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AUTHORS: Asli BUGAY SÖKMEZ,Muhammet COSKUN,Ayşe İRKÖRÜCÜ KÜÇÜK,Rakel DELEVI

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Difficulties in Emotion Regulation and Communication Skills: The Mediating Role of Co-Rumination

Aslı BUGAY SÖKMEZ^a  Muhammet COŞKUN^b  Ayşe IRKÖRÜCÜ KÜÇÜK^c 
Rakel DELEVİ^d 

^a Middle East Technical University, Guzelyurt, TRNC. ^b Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. ^c Ankara, Turkey. ^d California State University, California, USA

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ABSTRACT

Teaching highly depends on good communication skills including emotional regulation. This study specifically examines the mediating role of co-rumination between emotional regulation and communication skills in an educational setting. Data was collected from 4128 (1387 females, 2741 males) teachers working in the Turkish Ministry of National Education. Structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the mediator role of co-rumination in the relation between difficulties in emotion regulation and communication skills. Difficulties in emotion regulation predicted lower level of communication skills, which was mediated by co-rumination. Contrary to predictions, co-rumination was found to be positively correlated with communication skills. Thus, difficulties in emotion regulation lead individuals to co-ruminate more, which in return seems to be a positive variable that contributes to overall communication skills. Therefore, it can be inferred that when teachers with higher emotion regulation difficulties start to co-ruminate more, which positively increases their communication skills.

Communication skills are a crucial component of teaching, to thrive in their line of work, teachers must possess strong communication skills. It requires active and empathic listening, conscious interpretation of the message, and understandable expression of response both verbally and non-verbally, which in return motivates students and enables learning in educational settings (Duta, 2015). A teacher needs to be extremely knowledgeable in each of these areas in order to communicate and teach effectively. Proper verbal and nonverbal communication between teachers and students can be crucial in establishing a good relationship, which in turn can help them reach their educational goals (Bambaerloo & Shokrpour, 2017). The communication abilities of teachers have a direct impact on how well they perform in the classroom. If the teacher is competent at communicating, he or she will be able to present the lecture in an understandable way (Maes, Weldy & Icenogle, 1997). Research showed that when students perceive the communication skills of teachers as effective, the quality of education, and student learning and motivation increase (Frymier & Houser, 2000).

A minimum of two persons must share their information, feelings, thoughts, and lifestyles for interpersonal communication to take place. People communicate with others by using both verbal and non-verbal cues to convey a variety of messages. Along with numerous communications, moods and moods comprising emotions are also expressed during this message exchange (Ozkaral & Ustu, 2019). This shows the important role of emotions in communication. Teachers who use effective communication skills understand their students better, accept them unconditionally and experience more positive emotions toward their students, which positively

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR Muhammet COŞKUN, muhammetcoskun0794@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-6556-6783, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

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affects student behaviors and attitudes (Kısaç, 2002). It has also been found that healthy communication behaviors of teachers (i.e., eye contact, smiling, touching, etc.) are positively associated with students' interests and learning (Mazer, 2013). In a meta-analytic research based on 81 studies, Witt et al. (2004) concluded that teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy (e.g., smiling, moving close to, eye contact, etc.) is significantly related to students' effective learning. In the current study, it was aimed to understand the communication skills of teachers in the light of two emotion-related constructs: emotion regulation and co-rumination. The following sections discuss how these constructs are related and explain the hypothetical mediator model that was tested.

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation and Communication Skills

Emotion regulation refers to “the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1998, p. 275). It refers to an important set of skills as it is about managing both one's own and others' emotions effectively. Through emotion regulation, individuals can influence both their own and others' mood, and improve their interpersonal relationships (Williams et al., 2018).

Studies demonstrated that emotion regulation deficiencies might contribute to various mental health problems such as depression, anxiety (Berking et al., 2008), stress (Bardeen et al., 2012), eating disorders (Prefit & Szentagotai-Tatar, 2018) and so on. Teachers may be more vulnerable to these problems caused by emotion dysregulation because educational settings and classrooms are emotionally sensitive intense places that require emotional demands from teachers (Yin, 2016). In that sense, practicing emotion regulation is necessary for the well-being and functioning of teachers (Sutton et al., 2009).

