

The Influence of Religiosity, Political Affiliation, And Social Dominance Orientation on Contraceptive Use Among Women

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Introduction

Oral contraceptive pills (OCP) allow women to plan childbirth according to personal and financial goals¹ and reduce the risk of gynecological cancers and diseases². Social factors, such as religion and political affiliation, heavily influence contraceptive use, shaping personal choices and policies³. Social dominance orientation (SDO), linked to conservative views and hierarchy support, remains understudied in this area. This study aims to explore how religiosity, political affiliation, and SDO affect women's decisions to use OCPs, providing insights into the barriers and motivators influencing OCP and informing healthcare strategies for women's reproductive health.

Aims and Objectives

This study examines how religiosity, political affiliation, and social dominance orientation (SDO) influence oral contraceptive use among adult cisgender women aged 18 and older. While prior research has extensively explored the roles of religion and political ideology in contraceptive decision-making, the relationship between SDO and contraceptive use remains largely unexamined. Using data from naturally cycling women and oral contraceptive users, this study compares how these sociocultural and psychological factors relate to contraceptive use. Understanding these influences is important for identifying barriers to contraception and informing patient-centered counseling strategies that support informed reproductive health decision-making.

Methods

The study targeted cisgender women over 18, either naturally cycling or using oral contraceptives. Data was collected via a Qualtrics survey, recruited through social media, online platforms, and university courses. The survey began with a consent form and demographic questions. Political orientation was assessed with a single-item question rated on a 5-point scale (1 = extremely conservative, 5 = extremely liberal). Religiosity was measured using a seven-item Likert scale assessing beliefs, practices, and the importance of religion, with average scores compared between naturally cycling women and those using oral contraceptives. SDO was evaluated using a 14-item policy issues questionnaire, rated on a 7-point scale (1 = very negative, 7 = very positive). Data analysis was conducted using Excel and SPSS.

Results

Study Population:

Cisgender women (N=336), age M=20 years

Naturally cycling (n=234) | Using OCP (n=102)

Unadjusted Odds Ratios

Characteristic	OR (95% CI)	P
Political Orientation	1.397 (1.098-1.779)	0.006
Religiosity	0.721 (0.600-0.866)	<0.001
Social Dominance	1.050 (1.009-1.092)	0.016

Adjusted Odds Ratios

Characteristic	OR (95% CI)	P
Political Orientation	1.462 (0.993-2.151)	0.053
Religiosity	0.779 (0.631-0.963)	0.020
Social Dominance	1.058 (1.014-1.105)	0.009

Of the final sample, 234 participants identified as naturally cycling and 102 identified as using oral contraceptive pills (OCPs).

As shown in Table 1, logistic regression analyses revealed that religiosity and SDO were significantly associated with OCP use. Higher religiosity was linked to lower likelihood of contraceptive use, whereas higher SDO was associated with greater likelihood of OCP use. Political orientation was not significantly associated with OCP use after adjusting for other variables, though the trend approached significance.

Conclusions

This study examined the links between religiosity, political orientation, and SDO and oral contraceptive use. Non-users had higher religiosity, aligning with research on lower contraceptive use among religious individuals. Users had higher SDO scores, suggesting that desire for social hierarchy influences contraceptive behaviors. Political orientation showed only marginally significant differences, with most participants identifying as politically neutral.

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Acknowledgements

I thank Dr. Welling for assistance with survey distribution and the participants for their time. I also acknowledge the Oakland University IRB for expedited review and approval.