
Pre-engagement cohabitation and gender asymmetry in marital commitment

**ABSTRACT**

The authors longitudinally examined couples’ \((N = 197)\) dedication (interpersonal commitment) levels on the basis of their premarital cohabitation history. Findings suggested that men who cohabited with their spouse before engagement were less dedicated than men who cohabited only after engagement or not at all before marriage. Furthermore, these husbands were less dedicated to their wives than their wives were to them. Hierarchical linear modeling showed that such asymmetries were apparent before marriage and through the early years of marriage. Relationship adjustment and religiousness were related to dedication but did not account for the findings. The authors suggest that couples considering cohabitation before engagement could benefit from discussions about commitment and expectations about marriage.