, and research questions. The chapter also includes a description of the methodology, which includes recruitment, sampling procedures, participant information, data collection, and operationalization. Finally, Chapter 3 describes threats to reliability and validity as well as ethical procedures before transitioning to Chapter 4.

### Research Design and Rationale

This between-groups nonparametric survey design measured professional training and skill levels to manage disruptive student behaviors as well as explore teachers' perceptions involving professional training needs to manage disruptive student behavior in the classroom. Research questions and independent and dependent variables associated with this effort are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

#### *Research Design and Rationale*

Research Question Number	Variable Type	Variable Description
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*(table continues)*

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RQ1	IV	Teaching Level Teacher Type:
RQ1	DV	Participants' self-report of participation in professional training
RQ2	IV	Teaching Level: Teacher Type:
RQ2	DV	Participants' perception of current skill to manage behavior, and perception of training needed to manage student behavior
RQ3	IV	Teaching Level: Teacher Type:
RQ3	DV	Participants' perception of current skill to manage behavior, and perception of training needed to manage student behavior

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*Note.* Teacher level refers to middle school and high school teachers; teacher type refers to special and general educators.

This study involved the use of a nonparametric design with survey research conducted to test research hypotheses by expanding on previous research to include middle school and high school teachers as participants. Additionally, it was important to include special and regular educators as participants in the study because when students display disruptive behaviors, the behaviors influence students' academic and social interactions, which might be addressed differently by different types of educators. The dependent variables enumerated in Table 1 were included in this study because identifying appropriate training topics for teachers to manage disruptive student behavior was an important problem.

The questionnaire for this study was a web-based tool (SurveyMonkey) which allowed for convenience and anonymity for participants. Participants were invited to complete the survey through an email invitation after I received the list of potential participants from the participating district. Participation through email minimized the possibility for participants to submit multiple responses. Basic demographic information was included at the beginning of the survey to analyze and ensure that the appropriate variables were studied. The survey was accessible for 7 weeks. There were no expected time constraints. After the window for participation closed, the survey responses were transferred to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is an electronic statistical analysis program. Descriptive and distributional statistics as well as a one-way nonparametric ANOVA were conducted to examine differences between the four groups (special education middle school teachers, general education middle school teachers, special education high school teachers, and general education high school teachers). The results of the analysis are explained in Chapter 4.

## **Methodology**

### **Population**

Three hundred thirty-five special and general educators teach middle and high school in an urban public school district located in the northeast United States. The school district enrolls approximately 11,500 students. There are two schools that serve middle school students and two schools that serve high school grade students. The participating school district has suffered from financial constraints for longer than five school years. The participating district is in some phase of school restructuring with a

focus on academic advancement, teacher training, and student behavior because it is a reform district, known as an Alliance District. The Connecticut State Department of Education defined an Alliance District as a low-performing district according to student test scores and behavior referrals for four consecutive years. When districts fall into Alliance District status, they are in a restructuring phase, which requires them to design and implement corrective action plans. Corrective action plans include district responses to teacher training and support, school structure, student behavior, and parent participation. Options for district restructuring can include magnet school conversion, contracting with outside providers, and replacing administrators or teachers. The Connecticut State Department of Education requires districts that participate as Alliance Districts to redefine their internal structure. The Alliance District reform model aims to increase schools' performance on state and local standardized assessments with strength-based best practice models while fostering positive school culture.

### **Sampling**

Wilson (2016) stated that stratified random sampling was appropriate to use when the demographic variables are divided into categories. Since the teachers who participated in my study fit into four categories based on their certification: middle school special educator, middle school general educator, high school special educator, and high school general educator I used stratified sampling. I separated teachers into categorical groups so that I would have a sample groups based on participants' teaching characteristics.

Table 2

*Teacher Participant Samples*

Teacher Level	Teacher Type	Number of Teachers
Middle School	Special Educator	29
	General Educator	167
High School	Special Educator	29
	General Educator	168

The sampling frame was the complete employee list of middle school teachers and high school teachers that was stored in the district's data bank which lists all district staff according to certification and/or title. The list is managed by the district's Director of Data Analysis and Human Resource Director. Determinations for identifying which teachers to ask to participate were made after I met with the district's assistant superintendent. During the meeting, I confirmed the demographics of the sample population I wished to survey and built four subgroups according to grade level and classroom type. With assistance from the Assistant Superintendent, I identified teacher participants from the sample frame by compiling teacher lists from the middle and high schools according to teaching certification characteristics. Specifically, my list included middle and high school educators who were grouped according to their respective classroom types. All 335 special educators and general educators who taught middle school and high school in the district were invited to take the survey. A record of summary of responses was maintained. The survey design in SurveyMonkey included

item completion requirements. If participants did not answer a question, they saw an error message that prompted them to return to the incomplete item. The survey required that participants complete each item before they could click done.

The sample size calculator determined that the sample size needed for this study was 195 from the population with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5. When the surveys were complete, the survey information was logged into an Excel spreadsheet so that the surveys could be organized, numbered, and identified by teacher level and teacher type. In Excel, I organized the completed surveys by assigning each survey a number beginning with the number one, and recorded them in column A. I identified the level at which the respondent taught and recorded the level as middle school or high school in column B. I identified the type of teacher the participant was and recorded it as special education or general education in column C. I added a column D titled Random Sample and used the Excel function RAND to generate random values for every row. I recorded the random values and used the data sort of the numerical ordered items, according to the values established in columns B and C, and randomly sorted the numbered surveys for use in this study. Since there were four strata of variables, and I needed a sample size of 195, I selected 49 surveys from each stratum. This was accomplished by locating the first 49 selections of teacher type and teacher grade to make four groups so that the sample included 49 middle school special educators, 49 middle school general educators, 49 high school special educators, and 49 high school general educators. Since the special education teachers had a smaller sample size than the general education teachers it was essential to examine the variance for the

special education teachers. It was necessary to resample the middle school special education survey responses and the high school special education responses approximately 20 times to increase the sample size of each respective group so that it was even with the middle school regular education and high school regulation education teacher groups.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

The assistant superintendent helped the recruitment effort by identifying participants based on how they fit into each subgroup. An agreement defining district support for this study is attached as Appendix B. Once the tentative participant list was compiled, the Assistant Superintendent emailed the administrators at the middle schools and high schools to inform them of this study and asked them to email the teachers the description of this study which asked them to participate and included a hyperlink to the survey.

Informed consent was provided to teachers in written form at the beginning of the survey. Teachers were reminded of their right to participate in the research or withdraw from participating in the research at the start of the survey. I used the original survey created by Dutt et al. (2016) and modified it to complete this study; Dutt et al.'s survey is attached as Appendix A.

The superintendent's cabinet members, who are the lead directors of district departments such as school social work, school psychology, math, English, science, alternative education, counseling, and enrichment, reviewed the teacher survey used in this study. They read the survey to help determine ambiguity of words and phrases that

needed to be defined at the start of the survey. Review of the survey with the superintendent's cabinet helped to ensure that the survey was consistent, appropriate, and comprehensible. The cabinet had no concern of ambiguity or meaning.

I started with the survey published by Dutt et al. (2016) and modified the demographic section so that I could capture the necessary data for this study of middle school and high school teachers. The survey I used in the study is attached as Appendix C and was administered in an online format through SurveyMonkey. The demographic information that I collected was level of education, grade level in which the participant taught, and the classroom type with which teachers worked. The survey also captured previous professional training, skills in managing disruptive student behavior, and training needed to manage disruptive student behavior. The original survey design was a questionnaire format published by Dutt et al. which they used to capture schoolteachers' perception of their skills to administer a functional behavior assessment and their need for professional training in functional behavior assessments and behavior intervention. Content and face validity of the rating scale were established by extracting common themes from a qualitative review with seven experts in the area of function-based behavior assessments and interventions and 11 psychology students. Themes were established based on relevancy and content. The comments were addressed, and some survey items were revised before the survey was administered. Dutt et al.'s survey was used for this study and was modified to better suit the needs of my research. The current study focused on middle school and high school students; therefore, the original survey's

reference to children in items number three and five was changed to the word students to ensure that the content of the survey pertained to the objective of this research.

The survey was an electronic self-report tool designed to collect data from categorical schoolteachers that pertained to their previous professional training, their current skills, and the training they need to manage challenging student behaviors. Each rating had a qualitative description to guide participants to report their perceptions. Roberts and Allen (2015) recommended using web-based surveys to maximize participation and allow for flexibility and rapid accessibility to participants. Therefore, I administered the survey for this study online. The survey contained closed-ended questions, which had restricted responses limited to a choice of one alternative from a list of choices. Teachers completed the survey during the period that the survey was accessible, worked at their own pace, and submitted it anonymously. The survey began with a reminder of informed consent that was viewed prior to the start of the survey. Teachers were asked to check a box indicating that they read the information before the survey began. Data were sorted from the completed surveys and analyzed in SPSS for presentation in Chapter 4. Debriefing with the Assistant Superintendent occurred after the data was analyzed. This follow up may have encouraged the district to use teacher input to inform decisions regarding professional development.

