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Establishing the Content Validity Study of the Malay version of Parenting Scale (M-PS)

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Abstract

This study reports the content validity findings of the Malay-translated version of the Parenting Scale (PS). The objective is to identify relevant items from the translated version. The content validity was evaluated using a relevance score by two groups of parents: 10 parents without disabilities and 10 parents with physical disabilities. The study is a cross-sectional design to assess the Content Validity Index (CVI), including I-CVI, S-CVI/Ave, and modified kappa statistics. Findings indicated that several items required elimination, revision, or retention, ensuring cultural and contextual appropriateness of the PS for Malaysian parents, including those with physical disabilities.

Keywords: The Parenting Scale; Malay-Parenting Scale, Occupational therapy, content validity

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1.0 Introduction

Parenting and parent–child relationships are of interest to family research, as approaches supporting children's transition from childhood to adolescence and later into adulthood form the foundation for social, emotional, and cognitive growth (Koepke & Denissen, 2012). Parenting is a process by which parents instil their beliefs, practices, and behaviours in their children (Bornstein, 2019). Within the Malaysian context, parenting practices are deeply influenced by cultural norms, religious beliefs, and socio-economic factors (Noor & Leong, 2013; Abdullah et al., 2020).

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Discipline is a strategy to regulate children's behaviour, inconsistent with social values, and encourage self-regulation (Grusec & Hastings, 2015). In Malaysia, parenting discipline often reflects a hybrid approach, combining traditional authoritarian methods with more contemporary, authoritative styles (Chong & Yeo, 2018). While hierarchical family structures emphasising obedience remain prevalent, there is a growing shift toward nurturing practices that promote autonomy and open communication (Abdullah et al., 2020). Consistent with global trends, parenting researchers increasingly emphasise positive discipline and supportive, non-punitive practices, highlighting that harsh or inconsistent practices increase the risk of externalising behaviours and poor emotional regulation, whereas supportive, consistent discipline fosters prosocial skills, self-control, and secure parent–child bonds (Pinquart, 2017; Lansford et al., 2021; WenLi, 2025). A scoping review on parenting interventions found the majority of studies relied primarily on parent self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability and recall bias (Garces-Davila et al., 2024); therefore, a culturally appropriate scale is crucial.

Despite its importance, research on parenting discipline in Malaysia faces a methodological limitation: the lack of standardised and culturally validated instruments. The Parenting Scale (PS), developed by Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, and Acker (1993), is one of the most widely used measures of dysfunctional discipline practices. The PS assess three domains: Laxness, Overreactivity, and Verbosity. The former two dimensions, permissiveness and harshness, have consistently shown strong psychometric properties across studies (Rhoades & O'Leary, 2007). The PS has been adapted into several languages, including Spanish (López-Fernández, Gómez-Benito, & Barrios, 2022), Chinese (Xia et al., 2018), and Dutch (Prinzie et al., 2007), where it has generally demonstrated reliability and construct validity.

The significance of the current study lies in its provision of a culturally adapted tool that reflects Malaysian parenting values and disciplinary practices. Second, it contributes to disability-inclusive research, ensuring that parents with disabilities are represented in the research. Third, it has practical implications for managing parenting and childcare via a culturally appropriate self-measure. In summary, this study aims to translate and establish the content validity of the Parenting Scale in Malay, ensuring its items are linguistically accurate and relevant to Malaysian parents, including those with physical disabilities. The research objectives are to translated the original PS into Malay version of Parenting Scale (M-PS), to evaluate the item-level content validity (I-CVI) of the M-PS, to evaluate the item-level content validity (I-CVI) of the M-PS, to assess the scale-level content validity (S-CVI/Ave and S-CVI/UA) of the M-PS.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 The parenting scales.

The Parenting Scale (PS), developed by Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, and Acker (1993), is a well-established self-report measure designed to assess dysfunctional discipline practices in parents of children aged 18 months to 7 years. The scale includes three primary dimensions: Laxness, Overreactivity, and Verbosity, although the latter has been less stable psychometrically (Arnold et al., 1993). In the original, internal consistency was acceptable for the Laxness (α = .83) and Overreactivity (α = .82) subscales. However, the Verbosity scale demonstrated lower reliability (α = .63). Test–retest reliability over a two-week interval ranged from .79 to .83 for the total scale and its subscales, indicating temporal stability. Correlations with observational measures of parenting and child behaviour problems supported construct validity.

