

Premarital Prediction of Marital Quality or Breakup

**Research, Theory,
and Practice**

LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

An Interdisciplinary Series

Series Editors:

Howard B. Kaplan, *Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas*

Adele Eskeles Gottfried, *California State University, Northridge, California*

Allen W. Gottfried, *California State University, Fullerton, California*

THE ADDICTION-PRONE PERSONALITY

Gordon E. Barnes, Robert P. Murray, David Patton, Peter M. Bentler,
and Robert E. Anderson

DRUG USE AND ETHNICITY IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE

William A. Vega, Andres G. Gil, and Associates

DRUGS, CRIME, AND OTHER DEVIANT ADAPTATIONS

Longitudinal Studies

Edited by Howard B. Kaplan

PREMARRITAL PREDICTION OF MARITAL QUALITY OR BREAKUP

Research, Theory, and Practice

Thomas B. Holman and Associates

RESILIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Positive Life Adaptations

Edited by Meyer D. Glantz and Jeannette L. Johnson

A Continuation Order Plan is available for this series. A continuation order will bring delivery of each new volume immediately upon publication. Volumes are billed only upon actual shipment. For further information please contact the publisher.

**Premarital Prediction
of Marital Quality
or Breakup**

**Research, Theory,
and Practice**

Thomas B. Holman

*Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah*

with

Paul James Birch

Jason S. Carroll

Cynthia Doxey

Jeffrey H. Larson

Steven T. Linford

Kluwer Academic Publishers
New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, Moscow

eBook ISBN: 0-306-47186-8
Print ISBN: 0-306-46326-1

©2002 Kluwer Academic Publishers
New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, Moscow

All rights reserved

No part of this eBook may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording, or otherwise, without written consent from the Publisher

Created in the United States of America

Visit Kluwer Online at: <http://www.kluweronline.com>
and Kluwer's eBookstore at: <http://www.ebooks.kluweronline.com>

*To Dean and Leatrice Holman, who prepared me
so well for marriage; to Linda, who has kept me despite
my self-inflicted premarital deficiencies;
and to Wilmer and Geneva Nicholls,
who prepared her for the task.*

Associates

Paul James Birch , Center for Family Preservation and Progress, Salt Lake City, Utah 84157

Kent R. Brooks, Religious Education Department, Ricks College, Rexburg, Idaho 83460

Jason S. Carroll, Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Cynthia Doxey , Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602

Jeffry H. Larson , School of Family Life, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602

Steven T. Linford, Spanish Fork LDS Seminary, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660

David B. Meredith, Utah County Sheriff's Office, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660

Joseph A. Olsen, College of Family, Home, and Social Science, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602

Suzanne F. Olsen, School of Family Life, Brigham Young University, Provo,
Utah 84602

Clifford Jay Rhoades, Ammon Senior Seminary, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Robert F. Stahmann, School of Family Life, Brigham Young University,
Provo, Utah 84602

Preface

This book should be of interest to scholars, researchers, students, and practitioners alike. Scholars, researchers, and students of personal relationship development will recognize in this book the first serious attempt in over 40 years to do a large-scale, longitudinal study of premarital factors that predict premarital breakup and marital quality; they should also appreciate our attempt to develop a theoretical rationale for predicted paths and to test those paths with the best available statistical tools. Practitioners—while generally not as interested in the intricacies of the statistical results—will find much that is useful to them as they help individuals and couples make decisions about their intimate relationships, their readiness for marriage, and how to increase the probability for marital success. Teachers, family life educators, premarital counselors, and clergy will find helpful our “principles for practice,” particularly as described in Chapter 9, as they teach and counsel couples in any premarital situation.

My interest in the development of relationships from premarital to marital probably began when I got married in 1972 and started to notice all of the characteristics my wife and I brought from our respective families and how our “new beginning” as a married couple was in many ways the continuation of our premarital relationship, only more refined and more intense. My professional interest began when I did my doctoral dissertation in 1981 on premarital predictors of early marital satisfaction (the results of that study are reported in Chapter 8). While I have done research on other topics throughout my career, I have always returned to premarital relationship development as my main interest for my research and outreach efforts.

Collection of the premarital data began in 1989 when the PREPARation for Marriage (PREP-M) Questionnaire became available for use by teachers, workshop leaders, clergy, premarital counselors, and researchers. At that time my cocreators of PREP-M (Dean Busby and Jeff Larson) and I knew we wanted to do a longitudinal study; the issue was simply when and how. An initial follow-up study was done with a small sample of those who had taken PREP-M and been married

about one year (see Holman, Larson, & Harmer, 1994; Rhoades, 1994). Because the results were encouraging (see Chapter 8 for a full report of those results), I began planning a larger, longer-term follow-up. Funds were eventually obtained to begin the process of finding the sample members and getting them to participate in a follow-up.

