Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Communication Education

ISSN: 0363-4523 (Print) 1479-5795 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rced20

Rapport, motivation, participation, and perceptions of learning in U.S. and Turkish student classrooms: a replication and cultural comparison

Brandi N. Frisby, Amanda R. Slone & Elif Bengu

To cite this article: Brandi N. Frisby, Amanda R. Slone & Elif Bengu (2017) Rapport, motivation, participation, and perceptions of learning in U.S. and Turkish student classrooms: a replication and cultural comparison, Communication Education, 66:2, 183-195, DOI: 10.1080/03634523.2016.1208259

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2016.1208259

COMMUNICATION EDUCATION, 2017
VOL. 66, NO. 2, 183–195
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2016.1208259

NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION
Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Rapport, motivation, participation, and perceptions of learning in U.S. and Turkish student classrooms: a replication and cultural comparison

Brandi N. Frisby[a], Amanda R. Slone[b] and Elif Bengu[c*]

[a]School of Information Science, University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA; [b]University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA; [c]Faculty of Education, Okan University, İstanbul, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Building on previous rapport research, Hofstede's dimensions of culture, and calls for culture-centered instructional research, this study examined instructor–student rapport in U.S. and Turkish college classrooms. U.S. participants ($N = 143$) and Turkish participants ($N = 185$) completed measures of rapport, state motivation, participation, and perceptions of learning. Results revealed no differences in state motivation and perceptions of learning, but U.S. students reported significantly more rapport with their instructors while Turkish students reported significantly more participation in the classroom. Rapport significantly predicted state motivation, participation, and perceptions of learning in both samples, but accounted for different levels of variance in the student outcomes.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 17 January 2016
Accepted 28 June 2016

KEYWORDS
Culture; rapport; state motivation; participation; perceived learning

In 2006, McCroskey and McCroskey called for growth in culture-centered instructional communication research. Some scholars have responded to this call (see Sellnow et al., 2015), by examining instructional dynamics in particular countries including Nigeria (e.g., Olaniran & Stewart, 1996), China (e.g., Goodboy, Myers, & Bolkan, 2012), Germany (e.g., Zhang, Oetzel, Gao, Wilcox, & Takai, 2007), Japan (e.g., Zhang et al., 2007), South Korea (e.g., Mansson & Lee, 2014), Brazil (e.g., Santilli, Miller, & Katt, 2011), and Sweden (e.g., Mansson & Myers, 2011). However, instructional matters as related to other countries and cultures have been left unexplored. This dearth of instructional research focused on culture is alarming given Changfu, Zhang, and Chen's (2012) argument that, "the increasing multicultural diversity and changing cultural landscape on college campuses call for a paradigmatic shift" (p. 86). In other words, growth in this scholarly area requires logical extensions of theory and replication of established lines of research. This progress in the research will allow for more nuanced cultural comparison and understanding of students and instructors informing both theory and practice.

It is imperative to understand differing mindsets biased by culture for both students and instructors (Backlund, Ivy, & Javidi, 1996) as there is some evidence that suggests

CONTACT Brandi N. Frisby brandi.frisby@uky.edu
*Current address: Faculty of Educational Science, Abdullah Gul University, Kayseri, Turkey

cultural and ethnic backgrounds determine how students view the teaching and learning process (Collier & Powell, 1990). Thus, there is a need to understand how instructor behaviors affect all students, whether in classrooms abroad or within increasingly diverse U.S. classrooms. The relational approach to teaching emphasizes the instructor–student relationship and skills necessary to build and maintain that relationship in the classroom (Rudick & Golsan, 2014). Although there is room to expand on this area of scholarship (Rudick & Golsan, 2014), the importance of the relational approach in teaching has been well established (Mottet, Frymier, & Beebe, 2006).

Turkey provides an important cultural comparison with North America for multiple reasons. Turkey has a competitive achievement-oriented higher education system (Yildirim, 2006). Not only does higher education system differ from that in the U.S., but the country differs in demographics (e.g., U.S. is an older democracy, Turkey is mostly Muslim; Croucher et al., 2013), and in values as indicated by the opposing placements of each country on almost every one of Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions. Further, Guttenplan (2013) reports Turkey has consistently been in the top 10 countries for sending students to study in the U.S., often sending over 10,000 students a year. Thus, we examined relational teaching in both U.S. and Turkish classes.

