



# A study on the influence of the media contents use and personal characteristics on the perception of marriage: Focusing on pluralistic ignorance

\*Min-Wook Choi, Department of Advertising & Public Relations, Namseoul University, Cheonan, Choongnam, 31020, South Korea, [mwchoi@nsu.ac.kr](mailto:mwchoi@nsu.ac.kr)

\*Corresponding Author

**Abstract.** This study examines the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance in their perception of marriage among university students, and examines the influence of media usage and personal characteristics on pluralistic ignorance. This study conducted a questionnaire survey of university students. Regression analysis was performed to verify whether media usage and personal characteristics affect pluralistic ignorance. In order to grasp the pure influence of each variable on pluralistic ignorance, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to analyze the influence of the independent variable after controlling other predictive variables. As a result of this study, it was found that the degree of involvement in marriage had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage. And as a result of analyzing the effect of media's use of individual content genres on individual's pluralistic ignorance, it was found that the use of drama and film genres of TV had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage perception. And it was found that age had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage. Future research from the perspective of pluralistic ignorance needs to be activated in fields related to various social phenomena or marketing activities.

**Keywords:** Pluralistic ignorance, Perception of marriage, Media usage, Contents genre usage, Involvement

Received: 04.12.2020

Accepted: 10.01.2021

Published: 07.02.2021

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, as the low birth rate trend in Korea has accelerated, it has become a serious social problem. Low fertility decreases economic vitality by reducing the economically active population, while reducing social dynamism, and also causes rapid social aging, leading to many problems. In particular, it is noteworthy that Korea has suddenly become one of the world's leading low-birth countries in a situation where the population has rapidly increased to the extent that the birth control movement was carried out not so long ago. There are many causes of this low birth rate, but it can be said that one of the main reasons is the recent young people avoiding marriage or trying to marry at a late age. Of course, there are reasons for choosing non-marriage or late marriage personally and socially, but in terms of social phenomena in connection with the current low birth rate, this trend of young Koreans needs to be studied academically. In the fields of communication, sociology, social psychology, etc., researchers are interested in the phenomenon of "pluralistic ignorance," which is the tendency of individuals in society to misrecognize other people's thoughts in relation to public opinion or social norms. O'Gorman defined pluralistic ignorance as "a false cognitive belief shared by two or more people about the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others[1]. This study starts from the thought that the phenomenon of recent domestic youth avoiding marriage or trying to marry at a late age can be explained from the perspective of this pluralistic ignorance.

In research related to pluralistic ignorance, which is a tendency to misrecognize the thoughts of others in society, some scholars have been interested in the influence of mass media on the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. The assumption is that mass media will affect the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance, as mass media is the primary means of enabling people to monitor their surroundings and perceive the public atmosphere on various issues. With reference to these assumptions, if there is a phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance of young people's marriage, it can be expected that the use of mass media will affect the pluralistic ignorance of marriage. In particular, this study will examine the effects of not only media types such as TV and radio, but also content genres such as entertainment, news, and current affairs on pluralistic ignorance related to marriage.

Until now, in relation to the study of pluralistic ignorance, the influence of psychological attributes or audience variables on pluralistic ignorance has not been noticed. In communication studies, involvement

has been shown to be a major audience variable affecting various communication phenomena. Since pluralistic ignorance is a false cognitive belief that people have about a specific issue in society, this study focuses on the possibility that involvement in a specific issue as a variable for the audience will influence the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. In addition, we will examine the effects of demographic variables on the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance.

Until now, studies of pluralistic ignorance have mainly focused on public opinion perception related to political and social issues, such as race and current affairs issues[2-5]. However, there is a trend of expanding the research area of the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance by explaining various social phenomena in the dimension of pluralistic ignorance, from the environment and drinking culture, to the field of histology, education, and product buying behavior, mainly in the United States[6-11]. In this situation, through this study dealing with the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance related to marriage of young people, we look forward to the expansion of the research field of pluralistic ignorance.

This study attempts to explain the formation process of this distorted perception from the perspective of pluralistic ignorance, considering that young people's avoidance of marriage in Korea may be caused by distorted perceptions about marriage. Specifically, this study will examine the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance in their perception of marriage among university students, and examine the influence of media usage behavior and personal characteristics on pluralistic ignorance. Through this, this study will examine the process of forming perception of unmarried and late marriage, which are the major causes of low birth rate, and seek countermeasures.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### *2.1 Perception of marriage in modern society*

Currently, the biggest debate about families in Korean society is the low birth rate and aging population. Looking at the data related to the low birth rate, first of all, the marriage rate is low. The number of marriages in 2018 was the lowest at 258,000, and the number of marriages per 1,000 people was also the lowest ever at 5.0. The number of marriages is correlated with the number of births. Korea's total fertility rate in 2018 was 0.98, the lowest since 1970, when statistics were started.