Gratz and Roemer (2004), in Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), defined the elements of emotion dysregulation as (1) non-acceptance of negative emotions, (2) problems engaging in goal-directed behavior, (3) lack of control on impulsive behaviors, (4) lack of emotional awareness, (5) lack of strategy building, and (6) lack of emotional clarity.

Teaching and emotions go hand in hand; and thus, teaching has been described as an emotional endeavor (Schutz & Lanehart, 2002). More specifically, how emotions are displayed and regulated shape teacher behaviors in the classroom, and therefore impacts student learning either positively or negatively (Frenzel, 2014). Effective emotion regulation has a positive relation with positive educational outcomes (Boekerts, 2002). Sutton et al., (2009) showed that teachers' beliefs about how they regulate emotions were related to their job effectiveness. However, research on teachers' emotion regulation and how they might contribute to their communication skills is scarce.

Could emotion regulation difficulties be related to how teachers communicate in the classroom? It is known that employing emotion regulation strategies improve interpersonal functioning (Gross & John, 2003). Pallini et al., (2018) argued that the existence of difficulties in emotion regulation and especially the dysregulation of negative emotions is one of the important factors contributing to unhealthy communication, unfavorable interpersonal relationships, and attention problems. Emotion itself facilitates communicating information to other people, emotion regulation has the potential to improve communication skills (McMain et al., 2001). One study (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018) showed that school principals' emotion recognition ability, which is a prerequisite for emotion regulation (Yoo et al., 2006), was predictive of their positive behaviors toward teachers (e.g., transformational leadership). Moreover, teachers reported that they boost self-confidence when they communicate their positive emotions while managing their negative emotions, but teachers' emotions were not seriously taken into consideration in teaching practice (Sutton et al., 2009).

Co-rumination, Emotion Regulation, and Communication

Rumination is a mental process that involves repetitive, recurrent, and passive thinking about one's problems and their causes and consequences (Watkins, 2016). A rather new construct, co-rumination is a social rumination process that refers to talking to someone about one's negative experiences without focusing on any problem-solving, and it is a common communication and emotion regulation strategy (Rose, 2002). Rumination is likely to lead to co-rumination because ruminators often discuss the causes and meanings of

their difficulties with the people around them (Watkins, 2016). This excessive sharing of problems, i.e., co-rumination, may at times be helpful in gathering support (Boren, 2013). In fact, co-rumination is indicative of closeness and friendship quality among friends. In other words, the closer the friendship, the more likely one is to co-ruminate and find support (Rose et al., 2014). In a sense, co-rumination enhances social connectedness (Weaver & Bosson, 2011). Co-ruminating has also been found to be negatively associated with the frequency of one's negative behaviors. For instance, engaging in self-harming behavior was found to diminish by co-ruminating with friends and parents (Latina et al., 2015).

Furthermore, controlling for depressive symptoms, co-rumination was found to be negatively correlated with social anxiety (Starr & Davila, 2009), and positively with the emotion regulation skills of the ruminator (Stone et al., 2011). Given that the ruminator seeks social support, co-rumination might show similar benefits to having close friendships, which could promote emotional adjustment (Rose, 2002; Rose et al., 2007). For instance, a study carried out in the workplace found that co-rumination was associated with negative feelings about the problem at hand, which harms one's workplace adjustment; however, it was also positively associated with friendship satisfaction (Haggard et al., 2011).

On the other hand, co-rumination can also be problematic for one's emotional adjustment (Bugay-Sökmez et al., 2023) because of its emphasis on excessive problem talk (Rose et al., 2012). It could trigger internalizing symptoms including depressive symptoms and mood (Stone et al., 2011), higher peer stress (Rose et al., 2017), emotional distress (Calmes & Roberts, 2008), and increased stress level and burnout (Boren, 2013). Overall, it can be concluded that the literature provided mixed results as to the adaptive versus maladaptive nature of co-rumination as a communication style. In this study, it was hypothesized that difficulty in emotion regulation would positively affect co-rumination which also would positively contribute to the communication skills of teachers.

