Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of parent-adolescent bonding on school bullying and mental health in Vietnamese cultural setting: evidence from the Global School-based Health Survey.

Version: 1 Date: 14 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Nora McIntyre

Reviewer's report:

General comments

- I am not convinced that parental control can be described as one dimension in parent-child bonding. I might expect parent control to be a predictor of decreased bonding rather than them being part of the same construct. Do authors have a basis for putting acceptance and control under the same umbrella, then naming that bonding? I am open to persuasion but please provide a strong basis for this decision from the literature. Otherwise, I would suggest using a more neutral term to group acceptance and control, such as parent-child 'relationship' or 'dynamics'. To be clear, I do not recommend using 'connection' instead of bonding because it shares the same problem.

Introduction

- Please provide a convincing argument for choosing to focus on Vietnam out of all the Asian countries. Is it representative of wider Asian cultures in some way? Is there a particular aspect of the Vietnamese mindset that particular disposes its members towards loneliness and suicide ideation? The authors seem to present the cultural specificity to be a major contribution of this research. It is therefore important to demonstrate why culture should be such a focus in parenting and child mental health research. By the way, I would describe this area of the world as East Asian rather than Asian, as there are vast differences in mindset and values among Asian nations.

- No hypotheses have been presented at the end of the Introduction which actually makes the Results and Discussion sections difficult to follow. Please add these and organise the Results and Discussion sections accordingly.

Method

- The parent acceptance measure contains an item that is more monitoring-related than acceptance (or understanding or nurturing) related. I think Reviewer 1 disputed the use of this item as part of the control dimension, but I don't think moving it under acceptance is appropriate
either. Authors should consider dropping data based on this item altogether, framing monitoring as 'positive control' in contrast to 'negative control' that the current parent control item reflects, or integrating a third parenting dimension (monitoring) into the manuscript's framework. I believe Reviewer 2 suggested something similar previously.

- Reviewer 1 picked up on the use of single items to as dimensions in whole constructs being examined in this paper. I am not satisfied with authors' responses to this comment. I am not convinced that having a large sample made it that much more difficult to utilise an existing, established and more reliable scale (PBI) for investigating the key constructs in this study. The sensitivity argument is flawed, because the topic of parent-child relationship has already been raised via the students' participation in this study: to request multiple responses to closed questions such as in the PBI is not a significantly greater demand. I'm afraid this is a major limitation in this research and is possibly insurmountable, unless authors provide a more convincing rationale or collect new data using a multi-scale instrument.

- As Reviewer 2 had already pointed out, the variables that you describe as binary actually appear to be continuous. Please amend your phrasing.

Discussion

- The third paragraph in the Discussion seems insightful but it does not yet clearly relate to the findings in this manuscript.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.
I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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