Commitment, Self-Regulation and Intimacy in Cohabitating Unions in Colombia

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Descriptive Statistics

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INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

- Research findings across Latin American countries indicate that individuals who cohabitate tend to have significantly lower levels of education and socio economic status than those who marry (Castro, Martin & Puga, 2008).
- Cohabitation among middle-class individuals reflects autonomy and non-traditional views about couple relationships, while among lower-class individuals it is linked to poverty and social exclusion (Rodríguez, 2004) 35% of couples in Colombia are cohabitating unions (Profamilia & Ministerio de Salud, 2016).
- Little research on psychological and relationship factors in cohabitating unions in Latin America.

Research Goals

- Evaluate the relationship between reasons to cohabitate, residence prior to cohabitation, duration of cohabitation, and relational self-regulation, commitment, and intimacy in cohabitating individuals in Colombia.
- Identify individual and dyadic associations between relational self-regulation, intimacy, commitment, satisfaction and stability in cohabitating relationships.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

- cohabitate due to intrinsic rather than extrinsic reasons report higher levels of commitment, self-regulation, and intimacy in their relationship?
- intrinsic reasons will report higher levels of with partner in different areas: emotional, social, commitment, self-regulation and intimacy intellectual, recreational and spiritual (Schaefer & than those who cohabitate for extrinsic Olson, 1981). reasons.
- Q 2: Does residence prior to cohabitation has an effect on individuals' commitment, self-regulation and intimacy in their cohabitating relationship?
- H 2: Individuals living with family of origin prior to cohabitation will report higher commitment, self-regulation and intimacy than those who lived independent from their
- Q 3: Are individual's and partner's commitment, self-regulation and intimacy associated with relationship their satisfaction and stability?
- H 3: Both men's and women's relationship satisfaction and stability will be positively correlated with their own and their partner's commitment, self-regulation, and intimacy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Two dimensions: Dedication and Constraints (Owen et al, 2011)
- Individuals who cohabitate report less dedication than their married counterparts (Stanley, Whitton & Markman, 2004)
- Individuals who cohabitate due to extrinsic reasons report less dedication to the relationship than those who cohabitate due to intrinsic factors (Rhoades, Stanley & Markman, 2008)
- Men who cohabitate due to extrinsic reasons less dedication to their relationship (Rhoades, Stanley & Markman, 2008).

Relational self-regulation

- It refers to individuals' monitoring and changing their own behaviors to improve their relationship (Halford et al., 2007)
- Self-regulation strategies: evaluate situations, establish goals, implement changes and assess outcomes
- Self-regulation effort: Persistence in attempting to improve the relationship
- Married couples report more relational • Q 1: Do individuals who started to self-regulation than cohabitating couples. Cohabitating couples also report efforts to maintain their relationships (Meyer et al., 2012)

Intimacy

• H 1: Individuals who cohabitate for • Feelings of closeness that result from sharing

METHOD

- Demographic questionnaire
- Reasons to cohabitate: Two forced-choice questions (Rhoades, Stanley & Markman, 2010)
- Four groups: Extrinsic reasons; Intrinsic FOO reasons; First reason intrinsic; First reason
- Relational self-regulation: BSRERS; (Wilson et
- Commitment: Revised Commitment Inventory (Owen et al., 2011)
- Intimacy: PAIR; (Schaefer & Olson, 1981)

- Satisfaction: Marital Quality Index (Norton, 1983)
- Stability: Marital Status Inventory (Weiss & Cerreto,