Turkey: cultural and educational context

Turkey boasts an estimated population of almost 82 million individuals with approximately 71.5% of the total population located in urban centers (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014) and is able to provide free compulsory education for all students up to the age of 18 (Topbas, 2013). Higher education, however, is not as easy to acquire. The application process for universities is highly competitive, with about a 10% acceptance rate for those who pass the rigorous admission exam (Yildirim, 2006). In fact, it seems that the most important goal for the student is to earn a degree (Yildirim, 2006). Turkish attitudes toward higher education likely influence instructional communication behaviors. These attitudes and instructional behaviors likely differ from the U.S. student population. To understand the differences in educational attitudes, whether in Turkey or in multicultural U.S. classrooms, these differences may be most parsimoniously framed by Hofstede's (2001) dimensions of culture.

Hofstede (2001) identified four independent dimensions of culture relevant to the current study: power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. Turkey scores high on power distance (Baran, 2010), or "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, n.d., para. 2). In cultures with a high power distance, power is centralized, communication is indirect (Hofstede, n.d.), and members conform to strict hierarchical order (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010), which could lead to a more formal classroom environment where teachers are respected, not expected to be questioned or criticized, and students do not speak up in class (Bjørge, 2007). Turkey is highly collectivistic, part of a dimension assessing "the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 209). In other words, people define themselves in terms of "I" or "We." Collectivistic individuals are expected to maintain harmony and stay loyal to their in-groups (e.g., family, organization; Hofstede, n.d.). Turkey scores as more feminine,

embracing behaviors such as conflict avoidance, consensus, and sympathy. Finally, Turkey scores high on uncertainty avoidance or "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these" (Hofstede, n.d., para. 9). Scholars (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010) argue that this high score and discomfort with uncertainty leads to seeking experts, which in the instructional context, may be an instructor. These stark differences in cultural values imply that the college classroom may also be perceived and responded to differently in Turkish contexts and that instructor–student communication may differ based on this educational and cultural context.

Rapport

Rapport is a perception formed about a relationship (Frisby & Gaffney, 2015) characterized by mutual trust, connection, and enjoyment (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). Although research on instructor–student rapport is limited, it is considered an effective teaching strategy in U.S.-based studies (Faranda & Clarke, 2004; Perkins, Schenk, Stephan, Vrungos, & Wynants, 1995). In fact, Richmond, Berglund, Epelbaum, and Klein (2015) found that instructor–student rapport was the largest predictor of evaluations of instructors. Consistent with this finding, Frisby and Myers (2008) found that when students had greater rapport with their instructor, they also reported greater affect. This outcome may be explained by findings that rapport is related to greater perceptions of justice (Young, Horan, & Frisby, 2013) and credibility (Zhang, 2014).

Rapport in the classroom is also positive for students. In the earliest studies to examine instructor–student rapport, scholars (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Frisby & Myers, 2008) found rapport was related to greater student participation. In an effort to understand why rapport would influence participation, Frisby, Berger, Burchett, Herovic, and Strawser (2014) studied rapport as an instructor strategy to reduce face threats when students felt they were on display by participating orally. They reported that instructor rapport was indeed a face-supportive strategy that reduced face threat and participation anxiety for students. This may also be explained by Frisby and Martin (2010), who found rapport was related to peer-to-peer connectedness, and thus, a more comfortable classroom environment was created in which students could easily participate. Relatedly, rapport has also been associated with students' perceptions of learning.

Rapport is predictive of perceptions of cognitive learning (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Wilson & Ryan, 2013), anticipated final grades (Frisby & Gaffney, 2015), and actual final grades (Wilson & Ryan, 2013). More specifically, Wilson and Ryan (2013) found that it was the engagement component of rapport that predicted these outcomes. A potential explanation for this is that learning may be associated with students' proclivity to engage in proacademic behaviors (Sidelinger, Bolen, McMullen, & Nyeste, 2015), state motivation, and affect toward the course when rapport with instructors is positive (Benson, Cohen, & Buskist, 2005; Frisby & Myers, 2008). Affect toward the instructor and toward learning, which is associated with perceptions of learning (Hess, Smythe, & Communication 451, 2001; Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004), is also highly correlated to rapport (Frisby & Gaffney, 2015). That is, when students feel engaged through rapport with their instructor, their perception of learning is likely influenced by their state

motivation, affect, and proacademic activities inspired by positive rapport. Thus, we hypothesize:

H1: Rapport is positively related to participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning in the U.S. student sample.

In culture-centered studies of rapport in other contexts, Julliard et al. (2008) found rapport between physicians and Latina patients was critical in ensuring high-quality medical care. Eltaiba (2014) argued that building rapport with Muslim refugees helped to develop the social worker-client relationship. Both studies concluded that positive outcomes result from rapport. However, the study of rapport in instructional contexts that consider culture is rare. In one exception, Bjørge (2007) found that students in Norway, a low power-distance culture, used less formal rapport management in emails to instructors. For example, less formal rapport included less formal introductory greeting and closings, or no greeting or closing at all. In Turkey, preservice teachers reported that learning rapport building from their mentors was an important part of their education (Hudson & Savran-Gencer, 2009). These studies highlight the importance of rapport as a construct that can transcend culture, context, relationship type, and communication channel. Thus, we expect rapport to function similarly to the U.S. in Turkish student experiences.