Studies on Teacher Communication Skills in the Turkish Context

Considering the studies in terms of emotional intelligence and communication skills conducted in Turkey, some studies have been presented in the following sentences. In one of these studies, the relationship between emotional intelligence and communication skills was investigated, and findings indicated a significant positive relationship between communication skills and emotional intelligence of students, however, this study was conducted with healthcare manager candidates, not with teachers (Erigüç & Köse, 2013). In another study, the influence of communication skills training on emotional intelligence was investigated and researchers reported that the communication skills training program increases the teachers' communication skills and emotional intelligence (Tuluhan & Yalçinkaya, 2018). Similarly, Ozkaral and Ustu (2019) also captured a positive association between communication skills of and emotional intelligence levels of teacher candidates. However, in the aforementioned study, only levels were investigated not the relations. It is suggested that prospective teachers' general communication skills and intellectual, emotional, and behavioral skills are at a moderate level (Tutkun, 2015). As can be seen from the mentioned research above, emotion, emotion regulation, and communication skills are variables are concepts that are not studied before in Turkish literature.

The Current Study

To reiterate, in this study a mediational model was hypothesized to examine the mediating role of co-rumination between emotion regulation and communication skills. Therefore, the research question of the current study was set up as "To what extent are communication skills explained by the proposed difficulties in the emotion regulation model as being mediated by co-rumination?". The hypotheses that are investigated in the present study are a) difficulties in emotion regulation are directly related to co-rumination and communication skills; b) co-rumination will be directly related to communication skills; and c) that co-rumination will have indirect effect on the relationship between difficulties in emotion regulation and communication skills.

Method

In the present study, according to the objectives, several steps were taken to test the structural relationship between emotion regulation difficulties, co-rumination, and communication skills. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used as the main analysis to test the pro-posed model and explain the relationships

between variables using LISREL 8.8. More specifically, this study investigated the direct paths from emotion regulation difficulties to co-rumination and communication skills as well as indirect paths in the relation between emotion regulation difficulties and communication skills through co-rumination. After that a regression-based bootstrapping approach was used to examine the hypothesized indirect effects. Before the main analysis, missing data were first identified, data screening and cleaning were completed, assumptions required for the main analysis were tested, and descriptive statistics were summarized using SPSS 22.

Participants

The participants of the current study were 4128 teachers composed of 1387 females (%33.60) and 2741 males (%66.40) working for the Turkish Ministry of National Education. Convenient sampling method to collect the data. The data collection was done online by posting an announcement of the present study in teacher forums. Prior to data collection, an informed consent form was shown first, the data collection was carried out on a voluntary base, and also data were collected and held anonymously. Data collection was performed in accordance with the principles stated in the Declaration of Helsinki, and ethical consent was obtained from Human Research Ethics Committee of Middle East Technical University with protocol number of 388-ODTU-2021.

Participants were asked to indicate their income levels as low, medium and high according to their self-evaluations of their monthly income. 11.2% of the participants reported their income as low, 84.7% as medium and 4.1% as high. 75.7% have an undergraduate degree, 23% have a master's degree, and 1.3% hold a PhD. The professional experience of the participants was grouped as 1 to 5 years (10.3%), 6 – 10 years (14.1%), 11-15 years (13.3%), 16-20 years (22.5%) 21-25 years (18.8%) and 25 plus (21.2%) with this regard professional experience of the participants mean was 3.89, standard deviation was 1.63. 8.5% of the participants were from the science field, 2.9% were from social sciences and 68.6 % were from other fields.

Instruments

The Communication Skills Scale (CSS; Korkut-Owen & Bugay, 2014). This scale consists of 25 items and 4 factors including communication principles and basic skills, personal expression, non-verbal expression and willingness to communicate. Sample items are: 'I wait for other person to finish his/her speech before I respond', 'I can express my thoughts clearly whenever I want.', 'I can sense the feeling of other person while listening to him.' Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .88), test-retest reliability (.81), and concurrent validity findings proved that the scale is reliable and valid to use. In the present study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient for the total Communication Skills Scale was found to be 0.95. Cronbach's alphas for the four subscales ranged from .80 to .88. The total score was used for this study.

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; Gratz & Roemer, 2004). This is a 36-item, 5-point Likert type self-report scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always) that aims to measure difficulties in emotion regulation. It consists of six subscales: clarity, impulse, awareness, non-acceptance, goals, and strategies. A sample item is: 'I feel at ease with my emotions.' The scale was adapted into Turkish by Rugancı and Gençöz (2010) who reported Cronbach's alpha score as 0.94, and the test-retest reliability as .83, which indicates a high-reliability level of this measurement tool. The internal consistency reliability coefficient for the present study data was .94. Cronbach's alphas for the six subscales ranged from .73 to .91.