The decline in the fertility rate ranges from not only the reproductive problem of the population, but also to the reduction of the labor force, the increase in the cost of supporting the elderly due to aging, the decline of national competitiveness, the overall economic impact and social security, the labor market, the child rearing environment, and the protection of the elderly and the disabled. It has great social ramifications in that it can cause various problems. Changes in the demographic structure due to the low birth rate in Korea are progressing at such a rapid pace that it is unprecedented in the world, and it is expected to seriously damage the country's economy and society in the future[12].

The proportion of people who perceived that they should 'must marry' also declined to less than half to 48.1% in 2018 because their thoughts about marriage were also negative. Both the decrease in the number of marriages and the low fertility rate are analyzed to be that young people in our society postpone marriage and childbirth due to the continuous economic downturn, low employment rate, and changes in family values. In recent years, a change in family values has been newly raised as a major cause of low birthrate, and the importance of marriage values is emerging. In order to solve such a low birth rate problem, it is necessary to form the right values for marriage. Marriage values can be affected by personal, social, cultural, and economic aspects, and since industrialization, the marriage values of young Koreans have been changing. Along with the increase in the divorce rate of parents' generations such as dusk divorce, younger generations are also avoiding legal marriage in a way that prefers to live together. In addition, the celibacy rate is also on the rise continuously, and marriage values have become confused due to the creation of a variety of marriage cultures. Therefore, marriage, which signals the beginning of a new family, is generally difficult to predict. In this way, the change in the value of marriage is found to be related to the individual's choice considering the circumstances in deciding whether or when to marry outside the system or norm[13].

### *2.2 Pluralistic ignorance*

#### *2.2.1 Concept of pluralistic ignorance*

The concept of pluralistic ignorance was derived from the process of studying the "illusion of universality opinion" in 1924 by social psychologist Allport. It was defined as "the tendency of individuals to believe that they have a universal opinion. Later, Katz & Allport first used the term pluralistic ignorance to describe a situation in which individuals misperceived others. However, Allport did not extend it to the collective level by seeing the pluralistic ignorance as occurring at the individual level. A study of pluralistic ignorance at the collective level was attempted by O'Gorman in 1975. He defined pluralistic ignorance as

“a false cognitive belief shared by two or more people about the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others”, developing pluralistic ignorance into not only individual but collective dimensions [1].

Researchers of pluralistic ignorance have cited culture, stereotypes, media, and reference groups as examples of factors that enable such collective perceptions. In addition, Prentice & Miller argued that this pluralistic ignorance is caused by structural errors that occur in the process of people evaluating social norms[14]. In other words, in a situation where I do not think so, but because of social pressures, I am acting in compliance with the prevailing norms of the time, and in judging that the behavior of others conforming to the dominant norms is because they actually think so, It is said that a pluralistic ignorance of ignorance occurs. Because people hate being marginalized and tend to stand on the side of the majority, they will tend to adapt their attitudes and behaviors to the dominant norms of society that the majority of people at the time think. However, the problem of pluralistic ignorance may arise in changing the direction of society in a desirable direction in that the majority of people's opinions that individuals think may be wrong.

### *2.2.2 Pluralistic ignorance and involvement*

Until now, domestic and international studies on variables that affect pluralistic ignorance have not been actively conducted. Most of the related studies are also on the influence of media on the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance, and studies on the effect of the audience variable on the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance are not easy to find. In communication studies, the degree of involvement appears to be a major audience variable that affects various communication phenomena including the process of the audience's information. Since pluralistic ignorance is a false cognitive belief that people have about specific issues in society, it is worth paying attention to the possibility that involvement in a specific issue as a variable of audience will affect the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. In general, the level of involvement refers to the level of personal importance or interest induced by stimulation in a specific object or situation.

