

## Religious Beliefs and Their Effects on the Use of Contraceptives in Female College Students

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**Abstract :** The purpose of this study was to explore the association between the teachings of religious doctrine on the use of contraceptives and its influence on the behavior of female college students. The religious doctrine of both Christian and non-Christian religions states that sexual intercourse shall only take place between people that are married. Additionally, the teachings of most Christian and non-Christian religions prohibit the use of contraceptives during sexual intercourse. Being away from home for the first time, students that grew up in religious households may stop attending church services or stop practicing religion entirely. The college years are also a time for sexual exploration. The desire for sexual exploration leaves many students, both religious and non-religious, with having to choose between abstaining from sexual intercourse or using a form of contraceptive to prevent pregnancy. Of 1,130 female students anonymously surveyed at a southern university between Spring 2016 and Fall 2020, 50% reported having religious beliefs. Less than 50% of the students who reported having religious beliefs attend church services on a regular basis. Nearly 75% of the same students reported having participated in sexual intercourse with close to 60% utilizing some form of contraceptive to prevent pregnancy. The data suggest that female college students do not follow religious teachings on abstinence from premarital sex or the ban on the use of contraceptives.

**Keywords :** contraceptives, females, intercourse, religion

**Conference Title :** ICFGS 2022 : International Conference on Feminism and Gender Studies

**Conference Location :** Toronto, Canada

**Conference Dates :** September 20-21, 2022