The six-factor model of difficulties in emotion regulation scale was found to demonstrate poor fit with the data. When the awareness subscale was excluded, the data demonstrated a better fit. Previous studies also supported this five-factor model (e.g., Bardeen et al., 2012; Hal-lion et al., 2018). Therefore, in the current study, five-factor model was used. Difficulties in emotion regulation was utilized as a latent variable; thus, the total score was used like also it is used in earlier studies on psychometric properties of the DERS (Hallion et al., 2018). For the current study, the internal consistency of the 5-factor scale was .94.

The Co-rumination Questionnaire (CRS; Ross, 2002). This self-report inventory is a 27-item and 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (really true) that measures to which extent individuals tend to co-ruminate with others. A sample item is: 'We spend most of our time together while talking about my or my friend's problems.' Reliability and validity studies of this tool for a Turkish sample were carried out by Bugay and Erdur-Baker (2015), and this scale was found to be highly reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .95, and test-retest

reliability score = .90) and valid. For the present study, Cronbach's alpha was found to be .98. As co-rumination is a latent variable, the total score was used. Although co-rumination questionnaire does not have any subscale and it is a unidimensional questionnaire, prior to SEM, item parceling, a method in which an item is created by summing or calculating averages for multiple items (Bandalos, 2002) was used for the co-rumination variable. Observed variables with item parceling are CRUM1, CRUM2 and CRUM3.

Results

The Structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the mediator role of co-rumination in the relationship between difficulties in emotion regulation and communication skills. Prior to structural equation modeling, descriptive analysis was conducted. The means, standard deviations, and correlations between relevant variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Current Variables (N=4128)

Variables	\bar{X}	SD	1.	2.	3.
1. Communication Skills	104.56	13.14	-	-.30	.12
2. Difficulties in Emotion Regulation	63.43	21.92		-	.29
3. Co-Rumination	72.90	25.10			-

In the model, communication skills which were represented by communication principles and basic skills, personal expression, non-verbal expression, and willingness to communicate were used as outcome variables. On the other hand, difficulties in emotion regulation with dimensions clarity, awareness, impulse, non-acceptance, goals, and strategies were latent variables, and co-rumination was the mediator.

In advance of SEM, the necessary assumptions were checked. Two different data sets were tested with SEM to find the effect of outliers. One data set includes outliers and in the other data set outliers were excluded. There was no difference between the two data sets, thus we included the outliers in the dataset. Sample size adequacy was also checked. The current sample size ($N = 4128$) was found to be sufficient according to Klein (2016)'s suggested ratio of 10:1. Multicollinearity assumption was assessed, and no violations were found. In addition to these assumptions, univariate and multivariate normality were also investigated. While the former was found to be adequate, the latter was not as the multivariate normality assumption was not satisfied. Thus, Robust Maximum Likelihood estimation was used to remove the influence of non-normality. We used Satorra-Bentler scaling-corrected test statistic (Satorra & Bentler, 1994). The structure model was tested with LISREL 8.80. RMSEA, GFI, CFI, GFI, and SRMR model fit indexes were used to assess the model.

The results of the structural model indicated fit indices as Satorra-Bentler $\chi^2(51) = 833.87$, $p = .00$; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .98; NNFI = .98; GFI = .96; SRMR = .04. In the light of reference fit indices, it can be concluded that hypothesized model presented a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In the current model, Chi-Square/df ratio is higher than 5, however, the χ^2 statistic is very sensitive to sample size, and looking at other fit indices is suggested (Byrne, 2010).

The squared multiple correlation coefficients (R^2) were examined in order to explain the proportion of variance for each latent variable. The results of R^2 values demonstrated that difficulties in emotion regulation accounted for 15% of the variance in co-rumination. Moreover, difficulties in emotion regulation and co-rumination together explained 3% of the variance in communication skills.