H2: Rapport is positively related to participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning in the Turkish student sample.

When considering the cultural and social characteristics of Turkey, we argue that rapport differs from U.S.-centric samples. Specifically, Turkey is classified as a high power-distance culture where students may see the instructor as authoritarian and positioned higher in the hierarchy making an interpersonal relationship less appropriate. When coupled with high uncertainty avoidance, professional boundaries, rules, and policies that separate instructor and student may be preferred. On the other hand, Turkish students' collectivism may make the class as a whole closer and identify together as an in-group, including the instructor. Further, because Turkey is identified as feminine, rapport may be built through more nurturing, supportive, harmonious, and confirming interactions in the classroom.

Rapport may influence many affective aspects of Turkish students' classroom experience such as their willingness to participate in class, state motivation, and how much they think they are learning. For example, in an in-depth interview study by Tatar (2005), Turkish graduate students described their participation differently than what they had observed in American students and attributed differences to cultural background. They noted that American students often shared personal experiences as participation, while Turkish students thought that participation should be focused on academic content and that personal experiences were inappropriate. Although Tatar's participants reported that the relationship with the instructor was important to their motivation, it did not influence their participation. Conversely, Turkish instructors who demonstrated negative relational behaviors that damaged rapport (e.g., criticized students) were identified as demotivating students (Bekleyen, 2011). Even if a positive instructor–student relationship positively influenced motivation, Çetin (2015) found that motivation was not related to academic achievement for Turkish students. Further, and relevant to the current study, Turkish students did not believe participation contributed to learning.

This belief may also be explained by Turkish students seeing the instructor as the authority figure (Girgin & Stevens, 2005; Tatar, 2005). Considerable differences in the historical, cultural, and social factors define Turkish and U.S. classrooms. While rapport may function similarly in the classroom across culture, context, and relationship type, there is still potential for differences based on each culture's opposing standpoints on Hofstede's (2001) dimensions and the considerable differences in historical, social, educational, and cultural factors. Thus:

RQ1: Do American and Turkish students differ in perceptions of rapport, participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning?

RQ2: Does rapport predict participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning for Turkish students?

Method

Participants

United States participants ($N = 143$) were undergraduate students at a large southeastern university. Over half of the students recruited for this study identified as female ($N = 90$; 62.9%). The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 22 ($M = 18.8$, $SD = 0.5$), and most identified as Caucasian ($N = 108$; 75.5%), followed by African American ($N = 9$; 6.3%), Asian or Hispanic ($N = 6$; 4.2%), Mixed ($N = 3$; 2.1%), and Indian or Pakistani ($N = 1$; 0.7%). A majority of the participants were first-year students ($N = 128$; 89.5%), followed by sophomores ($N = 8$; 5.6%), juniors ($N = 6$; 4.2%), and seniors ($N = 1$; 0.7%). Nearly all of the participants were full-time ($N = 142$; 99.3%) pursuing 52 different majors across the university. Students reported on classes ranging in size from 14 to 500 ($M = 66.0$, $SD = 88.2$), taught primarily by female instructors ($N = 83$, 58.0%). A minority of the sample ($N = 26$, 18.2%) reported on an instructor they had in a previous course. The majority of the instructors required participation in the courses ($N = 117$, 81.8%), with instructors assigning between 0 and 50% of the final grade based on participation ($M = 10.5\%$, $SD = 9.5\%$).

Turkish participants ($N = 185$) were undergraduate students at a large inner city university. Over half of the students recruited for this study identified as female ($N = 119$, 64.3%). The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 32 ($M = 21.2$, $SD = 1.9$), and all identified their ethnicity as Turkish. The sample included first-year students ($N = 83$; 44.9%), followed by sophomores ($N = 67$; 36.2%), juniors ($N = 27$; 14.6%), and seniors ($N = 8$; 4.3%). Nearly all of the participants were full-time ($N = 169$; 91.4%) pursuing 18 different majors across the university. Students reported on classes ranging in size from 8 to 100 ($M = 42.5$, $SD = 17.9$), taught primarily by female instructors ($N = 119$, 64.7%). A majority of the sample ($N = 111$, 60%) reported on an instructor they had in a previous course. The majority of the instructors required participation in the courses ($N = 159$, 85.9%), and assigned between 0 and 100% of the final grade based on participation ($M = 24\%$, $SD = 27\%$).

