

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**MEALTIME BEHAVIOR AMONG
CHILDREN WITH AUTISM
SPECTRUM DISORDER**

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MSc

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

Issues regarding autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are increasingly being discussed in Malaysia, including their mealtime behaviour problem. Parents of children with ASD who concern about mealtime behaviour problem of their children usually will seek for professional's advice to overcome it. However, the data regarding mealtime behaviour problem in Malaysia is limited and the availability of assessment to screen this problem is still lack, especially when taking into account the factor of language and culture practised in Malaysia. The objectives of this study are to determine validity and reliability of the BAMBI – Malay, to identify the main behaviour problem and least behaviour problem during mealtime among children with ASD experienced by the parents' or caregivers, to identify any correlation between demographic variables of the children with ASD (i.e. the age, duration of attending therapy and number of problem in children with ASD) with total scores of BAMBI – Malay, and to identify any significant difference between demographic information such as age group, gender, race, attending therapy and area of the main problem faced by children with ASD with the level of problem during mealtime. Six steps involved in this study including (1) Preparation of preliminary version, (2) Evaluation of preliminary version and preparation of an experimental version, (3) Pre-test of experimental version, (4) Evaluation of the concurrent, convergent and content validity, (5) Evaluation of the internal consistency and test-retest reliability, and (6) Main study, which identifies the mealtime behaviour problems in Malaysia. The result shows that BAMBI – Malay has excellent validity and reliability to be utilized among the Malay speaking population in Malaysia to screen the mealtime behavior of children with ASD aged 3 to 11 years. Mealtime behavior problems are common among children with ASD, especially in the area of limited food variety, followed by food refusal issues. Although the number of children having the issues are high, the percentage of parents or caregiver feel that it is problematic to them and affect their daily function are much lower. Mealtime behavior problems were found to have no significant difference with age, gender, race, duration of attending therapy and the area of the main problem. The number of child's problems is positively correlated with the score of mealtime behavior. The availability of BAMBI – Malay allows occupational therapists to use this inventory in the early screening to identify mealtime behavior problems among their clients with ASD and data obtained from this study can be used as a reference to explore further on the area of mealtime behavior problems among this population. It is hoped that the methodological procedures of this study can be used as a guideline for other researchers and healthcare professionals in doing the translation of non-native assessment tools.

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