

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

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Hatfield & Walster (1978) define passionate love as "a state of intense longing for union with another. Reciprocated love (union with the other) is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy. Unrequited love (separation) with emptiness, anxiety, or despair. A state of profound physiological arousal" (p. 9). Other names for this emotion are "puppy love," "a crush," "lovesickness," "obsessive love," "infatuation," or "being in love." It includes components of sexual desire.

The Juvenile Love Scale (JLS) is designed to measure passionate love in children from 3 to 18 years of age.

The 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 and the PLS tap cognitive, emotional, and behavioral indicants of "desire for union." The JLS, like the PLS, comes in a short version (15 items) and a long version (30 items). Only the short version is shown in the Exhibit.

Researchers have utilized two techniques in administering the JLS:

If children are very young. 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 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." Its dimensions are 4 x 20 inches. It is divided into 9 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. First, the children are given nine buildings and asked to put them in order. (The buildings are made from piles of checkers, and range from 1 to 9 checkers in height.) Generally, all children can do this. This gives some confidence that even the youngest children can grasp the idea of "more" and "less." Then children are taught how to use the checkers to answer some questions. The experimenter explains: "I want you to use these checker buildings to tell me how much you agree with what I say. Suppose I say, 'I like my birthday.' Do you agree with that? Would you say so too?" The experimenter allows time for the children to answer. Then he/she proceeds "Show me by touching one of the checker buildings *how much* you like your birthday. If you think birthdays are great, if you agree very much, you would choose that one (9). If you think they're awful, if you agree very little, you would choose that one (1). If

you are right in the middle about how you feel, you would choose one of those (3-5)." More examples follow—How do children feel about cleaning their rooms? Eating breakfast? The experimenter then proceeds to administer the JLS. Researchers such as Greenwell (1983) have found that even children as young as 3 or 4 years of age have no trouble understanding this scale. (For more information on these procedures, see Greenwell.)

If children are older. Most researchers have found that once children are 7 or 8 years old, one can simply follow the same procedure used in administering to adolescents and adults.

Response Mode and Timing

Respondents either put a block in the appropriate square (if they are very young) or circle the number indicating how true each statement is for them (if they are older). The PLS is generally given individually. Once children are 7 or 8, it can be given in groups. How long it takes to explain the scale to children on the child. Usually, the short (15 item) version of the JLS takes approximately 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.

Reliability

Greenwell (1983) provides statistical evidence that the JLS/PLS are unidimensional, reliable, and produce comparable results when taken by children or adults. She also provides evidence that both scales reflect a real world experience called "being in love."

She argues that the JLS/PLS do measure a single entity—passionate love. A principal-components factor analysis revealed that one major factor accounts for most of the variance. In various samples, the first factor accounted for between 38% to 53% of the variance (See Greenwell, for tables of eigenvalues). 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 since the scales are designed to be identical, differing only in the difficulty of their language. In various populations, the JLS and PLS were found to correlate .88 for children and .87 for adults.

Greenwell (1983) also provides information on item-by-item correspondences. She found items highly inter-correlated. 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 version of both the JLS and the PLS). All items correlated highly with all totals, with 67 items in the .25 to 1.00 range. It is clear from these analyses that the JLS and the PLS are virtually equivalent measures of passionate love.

Finally, Greenwell (1983) provides evidence that both scales 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 people 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.)

Hatfield et al. (1986) provide information on the JLS scores typically secured by boys and girls, from 4-18 years of age.

Other Information

The PLS is available to researchers free of charge.

References

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