Procedures

To recruit the United States sample, a study announcement was sent via email to instructors in the first author's professional network asking them to share the recruitment

message and survey link with students. Students received minimal credit for completion of the IRB approved survey. All participants completed the same questionnaire through Qualtrics, an online survey system. Students were asked to think about the instructor they had immediately prior to completing the survey, a method recommended by Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, and Richmond (1986) in order to gather a diverse sample of classrooms and instructors. The third author, who is fluent in both Turkish and English, translated the survey. The survey was then reviewed and approved by the IRB's independent language and culture consultant. After receiving research approval at a university in Turkey, students were recruited in person by the third author to complete the same survey using the same directions during class. Although this method of survey completion differs from the U.S. sample, this approach was considered culturally appropriate after consultation with the third author. We selected the same instruments used in previous rapport research for replication.

Instrumentation

Rapport

Frisby and Martin's (2010) adaptation of Gremler and Gwinner's (2000) Likert-type scale asked participants to respond from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) on 11 items (e.g., "My instructor relates well to me"). The measure was reliable in the U.S. sample ($\alpha = .97$, $M = 53.01$, $SD = 17.32$) and in the Turkish sample ($\alpha = .97$, $M = 39.08$, $SD = 13.55$). Previous reliabilities have been .94 and higher (Frisby, Berger, et al., 2014; Frisby & Martin, 2010).

Participation

Following Frisby and Martin (2010), participation was measured using Goodboy and Myers's (2008) version of Fassinger's (1995) participation scale. Students responded to five items (e.g., "I contribute to class") on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (often). The scale was reliable in the U.S. sample ($\alpha = .94$, $M = 15.76$, $SD = 5.90$) and in the Turkish sample ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 17.76$, $SD = 5.07$). Previous reliabilities have been .91 and higher (Frisby & Myers, 2008; Goodboy & Myers, 2008).

State motivation

State motivation was measured using Christophel's (1990) 12-item, 7-point bipolar measure that asks students to report their feelings of state motivation (e.g., motivated/unmotivated) toward the targeted course and instructor. The scale was reliable in the U.S. sample ($\alpha = .95$, $M = 76.50$, $SD = 20.41$) and in the Turkish sample ($\alpha = .80$, $M = 72.88$, $SD = 16.82$). Previous reliabilities have been .94 and higher (Frisby & Myers, 2008; Myers, 2004).

Perceptions of learning

Using Frisby and Martin's (2010) cognitive learning measure, participants responded to 10 items (e.g., "I can clearly recall information from this class") on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale was reliable in the U.S. sample ($\alpha = .82$, $M = 36.51$, $SD = 7.05$) and in the Turkish sample ($\alpha = .85$, $M = 36.92$, $SD = 7.99$).

Previous reliabilities have been .94 and higher (Frisby & Myers, 2008; Myers, 2004). In Frisby and Martin (2010), the scale was reliable at .94.

Results

Hypothesis testing

H1 predicted positive relationships between rapport, participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning in the U.S. student sample. Rapport was positively related to participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning. All correlations are presented in Table 1. H1 was supported. To precisely replicate Frisby and Martin's (2010) analyses, we explored the potential influence of rapport on participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning in the U.S. student sample using regression. Rapport was a significant predictor of participation, $F(1, 142) = 42.75$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .48$ and accounted for 22% of the variance. Rapport was also a significant predictor of state motivation, $F(1, 137) = 82.97$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .62$ and accounted for 37% of the variance. Finally, rapport predicted perceptions of learning, $F(1, 140) = 36.97$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .46$ and accounted for 20% of the variance.

H2 predicted positive relationships between rapport, participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning in the Turkish student sample. Rapport was positively related to participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning. All correlations are presented in Table 1. H3 was supported.

Research questions

RQ1 inquired about differences between American and Turkish students on perceptions of rapport, participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning; we used a multivariate analysis of variance with the university of attendance (U.S. university vs. Turkish university) entered as the fixed factor and rapport, participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning entered as the dependent variables. The model was significant, $\Lambda = .67$, $F(1, 292) = 35.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .33$. The two student samples significantly differed in rapport, $F(1, 292) = 56.48$, $p < .001$, with Turkish students reporting significantly less rapport with their instructors ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.23$) than U.S. students with their instructors ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 1.58$). The student samples also differed significantly in participation, $F(1, 292) = 13.64$, $p = .001$, with Turkish students reporting greater participation ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.01$) than U.S. students ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.18$). U.S. and Turkish students did not significantly differ in motivation or perceptions of learning.