## **Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs**

### **Instrument Review**

I used the SNI-FBAI survey to capture the amount of time teachers report they received professional training focused on managing disruptive student behavior, teachers'

perception of their skill level to manage disruptive student behavior, and teachers' training needs to increase their capacity to manage their classrooms when interruptions occur due to challenging behavior. Permission from Dunn et al. (2016) to use the survey is attached as Appendix D. The survey was originally administered to special educators in Singapore. Content and face validity was established before the survey was administered. Reliability of the SNI-FBAI was determined using Cronbach's alpha and results showed that the 13 items within the Current Skills Inventory yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .91 and the six items within the Current Training Needs Inventory yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .81. The survey that was used in this study has three sections.

Part I of the survey focused on the number of hours teacher report that they receive professional training focused on behavior management. This data was collected by asking teachers to indicate if they have had professional training on behavior management and to indicate the number of hours they participated in professional training on behavior management. Part II of the survey asked teachers to record their skill level in managing disruptive student behaviors. The data for this section of the survey was collected by asking teachers to indicate their skill level in 18 different behavior management skills. The first 14 behavior management skills were included in the original survey and I added four additional items based on the feedback that I received from the experts during the validity phase. Part III of the survey asked teachers to indicate their training needs for 14 different behavior management strategies. The first eight strategies were included in the original survey and I added six additional items

based on expert recommendation during the validity phase. Therefore, I added a total of ten new items to the survey for my study and those items are identified in Table 3.

Table 3

*Instrument Review: Teacher Skill Level*

Survey Area.	Behavior Management Strategy	Citation
Part II.	Provide instruction that increases student engagement in their learning and decreases student engagement in disruptive behavior	Egeberg et al. (2016)
Part II.	Regular ongoing communication with caregivers for a collaborative approach to behavior needs	Jensen and Minke (2017)
Part II.	Strategize with colleagues to develop positive approaches to disruptive student behavior	Mizuta et al. (2016)
Part II.	Use culturally responsive curriculum	Pas et al. (2016)

*(table continues)*

Part III.	Pedagogical practice to provide instruction that engages students in their learning	Egeberg et al. (2016)
Part III.	Pedagogical practice to provide culturally responsive instruction	Pas et al. (2016)
Part III.	Communication and relationship training focused on building relationships with students	Spilt et al. (2016)
Part III	Collaborate with colleagues to develop plans that support students' behavior needs	Mizuta et al. (2016)
Part III.	Communication and relationship training focused on building relationships with families	Egeberg et al. (2016)
Part III	Respond to disruptive behavior in a positive skill building manner	Simonsen et al. (2017)

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### **Operationalization**

There were two independent variables: grade level and teacher type. Each independent variable had two categories: middle school teachers and high school teachers were in one category while special education teachers and general education teachers were in another category. There were three dependent variables: teacher training in managing student behavior, teacher perception of current skill to manage student behavior, and teacher perception of training needed to manage disruptive student behavior.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

When the surveys were reviewed, they were checked to ensure that each question was answered. As I determined that the surveys were complete, each survey information was logged into an Excel spreadsheet so that the surveys could be organized, numbered, and identified by teacher level and teacher type. Using three columns, I organized the completed surveys by assigning each survey a number and recorded them in column A. I identified the level that the respondent taught and recorded the level as middle school or high school in column B. I identified the type of teacher the participant was and recorded it as special educator or general educator in column C. I added a column D and used the Excel function RAND to generate random values for every row. I recorded the random values and sorted them in numerical order according to the values established in columns B and C in the new column, column D. The survey data was then uploaded in SPSS. The box and whisker plots were used to check for outliers (Adil & Irshad, 2015).

Data were selected from a stratified random sample from the population. The dependent variable, previous professional training, was a nominal measurement and was categorical as yes or no. The dependent variable, professional training needed, was ordinal and was measured according to participant input. Descriptive statistics and distributional statistics were analyzed in SPSS. The analysis was reviewed to ensure that there was limited skewness and kurtosis. Details of the analysis and the results are presented in Chapter 4.

The research questions that guided this study were:

*RQ1:* Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding time spent in professional training focused on classroom management?

*RQ2:* Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding their current skill levels in managing disruptive student behavior?

*RQ3:* Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior?

Descriptive and distributional data were captured in SPSS for all of the variables in this study. Examination of the interactions between the two independent variables was not available in SPSS, so a one-way nonparametric ANOVA was conducted to examine the differences in time spent in professional training across the four groups. To examine the main effects, the independent samples median test statistic was calculated for each

pair of groups (middle and high school teachers and general and special education teachers). Additionally, a univariate analysis was done on the four independent variables to determine interaction effects and compare differences between groups of teachers in terms of perceptions regarding their ability to manage disruptive student behavior and professional training needed to manage disruptive student behavior.

### **Threats to Validity**

#### **Threats to External Validity**

Threats to external validity exist in this study because generalizability of responses to survey questions is limited to just the teachers who participated in this study and participant responses are not that of other teachers' overall experience in a similar district. Disruptive behavior appears as a symptom of a larger problem. While the literature review considers some influences on student behavior, the survey study did not include mitigating factors. Therefore, a threat to construct validity existed in the results generalizing disruptive behavior as a unique and solo interruption to instruction and classroom climate.

#### **Threats to Internal Validity**

Threats to measurement validity referred to the risk of teacher responses being unreliable because of the inability to recall training from past years, as well as their unwillingness to be honest about their experiences. More importantly, the psychometric properties of the untested and changed items are unknown.

Threats to internal validity existed because the survey research designs have limited control over the data collection circumstances. There were no manipulated

independent variables, and the dependent variables were self-reported. Unmeasured confounding variables (environmental, circumstantial, and moderating) accounted for variance in the dependent variable that cannot be explained, resulting in type 1 and/or type 2 errors.

### **Ethical Procedures**

The agreement with the district providing permission for me to do the study was made available when the proposal was submitted in the IRB application. Institutional permissions, including IRB approvals that were needed were obtained from the Walden University IRB. The Assistant Superintendent instructed administrators to alert schoolteachers of the study through an email that contained a hyperlink to access the survey when it was convenient for teachers to complete the survey. The first page of the survey was the informed consent document to make participants aware of their rights. There was no compensation for participants in the study.

Informed consent is an ethical concern when conducting research. Schoolteachers needed to know that while the district approved this research and agreed to participate, teacher participation was both voluntary and anonymous. Prior to beginning the survey, schoolteachers were made aware of their right to choose if they would participate in the study. The survey instrument was designed to protect participants' anonymity, as it does not have a place for a name. While this study was planned for a district with which I work, I work with the superintendent's office; I do not work at the school level with administrators or teachers. I will not share the results of individual survey items with the superintendent.

### **Summary**

This chapter identified the research rationale for identifying teachers' skills and training needs to manage disruptive student behavior. The chapter described the research design of using descriptive statistics to organize survey data and determining the differences between the variables using a one-way non-parametric ANOVA. The chapter also included a description of the recruitment method, the sampling procedure, information regarding the targeted participants, the analysis tool, data collection, and operationalization. The chapter ended with threats to reliability and validity as well as ethical procedures. Findings from this study are reported in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine perceptions of teachers in terms of their ability to manage disruptive student behavior and their identified training needs to do so. Middle and high school special and regular educators participated in the study. I modified the SNI-FBAI to capture data relevant for this study. The study was an examination of participants' self-reports regarding the number of hours of prior professional trainings on behavior management, perceptions of current skills to manage disruptive student behaviors, and perceptions of needs for training.

The research questions that guided this study were:

*RQ1:* Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding time spent in professional training focused on classroom management?

*H<sub>01</sub>:* There are no differences between special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding time spent in professional training focused on classroom management.

*H<sub>a1</sub>:* There are differences between special and general educators in terms of self-reports of time spent in professional training focused on classroom management.

*RQ2:* Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding their current skill levels in managing disruptive student behavior?

*H<sub>02</sub>*: There are no differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding their current skill levels in managing disruptive student behavior.

*H<sub>a2</sub>*: There are differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding their current skill levels in managing disruptive student behavior.

*RQ3*: Are there differences between middle and high school special and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior?

