Reviewer’s report

Title: Agreement between parents and adolescents on emotional and behavioral problems and its associated factors among Chinese school adolescents: a cross-sectional study

Version: 2

Date: 29 November 2013

Reviewer: Wan-Ling Tseng

Major Compulsory Revisions:

I appreciate the opportunity to read this revised manuscript titled “Agreement between parents and adolescents on emotional and behavioral problems and its associated factors among Chinese school adolescents: a cross-sectional study.” The revised version is improved over the original submission. However, there are still some issues that I hope that the authors would clarify and address.

1. I appreciate the authors’ effort in adding more information to support their rationale of investigating specific factors associated with parent-adolescent disagreement. However, in several places, the argument is unclear and vague. For example:

(a). On p. 5, line 4-5, the authors wrote “…. a conflicting evidence existed regarding the direction of age effect on informant agreement.” This is unclear given that the study cited (Berg-Nielsen et al., 2003) showed that, with increasing age, discrepancies between CBCL and YSR decreased. I don’t see why this is a conflicting evidence. Please clarify.

(b). The sentence on p. 5, line 5-6, is vague. Please be specific as to how the quality of parent-children relationship could also “indirectly” influence the disagreement between parent and their children. Same issue for the statement in line 10-11 “different parental function itself can [directly] influence their child behavior and emotion.”

2. I thank the authors for providing information regarding SES and class size in their response letter. It would be informative for the readers to know more about the sample characteristics. I suggest the authors add the info about SES and class size in the manuscript.

3. Maybe I am mistaken, but I don’t understand why Cronbach’s alphas for internalizing scale and externalizing scale are in ranges. I believe one Cronbach’s alpha for each internalizing and externalizing scales can be calculated using the scores after referencing age and gender norms.

4. I thank the authors for their responses to my comment regarding the single-item measurement (for parent-adolescent relationship and parental expectation). I understand their concern about the length of the questionnaire.
Although internal consistency cannot be inferred using a single item, reliability can be assessed using the intraclass correlation (ICC), if the authors have data from more than one time point or if previous studies have used a similar item to support the reliability of such measurement (e.g., Korkeila et al., 2004; Wu et al., 2009, as the authors described?). Likewise, concurrent validity or predictive validity in relation to other measures can be examined. If the authors have information on these, please add it in the manuscript, as information like this would help the readers better evaluate the findings.

5. The range of Cronbach’s alpha of the 7 subscales in the FES is 0.42-0.81. I wondered how many subscales’ alphas are lower than 0.70? Please clarify, as low internal consistency (e.g., under 0.70) may undermine the validity of the findings.

6. I agree with Reviewer 2’s suggestion about conducting a 2 x 2 repeated measure ANOVA with informant as a within-subject variable, and including age as variable in the analysis. It looks like the authors took the suggestion and conducted such analysis; however, there are several issues that await clarification:

(a) the description in p.11, line 2-3, did not accurately reflect this analysis.
(b) did the authors use age as a categorical variable in the analysis? If so, please describe how they categorize age and provide justification, if any.
(c) several significant 2-way and 3-way interactions were found, but no follow-up analyses were conducted to decipher the interaction effects. Post hoc comparisons are needed to break down the interactive effects of gender, informants, and/or age on the problem scores.

7. The authors conducted univariate analysis, as well as regression, to examine the association between parent-adolescent discrepancies and child, parent and family factors. Univariate analysis seems redundant to me, and it involves testing more than 30 models (with 3 outcome variables (DVs): total scale, internalizing and externalizing scales and 11 IVs), which should be justified with some sort of corrections for multiple comparisons.

8. It is unclear if only one regression analysis (with all IVs) or multiple ones (with one IV at a time) were conducted. Please clarify.


10. There are still many syntax and grammatical errors, as well as imprecise wording or improper usage of words. I encourage the authors to address these issues in their next revision.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being
published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.