The final research question inquired whether rapport would predict participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning in the Turkish student sample. Rapport was a

Table 1. Correlation matrices of all variables for U.S. and Turkish student samples.

	Rapport	Participation	Motivation	Cognitive Learning
Rapport	–	.40**	.51**	.63**
Participation	.48**	–	.37**	.36**
Motivation	.61**	.34**	–	.75**
Perceptions of Learning	.46**	.14	.61**	–

Note: U.S. student correlations are below the diagonal. Turkish student correlations are above the diagonal.
**$p < .001$.

significant predictor of participation, $F(1, 170) = 33.38$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .40$ and accounted for 16% of the variance. Rapport was also a significant predictor of state motivation, $F(1, 168) = 61.44$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .52$ and accounted for 26% of the variance. Finally, rapport predicted perceptions of learning, $F(1, 160) = 109.97$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .64$ and accounted for 40% of the variance.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to replicate previous research suggesting the importance of instructor–student rapport in the U.S. classroom and to explore the influence of culture on the role of rapport by exploring the Turkish classroom. Our results suggest that while rapport and participation levels differ between the two cultures, rapport is an important relational strategy for instructors to employ which can elicit positive student outcomes including state motivation, participation, and perceptions of learning in both cultures.

Turkish and U.S. students perceived significantly different levels of rapport demonstrated by their instructors with U.S. students reporting greater rapport than Turkish students. Culturally, the U.S. is a low power-distance culture, which makes an instructor–student interpersonal relationship more culturally appropriate. This may afford greater opportunities for U.S. instructors to build and maintain relationships in the college classroom. This finding also makes sense given the focus on immediacy research in instructional communication scholarship and instructor and teaching assistant training programs which are U.S.-centric ways of teaching and training teachers (Zhang et al., 2007). Both samples had a majority of women instructors, which may have inflated the rapport results as women instructors tend to communicate in more relational, immediate, and affiliative ways (Luo, Grady, & Bellows, 2001). However, two post-hoc t-tests to examine this possibility revealed no significant differences in rapport between male and female instructors in the U.S. sample, $t\ (140) = 1.49$, $p = .13$, and no significant difference in rapport between male and female instructors in the Turkish sample, $t\ (194) = -.43$, $p = .66$.

The second significant difference was regarding classroom participation with greater participation being reported by students from Turkey. These results make sense given the cultural context, as Turkey is a new-found democracy. Thus, according to Girgin and Stevens (2005), Turkish students and instructors believe classrooms provide a student-centered forum to practice participation and to exercise their democratic voice. Interestingly, both cultures expected participation with over 80% of the instructors requiring it as a formal part of the course. However, Turkish instructors tended to reward a larger percentage of the final grade for it, with some students reporting that 100% of their grade was dependent on participation. The points allotted to incentivize certain activities, including oral participation, may communicate to students what the instructor values and increase content meaningfulness (Frisby, Weber, & Beckner, 2014). Further, this expectation can change how students prepare to participate through behaviors like more reading and asking more questions (McDougall & Granby, 1996).

Previous research has found links between participation and learning as measured by recall (Blankenstein, Dolmans, Vleuten, & Schmidt, 2011) and perceptions of learning or attitudes (Frisby & Martin, 2010). Contrary to previous research, in the U.S. sample, there was no significant relationship between participation and perceptions of learning.

One possible explanation for this finding is that the participation happening in U.S. classrooms is subjective (Balas, 2000) and may merely function to take attendance and allow personal stories and examples to be shared. In the U.S. classroom, participation and educational engagement have also been described as more passive and apathetic (Dolan, Mallott, & Emery, 2002). If U.S. students are participating in less meaningful and less prepared ways as observed by Turkish students in multicultural classrooms (Tatar, 2005), then these forms of oral participation may not contribute to perceptions of learning in the same way as in the Turkish classrooms. This speculative explanation supports calls by scholars to focus on participation quality instead of quantity or oral forms of participation (Burchfield & Sappington, 1999) and to measure learning more carefully.

Although the instructor–student relationship (i.e., rapport) and student communicative behaviors (i.e., participation) differed significantly, the two samples did not differ significantly in motivation or perceptions of learning. This is initially surprising given the highly competitive nature and low acceptance rates of students into Turkish universities (Yildirim, 2006). Although only speculation, this may lead some to believe that the Turkish students are more motivated and are open to and capable of greater cognitive learning gains. The interactional differences speak to the importance of examining culture-centered instructional communication, but the lack of student outcome differences seems to suggest that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to higher education.