*H<sub>03</sub>*: There are no differences between middle and high school special educators and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior.

*H<sub>a3</sub>*: There are differences between middle and high school special educators and general educators in terms of self-reports regarding specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior.

### **Data Collection**

Two hundred twenty-six teachers responded to the electronic survey in SurveyMonkey. Twenty-five incomplete surveys were discarded from the analysis. The compilation of survey data took approximately 10 weeks.

### **Time Frame for Data Collection**

Collecting and compiling data took approximately three months. When I originally met with the district's Assistant Superintendent of Schools to determine how to

recruit middle and high school teachers to participate in the study, I planned to have the survey open for one month. However, there was a low level of participation from teachers and I had to meet with the Assistant Superintendent a second time to seek supplemental support for encouraging teacher participation. I kept the survey open for three additional weeks until I reached the minimum number of participants. When I closed the survey, I had to learn how to export data from SurveyMonkey into Excel and create spreadsheets that were usable in SPSS. This work took approximately three weeks and is included in the data collection timeline.

### **Discrepancies in Data Collection and Rationale**

#### **Modifications in the Collection of Data**

At the time of my proposal, I indicated that I would identify participants from the sample frame by compiling teacher lists. However, when the study started, due to confidentiality concerns of the district's Human Resources office, an administrative assistant in the Assistant Superintendent's office compiled the teacher list instead of me. Also, I indicated that I would email middle and high school administrators to request their participation in sending study information and informed consent forms to teachers. However, due to confidentiality concerns of the Human Resource office, the Assistant Superintendent did this work. I do not know if teacher participation in the survey was impacted because the request to participate came from the Assistant Superintendent rather than me. There is a possibility that school staff were concerned about confidentiality or fear of retaliation because of their reporting, and this might explain why staff participation was low during the initial time that the study was open. When I

collected the number of surveys needed for the study I closed the survey and reviewed the survey data. Upon review of the complete surveys, I realized that there were several incomplete surveys; this meant that I had not designed the survey with an error message for incomplete answers. Therefore, I excluded incomplete surveys during the data cleaning process and included only complete surveys in the data compilation. Additionally, when organizing the survey data, I created an Excel spreadsheet as described in Chapter 3 to manage and analyze the data.

### **Descriptive and Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample**

The sample for my study was stratified. This sampling was appropriate because it allowed for equal grouping of state-certified general and special educators who work in middle and high schools. The sample was used to capture teacher skills to manage disruptive student behavior and identified training needs of teachers to increase their capacity to manage disruptive student behavior.

## **Results**

### **Adjustments to the Sample**

There are 335 special and general educators who teach middle and high school in the school district that I sampled. The sample size calculator indicated that the sample size needed for this study was 195. More teachers than were needed (approximately 67% of teachers) actually participated in the study and took the survey, which helped to strengthen characteristics of my study sample for this school district. Additionally, since the number of special education teachers was smaller than the strata size, it was necessary for the survey responses for special education teachers to be increased randomly using

the Excel RAND function which works to shuffle lists and sort the list's rows in random order from the smallest to the largest. The function can be repeated as often as is necessary for one to manage lists. I used the RAND function to randomly sort the special education survey responses 20 times and chose the smallest value generated for each special education middle school or special education high school variable until the strata reached the appropriate size.

The demographic variables for this study were divided into four categories based on teacher certification and were then divided into four equal groups. In the study sample, ( $N = 226$ ), I only used the 201 responses that contained non-missing data to prevent an issue with bias. The study sample included current schoolteachers who met the criteria for teacher type (special educators and general educators) and teacher level (middle school and high school). The study sample included a distribution of 168 general education high school teachers, 167 general education middle school teachers, 29 special education high school teachers and 29 special education middle school teachers. Table 4 displays the descriptive results. There were 29 teachers in both special education teacher groups. I increased the groups from 29 to 49 by using the RAND function 20 times for each special education strata to add the smallest numbered data set one at a time. I did this with the Excel RAND function by generating values for the special education middle school group and the special education high school group and sorted the groups in order from smallest to largest. With each sort, I chose the smallest number to add to the group of 29 until the group reached 49.

Table 4

*Sample Size Changes to Create Equal Groups*

Teacher Level	Teacher Type	Original Sample		Final Sample	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Middle School	General Education	167	42%	49	25%
Middle School	Special Education	29	7%	49	25%
High School	General Education	168	43%	49	25%
High School	Special Education	29	7%	49	25%
Total n		393		196	

Table 5 explains the skewness and kurtosis values. The values were within acceptable ranges for general and special education teachers across the levels of middle school and high school for the hours spent in professional training. This indicates that the distributions approach normality for all four groups.

Table 5

*Descriptive and Distributional Statistics for Professional Development*

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean # of Hours	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	n
Middle School General Educator	Time in Professional Development	2.96	3.81	1.343	1.646	49
High School General Educator	Time in Professional Development	5.27	5.167	.801	-.419	49
Middle School Special Educator	Time in Professional Development	8.8	7.018	-.143	-1.828	n
High School Special Educator	Time in Professional Development	7.71	7.089	.106	-1.79	49

Table 6 shows that the skewness and kurtosis values were within acceptable ranges for both general and special education teachers across the levels of middle school and high school regarding teacher perception of ability to manage disruptive student behavior. This indicates that the data are approaching normality for all four groups. Skewness and kurtosis values were within acceptable ranges, except for Uses Positive Reinforcement, where positive kurtosis indicates a sharply pointed distribution for the middle school general educators. Additionally, the kurtosis measurement of values for general education middle school teachers is negative which suggests a wider self-report of teacher capacity to use positive behavior strategies.

Table 6

*Descriptive and Distributional Statistics for Perception of Ability to Manage Behavior*

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	n
Middle School General Educator	Define Problem Behavior	.98	.52	.031	-1.019	49
	Predict Problem Behavior	1.2	.666	.32	.248	49
	Develop Behavior Intervention Plans	0.8	.707	.683	.686	49
	Use Positive Reinforcement	1.71	.54	-1.773	2.387	49
	Use Behavior Intervention Strategies	1.29	.791	-.301	-.851	49
	Provide instruction that increases student engagement	1.33	.689	.663	.56	49
	Communicate with Caregivers	1.94	.876	-.46	-.441	49

*(table continues)*

	Use culturally responsive curriculum	1.12	.857	.585	-.026	49	
High School General Educator	Define Problem Behavior	1.08	.886	.398	-.578	49	
	Predict Problem Behavior	1.1	.77	-.179	-1.27	49	
	Develop Behavior Intervention Plans	.49	.617	.874	-.184	49	
	Use Positive Reinforcement	1.71	.5	-1.489	1.336	49	
	Use Behavior Intervention Strategies	1	.707	.369	.203	49	
	Provide instruction that increases student engagement	1.27	.605	-.185	-.487	49	
	Communicate with Caregivers	2	.89	-.74	.042	49	
	Use culturally responsive curriculum	1.08	.702	.638	1.047	49	
	Middle School Special Educator	Define Problem Behavior	1.73	.52	.031	-1.019	49
		Predict Problem Behavior	1.76	1.109	-.157	-1.406	49
Develop Behavior Intervention Plans		1.39	1.151	-.055	-1.498	49	
Use Positive Reinforcement		1.73	.446	-1.097	-.832	49	
Use Behavior Intervention Strategies		1.57	.816	0	-.431	49	
Provide instruction that increases student engagement		1.41	.998	-.129	-1.094	49	
Communicate with Caregivers		2.02	.924	-.372	-1.059	49	
Use culturally responsive curriculum		1.22	.685	.491	.61	49	

(table continues)

High School Special Educator	Define Problem Behavior	2	1.099	-.883	-.513	49
	Predict Problem Behavior	1.92	.786	-.389	-.11	49
	Develop Behavior Intervention Plans	1.35	.969	.096	-.947	49
	Use Positive Reinforcement	1.51	.681	-1.071	-.044	49
	Use Behavior Intervention Strategies	1.53	1.063	-.029	-1.198	49
	Provide instruction that increases student engagement	1.43	.736	-.233	-.297	49
	Communicate with Caregivers	1.96	.865	-.523	-.284	49
	Use culturally responsive curriculum	1.06	.689	-.08	-.817	49

*Note: 0 indicates no skill, 1 indicates low level of skill, 2 indicates moderate level of skill, and 3 indicates high level of skill*

Table 7 shows that the skewness and kurtosis of educators' perception of training needs. The values for high school general educators and middle school special educators indicates normality. However, the data for middle school general educators were negatively skewed and leptokurtic for the three variables need training for interventions for severe challenging behaviors, behavioral assessments to identify functions of behavior, and teach functional skills such as daily life skills and academic strategies. Also, the data for high school general educators was leptokurtic for the variable need training for interventions for severe challenging behaviors. The leptokurtic values suggests that there was a narrow range of responses, with most of these teachers reporting a need for training. Table 7 also displays a full report of the differences in middle and high school teachers' report of their need for professional training to manage

disruptive student behavior. Middle and high school teachers reported a need for training in all areas. When comparing the means of training needs, this study reported small differences in means between middle and high school teachers' report of training needs to manage disruptive student behavior. For example, the difference between middle and high school teachers' report of need for training in interventions focused on severe problem behaviors is .03. The largest difference between middle and high school teachers' report of need for training is on the topic of intervening in mild behaviors with a difference of .57.