2.2 Parenting Scales Validity Studies

The content validity index (CVI) is one of the most important factors to consider when measuring adaptation and validation of study instruments, particularly in translational research, which involves adapting from different contexts and populations (Squires et al., 2013). Multiple translated versions of the Parenting Scale have been developed, with varying degrees of psychometric support. Spanish Version: Fuentes et al. (2004) validated a Spanish version with parents in Spain, reporting acceptable internal consistency (α = .75–.82) and a comparable two-factor structure (Laxness and Overreactivity). Chinese Version: Leung et al. (2009) adapted the PS in Hong Kong and found good internal consistency (Laxness α = 0.78, Overreactivity α = 0.81); however, some cultural modifications were required. Their results also supported the two-factor model and established criterion validity with measures of child behavioural problems. Turkish Version Önder and Gülay (2010) examined the psychometric properties of the Turkish version of the PS among mothers of preschoolers. Their findings indicated acceptable internal consistency (α > .70) and a similar factor structure, though the Verbosity scale again showed limited reliability. Prandstetter et al. (2023) reported strong psychometric performance of the subscales across multiple versions of PS. This ongoing support highlights the relevance of scale in parenting research.

2.3 Needs of Malay Version-Parenting scale

To ensure cultural relevance, the present study evaluates content validity through the expertise of parents, focusing on how well the translated items reflect parenting discipline in Malaysia. Establishing robust content validity is essential before examining broader construct validity (Squires et al., 2013). Cultural norms shape parenting constructs such as discipline and verbal communication; thus, Western-developed tools are unlikely to cover Malaysian parenting norms (Masiran, 2022). For instance, the long verbal reprimands, referred to as "verbosity," which is most likely to be found in collectivist cultures, such as Malaysia, are perceived as a positive form of parental guidance, rather than a dysfunctional discipline.

Research reported parents with physical disabilities face challenges in parenting practices, such as physical limitations, stigma, and limited accessibility to services (Auger et al., 2023; Haworth et al., 2024; Lightfoot et al., 2024). For instance, mothers with disabilities often need to adapt childcare tasks, equipment, or restructure their surroundings (Iezzoni et al., 2019) and lack parenting competence perceived by society (Jetha et al., 2025). This study, therefore, addresses two critical gaps: the absence of a Malay version of the Parenting Scale and the lack of disability-inclusive adaptation. By involving non-disabled parents and parents with physical disabilities, the study ensures that the Malay version of the Parenting scale has the potential to be used in diverse parenting contexts in Malaysia.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Procedure

This study used a cross-sectional content validation approach to assess the relevance of items in the Malay-translated Parenting Scale (M-PS). A cross-sectional method is commonly recommended for early-stage instrument validation because it allows researchers to collect expert ratings and user feedback at a single point in time, ensuring feasibility and efficiency (Yusoff, 2019). Polit & Beck (2021) and Almanasreh et al. (2019 supported the use of cross-sectional designs in scale adaptation, especially if the objective is to determine content accuracy before engaging in more extensive psychometric testing.

The CVI was utilised due to its strong methodological support in health and psychosocial research. The CVI quantifies expert agreements by two indicators. First, the item-Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI), which is the proportion of experts rating the items as relevant. Second, the overall scale relevance, that is, the Scale-Level Content Validity Index (S-CVI). Content validity is essential in cross-cultural appropriateness before proceeding to reliability and construct validation. (Almanasreh et al., 2019; Escalada-Hernández et al., 2022).

The translation process was adapted from Musa.