When exploring rapport as a predictor of participation, motivation, and perceptions of learning, we found that the Turkish sample performed similarly in that rapport was a significant predictor of each of the outcomes. However, the Turkish sample performed differently in that rapport accounted for less variance in motivation and participation. The result is consistent with findings that the relationship with instructor is related to motivation (Bekleyen, 2011) but contradictory to the findings that the instructor–student relationship did not affect students' participation rates (Tatar, 2005).

To our knowledge, previous research has not explored a relationship between the instructor–student relationship and perceived or actual learning in Turkey. Our results found that rapport was a strong predictor of perceptions of learning and, in fact, accounted for more variance in perceptions of learning than in the U.S. sample. Given Wilson and Ryan's (2013) finding that rapport used to build student engagement was the only predictor of learning, both perceived and final grades, this finding makes sense in light of the higher engagement levels of Turkish students. If rapport functions to engage students, who culturally, educationally, and politically are already highly engaged (Croucher et al., 2013; Tatar, 2005), then the link to perceptions of learning is clearer than what we have been able to identify or argue in the extant U.S.-centric studies, where students are often less engaged in their education and politics (Croucher et al., 2013).

Given the strong relationships between immediacy and rapport (Frisby & Gaffney, 2015), rapport may also be a culture-laden construct like immediacy (Zhang et al., 2007) warranting additional examinations of instructor–student rapport across cultures. Although not a primary purpose of this study, the scales used were reliable and performed as expected with other instructional constructs providing convergent validity. Thus, this study provides initial validity and support for use of the rapport scale across cultures.

Limitations and future directions

This study is limited in that it relied on student perceptions, the data-collection method differed across samples, and scale choices were determined by the desire to replicate previous studies. First, the U.S. sample completed an online survey, while the Turkish sample completed a hard copy survey during class. Although we have no evidence to suggest that this affected our results in any way, it is important to note as a potential limitation. Second, the rapport, motivation, participation, and learning scales used in previous work were used when other options exist. For example, learning may be assessed using other learning scales (e.g., learning indicators; Frymier & Houser, 1999) or behavioral performance measures and student participation may be measured by other indicators (e.g., student engagement, Mazer, 2012). Additionally, future research could measure Hofstede's (2001) dimensions of the cultures to understand the influence of each dimension on instructor–student rapport. Because this is the first study of instructor rapport in a non-U.S. sample, it is also important for rapport research to be examined in other cultures. Additionally, it is important for future research to identify the specific behaviors that build rapport with students using behavioral measures or observations.

Practically, the results of this study inform instructional communication scholars about cultural differences in instructor communication, student communication, and student outcomes in two separate cultures. These results can be used to understand both education abroad and increasingly multicultural classrooms in the U.S. and to inform instructor training, expectations and policies regarding participation, and optimal ways to inspire motivation and achieve greater perceptions of learning, if not actual learning, for all students in the classroom.

References

Backlund, P., Ivy, D. K., & Javidi, M. N. (1996). Multicultural challenges for communication curriculum and instruction. *Journal of the Northwest Communication Association*, *24*, 31–48.

Balas, A. (2000). Using participation to assess students' knowledge. *College Teaching*, *48*, 122–123. doi:10.1080/2F87567550009595827

Baran, B. (2010). Facebook as a formal instructional environment. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *41*, E146–E149.

Bekleyen, N. (2011). Demotivating factors in the EFL environment. *Frontiers of Language and Teaching*, *2*, 151–156.

Benson, T. A., Cohen, A. L., & Buskist, W. (2005). Rapport: Its relation to student attitudes and behaviors toward teachers and classes. *Teaching of Psychology*, *32*, 237–270. doi:10.1207/s15328023top3204_8

Bjørge, A. K. (2007). Power distance in English lingua franca email communication. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *17*, 60–80. doi:10.1111/j.1473-4192.2007.00133.x

Blankenstein, F., Dolmans, D. M., Vleuten, C., & Schmidt, H. G. (2011). Which cognitive processes support learning during small-group discussion? The role of providing explanations and listening to others. *Instructional Science*, *39*, 189–204. doi:10.1007/s11251-009-9124-7

Burchfield, C. M., & Sappington, J. (1999). Participation in classroom discussion. *Teaching of Psychology*, *26*, 290–294.

Central Intelligence Agency. (2014, June 20). The world factbook: Turkey. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html

Çetin, B. (2015). Academic motivation and approaches to learning in predicting college students' academic achievement: Findings from Turkish and US samples. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, *12*, 141–150.