Table 7

*Descriptive and Distributional Statistics for Perception of Training Needs*

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	n
Middle School General Educator	Need training in interventions for mild behavioral problems	1.49	1.139	-.106	-1.404	49
	Need training for interventions for severe challenging behaviors	2.71	.645	-2.561	6.816	49
	Need training for behavioral assessments to identify functions of behavior	2.53	.616	-1.516	4.018	49
	Need training in preference assessments to identify effective reinforcers	2.33	.625	-.364	-.607	49

*(table continues)*

	Need training to teach functional skills such as daily life skills and academic strategies	2.37	.809	-1.274	1.29	49
	Need training to replace challenging behaviors with appropriate	2.63	.636	-2.048	5.173	49
	Need training to provide instruction that engages students in their learning	2.16	.8	-.818	.476	49
	Need training to collaborate with colleagues	2.27	.811	-1.02	.737	49
	Need training to respond to disruptive behavior in a positive manner	2.59	.643	-1.339	.683	49
High School General Educator	Need training in interventions for mild behavioral problems	.71	.957	1.209	.454	49
	Need training for interventions for severe challenging behaviors	2.57	.677	-1.74	3.376	49
	Need training for behavioral assessments to identify functions of behavior	2.39	.702	-1.091	1.427	49
	Need training in preference assessments to identify effective reinforcers	1.9	.743	-.15	-.392	49
	Need training to teach functional skills such as daily life skills and academic strategies	2.15	.85	-.94	.583	49

*(table continues)*

	Need training to replace challenging behaviors with appropriate	2.39	.671	-.648	-.597	49
	Need training to provide instruction that engages students in their learning	2.04	.644	-.036	-.472	49
	Need training to collaborate with colleagues	2.22	.743	-.392	-1.071	49
	Need training to respond to disruptive behavior in a positive manner	2.22	.743	-.709	.273	49
Middle School Special Educator	Need training in interventions for mild behavioral problems	1.04	.935	.396	-.871	49
	Need training for interventions for severe challenging behaviors	1.8	.912	-.089	-.97	49
	Need training for behavioral assessments to identify functions of behavior	1.41	1.019	.198	-1.027	49
	Need training in preference assessments to identify effective reinforcers	1.43	.842	-.312	-.629	49
	Need training to teach functional skills such as daily life skills and academic strategies	1.45	.937	.075	-.806	49
	Need training to replace challenging behaviors with appropriate	1.78	.771	.131	-.742	49

*(table continues)*

High School Special Educator	Need training to provide instruction that engages students in their learning	1.27	.73	.545	.437	49
	Need training to collaborate with colleagues	1.73	1.036	-.138	-1.201	49
	Need training to respond to disruptive behavior in a positive manner	1.55	1.119	.053	-1.37	49
	Need training in interventions for mild behavioral problems	.82	1.014	.885	-.513	49
	Need training for interventions for severe challenging behaviors	2	1.021	-.613	-.804	49
	Need training for behavioral assessments to identify functions of behavior	1.65	1.091	-.36	-1.142	49
	Need training in preference assessments to identify effective reinforcers	1.53	.793	-.235	-.302	49
	Need training to teach functional skills such as daily life skills and academic strategies	1.57	.935	-.296	-.731	49
	Need training to replace challenging behaviors with appropriate	1.65	.631	.426	-.613	49
	Need training to provide instruction that engages students in their learning	1.71	.791	-.226	-.229	49
	Need training to collaborate with colleagues	1.63	.834	.345	-.775	49

*(table continues)*

Need training to respond to disruptive behavior in a positive manner	1.41	.84	.192	-.429	49
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*Note: 0 indicates no training needed, 1 indicates low level of training needed, 2 indicates moderate level of training needed, and 3 indicates high level of training needed*

### Reliability, Descriptive, and Inferential Findings

RQ1 focused on differences between middle and high school special and general educators' reports of how much time was spent in professional training focused on managing disruptive student behavior. The dependent variable (time spent in professional training focused on behavior management) was measured using an ordinal scale and the frequency distributions are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

#### *Time Spent in Professional Training for Teacher Types*

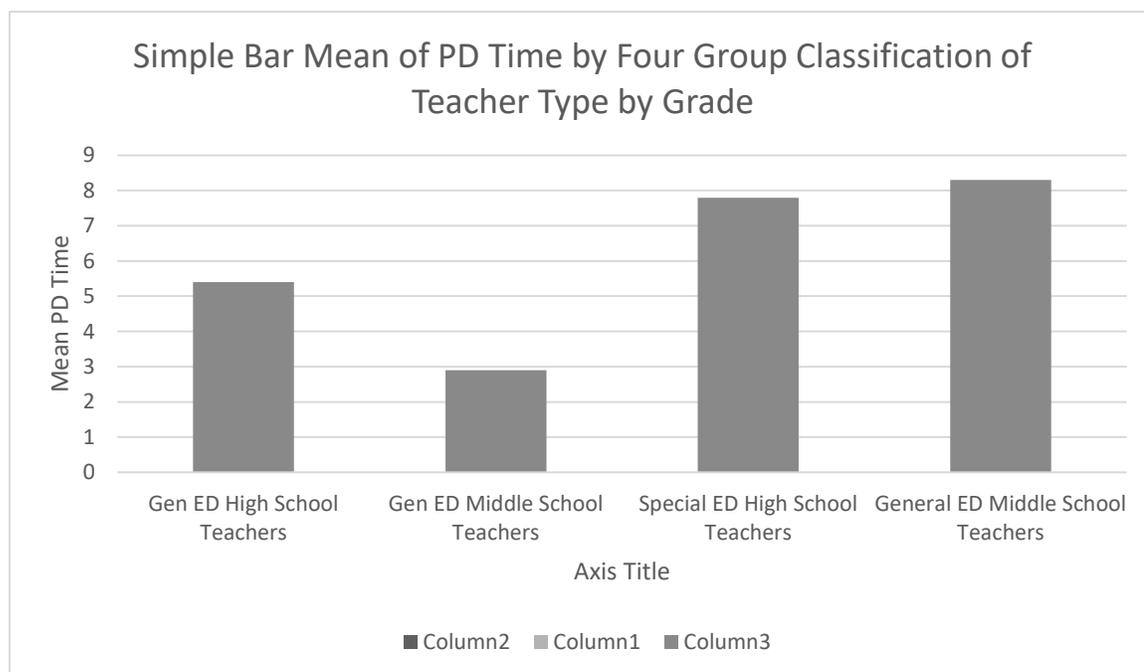
		PD Time							Total
		0 hour	1 to 3 hours	4 to 6 hours	7 to 9 hours	10 to 12 hours	13 to 15 hours	16 or more hours	
Gen ED High School Teachers	Count	15	11	9	6	2	3	3	49
	%	30.6%	22.4%	18.4%	12.2%	4.1%	6.1%	6.1%	100.0%
Gen Ed Middle School Teachers	Count	25	9	9	4	1	0	1	49
	%	51.0%	18.4%	18.4%	8.2%	2.0%	0.0%	2.0%	100.0%
Special Ed High School	Count	18	3	4	5	1	0	18	49
	%	36.7%	6.1%	8.2%	10.2%	2.0%	0.0%	36.7%	100.0%
Special Ed Middle School	Count	13	6	5	0	4	1	20	49
	%	26.5%	12.2%	10.2%	0.0%	8.2%	2.0%	40.8%	100.0%

*(table continues)*

Total	Count	71	29	27	15	8	4	42	196
	%	36.2%	14.8%	13.8%	7.7%	4.1%	2.0%	21.4%	100.0%

To examine the main effects, the independent samples median test statistic was calculated for each pair of groups (between middle school and high school teachers, and between general and special education teachers). I rejected the null hypothesis,  $p = .012$ , for middle and high school teachers and I rejected the null hypothesis,  $p = .007$ , for general and special education teachers. The mean for general educators' report of time spent in professional development was 3 hours with a range from 0 to 16 hours. The mean for special educators' report of time spent in professional development was 7.5 hours with a range from 0 to 16 hours.