I initially invited my doctoral student, Steve Linford, to participate in the research and write his dissertation from the data gathered. Steve was in charge of data collection, and another of my graduate students, Dave Meredith, entered all of the data. Dave was also invited to use the data and he wrote his master's thesis from it. After conceptualizing each chapter, I invited other faculty colleagues or graduate students to join as coauthors of various chapters and as joint coauthors of the entire book. I have a very strong bias that coauthored works are almost always better than single-authored works, and that one of the most important aspects of training and mentoring graduate students is to get them involved in the research and write-up and to acknowledge their help by including their names on articles, chapters, or books to which they contribute, even if they were serving as paid graduate assistants for some or even all of the time.

Therefore, what evolved was a book with me as the "chief author" and with all of the others contributing to one or more of the chapters. Some contributed to their chapter(s) and also read all of the other chapters and made contributions, gave suggestions, and helped me integrate many ideas, eliminate overlaps, and edit the numerous voices to sound like one. Those who helped write one or more chapters and who helped with the whole book are listed on the title page as my coauthors. Those who chose only to contribute to their chapter have their names listed in the Contents and Associates pages, as well as at the beginning of their chapters, but not on the title page.

I express appreciation to the Family Studies Center, the Religious Studies Center, and the Department of Family Sciences for their financial support of this project. Special appreciation is given to JoNell Pabst, operations manager of the Marriage Study Consortium (which distributed and scored PREP-Ms), and Mark O. Jarvis, who both made essential contributions to the completion of this project.

Thomas B. Holman

Contents

1. Premarital Factors and Later Marital Quality and Stability	1
<i>Thomas B. Holman and Steven T. Linford</i>	
Four Vignettes	2
Heidi and David	2
Linda and Steve	5
Jean and Bob	6
Becky and Josh	9
The Conceptual Model	12
A Review of the Research	13
A Review of the Theory	21
The General Conceptual Model	26
Overview of Book Chapters	26
Endnotes	27
2. Assumptions and Methods	29
<i>Thomas B. Holman and Steven T. Linford</i>	
Assumptions	30
Assumptions about Marriage and Family	30
Assumptions about the Research Process	31

Assumptions about Practice	33
Methods	34
Sample	34
Measures	34
Procedures	41
Analysis	42
The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study	43
3. Breaking Up before and after Marriage	47
<i>David B. Meredith and Thomas B. Holman</i>	
Perceptions of Factors Involved in Premarital Breakups	49
Our Study of Premarital Breakup Factors	49
Individuals in Premarital Breakups	50
Couples in Premarital Breakups	51
Perceptions of Factors Involved in Divorce or Separation	53
Our Study of Divorce or Separation Factors	53
Divorced or Separated Individuals	54
Divorced or Separated Couples	54
Premarital Prediction of Relationship Status	55
Family-of-Origin Background Factors	56
Individual Characteristics	57
Social Contextual Factors	57
Couple Interactional Processes	59
Results	60
Discussion	71
Perceptions of Reasons for Premarital and Marital Breakups	71
Premarital Predictors of Relationship Breakup and Quality	72
Implications for Practice	75
Implications for Research and Theory	76
4. Family-of-Origin Structures and Processes and Adult Children's Marital Quality	79
<i>Thomas B. Holman and Paul James Birch</i>	
Purpose	81
Family-of-Origin Factors Related to Marital Quality	81
Family Structure	81

Contents	xiii
Family Environment	82
Parents' Marital Quality	83
Parent–Child Relationships	84
Theoretical and Empirical Ordering of the Family-of-Origin Factors	85
Attachment Theory	89
Ecological Theory of Human Development	92
Results	96
Discussion	99
Implications for Research and Theory	100
Implications for Practice and Policy	102
5. Individual Characteristics Influencing Marital Quality	105
<i>Thomas B. Holman, Jeffry H. Larson and Joseph A. Olsen</i>	
Premarital Individual Characteristics and Marital Quality: Research and Theory	106
Family-of-Origin Factors and Individual Characteristics	109
Family-of-Origin Effects on Individual Characteristics	109
Simultaneous Effects of Family-of-Origin Factors and Individual Characteristics	110
Results	111
Discussion	114
Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice	115
Endnote	117
6. Social Contexts Influencing Marital Quality	119
<i>Cynthia Doxey and Thomas B. Holman</i>	
Definitions	121
Social Networks	121
Social Support	122
Sociocultural Context	122
Direct Effects of Social Contexts on Marital Quality	122
Social Network Support	123
Sociocultural Context	124
Effects of Family of Origin on Social Context	127
Hypotheses	129
Results	130