In the structural model, in addition to model fit indices, the significant direct paths between difficulties in emotion regulation, communication skills and to co-rumination were observed. The direct effects from difficulties in emotion regulation to communication skills ($\beta = -0.13$, $p < .01$) and to co-rumination ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$) were significant. Moreover, the direct path from co-rumination to communication skills ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$) was also found to be significant. Klein (2016) suggested that standardized path coefficient (β) which is below .10 indicates small effect size, while around .30 is claimed as medium and higher .50 as large. According to Klein, standardized path coefficient (β) of the current model can be interpreted as low for paths of difficulties in emotion regulation to communication skills and co-rumination to communication skills, and medium for the path of difficulties in emotion regulation to co-rumination. Moreover, there is a negative relation between difficulties in emotion regulation to communication skills can be also highlighted.

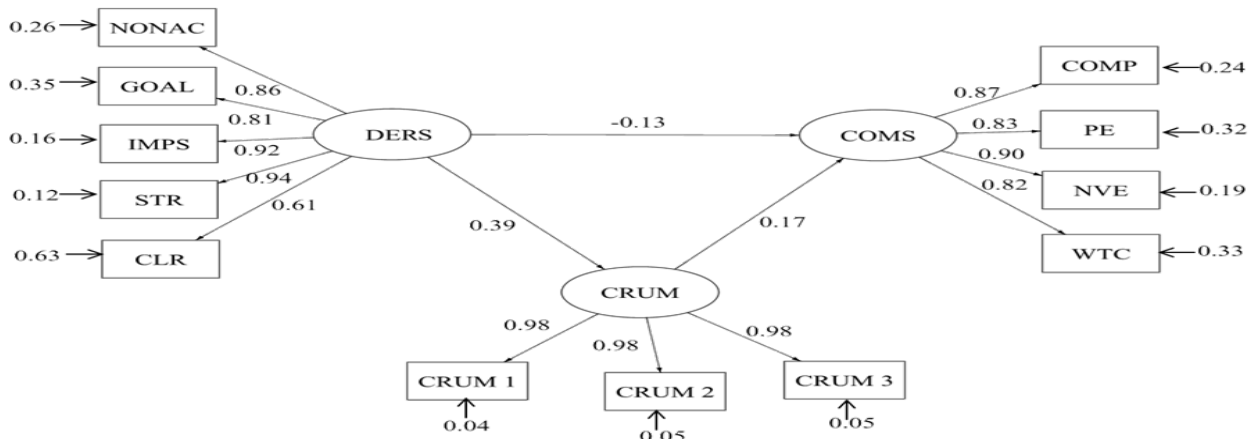
The indirect effect of difficulties in emotion regulation on communication skills through the influence of co-rumination was examined. Findings demonstrated that difficulties in emotion regulation ($\beta = .07$ $p < .01$) have a significant positive indirect effect on communication skills through co-rumination. In the light of these findings, it can be summarized that the direct and indirect paths are statistically significant which indicates that co-rumination plays a mediating role in the current model. The direct effect of emotion regulation difficulties on communication skills was negative and significant however when co-rumination intervenes the association this relationship was turned to significant and positive which means co-rumination changes the way of the relationships between emotion regulation difficulties on communication skills. In brief, when the individual difficulty level in emotion regulation increases, rumination, as a mediator, could mitigate the influence of emotion regulation difficulties on communication skills.

Building from significant direct and indirect paths between difficulties in emotion regulation, communication skills, and co-rumination, it was decided to use bootstrapping method to produce a confidence interval for the mediational effect of co-rumination. To eliminate the limitations of cross-sectional data on mediation analysis coefficient approaches was recommended (Fairchild & McDaniel, 2017). Thus, the mediated association was estimated using the product of coefficients approach.

The hypothesized mediation model was evaluated by using Process Macro v3.2 (Model 4) which is an SPSS procedure (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Before assessing the mediated effect, a mediation regression was evaluated to understand the relationships between variables. Baron and Kenny's (1986) suggest a four-step procedure in mediation analysis which are; (1) significant effect of independent variable (difficulties in emotion regulation) on mediator (co-rumination), (2) significant effect of independent variable (difficulties in emotion regulation) on dependent variable (communication skills), (3) significant effect of dependent variable (communication skills) on mediator (co-rumination), (4) a weaker or insignificant effect on independent variable (difficulties in emotion regulation) on dependent variable (communication skills) in the presence of mediator (co-rumination).