Changfu, C., Zhang, M., & Chen, Z. J. (2012). Cultures matter: An alternative model of teaching evaluations. *China Media Research*, *8*(2), 86–93.
Christophel, D. M. (1990). The relationships among teacher immediacy behaviors, student motivation, and learning. *Communication Education*, *39*, 323–340.
Collier, M. J., & Powell, R. (1990). Ethnicity, instructional communication and classroom systems. *Communication Quarterly*, *38*, 334–349.
Croucher, S. M., Otten, R., Ball, M., Grimes, T., Ainsworth, B., Begley, K., & Corzo, L. (2013). Argumentativeness and political participation: A cross-cultural analysis in the United States and Turkey. *Communication Studies*, *64*, 18–32. doi:10.1080/10510974.2012.727942
Dolan, S., Mallott, D. B., & Emery, J. A. (2002). Passive learning: A marker for the academically at risk. *Medical Teacher*, *24*, 648–649. doi:10.1080/01421590216082
Eltaiba, N. (2014). Counseling with muslim refugees: Building rapport. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, *28*, 397–403. doi:10.1080/02650533.2013.875523
Faranda, W. T., & Clarke, I. (2004). Student observation of outstanding teaching: Implications for marketing educators. *Journal of Marketing Education*, *26*, 271–281.
Fassinger, P. A. (1995). Understanding classroom interaction: Students' and professors' contributions to students' silence. *Journal of Higher Education*, *66*, 82–96.
Frisby, B. N., Berger, E., Burchett, M., Herovic, E., & Strawser, M. G. (2014). Participation apprehensive students: The influence of face support and instructor–student rapport on classroom participation. *Communication Education*, *63*, 105–123. doi:10.1080/03634523.2014.881516
Frisby, B. N., & Gaffney, A. L. (2015). Understanding the role of instructor rapport in the college classroom. *Communication Research Reports*, *32*, 340–346.
Frisby, B. N., & Martin, M. M. (2010). Instructor–student and student–student rapport in the classroom. *Communication Education*, *59*, 146–164. doi:10.1080/03634520903564362
Frisby, B. N., & Myers, S. A. (2008). The relationships among perceived instructor rapport, student participation, and student learning outcomes. *Texas Speech Communication Journal*, *33*, 27–34.
Frisby, B. N., Weber, K. D., & Beckner, B. N. (2014). Requiring participation: An instructor strategy to influence student interest and learning. *Communication Quarterly*, *62*, 308–322.
Frymier, A. B., & Houser, M. L. (1999). The revised learning indicators scale. *Communication Studies*, *50*, 1–12. doi:10.1080/10510979909388466
Girgin, K. Z., & Stevens, D. D. (2005). Bridging in-class participation with innovative instruction: Use and implications in a Turkish university classroom. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *42*, 93–106.
Goodboy, A. K., & Myers, S. A. (2008). The effect of teacher confirmation on student communication and learning outcomes. *Communication Education*, *57*, 153–179.
Goodboy, A. K., Myers, S. A., & Bolkan, S. (2012). Personalized education and student motives for communicating with instructors: An examination of Chinese and American classrooms. *China Media Research*, *8*(2), 94–100.
Gremler, D. D., & Gwinner, K. P. (2000). Customer-employee rapport in service relationships. *Journal of Service Research*, *3*, 82–104.
Guttenplan, D. D. (2013, April 8). An old ally sends droves of students to the U.S. *The New York Times.* Retrieved on September 4, 2015 from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/08/world/europe/08iht-educlede08.html?_r=0
Hess, J. A., Smythe, M. J., & Communication 451. (2001). Is teacher immediacy actually related to student cognitive learning? *Communication Studies*, *52*, 197–219. doi:10.1080/10510970109388554
Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Hofstede, G. (n.d.). What about Turkey? Retrieved from http://geert-hofstede.com/turkey.html
Hudson, P., & Savran-Gencer, A. (2009). Employing the five-factor mentoring instrument: Analysing mentoring practices for teaching primary science. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *32*, 63–74. doi:10.1080/02619760802509115
Julliard, K., Vivar, J., Delgado, C., Cruz, E., Kabak, J., & Sabers, H. (2008). What latina patients don't tell their doctors: A qualitative study. *Annals of Family Medicine*, *6*, 543–549. doi:10.1370/afm.912

Luo, J., Grady, M. L., & Bellows, L. H. (2001). Instructional issues for teaching assistants. *Innovative Higher Education*, *25*, 209–230.

Mansson, D. H., & Lee, H. B. (2014). American and South Korean engineering students' communication motives and their student–instructor communication satisfaction. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, *43*, 30–44. doi:10.1080/17475759.2013.869244

Mansson, D. H., & Myers, S. A. (2011). Swedish college students' academic involvement: Bridging culture, traits, and communicative behaviors. *Texas Speech Communication Journal*, *36*, 1–12.