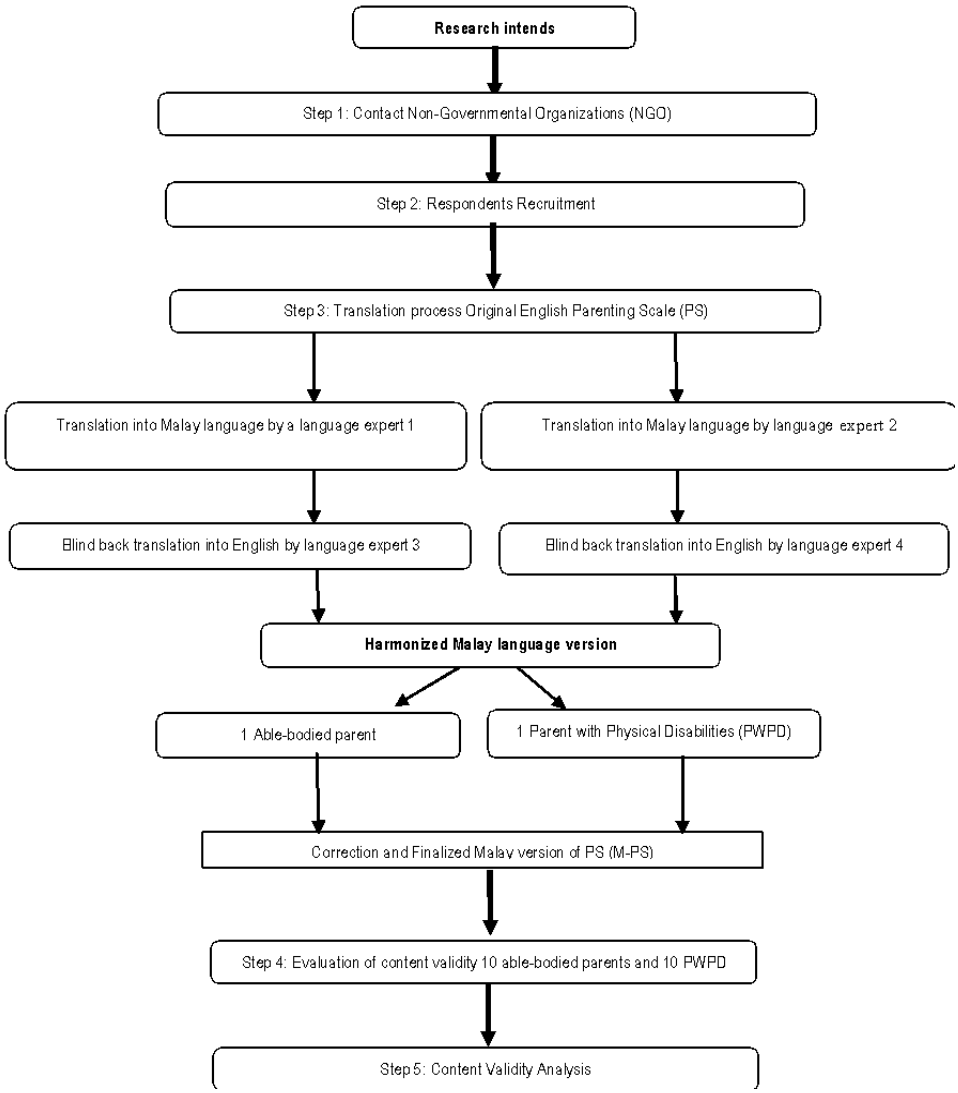

Figure 1: Content validity research process of the Malay version of the Parenting Scale, Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, and Acker (1993).

The instructions on how to answer the scales were provided, and the respondents were ensured to fully understand the instructions before answering all the questions. Each item has a relevance scale, ranging from 1 (not relevant) to 4 (highly relevant). Then, the respondents were contacted by phone, and a meeting was arranged at their location.

3.2 The respondents' criteria

Group 1 criteria include parents with no physical disabilities and proficiency in both Malay and English. Group 2 are parents with physical disabilities due to spinal cord injury, mobility impairment due to stroke and amputation. Group 2 parents were able to understand and speak the Malay language well. All respondents live with and care for a child below 18 years old.

There were three categories of respondents: the first category consisted of two parents familiar with people with disabilities by relation for the harmonisation process, the second category comprised non-disabled parents, and the third category consisted of parents with physical disabilities. The second and third categories are members of a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) introduced by the committee upon consent. Exclusion criteria for respondents include cognitive impairment, aphasia, a current or history of psychiatric illness, and any traits that may pose difficulties during the interview.

This dual-group approach chosen for two reasons, first, representation of diverse parenting experiences as parenting discipline practice may differ based on physical ability, environmental demands, and support systems (Harworth et al, 2024; Ligfoot et al, 2024), therefore it is crucial to include parents with disabilities as they are unrepresented groups especially when adapting instruments(Jetha et al., 2025) Second, cultural appropriateness, parents with differing background strengthen the ecological validity of the adapted instrument.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Demographics of respondents

Respondents in the study are parents without disabilities, labelled as group 1, and parents with physical disabilities (PWPD), labelled as group 2. Age respondents in group 1 are forty per cent between the ages of 30 and 39, and 40 and 49. Eighty per cent of the Group 2 parents are female, and Group 2 parents consisted of 50% males and 50% females. A contrast was observed in educational attainment. All Group 1 participants had completed tertiary education with a first degree, at 90.0%, and one respondent had a postgraduate qualification, at 10.0%. Conversely, Group 2 demonstrated educational diversity, with 60.0% having completed secondary education, 20% holding a diploma, 10.0% having graduated from a technical school, and the remaining individuals having completed their education at the primary school level.