In the mediation model, Figure 1 provides the estimated standardized regression coefficients of the hypothesized mediation model. In the first path, it can be seen that the direct effect of the difficulties in emotion regulation on the co-rumination was significant ($\beta = .3836$, $t = 22.83$; $p < .05$), which means difficulties in emotion regulation significant predictor of the co-rumination. Another path was from mediator to dependent variable that is from co-rumination to communication skills, which also indicated a significant and positive relationship ($\beta = .1084$, $t = 13.11$; $p < .05$). In consideration of the direct effect of difficulties in emotion regulation on communication skills was also significant, but the relationship was negative ($\beta = -.1718$, $t = -18.14$; $p < .05$). All paths were significant as suggested by Baron and Kenny's (1986).

Figure 1. Figure 1



Note. DERS= difficulties in emotion regulation (NONAC= non-acceptance, GOAL=goals, IMPS=impulse, STR= strategies, CLR=clarity), COMS= communication skills (COMP=communication principles and basic skills, PE=personal expression, NVE =

non-verbal expression, WTC=willingness to communicate), CRUM=co-rumination (CRUM1, 2, 3 are the parcels for co-rumination variable)

A regression-based bootstrapping approach was used to examine the hypothesized indirect effects. The results of the mediation analysis indicated that co-rumination significantly partially mediated the relationship between difficulties in emotion regulation and communication skills. The bootstrap estimates results presented that 95% bias-corrected confidence interval was above zero. The difficulties in emotion regulation had a significant total effect on communication skills was significant ($TE = -.1302$, $SE = .0091$, $p = .0000$), a significant residual direct effect ($DE = -.1718$, $SE = .0095$, $p = .0000$) and a significant effect ($IE = .0416$, $SE = .0043$, $LLCI = .0334$, $ULCI = .0501$). According to these results, it can be inferred that difficulties in emotion regulation predict communication skills through the mediation of co-rumination. Results were presented in Table 1.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between emotion regulation difficulties, co-rumination, and communication skills in detail with a sample of teachers. Accordingly, the structural relation between emotion regulation difficulties, co-rumination and communication skills were tested. Findings revealed that difficulties in emotion regulation accounted for 15% of the variance in co-rumination. Moreover, difficulties in emotion regulation and co-rumination together explained %3 of the variance in communication skills. Therefore, co-rumination was found to decrease the negative effect of difficulties in emotion regulation on communication skills.

Direct and indirect paths were also examined. The first direct path was from difficulties in emotion regulation to communication skills. Difficulties in emotion regulation had a strong negative influence on communication skills. In other words, participants who experience difficulty in emotion regulation also tended to experience difficulty in communication skills. It was an expected outcome that individuals who become good at learning and understanding emotions also become good at communicating with others according to previous research (Eisenberg et al., 2005). For instance, training to improve the communication skills of participants with diabetic neuropathy made these individuals suffer less from difficulties in emotion regulation (Heydarian et al., 2018). In Turkey, Dagal (2017) concluded that there was not a significant overall association between emotion regulation and communication skills of children, but a significant relation was detected among subscales of Emotion Regulation and Communication Skills such as between negativity subscale of Emotion Regulation and 'Reacting Positively toward Others' subscale of Communication Skills. After receiving dialectical behavior therapy program, a client with borderline personality disorder which is associated with serious difficulties in emotion regulation reported to develop better communication skills (McMain et al., 2001). Even difficulties in emotion regulation were found to have a mediator role between a man's restrictive emotionality and how to communicate his psychological distress (Cohn et al., 2010). Thus, the way of regulating emotions can impact the way how it is communicated. As Pallini et al., (2018) argued, emotion dysregulation influences healthy communication and interpersonal relationships negatively, and that is what this present study supported.

Secondly, by augmented difficulty in emotion regulation, participants became more likely to co-ruminate. Interestingly, participants with high level of co-rumination tended to get their communication skills enhanced. While participants have difficulty in regulating emotions, they can start sharing their problems with their friends more, which can improve one's communication skills, and this improvement may affect the direction of the negative relation between emotion regulation difficulties and communication skills. Co-rumination has positive correlation with emotion regulation difficulties and it has positive correlation with communication skills. This shows the two-sided effect of co-rumination; as a negative emotion regulation strategy, co-rumination increases the severity of the person's distress related to emotion regulation increases, which pushes the individuals to share their problems with the others through self-disclosure, which in turn is expected to increase their communication skills. This finding might seem paradoxical because as it is a negative emotion regulation strategy a destructive effect of co-rumination was expected; however, this study demonstrated a constructive influence of co-rumination. However, as Rose (2002) claimed, co-rumination has a paradoxical influence on different concepts. As also discussed in the literature, co-rumination is also a sort of communication (Rose, 2002), and a kind of social support with more negative content (Boren, 2013; Rose,