Participants

		M	[ale	F	'emale
		f	%	f	%
Sex		26	43,4	34	56,6
Relationship	0 to 5 years	13	21,7	17	28,3
Duration	6 to 10 years	13	21,7	17	28,3
Education Level	High School	1	1,7	2	3,3
	College	8	13,4	12	20,
	studies, without degree				
	College Degree	10	16,7	14	23,3
	Postgraduate	7	11,6	6	10,0
	T.T.,	0	0.0		
Employment Situation	Unemployed	0	0,0	4	6,6
Situation	Informal Employment	2	3,3	0	0,0
	Part-Time Employment	1	1,7	2	3,3
	Full-time Employment	16	26,7	14	23,3
	Student	2	3,3	7	11,7
	Housekeeping	0	0,0	3	5,1
	Other ^a	5	8,4	4	6,6
Income	1 to 2 Minimum	5	8,4	15	25,0
	wages ^b	1.0	167	1.1	10.2
	2 a 4 Minimum	10	16,7	11	18,3
	Wages More than 4		18,3	8	13,3
	Minimum wages				
		M	DE	M	DE
Age (years)		36	12	31	8

Note. aSelf-employed and retired people.

b Minimum wage= 781.242 Colombian Pesos (US \$274)

- 60 individuals: 43.4% men; 56.6% women
- Average relationship duration: 6.7 yrs (SD= 3.7)
- Living situation prior to cohabitation:
 46.2% of men and 47.1% of women lived with

Procedures

- Translation to Spanish and back translation to English of all instruments
- Piloting of measures: Cognitive interview (Willis,
- Informed consent
- Online questionnaire administered individually

RESULTS

		Male	Female						
Variables	Dimensions	M	DE	M	DE				
Self-regulation	Effort	36,12	7,83	36,82	5,59				
	Strategies	14,12	4,32	15,85	3,25				
Commitment	Dedication	5,74	0,97	5,50	1,11				
	Constraints	4,25	0,69	4,17	0,85				
Intimacy	Emotional	3,96	0,71	3,86	0,87				
	Social	2,82	0,88	3,08	0,87				
	Sexual	3,78	0,81	3,86	0,79				
	Intelectual	3,93	0,80	3,67	0,84				
	Recreational	3,98	0,74	3,96	0,82				
Satisfaction		4,46	0,70	4,52	0,63				
Stability		2,38	2,59	2,47	2,75				

 Both men and women scored high on dedication to their relationship (commitment), efforts to self-regulate, and intimacy in different dimensions

MANOVA Results

		Liv		Reasons to Cohabitate														
Variable	Dimension	0 to yea		6 to year			one	FOO		Both extrinsic		First extrinsic		First intrinsic		Both intrinsic		
		M	DE	M	DE		M	DE	M	DE	M	DE	M	DE	M	DE	M	DE
Self- Regulation	Strategies	37,1ª	5,4	$35,9^{a}$	7,6		36,7	6,7	36,4	6,7	37,4	7,0	36,7	5,7	36,1	7,4	34,9	6,9
	Effort	15,7	3,5	14,4	4,0		14,6	3,9	15,5	3,8	14,4	5,3	15,3	2,9	15,4	3,1	15,9	2,
Commitment	Dedication	5,6	1,1	5,5	1,1		5,5	1,0	5,7	1,1	5,6	1,2	5,9	0,9	5,4	1,2	5,4	0,
	Constraints	4,2	0,8	4,1	0,8		4,2	0,8	4,2	0,8	$4,5^{\mathrm{b}}$	0,8	$4,5^{c}$	0,5	3,9	0,9	$3,4^{\mathrm{bc}}$	0,
Intimacy	Emotional	3,9	0,8	3,8	0,8		4,1	0,7	3,8	0,8	3,9	0,9	4,2	0,6	3,9	0,7	3,4	0,
	Social	2,9	0,9	3,0	0,8		2,9	0,9	2,9	0,9	2,9	0,8	2,9	0,8	3,1	0,8	2,9	1,
	Sexual	3,8	0,7	3,7	0,9		3,8	0,7	3,8	0,9	4,0	0,7	3,9	0,8	3,7	0,7	3,5	1,
	Intelectual	3,6	0,8	3,9	0,8		3,8	0,8	3,7	0,9	3,7	1,0	3,9	0,7	3,9	0,7	3,5	0,
	Recreational	3,8	0,7	4,1	0,8		4,2	0,7	3,8	0,8	3,7	0,9	4,2	0,6	4,1	0,7	3,9	0,