Table 1: Demographics of respondents

	Frequency(n)		Per cent (%)		Mean		Median	
	Group 1 Able-bodied	Group 2 (PWPD)	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
Age								
20-29	1	1	10.0	10.0				
30-39	4	4	40.0	40.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
40-49	4	4	40.0	40.0				
50-59	1	1	10.0	10.0				
Gender								
Male	2	5	20.0	50.0	1.8	1.5	2.0	1.5
Female	8	5	80.0	50.0				
Education Status								
Primary school		1		10.0				
Sec. school		6		60.0				
Tech. Cert.		1		10.0	5.0	2.4	5.1	2.4
Diploma		2		20.0				
Degree	9		90.0					
Master	1		10.0					
Number of children								
1-2	6	5	60.0	50.0				
3-4	3	4	30.0	40.0	1.6	1.6	1.0	1.5
5-6	1	1	10.0	10.0				

4.2 Content validation

The relevance of each item in the M-PS was presented with the Item Content Validity Index (I-CVI), and the Scale-level content validity score (S-CVI) was the final average of the I-CVI scores, probability of chance agreement (Pc), and modified kappa (k*). The result is presented in Table 2. Content validity of each scale item was evaluated using the Item-Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI), which represents the proportion of experts rating the item as “quite relevant” or “highly relevant” (scores 3 or 4). Consistent with established guidelines, items with I-CVI ≥ 0.90 were considered excellent and retained; those with I-CVI between 0.70 and 0.90 were revised for review; and items with I-CVI < 0.70 were eliminated (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). This aligns with earlier benchmarks, suggesting that I-CVI > 0.79 is acceptable, 0.70–0.79 is ambiguous and requires modification, and < 0.70 is unacceptable (Polit & Beck, 2006). This study will retain items with a score above 0.80, revise items with a score between 0.71 and 0.79, and eliminate those with a score below 0.70.The content validity calculation as figure 1 below.

$$\text{I-CVI} = \frac{\text{number of raters scoring an item with a 3 or 4}}{\text{Total expert}}$$

$$P_c = \left[\frac{N!}{[A!\,(N-A)!]}\right] * \times 5^N \qquad k^* = \frac{\text{I-CVI} - p_c}{1\ p_c}$$

k^* = Modified Kappa coefficient
P_c = probability of random correlation coefficient
N = Number of experts
A = Number of very important scores (3 or 4)

Figure 1: Content validity calculation

Table 2: Results of content validity M-PS I-CVI, Pc, k* between group 1 and group 2

Item	Group 1 (N=10)			Decision	Group 2 (N=10)			Decision
	I-CVI	P_c	k*		I-CVI	P_c	k*	
Item 1	0.80	0.044	0.791	Revise	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 2	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 3	0.50	0.246	0.337	Eliminate	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 4	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 5	0.70	0.117	0.66	Eliminate	0.60	0.205	0.497	Eliminate
Item 6	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 7	0.60	0.205	0.497	Eliminate	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 8	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 9	0.60	0.205	0.497	Eliminate	0.90	0.010	0.90	Retain
Item 10	0.60	0.205	0.497	Eliminate	0.90	0.010	0.90	Retain
Item 11	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 12	0.90	0.010	0.90	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 13	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 14	0.90	0.010	0.90	Retain	0.80	0.044	0.791	Revise
Item 15	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 16	0.80	0.044	0.791	Revise	0.80	0.044	0.791	Revise
Item 17	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 18	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	0.50	0.246	0.337	Eliminate
Item 19	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.000	Retain
Item 20	0.90	0.010	0.90	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 21	0.90	0.010	0.90	Retain	0.80	0.044	0.791	Revise
Item 22	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 23	0.80	0.044	0.791	Revise	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 24	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 25	0.90	0.010	0.90	Retain	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 26	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain	0.90	0.010	0.90	Retain
Item 27	0.70	0.117	0.66	Eliminate	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
Item 28	0.30	0.117	0.207	Eliminate	0.50	0.246	0.337	Eliminate
Item 29	0.80	0.044	0.791	Revise	0.70	0.117	0.66	Revise
Item 30	0.80	0.044	0.791	Revise	1.00	0.001	1.00	Retain
	$S\text{-CVI}_{ave}$= 0.85				$S\text{-CVI}_{ave}$ = 0.91			
	$S\text{-CVI}_{UA}$ = 0.433				$S\text{-CVI}_{UA}$ = 0.633			