2002). In other words, co-rumination and communication cannot be separated from each other. Therefore, when the relationships between emotion regulation difficulties, co-rumination and communication skills are considered as a whole, it can be concluded that the relations between emotion regulation difficulties and co-rumination are weaker than the relations between co-rumination and communication skills.

The indirect path presented the association between communication skills and difficulties in emotion regulation through co-rumination. The result showed that difficulties in emotion regulation predict communication skills through the mediation of co-rumination. That is, the model confirmed that difficulties in emotion regulation affected communication skills both directly and through the mediating effect of co-rumination.

To sum up, while emotion regulation difficulties have a negative relationship with communication skills, it has a positive relationship with co-rumination. Literature asserts that co-rumination has both positive and negative sides. It increases anxiety and negative symptoms by making individuals talk repetitively and negatively focusing on the negative sides of the experienced problem (Rose et al., 2007). However, it also increases social functioning as being a specific type of self-disclosure (Rose, 2002). Co-rumination enables social support including emotional support and presenting sympathy (Fenlason & Beehr, 1994). Unlike rumination, co-rumination requires a social process that helps individuals establish emotionally closer and higher quality friendships (Haggard et al., 2011; Rose, 2002; Rose et al., 2007). Thus, individuals who use co-rumination actively need friends which in turn require communication skills to have closer friends (Keshishlan et al., 2016). This close friendship means providing social support that decreases emotional exhaustion through the mediator role of co-rumination (Boren, 2013).

Overall, the current study contributed to the enlightenment of the reasons and consequences of factors influencing the communication skills of teachers, which is crucial to a healthy educational setting. Although their difficulties in emotion regulation negatively affect their communication skills, co-rumination eases this negative impact. In other words, when teachers increase in self-disclosure of their problems with others, side effects of emotion regulation difficulties decrease. This in return leads to improvement in communication skills. However, considering the cruciality of communication skills in educational setting, teachers must know how to regulate and communicate their emotions, which is an essential indicator of their competence (Muehlbacher et al., 2022). Both intrapersonal and interpersonal emotion regulation capacity are key to teachers' well-being, self-efficacy, job satisfaction (Hoffmann et al., 2020), belongingness to school (Arslan & Coşkun, 2023), and satisfying relationships with other stakeholders (Ocak-Karabay, 2019). Hence, the main suggestion of findings of the current study is to develop and apply intervention programs for enhancing emotion regulation skills of teachers. In fact, a teacher must have effective communication skills (Bıçak & Yöndem, 2008), but it does not seem possible with difficulties in emotion regulation because understanding and communicating emotions are prerequisite for building positive communication between teachers and students (Morrish et al., 2018). Even the current study captured the functional role of co-rumination between difficulties in emotion regulation and communication skills of teacher since co-rumination itself is an interpersonal emotion regulation strategy (Tudder et al., 2022). Nevertheless, while some cultures, especially in Western ones, have already been come up with such programs to improve emotion regulation skills of teachers (e.g., Fried, 2011; Wimmer et al., 2019), to the best of our knowledge, no such a program has been examined in Turkey. As a result, effective training programs targeting emotion regulation skills of educators should be developed so that they can communicate in a more functional and flourishing way, which is crucial for a healthy school climate.

The study is not without some limitations. First of all, the teaching profession requires a great amount of communication; thus, communication skills of the current sample might not be representative of those from another profession. Another limitation is about the scales that were used. More specifically, Communications Skills Scale, Emotional Regulation, and Co-Rumination Scales are not specific to communication in the classroom, but rather measure general interpersonal communication skills. Thus, further studies can develop scales that are specific to classroom communication.

Lastly, an online self-report survey was used, which might be impacted by personal biases and social desirability. In addition, due to problems with Internet access, it may not have reached as many people as would be desirable. Overall, it should be noted that the study is a correlational and cross-sectional study that does not allow conclusions to be drawn about causality.

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