Direct Relationships	130
Indirect Relationships	133
Comparison between Male and Female Models	135
Discussion	135
Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice	137
7. Premarital Couple Interactional Processes and Later Marital Quality	141
<i>Jason S. Carroll and Thomas B. Holman</i>	
Literature Review	142
Communication Processes	142
Negativity/Positivity Models of Communication	143
A Model for Constructive Marital Conflict	146
Other Communication Studies	148
Summary	149
Similarity	150
Couple Identity Formation	153
Hypotheses	153
Results	154
Similarity's Indirect Effect	158
Discussion	160
Implications	162
Research and Theory	162
Practice	162
8. Putting It All Together: Four Longitudinal, Multivariate Models of Premarital Prediction of Marital Quality	165
<i>Thomas B. Holman, Steven T. Linford, Kent R. Brooks, Suzanne F. Olsen, Clifford Jay Rhoades, and Jason S. Carroll</i>	
Four Longitudinal, Multivariate Studies of Premarital Predictors of Marital Quality	166
Study Number One	167
Study Number Two	171
Study Number Three	173
Study Number Four	178
What We Learn from the Four Longitudinal, Multivariate Studies	182

Contents	xv
Continuing Influence of Premarital Variables	182
Several Premarital Factors Are Important	183
Some Predictors Are More Important than Others	183
Some Factors' Importance Is through Their Indirect Effects	184
Some Aspects of Marriage Are More Influenced by Premarital Factors than Others	184
There Are Gender Differences	184
Summary Table of Previous and Current Research	184
Endnote	189
9. General Principles, Implications, and Future Directions	191
<i>Thomas B. Holman. Jeffrey H. Larson. Robert F. Stahmann. and Jason S. Carroll</i>	
Principles for Practice	192
Our Most General Principles	192
Principles Specific to Particular Premarital Factors—Family of Origin	194
Principles Specific to Particular Premarital Factors—Individual Characteristics	198
Principles Specific to Particular Premarital Factors—Social Contexts and Networks	201
Principles Specific to Particular Premarital Factors—Couple Interactional Processes Issues	203
Implementing Our Principles for Practice	205
Comprehensive Premarital Assessment Questionnaires: Bringing Science to Premarital Counseling	206
Using RELATE in Education and Counseling for Marriage Preparation and Enrichment	211
Session-by-Session Outline Using RELATE in Marriage Preparation	213
Implications for Research and Theory	215
Research	216
Theory	219
10. Epilogue and Invitation	223
<i>Thomas B. Holman</i>	
Four Vignettes Concluded	224

Heidi and David	224
Linda and Steve	225
Jean and Bob	227
Becky and Josh	229
An Invitation	231
Endnote	232
Appendix A: PREParation for Marriage (PREP-M)	233
<i>Thomas B. Holman, Dean M. Busby, and Jeffrey H. Larson</i>	
Section I	234
Section II	236
Section III	245
Section IV	246
Section V	247
Appendix B: The Relationship Quality Follow-Up Study	251
<i>Thomas B. Holman and Steven T. Linford</i>	
Section A	251
Section B	251
Section C	252
Section D	253
Section E	254
Section F	261
Appendix C: A Century-End Comprehensive Review of Premarital Predictors of Marital Quality and Stability	263
<i>Steven T. Linford and Jason S. Carroll</i>	
Longitudinal Studies: Premarital to Marital	264
Adams(1946)	264
Terman and Oden (1947)	267
Burgess and Wallin (1953)	269
Vaillant (1978)	273
Fowers and Olson (1986)	274
Kelly and Conley (1987)	276
Filsinger and Thoma (1988)	278
Larsen and Olson(1989)	280

Contents	xvii
Smith. Vivian. and O'Leary (1990)	281
Holman. Larson. and Harmer (1994)	283
Fowers. Montel. and Olson (1996)	285
Holman. Linford. Brooks. Olsen. Rhoades and Carroll (Chapter 8. this volume)	287
Longitudinal Studies Where the Relationship Status Is Ambiguous	288
Markman(1979. 1981)	288
Markman. Duncan. Storaasli. and Howes (1987)	289
Wamboldt and Reiss (1989)	291
Longitudinal Studies in Which Premarital Data Were Collected	
Retrospectively	293
Bentler and Newcomb (1978)	293
Kelly. Huston. and Cate (1985)	294
Cross-sectional Retrospective Studies with Marital Quality Outcomes . . .	296
Burgess and Cottrell(1939)	296
Roscoe and Benaske (1985)	297
Grover. Russell. Schumm. and Paff-Bergen (1985)	297
Wilcoxon and Hovestadt (1985).	298
Couillard (1990)	298
Whyte(1990)	298
Reviews of Research	299
Lewis and Spanier (1979)	299
Wamboldt and Reiss (1989)	299
Cate and Lloyd (1992)	300
Larson and Holman (1994)	300
Karney and Bradbury (1995)	300
References	301
Index	321