Note. a Inter-Subjects test; p < .05. b Post-hoc Tukey test; p < .05.c Post-hoc Tukey test; p < .01

- Three significant interaction effects (sex * reasons to cohabitate; sex * living situation; living situation * reasons to cohabitate) on self-regulation variables
- Interaction sex* reasons to cohabitate
- Men who reported primarily extrinsic reasons to cohabitate made more efforts to change their relationships.
- Women who reported primarily intrinsic reasons to cohabitate made more efforts to change their relationships
- Reasons to cohabitate * residence prior to cohabitation
- Individuals who lived with their families of origin before cohabitating and reported primarily extrinsic reasons to cohabitate used a more limited repertoire of strategies to change their relationships.
- Sex * Residence prior to cohabitation
- Men who lived independently before cohabitating reported using less strategies to change their relationships.
- Women who lived with their families of origin before cohabitating used more strategies to change their relationships
- A significant univariate effect of reasons to cohabitate on constraints: individuals who cohabit for extrinsic reasons report higher levels of this kind of commitment than those who cohabit for intrinsic reasons
- Reasons to cohabitate did not have a significant effect on reports of dedication and
- A significant univariate effect of relationship duration on self-regulation strategies: individuals who had lived less than six years with their partners reported using more self-regulation strategies

Correlation Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Self- Regulation Effort		-,21	,01	,24	-,37	-,38*	-,15	-,37	-,30	-,20	,25
2. Self Regulation Strategies	-,14		,50**	,35	,44*	,34	,48**	,37	,26	,47*	-,41*
3. Commitment Dedication	-,32	,19		,46*	,41*	,25	,37	,26	,16	,54**	-,57**
4. Commitment Restraints	,14	,44*	,27		-,09	-,04	-,02	-,27	-,26	-,05	-,11
5. Emotional Intimacy	-,46*	,21	,64**	,26		,18	,40*	,76**	,41*	,75**	-,52**
6. Social Intimacy	,04	,14	,15	,02	,19		,61**	,39*	,47*	,26	-,14
7. Sexual Intimacy	-,27	,25	,51**	,23	,64**	,28		,49**	,52**	,53**	-,28
8. Intelectual Intimacy	-,59**	,00	,58**	-,05	,73**	,35	,54**		,46*	,72**	-,45*
9. Recreational Intimacy	-,26	,18	,54**	-,06	,73**	,40*	,62**	,68**		,41*	-,28
10. Satisfaction	-,28	,14	,75**	,09	,82**	,30	,53**	,72**	,72**		-,68**
11. Stability	,50**	-,07	-,45*	,27	-,49**	-,06	-,51**	-,63**	-,63**	-,51**	

Note. Values above diagonal correspond to women, and those below to men. * p <.05. ** p <.01.1

Individual correlations

- Significant associations between dimensions of intimacy, dedication and relationship satisfaction in both men and women
- Self-regulation strategies are positively associated with women's satisfaction, but not with men's satisfaction
- Dyadic correlations
- Men's relationship satisfaction was positively associated with women's report of intellectual intimacy
- Dyadic correlations did not indicate a significant association between individuals' commitment and self-regulation, and their partner's satisfaction

CONCLUSIONS

- Future studies should evaluate the relationship between reasons to cohabitate, residence prior to cohabitation, sex, and relational self-regulation
- Extrinsic reasons to cohabitate are associated with higher anxiety and fear of abandonment (Rhoades et al, 2009). Greater relationship efforts in extrinsically-motivated individuals may be explained by such anxiety
- Fulfilling relationship expectations regarding cohabitation may motivate individuals to engage in self-regulation efforts

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