*Figure 1.* Bar graph displaying teacher time spent in professional training



Examination of the interactions between the four groups was not available in SPSS, so a one-way nonparametric ANOVA was conducted to examine the differences in time spent in professional training across the four groups of educators. I found that there were significant differences across the levels of the time spent in professional training focused on behavior management,  $p = .012$ . These differences are presented visually in Figure 1.

The largest difference in median time spent in professional development occurred between middle school special educator and middle school general educators. This result suggests that classroom teacher type is strongly associated with the number of hours teachers spend in professional training focused on managing disruptive student behavior.

### **Teacher Perceptions of Ability to Manage Disruptive Student Behavior**

RQ2 focused on the differences between the four groups of educators regarding the variable teacher perception of their ability to manage disruptive student behavior. This variable was operationalized with the 15 items that composed Factor 1 (teacher perceptions of ability to manage disruptive students). The content validity phase of this study (as described in Chapter 3) was conducted prior to data collection using recommendations from experts in the field. Based on that feedback, I added four items to this section of the survey that I used in this study. When the reliability analyses were done, inter-item correlations were all positive and ranged from .228 to .887. With the addition of the four items that were included in the modified version of the survey, the Cronbach's Alpha increased to .948 which compares to a Cronbach's Alpha of .945 in the original use of the survey. Therefore all 19 items were included in the summary scale to

create the dependent variable for the analysis, answer the research question, and add value to existing research. The results of the reliability analysis is displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

*Reliability Analysis Comparing Survey Section II Items*

Reliability Statistics			
	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
Dutt et al. (2016)	.945	.944	15
Current study	.948	.944	19

The content validity phase of this study (as described in Chapter 3) was conducted prior to data collection using recommendations from experts in the field. Based on that feedback, I added four items to this section of the survey. With the addition of the four items that were included in the modified version of the survey the Cronbach Alpha increased to .948. Therefore all 19 items were included in the summary scale to create the dependent variable for the analysis to answer the research question and add value to existing research. Egeberg et al.'s (2016) research that supports the survey item that tested teacher perception of capacity to provide instruction that increases student engagement in their learning and decreases student engagement in disruptive behavior. Jensen and Minke's (2017) research supports the survey question related to ongoing communication with caregivers for a collaborative approach to students' behavior needs. Additionally, Mizuta et al. (2016) supported the addition of the survey item that measured teacher perception regarding their capacity to collaborate with colleagues to

develop positive approaches to disruptive student behavior and the survey item regarding the use of culturally responsive curriculum was evoked by Pas et al. (2016). For the summary score of perception of skill to manage disruptive behavior,  $M = 25.35$ ,  $SD = 11.632$ . This variable met the assumption of a normal distribution for the analysis.

Teachers' self-reports of their skill level to manage disruptive student behavior was captured in a frequency distribution and is displayed in Table 10. A 2 x 2 ANOVA was computed to test the null hypothesis of no difference in teachers' self-reports of skills to manage student behavior between type of educator (special or general educator) or across the grade levels (middle school and high school).

Table 10

*Means and SD of Perception of Ability to Manage Disruptive Behavior*

Special or General Educator		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
General Educator	High School	21.551	8.314	49
	Middle School	22.408	8.563	49
	Total	21.980	8.407	98
Special Educator	High School	28.224	13.240	49
	Middle School	29.204	13.594	49
	Total	28.714	13.358	98
Total	High School	24.888	11.498	98
	Middle School	25.806	11.807	98
	Total	25.347	11.632	196

Table 11 presents the results of the 2 x 2 ANOVA. The results indicated a significant difference between special and general educators' perception of skill  $F=17.689 (1, 195), p=.000$ , but not between middle and high school educators'

perception of skill,  $F=.329$  (1, 195),  $p=.567$ . There was no significant interaction between the 2 independent variables  $F=.001$  (1, 195),  $p=.97$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected for special and general educators, but it is not rejected for middle and high school educators.

Table 11

*Effect of Teacher Type on Perception of Ability to Manage Disruptive Behavior*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2263.959 <sup>a</sup>	3	754.653	6.007	.001
Intercept	125923.592	1	125923.592	1002.275	.000
Teacher Type	2222.449	1	2222.449	17.689	.000
Teacher Class	41.327	1	41.327	.329	.567
Teacher Type * Teacher Class	.184	1	.184	.001	.970
Error	24122.449	192	125.638		
Total	152310.000	196			
Corrected Total	26386.408	195			

**Need for Professional Training Focused on Managing Disruptive Student Behavior**

RQ3 concentrated on the difference between the four groups of educators regarding the variable teacher perception of their need for professional training focused on managing disruptive student behavior. This variable was operationalized with the 8 items that composed Factor 2 (teacher perception of their need for professional training focused on managing disruptive student behavior). The content validity phase of this

study (as described in Chapter 3) was conducted prior to data collection using recommendations from experts in the field. Based on that feedback, I added six items to this section of the survey that I used in this study. When the reliability analyses were done, inter-item correlations were all positive and ranged from .242 to .839. With the addition of the six items that were included in the modified version of the survey, the Cronbach's Alpha increased to .942 which compares to a Cronbach's Alpha of .911 in the original use of the survey. Therefore all 14 items were included in the summary scale to create the dependent variable for the analysis, answer the research question, and add value to existing research. The results of the reliability analysis is displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

*Reliability Analysis of Survey Section III Items*

Reliability Statistics			
	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
Dutt et al. (2016)	.911	.944	8
Current study	.942	.944	14

The survey item that tested teacher perception of training needed to provide instruction that engages students in their learning is supported by the research of Egeberg et al. (2016). Pas et al.'s (2016) research supported the survey question related to training in pedagogical practice to provide culturally responsive instruction. Spilt et al.'s (2016) research supported the survey item that tested training needed in communication and relationship training focused on building relationships with students. The survey item

that tested training needed to increase capacity to collaborate with colleagues to develop plans that support students' behavior needs is supported by Mizuta et al. (2016).

Additionally, Egeberg et al. (2016) inspired the addition of the survey item that that tested training needed in communication and relationship training focused on building relationships with families. Finally, Simonsen et al. (2017) evoked the addition of the survey item that tested teacher training need to respond to disruptive behavior in a positive, skill building manner. For the summary of perception of training needed,  $M = 19.46$ ,  $SD = 9.776$ . This variable met the assumption of a normal distribution for the analysis.

I also observed the difference of means of teachers' self-reports of specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior in special and general educators across the levels of middle school and high school. The null hypotheses predicted no difference in perception between special educators' and general educators across the grade levels of middle school and high school of specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior. The results of the overall means and standard deviations of the dependent variable for each of the 2 variables and group is presented in Table 13.

Table 13

*Means and SD of Perception of Need for Training*

Special or General Educator		Mean	SD	N
Special Educator	High School	21.020	9.406	49
	Middle School	21.061	10.170	49
	Total	21.040	9.788	98

*(table continues)*

General Educator	High School	28.224	13.240	49
	Middle School	29.204	13.594	49
Total	Total	28.714	13.417	98
	High School	24.622	11.323	98
	Middle School	25.134	11.882	98
	Total	24.878	11.602	196

Table 14 presents the 2x2 ANOVA. The results indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between special and general educators' perception of training needed  $F=44.939 (1, 195)$ ,  $p=.000$  but there is no statistical difference between middle and high school educators' perception of training needed  $F=2.962 (1, 195)$ ,  $p=.087$ . Additionally, there was no statistically significant interaction between the 2 independent variables  $F=2.850 (1, 195)$ ,  $p=.093$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 14

*Effect of Teacher Type on Perception of Training Needs to Manage Disruptive Behavior*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3855.408	3	1285.136	16.917	.000
Intercept	124609.000	1	124609.000	1640.312	.000
Teacher Type	3413.898	1	3413.898	44.939	.000
Teacher Class	225.000	1	225.000	2.962	.087
Teacher Type * Teacher Class	215.510	1	216.510	2.850	.093
Error	14585.592	192	75.967		

*(table continues)*

Total	143050.000	196
Corrected	18441.000	195
Total		

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### **Summary**

Three research questions were proposed for this study and 226 middle and high school special and general educators responded to the survey. Data were collected from 196 participants using the SNI-FBAI questionnaire. I modified the original survey and added ten additional items based on the results from the content validity phase of this study which occurred prior to data collection. Inter-item correlations were conducted for the purpose analyzing the test questions. The reliability results indicated that the addition of the items to the modified survey increased the Cronbach's Alpha thereby adding value to existing research.

