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The Juvenile Love Scale: A Child's Version of the Passionate Love Scale

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Purpose

Passionate love has been defined as “a state of intense longing for union with another.” Reciprocation is “associated with fulfillment and ecstasy” while unrequited love is “associated with emptiness, anxiety, or despair.” Though the Passionate Love Scale (PLS) for adults has been widely used (Hatfield, Rapson, & Martel, 2007) as a valid measure for several decades, it was not until 1983 that a companion scale was developed to measure passionate love in young children and adolescents. As passionate love has been described as “puppy love”, “lovesickness”, and “infatuation”, (labels all ideologically associated with young love) it seems to be specifically relevant to measure in younger age groups. The Juvenile Love Scale (JLS) is an exact equivalent of the Passionate Love Scale (PLS), which measures this emotion in adolescents and adults. (A detailed description of the PLS is provided elsewhere in this volume.) The JLS taps cognitive, emotional and behavioral indicants of “desire for union.”

Description

The Juvenile Love Scale (JLS) is designed to measure passionate love in children from three to 18 years of age. The JLS, like the PLS, comes in a short version (15 items) and a long version (30 items.).

Researchers have used two techniques in administering the JLS, depending on the age of the participants.

If children are three to seven:

The first step in administering the JLS is to make sure the children understand the concepts of “boyfriend” and “girlfriend” (almost all do), the 15 or 30 test items (almost all do), and how to use the response scale.

The response scale is explained first. Essentially, one wants to teach children that when the experimenter makes a statement, they can indicate how much they agree via a 9-point scale. This is done in the following way: Children are shown a large “ruler” with dimensions of 4 x 20 inches. It is divided into nine blocks. The first block is labeled (1) *agree very little*. The last block is labeled (9) *agree very much*. The experimenter then conducts several tests to teach children how to respond via the scale (For more a more detailed example see Hatfield, Schmitz, Cornelius, & Rapson 1988).

After it has been confirmed that children understand and can use the scale, the experimenter then proceeds to administer the JLS. Researchers such as Greenwell (1983) have found that even children as young as three or four years of age have no trouble understanding this scale. (For more information on these procedures, see Greenwell, 1983).

If children are older: Once children are seven or eight years old, one can simply follow the same procedure used in administering the PLS to adolescents and adults.

Response Mode and Timing

Respondents either put a block in the appropriate square (if they are young) or circle the number indicating how true each statement is for them (if they are older.) The JLS is generally given individually. Once children are seven or eight, it can be given in groups. How long it takes to explain the scale to children depends on the child. Usually, the short (15 items) version of the JLS takes appropriately 25 minutes and the long version (30 items) takes 40 minutes to complete.

Scoring

The individual items are simply summed to produce a total score. Some researchers have interpreted the scores (in adolescents and adults) this way:

106-135 points = Wildly, recklessly, in love.

86-105 points = Passionate but less intense.

66-85 points = Occasional bursts of passion.

45-65 points = Tepid, infrequent, passion.

15-44 points = The thrill is gone.

Generally, however, the scale has been used to investigate gender and group differences.

Reliability

Greenwell (1983) provided statistical evidence that the JLS is reliable, and produces comparable results when taken by children or adults. The scales are internally consistent and reliable. In various samples, coefficient alphas were found to range from .94 to .98. Children and adolescents receive virtually identical scores on both scales. This is not surprising because the scales are designed to be identical, differing only in the difficulty of the language. In various populations, the JLS and PLS were found to correlate .88 for children and .87 for adults.

Greenwell (1983) also provided information on item-by-item correspondences. She found items highly intercorrelated. She also correlated each item with its own scale total, the other scale total, and the combined total of all 60 items (i.e., she used the long versions of both the JLS and the PLS). All items correlated highly with all totals, with 67 items in the .25 to .50 range, 221 in the .51 to .75 range, and 59 in the .76 to 1.00 range.

