

Loneliness & Social Dissatisfaction Questionnaire

Cassidy, J., and Asher, S.

1992

Description of Measure

Purpose

To obtain children's self-reported feelings of loneliness and dissatisfaction with peer relations.

Conceptual Organization

The instrument includes 24 items, 16 of which assess loneliness and social dissatisfaction (e.g., Are you lonely at school?). The remaining items are fillers focusing on children's hobbies and other activities, designed to help children relax during the interview. Children are asked to rate the extent to which each statement is true by saying "yes," "no," or "sometimes."

Item Origin/Selection Process

The Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Questionnaire was designed by Asher, Hymel, and Renshaw (1984) and revised by Asher and Wheeler (1985) to place greater emphasis on the school setting. In earlier versions, children were asked to respond using a 5-point Likert-style scale rating how true each statement was about them (always true, true most of the time, sometimes true, hardly ever true, not true at all). In the original instrument, children responded to statements, whereas in Cassidy and Asher's (1992) revision, items are worded as questions.

Materials

See Cassidy and Asher (1992).

Time Required

5-10 minutes

Administration Method

Interviewer-administered. Prior to administration, children should be familiarized with the response format and given practice items until it is clear to the interviewer that the child understands the task.

Training

Minimal

Scoring

Score Types

Items are coded 1 (no), 2 (sometimes), or 3 (yes). A total score is computed by summing all items which assess loneliness and social dissatisfaction. Filler items (i.e., items 2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 19, and 22) are omitted and do not contribute to the total score. Items 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 21, and 23 are reverse-coded so that higher scores reflect a greater degree of loneliness on all items. Total scores range from 15 to 45.

It is important to note that in the original administration the authors inadvertently omitted item 20, "Is it hard to get along with the kids at school?" (Cassidy & Asher, 1992). Thus, the range of total scores of 15 to 45 is derived by summing all loneliness and social dissatisfaction items excluding item 20.

If item 20 is included in the total score, the range of total scores is 16 to 48. (See LONGSCAN scoring notes.)

Score Interpretation

Higher scores indicate greater loneliness and social dissatisfaction.

Norms and/or Comparative Data

The authors tested the original instrument using a sample of 452 children (230 boys, 222 girls) from 7 kindergarten and 15 first grade classrooms. All children were from public schools in a moderately-sized town in the Midwest. Seventy percent of the children were White, 25% were African-American, and 5% were Asian. Mean scores for social status groups, defined based on peer assessments ranged from 18.3 for "popular" girls to 23.6 for "rejected" girls. "Average" and "controversial" girls scored in between these two groups. Boys had slightly lower (less lonely) scores than girls in all groups except "average" (Cassidy & Asher, 1992). The assessments were made by showing the children a picture of each classmate and asking how much they liked to play with the person. Children were also asked to name up to three other children in response to the questions "who would you like to play with most: "___" or "___" and

least: "___" or "___". These measures were used to classify children as popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, or average.

Psychometric Support

Reliability

The authors report satisfactory internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .79$) (Cronbach's alpha) (Cassidy & Asher, 1992).

Validity

Children's self-report on this form correlates significantly with peer status derived from sociometric measures, and also with teacher report of child's social behavior (Cassidy & Asher, 1992).

LONGSCAN Use

Data Points

Age 6

Respondent

Child

Mnemonic and Version

LSDA

Rationale

Children's ability to form close relationships and to function successfully in peer groups was a focus of the 6-year assessment. Children's self-reports supplement those of parent's and teachers.

Administration and Scoring Notes

Each item was coded 0 (no), 1 (sometimes), or 2 (yes). Before scores were totaled, values for items 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 22, and 24 were reversed so that higher scores would indicate

a greater degree of loneliness. Filler questions (2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 19, and 23) were omitted. A total score was derived by adding the remaining 16 items.

If comparison with Cassidy and Asher's (1992) sample is desired, item scores should be converted from a range of 0 to 2 to a range of 1 to 3. Also, because Cassidy and Asher inadvertently omitted item 20 in their study, it is necessary to eliminate this item from the total score for a direct comparison.

Results

Table 1 lists the mean total scores and Cronbach's alpha values (with or without Q. 20) at the Age 6 interview by the child's race and by study site. Item scores (0, 1, 2) are not adjusted to conform with those of Cassidy and Asher (1, 2, 3) but adding 15 points to the scores that do not include Q. 20 would provide scores that would be directly comparable. For example, the overall score for LONGSCAN children (not including Q. 20) was 6.94, or 21.94. This score is comparable to those of the "controversial" and "rejected" groups in the Cassidy & Asher study. Yet this total score represents a mean score per item (i.e., 6.94/15) of .46, which on a scale of 0 to 3 (with 3 reflecting loneliness) is not very high. Black children reported less loneliness than other children. Children at the SO site reported the least amount of loneliness and those at the NW site the most.

Reliability

The internal consistency of the scale (Cronbach's alpha) was acceptable and ranged from .61 to .84 for all racial groups and sites. Alpha increased only slightly with the addition of Q. 20.

Validity

To examine the construct validity of the LSD total score, we correlated it with the teacher's report of peer problems on the Teacher's Estimation of Child's Peer Status form. The resulting coefficient of .21 ($p < .0001$) indicated a significant correspondence between the two measures.

References and Bibliography

Asher, S., Hymel, S., & Renshaw, P. D. (1984). Loneliness in children. Child Development, *55*, 1456-1464.

Asher, S. R., & Wheeler, V. A. (1985). Children's loneliness: A comparison of rejected and neglected peer status. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, *53*(4), 500-505.

Cassidy, J., & Asher, S. (1992). Loneliness and peer relations in young children. Child Development, *63*, 350-365.

Table 1. Mean Scores and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients by Race and Study Site. Age 6 Interview

	N	With Question 20			Without Question 20		
		<u>M</u>	<u>(SD)</u>	α	<u>M</u>	<u>(SD)</u>	α
Total	1109	7.61	(6.57)	.80	6.94	(6.13)	.78
Race							
White	289	7.72	(6.72)	.82	7.01	(6.24)	.81
Black	597	7.33	(6.32)	.77	6.69	(5.92)	.76
Hispanic	77	8.04	(6.79)	.79	7.30	(6.21)	.77
Multiracial	130	8.28	(7.27)	.84	7.57	(6.85)	.84
Other	15	7.67	(4.94)	.64	7.00	(4.44)	.61
Site							
EA	235	6.90	(6.25)	.76	6.31	(5.92)	.76
MW	175	7.36	(6.66)	.81	6.67	(6.13)	.79
SO	207	6.47	(6.52)	.83	5.90	(6.05)	.81
SW	276	7.84	(6.40)	.78	7.12	(5.97)	.77
NW	216	9.38	(6.76)	.78	8.60	(6.36)	.77

Source. Based on data received at the LONGSCAN Coordinating Center through 8/24/01.