For RQ1, a nonparametric analysis of differences in time spent in professional training focused on managing disruptive student behavior across the four groups (special middle school educators, general middle school educators, special high school educators, and general high school educators) was conducted, and the results indicated significant differences across the four groups of teachers. The largest difference occurred between middle school special educators and middle school general educators. These results suggest that classroom teacher type is strongly associated with the number of hours teachers spend in professional training focused on managing disruptive student behavior.

For RQ2, I focused on the difference between the four groups of educators regarding teacher perception of their ability to manage disruptive student behavior. I found that the four strata reported low levels of ability to manage disruptive behavior. In

response to the hypothesis for RQ2, the results were inconsistent. There was no significant difference across the grade levels of middle school and high school for teacher perception of their ability to manage disruptive student behavior. However, the comparison of means of between special and general educators indicated that there was a significant difference in teacher perception of ability to manage disruptive behavior. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected or confirmed because it was rejected for middle and high school educators, but it was not rejected for special and general educators.

For RQ3, I focused on the difference between the four groups of educators regarding teacher perception of the training they need to manage disruptive student behavior. I found that the four strata reported moderate need for training to manage disruptive behavior. In response to the hypothesis for RQ3, the results were inconsistent. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between middle and high school teachers' report of professional training needs to manage disruptive student behavior but there was a significant statistical difference between special and general educators' report of professional training needs to manage disruptive student behavior. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected or confirmed because it was rejected for middle and high school educators but it was not rejected for special and general educators. A complete description of the findings from this research is reported in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine middle and high school special and regular educators' experiences managing disruptive student behavior. Participants provided self-reports regarding professional training, perceptions of current skills to manage disruptive students' behavior, and training needed to increase skills to manage disruptive student behavior. I used a survey to collect data from the sample of schoolteachers and examined the descriptive data and the ANOVA analyses to find differences between the four independent variables middle school special educators, middle school general educators, high school special educators, and high school general educators.

The reason for undertaking this study was my personal interest in teacher capacity to manage disruptive student behavior because of my professional experiences involving reviewing school reports regarding behavior problems interfering with instruction. I sought to find differences in time spent in professional training focused on classroom management between the self-reports of special and general educators' across the levels of middle and high school. My findings indicated that there were differences between special and general educators' reports of time spent in professional training focused on disruptive student behavior whereby special educators reported more time in training focused on classroom management than general educators. Special educators reported time spent in professional training  $M = 16.51$  hours while general educators reported  $M = 8.23$  hours. I also found differences between middle and high school teachers' reports of

time spent in professional training focused on classroom management. High school general education teachers reported  $M = 12.98$  hours of professional training focused on behavior management, while middle school teachers reported  $M = 11.76$  hours of professional training focused on behavior management.

When working to determine differences between middle and high school special and general educators' self-reports regarding their current skills to manage student behavior and specific training needed to manage disruptive student behavior, I hypothesized that special educators would rate their skill level higher than general educators. The results indicated that special and general educators significantly differ in terms of their perceptions of ability to manage disruptive student behavior while middle and high school educators do not significantly differ in terms of these perceptions. In this study, the perception of middle and high school special educators' ability to manage disruptive student behavior  $M = 28.7$  was higher than the perception of middle and high school general educators' perception of ability to manage disruptive student behavior  $M = 21.9$ . The descriptive statistics of each behavior management strategy including interview caregivers regarding behavioral problems, using the ABC (Antecedent – Behavior- Consequence) Model, define problem behaviors such that they can be observed and quantified, identify the function of behavior based on direct observation, predict problem behavior based on direct observation, use a recording procedure to measure behavior that counts frequency of occurrences of behavior (i.e., event recording), use a recording procedure to measure behavior in terms of the amount of time spent in engaging in the problem behavior (i.e., duration recording), analyze observational data

(e.g., frequency, duration, and time samples) to determine the purpose of problem behavior, develop behavioral intervention plans based on information collected from direct observation and interviews with caregivers, identify potential reinforcers that can be used in behavioral intervention programs, use positive reinforcement-based behavioral intervention strategies to increase the occurrence of appropriate behaviors, use other reinforcement-based behavioral intervention strategies to decrease the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors, use behavioral intervention strategies to shape or teach specific functional skills, conduct ongoing assessments to monitor changes in behavior due to the intervention, provide instruction that increases student engagement in their learning and decreases student engagement in disruptive student behavior, regular ongoing communication with caregivers for a collaborative approach to behavior needs, strategize with colleagues to develop positive approaches to student behavior, and use culturally responsive curriculum indicated lower levels for general educators than special educators. The levels were measured on a Likert scale of 0 to 3 for teacher ability to manage disruptive student behaviors where zero indicated no skill, one indicated low level of skill, two indicated moderate level of skill, and three indicated high level of skill. Table 6 displays specific statistics for educators' report of skill level to manage disruptive student behavior in special and general education classrooms in middle school and high school.

Finally, in this study, I worked to determine if there were differences between middle and high school special and general educators' perceptions of training needed to manage disruptive student behavior. I hypothesized that general educators would rate

their perception of need for training to manage disruptive student behavior higher than special educators would rate their need for training to manage disruptive student behavior. The perception of middle school and high school general educators' need for training to manage disruptive student behavior  $M = 28.7$  was higher than the perception of middle school and high school special ed educators' perception of ability to manage disruptive student behavior  $M = 21.0$ . The strategies that teachers rated a need for training in included interventions for mild behavioral problems, early childhood intervention for children and young persons with disabilities, interventions for children with severe challenging behaviors, behavioral assessments to identify functions of behavior problems, preference assessments to identify effective reinforcers or rewards for children, skill training programs to teach functional skills such as daily life skills, academic strategies, etc., communication training to replace challenging behaviors with appropriate communicative responses, progress monitoring of effectiveness of interventions, pedagogical practice to provide instruction that engages students in their learning, pedagogical practice to provide culturally responsive instruction, communication and relationship training focused on building relationships with students, collaborate with colleagues to develop plans that support students' behavior needs, communication and relationship training focused on building relationships with families, and respond to disruptive behavior in a positive skill building manner. Teacher perception of need for training was measured on a Likert scale of 0 to 3 where zero indicated no training need, one indicated low level of training need, two indicated moderate level of training need, and three indicated high level of training need. Table 7

displays specific statistics for educators' report of training need to manage disruptive student behaviors. There were no significant differences between middle school and high school educators in terms of reported need for training to manage disruptive student behavior. However, teacher training to manage student behavior is necessary.

Domitrovich et al. (2016) showed that teachers who participated in training focused on managing student behavior reported positive levels of self-efficacy to manage disruptive student behaviors and meet students' needs when compared to teachers who do not receive professional training.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

For RQ1, I looked for differences in terms of educators' reported time spent in professional development focused on behavior management strategies. The analysis for RQ1 resulted in rejecting the alternative hypothesis. The results of the frequency distribution showed statistically significant differences between special and general educators' reports of time spent in professional training. I found significant differences across the levels of the time spent in professional training focused on behavior management,  $p = .012$ .

Teacher training in effective classroom management strategies is necessary because behavior management is an area of high concern for teachers. It is difficult for teachers to manage disruptive student behavior because due to low levels of professional training for general educators, they have limited interventions to use for challenging behaviors. Teacher education preparation usually includes a small focus on discipline which does not prepare teachers to manage disruptive behaviors. My study found

significant differences between middle school special and general educators' reports of professional training in terms of managing disruptive student behavior ( $p = .012$ ). When participants responded to the survey item for RQ1, they were asked to record the number of hours they received professional training focused on managing disruptive student behavior. It is unclear if participants included their university training as well as post graduate professional development training; if they did, that would likely have increased their reported number of hours of overall training. Professional teacher training on behavior management is important because teachers who have no classroom management skills contribute to negative student performance outcomes. Teachers' ability to manage disruptive student behavior is essential to classroom management because as shown by Scott (2017), when teachers are able to manage disruptive student behavior then they have more time to address academic growth and make provisions for inclusion of special education students into general education classrooms.

RQ2 was about differences between the four groups in terms of teacher perceptions to manage disruptive student behavior. The null hypothesis was rejected for special and general educators but not for middle and high school educators. Although the mean report of middle and high school teachers showed no statistical differences in terms of teacher reports of their ability to manage disruptive student behavior, the means of special and general educators did show statistical differences in their self-report of ability to manage disruptive student behavior. Teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy for managing disruptive student behavior included: impacts classroom management, addresses academics, develops peer-to-peer relationships and student-teacher

relationships, and includes special education students into general education classrooms. The negative impact that disruptive student behavior has on teachers' ability to efficiently manage their classrooms is a concern. This is important because students' social, emotional, and academic development are impacted by teachers' ability to manage their classrooms. The difference between special and general educators' report of their perceived ability to manage disruptive student behavior was hypothesized. The result regarding the self-report of special and general educators perceived ability to manage disruptive behavior was not surprising because special educators' study behavior management in their university coursework while general educators normally do not.

