
The pre-engagement cohabitation effect: A replication and extension of previous findings

ABSTRACT

Using a random telephone survey of men and women married within the past 10 years (*N* = 1,050), the current study replicated previous findings regarding the timing of engagement and the premarital cohabitation effect (see Kline et al., 2004). Those who cohabited before engagement (43.1%) reported lower marital satisfaction, dedication, and confidence as well as more negative communication and greater potential for divorce than those who cohabited only after engagement (16.4%) or not at all until marriage (40.5%). These differences were generally small, but could not be accounted for by length of marriage or by variables often associated with selection into cohabitation (i.e., age, income, education, and religiousness). Similar results were found in a subsample of individuals who cohabited only with the current spouse. There were no significant differences between those who cohabited after engagement and not at all before marriage, supporting a pre-engagement, but not a premarital cohabitation effect.