The grading used in this study for the average method S-CVI is ≥ 0.90, which indicates excellent content validity; 0.80–0.89 is considered good / Acceptable content validity, and < 0.80 is considered to need revision (Polit & Beck, 2006). The grading for universal agreement S-CVI is ≥ 0.80, which is Strong agreement among experts, 0.60 – 0.79 is Moderate agreement, and < 0.60 is low agreement. Reference points for the kappa statistic are Polit et al. (2007) recommend the following cut-offs (based on Cicchetti & Sparrow, 1981): κ* < 0.40 is Poor agreement, κ* = 0.40–0.59 is Fair agreement, κ* = 0.60–0.74 is Good agreement and κ* ≥ 0.75 is Excellent agreement.

4.3 The M-PS content validity

The average scale validity for Group 1 (S-CVI) is 0.85, whereas Group 2, which consists of parents with physical disabilities, had overall relevance scores of 0.91, indicating excellent validity. Reasonable rates of content validity indexes were observed when I-CVI, S-CVI Ave, and S-CVI universal agreement scores were at least 0.78, 0.90, and 0.80, respectively (Polit, Beck, & Owen, 2007). However, the S-CVI universal agreement for group 1 is 0.433, and the S-CVI universal agreement for group 2 is 0.633.

Content validity and modified kappa highlighted results for Group 1 show the need to eliminate items 3, 7, 9, 10, and 28. Whereas Group 2 results suggested eliminating items 5, 18, and 28. Both groups agreed that item 28 is weak. There are five items to revise for Group 1 and four items to revise for Group 2. Eighteen items are retained for group 1, and twenty-three are retained for group 2. Details are shown in Table 2.

The Malay version of the Parenting Scale demonstrated acceptable to excellent content validity overall, with group differences offering valuable insights. Among non-disabled parents (Group 1), the average scale validity (S-CVI/Ave) was 0.85, while parents with physical disabilities (Group 2) reported a validity of 0.91, indicating excellent agreement. These values align with established benchmarks, where I-CVI ≥ 0.78, S-CVI/Ave ≥ 0.90, and S-CVI/UA ≥ 0.80 are recommended for acceptable validity (Polit, Beck, & Owen, 2007)

Discussion

Although both groups demonstrated satisfactory S-CVI/Ave scores, S-CVI/UA values were lower (0.433 for Group 1 and 0.633 for Group 2). This pattern is consistent with prior methodological observations: S-CVI/UA is highly stringent and often underestimates content validity, particularly when the Number of experts is modest. At the item level, several weaknesses were identified. For Group 1, items 3, 7, 9, 10, and 28 failed to meet acceptable standards, while for Group 2, items 5, 18, and 28 were inadequate. Notably, both groups agreed on the poor performance of item 28, underscoring its limited relevance across parenting contexts. Revision is also recommended for five items in Group 1 and four items in Group 2, while most items, 18 and 23, respectively, were retained. These findings suggest the scale has a solid core of valid items but requires targeted refinement to improve contextual clarity.

Group 2 demonstrated higher overall agreement. Parents with physical disabilities may bring unique perspectives to parenting, leading to more nuanced evaluations of the relevance of items. For example, a Spanish validation study also confirmed the instrument's psychometric adequacy but highlighted the importance of cultural tailoring (López-Fernández, Gómez-Benito, & Barrios, 2022). Together, these results support the cross-cultural robustness of the Parenting Scale while reinforcing the need for population-specific refinements

5.0 Conclusion& Recommendations

In conclusion, the M-PS I-CVI and S-CVI need further refinement. One of the critical steps is cognitive debriefing, which focuses on items involving discipline, harshness, or ambiguous wording. The S-CVI/Ave scores for both groups were high, but the S-CVI/UA scores were lower; this finding emphasises the importance of continuing further investigation into the complete psychometric properties of M-PS.

The study imposed several limitations from various aspects, including sample size, educational disparities between groups, and parenting diversity, which were not fully represented. The sample size is acceptable for CVI analysis. However, it restricts generalisability, which warrants future research to pilot-test the revised items and conduct full psychometric validation, including factor structure, internal consistency, construct validity, test-retest reliability, and measurement invariance. This is necessary because Malaysia has three major ethnic groups: Malay, Chinese, and Indian.

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Paper Contribution to the Related Field of Study

This study will contribute to the knowledge base in the health sciences, specifically for practitioners and researchers in the field of parenting.

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