Finally, I rejected the null hypothesis for RQ3 regarding teacher report of training needed to manage disruptive student behavior. While there was a significant difference between special and general educators' reported need for training ( $p < .05$ ) there was not a significant difference in middle and high school educators' reported need. There is limited prior research that identifies teacher type and teacher grade level when reporting time spent in professional training, ability to manage student behavior, or perception of training need. This current study adds to existing literature.

### **Limitations**

The primary limitation of the study is the questionable construct validity of the measures as the responses are based on the subjective self-report of participants; quantitative research is grounded in assumptions that require observable data (Eddy, 2016). I took the development of the original survey into consideration to be sure that I demonstrated thoughtful consideration of the wording of the questions to help avoid

ambiguity and influence biases (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2014). An additional limitation is one question measured each variable of teachers' perception on the ability to manage behavior and their need for training to manage behavior. This limitation effects the construct validity of the dependent variables. Additionally, I sent the survey to 10 experts in the field of school-based behavior management. I invited them to review the instrument and provide me with feedback on its content and terminology to ensure content and face validity. I used some of the feedback that I received from the experts to edit the survey so as to ensure that the questions leaned toward adolescent students and teacher accountability. I added questions that reflected on teacher practice. Then I established relevance of the survey items through a panel discussion focused on the content and context of each item. Relevance of each of the survey items was determined during the panel discussion with 10 teachers who provided a binomial rating of each item as either being relevant to managing disruptive student behavior or not relevant to managing student behavior. I recorded the rating for each item and used the mean of each rating to assign a relevancy score for each item. The results of the rating determined that the demographic information was good and that each item was relevant to classrooms and schools. The validity and reliability phase also led me to revise the rating in section III of the survey so that it was continuous with the rating used in section II of the survey. Finally, this study is limited in that it was conducted in one school district in one state, which limits generalizability of results to other schools or other districts in this country or another. The random sample produced results that can be generalized within that district only.

## **Recommendations**

The results of this study reveal that there is a gap between special and general educators' ability to manage disruptive student behavior and there is a gap between special and general educators' report of training needs to manage disruptive student behavior. I refer to this as the teacher gap. The teacher gap, as identified in this study, reveals the need for professional training for general educators focused on strategies to manage disruptive student behavior. Khasakhala and Galava (2016) supported the recommendation of teacher training on behavior management for all teachers because they reported that teachers receive little to no training on managing challenging student behavior.

Stough et al. (2015) reported that behavior management training is embedded in the university level training for special educators. I recommend that college courses include behavior management when preparing general educators for work. I also recommend that districts provide professional training focused on behavior management strategies to general education teachers as part of the annual district level training. Additionally, schools' operational plans should include strategies to build and sustain teacher capacity in classroom management and behavior management. Classroom management helps to establish a learning environment that supports students' social skills and academic achievement (Back et al., 2016). Administrative mid-year and end-of-year teacher performance reviews should include a review of the number of behavior referrals written by the teacher. Administrators should use the reviews to determine whether technical assistance on behavior management is necessary for a teacher and as a result,

the teacher would receive coaching and modeling on increasing non-academic instruction (behavior management) just as they receive coaching and modeling on academic instruction.

If this study were to be duplicated, I would recommend that researchers look into the specific differences in outcomes for teachers' training needs on each individual dependent variable because the current study analyzed the dependent variables in groups. This study indicated that there is a difference in special and general educators' report of training needs to improve their ability to manage disruptive student behavior, but it does not indicate the specific strategies that teachers perceive they need training to use. A problem exists with supporting teachers in classroom management because there is limited information available for educators to use when planning classroom management strategies that include effective, appropriate behavior intervention. This current research captures teachers' report that there is a need for additional training in managing disruptive student behavior which could help to change the content and design of university level study and district level training.

This study is the only study to review specific items middle school and high school teachers report are the most needed for effective classroom management. Specific variables identified by teachers reported their skill level and their need for training to increase their skill level but were not included in the results. Results from this study should be further analyzed to determine specific supports identified by teachers to improve pedagogical practice. This is important because teachers rank students with disruptive behavior as one of the top three barriers to teaching (Marquez et al., 2016).

Professional training for teachers, in areas identified by teachers, could have an impact in the performance of teachers and students.

### **Implications**

Self-efficacy is the basis for the social cognitive theory, which guided this study. Self-efficacy relates to teacher effectiveness. Domitrovich et al. (2016) indicated that teachers who participated in professional training on behavior management strategies reported a positive level of self-efficacy in classroom management skills. Shi (2014) demonstrated that teachers' self-efficacy affects their teaching and student learning. The theory of self-efficacy was used because it helped to identify a gap between special and general educators' self-efficacy in terms of their abilities to provide behavior management supports to students who display disruptive behavior and in their need for training to manage disruptive student behavior.

The gap filled by this research is a potential element of institutional social change in the nation's public school system. The results of this study could impact social change at the university level so that the program of study for students who major in education would include classes focused on behavior management strategies. This study could influence school districts to fortify the professional training that teachers receive by expanding it to include training teachers on how to provide non-academic supports for students in the classroom. Teacher training about responding to disruptive student behavior would empower teachers to create classroom environments that meet both the academic and social needs of students. The expansion of professional teacher training focused on supporting non-academic needs for students could focus on behavior

management strategies for all teachers from Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade because behavior management is critical to successful instruction. Professional training on behavior management strategies for general educators may help to increase teachers' self-efficacy to effectively manage students' behaviors and result in other gains for both the student and the teacher. Training for general educators focused on increasing their capacity to manage disruptive student behavior in areas of managing severe challenging behavior, completing behavior assessments, engaging students in instruction, and positive skill building were reviewed by special and general educators of middle and high school students as areas of need.

### **Conclusion**

There are disparities among teachers in terms of their ability to manage disruptive student behavior in both special and general education classrooms. When compared, special educators reported a greater capacity to manage challenging student behavior than general educators did while general educators reported a greater need for training than special educators did. The teacher gap is a critical classroom problem that must be addressed with proper professional training, non-academic teaching goals, administrative observations focused on classroom management, and proper supports for students, staff, and families.

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2.)	Early childhood intervention for children and young persons with disabilities	
3.)	Interventions for children and young persons with severe challenging behaviors	
4.)	Behavioral Assessments to identify functions of behavior problems	
5.)	Preference Assessments to identify effective reinforcers or rewards for children	
6.)	Skill training programs to teach functional skills such as daily life skills, academic strategies etc.	
7.)	Communication Training to replace challenging behaviors with appropriate communicative responses	
8.)	Restraint procedures to manage challenging behaviors	
9.)	Progress Monitoring of effectiveness of interventions	
10.)	Other (Specify)	

*Your Current Skill Level:* Please indicate your **current** skill in each of the following areas by circling the options between 0 and 3 as explained below:

0 – indicates no skill 1 – indicates low skill 2 – indicates moderate skill 3 – indicates high skill

No.	Skills	Rating Scale			
11.)	Interview caregivers regarding behavioral problems using the ABC (Antecedent – Behavior-Consequence) Model	0	1	2	3
12.)	Define problem behaviors such that they can be observed and quantified	0	1	2	3
13.)	Identify the function of behavior based on direct observation	0	1	2	3
14.)	Predict problem behavior based on direct observation	0	1	2	3
15.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior that counts frequency of occurrences of behavior (i.e., event recording)	0	1	2	3
16.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior that counts frequency of occurrences of behaviors within specified time blocks (i.e., interval recording)	0	1	2	3

17.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior in terms of the amount of time spent in engaging in the problem behavior (i.e., duration recording)	0	1	2	3
18.)	Analyze observational data (e.g., frequency, duration, and time samples) to determine the purpose of problem behavior	0	1	2	3
19.)	Develop behavioral intervention plans based on information collected from direct observation and interviews with caregivers	0	1	2	3
20.)	Identify potential reinforcers that can be used in behavioral intervention programs	0	1	2	3
21.)	Use positive/negative reinforcement based on behavioral intervention strategies to <i>increase</i> the occurrence of appropriate behaviors	0	1	2	3
22.)	Use other reinforcement based behavioral intervention strategies to <i>decrease</i> the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors	0	1	2	3
23.)	Use behavioral intervention strategies to shape or teach specific functional skills	0	1	2	3

24.)	Conduct ongoing assessments to monitor changes in behavior due to the intervention	0	1	2	3
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## Appendix B: AGREEMENT WITH DANBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Agreement with Danbury Public Schools

This agreement is made on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2018

between the signor, Kevin Walston, Assistant Superintendent of Danbury Public Schools and the signee, Kelly Mero, Ph.D. candidate with Walden University. By signing this Agreement, the signor Agrees to allow the signee to assess general and special educators across the grade levels of middle school and high school by administering a survey focused on collecting teacher perception of their capacity to manage disruptive student behavior and the professional training needed to increase their capacity to manage disruptive student behavior. The signor understands that once the data is retrieved, it will be used in an analysis to determine what professional training needs are identified by teachers and if there is a difference in the responses received from educators across grade level and teacher type.