Mazer, J. P. (2012). Development and validation of the student interest and engagement scales. *Communication Methods & Measures*, *6*, 99–125. doi:10.1080/19312458.2012.679244

McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (2006). Instructional communication: The historical perspective. In T. P. Mottet, V. P. Richmond, & J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Handbook of instructional communication: Rhetorical and relational perspectives* (pp. 33–47). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

McDougall, D., & Granby, C. (1996). How expectation of questioning method affects undergraduates' preparation for class. *Journal of Experimental Education*, *65*, 43–54. doi:10.1080/00220973.1996.9943462

de Mooij, M., & Hofstede, G. (2010). The Hofstede model: Applications to global branding and advertising strategy and research. *International Journal of Advertising*, *29*, 85–110.

Mottet, T. P., Frymier, A. B., & Beebe, S. A. (2006). Foundations of instructional communication. In T. P. Mottet, V. P. Richmond, & J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Instructional communication: Rhetorical and relational perspectives* (pp. 3–27). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Myers, S. A. (2004). Perceived aggressive instructor communication and student state motivation, learning, and satisfaction. *Communication Reports*, *15*, 113–121.

Olaniran, B. A., & Stewart, R. A. (1996). Instructional practices and classroom communication apprehension: A cultural explanation. *Communication Reports*, *9*, 193–203.

Perkins, D., Schenk, T. A., Stephan, L., Vrungos, S., & Wynants, S. (1995). Effects of rapport, intellectual excitement, and learning on students' perceived ratings of college instructors. *Psychological Reports*, *76*, 627–635.

Plax, T. G., Kearney, P., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1986). Power in the classroom VI: Verbal control strategies, nonverbal immediacy, and affective learning. *Communication Education*, *35*, 43–55.

Richmond, A. S., Berglund, M. B., Epelbaum, V. B., & Klein, E. M. (2015). A + (B[subscript 1]) professor--student rapport + (B[subscript 2]) humor + (B[subscript 3]) student engagement = (Y) student ratings of instructors. *Teaching of Psychology*, *42*, 119–125.

Rudick, C. K., & Golsan, K. B. (2014). Revisiting the relational communication perspective: Drawing upon relational dialectics theory to map an expanded research agenda for communication and instruction scholarship. *Western Journal of Communication*, *78*, 255–273. doi:10.1080/10570314.2014.905796

Santilli, V., Miller, A. N., & Katt, J. (2011). A comparison of the relationship between instructor nonverbal immediacy and teacher credibility in Brazilian and U.S. classrooms. *Communication Research Reports*, *28*, 266–274. doi:10.1080/08824096.2011.588583

Sellnow, D. D., Limperos, A., Frisby, B. N., Sellnow, T. L., Spence, P. R., & Downs, E. (2015). Expanding the scope of instructional communication research: Looking beyond classroom contexts. *Communication Studies*, *66*, 417–432. doi:10.1080/10510974.2015.1057750

Sidelinger, R. J., Bolen, D. M., McMullen, A. L., & Nyeste, M. C. (2015). Academic and social integration in the basic communication course: Predictors of students' out-of-class communication and academic learning. *Communication Studies*, *66*, 63–84. doi:10.1080/10510974.2013.856807

Tatar, S. (2005). Classroom participation by international students: The case of Turkish graduate students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *9*, 337–355.

Topbas, E. (2013). A comparison of teacher training programs in Turkey and Finland. *International Journal of Academic Research Part B*, *5*, 111–120. doi:10.7813/2075-4124.2013/5-4/B.16

Wilson, J. H., & Ryan, R. G. (2013). Professor–student rapport scale: Six items predict student outcomes. *Teaching of Psychology*, *40*, 130–133. doi:10.1177/0098628312475033

Witt, P. L., Wheeless, L. R., & Allen, M. (2004). A meta-analytical review of the relationship between teacher immediacy and student learning. *Communication Monographs*, *71*, 184–207. doi:10.1080/036452042000228054

Yildirim, I. (2006). Daily hassles and social support as predictors of academic achievement. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education*, *30*, 258–267.

Young, L. E., Horan, S. M., & Frisby, B. N. (2013). Fair and square? An examination of classroom justice and relational teaching messages. *Communication Education*, *62*, 333–351. doi:10.1080/03634523.2013.800216

Zhang, M. (2014). Rapport and knowledge: Enhancing foreign instructor credibility in the classroom. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, *2014*(138), 29–39. doi:10.1002/tl.20094

Zhang, Q., Oetzel, J. G., Gao, X., Wilcox, R. G., & Takai, J. (2007). Teacher immediacy scales: Testing for validity across cultures. *Communication Education*, *56*, 228–248. doi:10.1080/03634520601089092