Validity

If the JLS is valid, it should be related to other variables in ways expected by past theoretical and empirical work. There is some evidence for such construct validity. Greenwell (1983) provided evidence that the JLS and PLS are virtually equivalent measures of passionate love, and that both scales that reflect the real-world experience of “being in love.” For

example, she asked children and adolescents to describe their feelings for a person whom they currently love, had loved in the past, or (if they had never been in love) who was as close as they had come to being in love. She found that young who had experienced passion did score higher on both the JLS and the PLS than did those who had never been in love. (For more information on the JLS, see Hatfield, Schmitz, Cornelius, & Rapson, 1986, who provided information on the JLS scores typically secured by boys and girls, from four to 18 years of age.) Furthermore, Hatfield, Brinton, and Cornelius (1989) found that children and adolescents prone to anxiety tended to score higher on the PLS than did their less anxious peers.

Other Information

The JLS is copyright by Elaine Hatfield and Marilyn Easton. Permission is automatically given to all clinicians and researchers who wish to use the scale in their research (free of charge).

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We are trying to find out how children feel when they love somebody in a very special way. Some children think about a special person a lot, get very excited about him or her and what to get very, very close. Sometimes we call this a “crush”. Please list on the lines that follow the name of the eight people you have loved or liked most in your life:

Name	Male or female
1. _____	_____

Now draw a circle around the name of the person you’d feel most excited about seeing right now or used to get excited about seeing if that person isn’t around anymore. Do not choose mother, father or brother or sister. If you aren’t excited about him/her right now, try to remember how you felt when you did feel the most excited. If you don’t think you have ever felt *very* excited, try to answer anyway, remembering how you did feel.

Each question is followed by a nine point rating scale. If you circle the 9 it means you agree very much with what the item says. If you circle the 1, it means you agree very little with what the item says. Try to circle which most closely explains how you do feel.

Form A: 15 Item Version)

1. I feel like things would always be sad and gloomy if I had to live without _____ forever.
2. Did you ever keep thinking about _____ when you wanted to stop and couldn’t?
3. I feel happy when I am doing something to make _____ happy.
4. I would rather be with _____ than anybody else.
5. I’d feel bad if I thought _____ liked somebody else better than me.
6. I want to know all I can about _____.
7. I’d like _____ to belong to me in every way.
8. I’d like it a lot if _____ played with me all the time.

9. If I could, when I grow up I'd like to marry (live with) _____.
10. When _____ hugs me my body feels warm all over.
11. I am always thinking about _____.
12. I want _____ to know me, what I am thinking, what scares me, what I am wishing for.
13. I look at _____ a lot to see if he/she likes me.
14. When _____ is around I really want to touch him/her and be touched.
15. When I think _____ might be mad at me, I feel really sad.

Possible answers range from:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Agree very little

Agree very much

Form B, 15-item Version. A and B comprise a 30-Item Version

1. When _____ is around I laugh and cry more often.
2. I feel like things would always be sad and gloomy if I had to live without _____ forever.
3. Sometimes I feel shaky all over when I see _____.
4. Sometimes I think it is fun just to watch _____ move around.
5. Did you ever keep thinking about _____ when you wanted to stop and couldn't?
6. I feel happy when I am doing something to make _____ happy.
7. I would rather be with _____ than anybody else.
8. I'd feel bad if I thought _____ liked somebody else better than me.
9. No one else could like _____ as much as I do.
10. I want to know all I can about _____.
11. I'd like _____ to belong to me in every way.
12. I will always like _____.
13. I feel all happy inside when _____ looks at me and I look at _____.
14. I'd like it a lot if _____ played with me all the time.

15. If I could, when I grow up I'd like to marry (live with) _____.
16. _____ is the person who can make me feel the happiest.
17. When _____ hugs me my body feels warm all over.
18. I feel all soft and happy inside about _____.
19. I am always thinking about _____.
20. If I were always from _____ for a long time I would be very lonely.
21. Sometimes I can't do my school work because I am thinking about _____.
22. I want _____ to know me, what I am thinking, what scares me, what I am wishing for.
23. Knowing that _____ cares about me makes me feel more like I am OK.
24. I look at _____ a lot to see if he/she likes me.
25. If _____ needed help from me, I'd stop what I was doing, even if it was lots of fun and go help him (her).
26. _____ can make me feel bubbly, like coke.
27. When _____ is around I really want to touch him/her and be touched.
28. Living without _____ would be very, very sad.
29. I want to hug _____ very, very tight.
30. When I think _____ might be mad at me, I feel really sad.

Possible answers range from:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Agree very little

Agree very much