Kelly Mero, Signee



Kevin Walston, Signor

Appendix C: TEACHER SURVEY

**Participant Demographics**

Level of Education: BS  MS  6<sup>th</sup> Year  Doctorate

Grade Level: Middle School  High School

Class Type: Special Education  General Education

**PART I: PRIOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

Have you had university level or school district professional development that provided strategies to use to manage disruptive student behavior? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If you answer "yes" above, please indicate the number of hours you have participated in professional training:	
	0 hours of professional training
	1-3 hours of professional training
	4-6 hours of professional training
	7-9 hours of professional training
	10-12 hours of professional training

	13-15 hours of professional training
	More than 15 hours of professional training

**PART II: CURRENT SKILL LEVEL IN STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING CLASSROOM CLIMATE WHEN DISRUPTIVE STUDENT BEHAVIORS ARISE**

**Your Current Skill Level:** Please indicate your **current** skill in each of the following areas by circling the options between 0 and 3 as explained below:

**0 – indicates no skill 1 – indicates low skill 2 – indicates moderate skill 3 – indicates high skill**

No.	Skills	Rating Scale
1.)	Interview caregivers regarding behavioral problems using the ABC (Antecedent – Behavior-Consequence) Model	0      1      2      3
2.)	Define problem behaviors such that they can be observed and quantified	0      1      2      3
3.)	Identify the function of behavior based on direct observation	0      1      2      3
4.)	Predict problem behavior based on direct observation	0      1      2      3

5.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior that counts frequency of occurrences of behavior (i.e., event recording)	0	1	2	3
6.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior that counts frequency of occurrences of behaviors within specified time blocks (i.e., interval recording)	0	1	2	3
7.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior in terms of the amount of time spent in engaging in the problem behavior (i.e., duration recording)	0	1	2	3
8.)	Analyze observational data (e.g., frequency, duration, and time samples) to determine the purpose of problem behavior	0	1	2	3
9.)	Develop behavioral intervention plans based on information collected from direct observation and interviews with caregivers	0	1	2	3
10.)	Identify potential reinforcers that can be used in behavioral intervention programs	0	1	2	3
11.)	Use positive/negative reinforcement- based behavioral intervention strategies to <i>increase</i> the occurrence of appropriate behaviors	0	1	2	3

12.)	Use other reinforcement based behavioral intervention strategies to <i>decrease</i> the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors	0	1	2	3
13.)	Use behavioral intervention strategies to shape or teach specific functional skills	0	1	2	3
14.)	Conduct ongoing assessments to monitor changes in behavior due to the intervention	0	1	2	3

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**PART III: NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN STRATEGIES TO SUSTAIN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT WHEN STUDENTS DISPLAY DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

*Your need for training:* Please order the “training items” on this page between 1 and 10.

The “training item” that would be the most valuable for you to receive would be rated “1” followed by a decreasing order of training needs, and the item needing the least training need would be rated as “10”. Please indicate the numbers under the training needs column.

No.	Training Items	Training Needs			
1.)	Interventions for mild behavioral problems	0	1	2	3

2.)	Early childhood intervention for children and young persons with disabilities	0	1	2	3
3.)	Interventions for children with severe challenging behaviors	0	1	2	3
4.)	Behavioral Assessments to identify functions of behavior problems	0	1	2	3
5.)	Preference Assessments to identify effective reinforcers or rewards for children	0	1	2	3
6.)	Skill training programs to teach functional skills such as daily life skills, academic strategies, etc.	0	1	2	3
7.)	Communication Training to replace challenging behaviors with appropriate communicative responses	0	1	2	3
8.)	Progress Monitoring of effectiveness of interventions	0	1	2	3
9.)	Pedagogical practice to provide instruction that engages students in their learning.	0	1	2	3
10.)	Pedagogical practice to provide culturally responsive instruction	0	1	2	3

11.)	Communication and relationship training focused on building relationships with students	0	1	2	3
12.)	Collaborate with colleagues to develop plans that support students' behavior needs	0	1	2	3
13.)	Communication and relationship training focused on building relationships with families	0	1	2	3
14.)	Respond to disruptive behavior in a positive skill building manner	0	1	2	3

## Appendix D: PERMISSION TO USE THE SURVEY

**From:** Rahul Nair <rahul.n@outlook.com>

**Sent:** Sunday, September 2, 2018 11:48 PM

**To:** Kelly Mero

**Subject:** RE: Permission to access SNI-FBAI

Hi Kelly,

I'm happy to share it with you (pasted below). It looks like your question is similar to the one that we had planned. Please keep in mind that changing scales (Q1-24) is not advised, unless there is some good psychometric or theoretical reason. It can also limit your ability to compare across scenarios. Hope it is helpful, and please let me know if you need help with it.

Warm regards,

Rahul.

Demographic Information: Please check relevant boxes



<b>No.</b>	<b>Training Items</b>	<b>Training Needs</b>
1.)	Interventions for mild behavioral problems	
2.)	Early childhood intervention for children and young persons with disabilities	
3.)	Interventions for children and young persons with severe challenging behaviors	
4.)	Behavioral Assessments to identify functions of behavior problems	
5.)	Preference Assessments to identify effective reinforcers or rewards for children	
6.)	Skill training programs to teach functional skills such as daily life skills, academic strategies etc.	
7.)	Communication Training to replace challenging behaviors with appropriate communicative responses	
8.)	Restraint procedures to manage challenging behaviors	
9.)	Progress Monitoring of effectiveness of interventions	
10.)	Other (Specify)	

Your Current Skill Level: Please indicate your **current** skill in each of the following areas

by circling the options between 0 and 3 as explained below:

0 – indicates no skill 1 – indicates low skill 2 – indicates moderate skill 3 – indicates high skill

No.	Skills	Rating Scale
11.)	Interview caregivers regarding behavioral problems using the ABC (Antecedent – Behavior-Consequence) Model	0      1      2      3
12.)	Define problem behaviors such that they can be observed and quantified	0      1      2      3
13.)	Identify the function of behavior based on direct observation	0      1      2      3
14.)	Predict problem behavior based on direct observation	0      1      2      3
15.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior that counts frequency of occurrences of behavior (i.e., event recording)	0      1      2      3

16.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior that counts frequency of occurrences of behaviors within specified time blocks (i.e., interval recording)	0	1	2	3
17.)	Use a recording procedure to measure behavior in terms of the amount of time spent in engaging in the problem behavior (i.e., duration recording)	0	1	2	3
18.)	Analyze observational data (e.g., frequency, duration, and time samples) to determine the purpose of problem behavior	0	1	2	3
19.)	Develop behavioral intervention plans based on information collected from direct observation and interviews with caregivers	0	1	2	3
20.)	Identify potential reinforcers that can be used in behavioral intervention programs	0	1	2	3
21.)	Use positive/negative reinforcement based behavioral intervention strategies to <i>increase</i> the occurrence of appropriate behaviors	0	1	2	3
22.)	Use other reinforcement based behavioral intervention strategies to <i>decrease</i> the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors	0	1	2	3

23.)	Use behavioral intervention strategies to shape or teach specific functional skills	0	1	2	3
24.)	Conduct ongoing assessments to monitor changes in behavior due to the intervention	0	1	2	3

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**From:** Kelly Mero

<kelly.mero@waldenu.edu>

**Sent:** Sunday, September 2, 2018 9:51:37 PM

**To:** rahul.n@outlook.com

**Subject:** Permission to access SNI-FBAI

Hello.

My name is Kelly Mero and I am a Ph.D. student at Walden University. I have focused my work on special and general educators' perception of skill to manage disruptive student behavior and their current professional training needs. I would like to use the SNI-FBAI tool that you developed for your study in special education schools in Singapore and modify to fit my study. Will you please share the tool with me?

I look forward to your response.

Kelly