The research results of Prentice and Miller, which analyzed the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance of social norms in American college students' attitudes toward drinking, show that the degree of involvement in issues has a significant effect on the future attitudes and behaviors of individuals according to the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance[14]. Research shows that respondents themselves are reluctant to drink on college campuses, but they erroneously judged that other college students would enjoy drinking on their own.(However, survey results showed that other college students turned out to be reluctant). Notable facts in this study are that male students change their attitudes and behaviors toward thinking of their attitudes and behaviors as attitudes of the majority through the process of internalization in order to resolve the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance, that is, to get out of the situation that they are deviated from the majority. However, this trend did not appear in the case of female students. Researchers said that the reason why the internalization process by pluralistic ignorance takes place in male students is that drinking is an important part of male students' social life compared to female students. In other words, male students feel social pressure to drink. In the light of these research results, it can be expected that the degree of involvement of an individual in a specific issue can affect the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance

### *2.2.3 Pluralistic ignorance and media*

The phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance stems from individuals misrecognizing other people's opinions, thoughts, and attitudes. Therefore, it can be expected that mass media, which is the main means for individuals to obtain information on opinions, thoughts, and attitudes of members of society, will affect the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. According to scholars who have studied pluralistic ignorance such as O'Gorman, people are influenced by their own group and show a tendency to follow the opinions of the group. It depends on the mass media as a source of information.

However, it does not show consistent results on how mass media influences pluralistic ignorance. A series of studies have argued that mass media plays a positive role in accurately recognizing public opinion[15-16]. They argue that there is a positive correlation between the use of mass media and the accuracy of public opinion perception. However, the use of mass media may reinforce the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. In general, the main media of the society at the time tended to deal with the dominant norms or opinions of the time. So people who had a lot of contact with the mass media were influenced by the mass media, so they changed the attitudes and opinions of others in a more conservative direction than they actually were.

## **3. Research problems**

### 3.1 *Pluralistic ignorance in perception of marriage*

Marriage, childbirth and child-rearing have a strong aspect of the traditional social system. On the other hand, active employment and social advancement, self-realization in social and professional aspects, and individualism have a strong progressive character and are major trends in modern society. In addition, pursuing and enjoying a personal and free life without being bound by traditional family institutions or customs is also a major trend today. In addition, young people have a stronger tendency to be conscious of others than older generations, and are a group with a greater influence of the reference group.

These facts may have influenced the current view of marriage among young Koreans. In other words, the idea that it is better now to realize self-realization through work, to live and enjoy a personal and free life, rather than to marry early to start a family and to devote myself to family and parenting, may have had an effect. The following research questions were set up in order to solve the question of the research based on the recognition of marriage and the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance discussed so far.

Research problem 1: How will college students perceive other people's attitude toward marriage? How will this differ from the actual attitude of others?

### 3.2 *Influencing factors of pluralistic ignorance in perception of marriage*

#### 3.2.1 *Involvement*

In communication studies, the degree of involvement appears to be a major audience variable that affects various communication phenomena including the process of processing the audience's information. Since pluralistic ignorance is a false cognitive belief that people have about a particular issue in society, it is necessary to pay attention to the possibility that involvement in a particular issue as an audience variable will have an effect on the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance.

The high degree of involvement of an individual on a particular issue means that the issue is important to the individual. Here, the importance of the issue is that there may be cases in which you are voluntarily interested in the issue, but there may be cases in which you need to pay attention due to social pressure, that is, being conscious of others. In this context, it can be expected that involvement influences pluralistic ignorance, which is deeply related to the perception of other people's opinions. As a related study, as a result of a study by Prentice and Miller, which analyzed the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance of social norms targeting the attitudes of American college students toward drinking, male students with high involvement in drinking felt social pressure on drinking[14]. This pressure was found to have a significant effect on the attitudes and behaviors of individuals according to the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. Based on these research results, the following research problem was set up in relation to involvement in marriage and the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance.

Research problem 2: What is the effect of involvement on the pluralistic ignorance that appears in the perception of marriage?

#### 3.2.2 *Media usage*

If there is a phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance in the perception of marriage, which is the subject of this study, the next academic interest is what factors affect the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance of marriage. People show a tendency to follow the opinions of the group under the influence of the group they belong to, and in this process, they rely on the mass media as a source of information to grasp the opinions of the group they belong to or the opinions of others. Therefore, scholars who have studied the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance have predicted that mass media, which is the main means for individuals to obtain information on opinions, thoughts, and attitudes of members of society, have conducted research on the expectation that it will affect the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. However, it does not show consistent results on how mass media influences pluralistic ignorance.

The results of research analyzing the influence of individual media on pluralistic ignorance also do not show a consistent direction. In this study, if there is a phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance in the perception of marriage, the purpose of this study is to find out how media usage affects the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. In particular, the following research questions were set up for the purpose of grasping the effect of Internet use, which is widely used by college students, along with TV and radio as individual media.

Research problem 3: What is the effect of individual media usage on the pluralistic ignorance that appears in the perception of marriage?

### 3.2.3 Contents genre usage

Since the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance is felt by individuals, social perception of how other people around them perceive specific issues or norms plays an important role. In this regard, since mass media is an important means for individuals to have social perception, researchers have a view that mass media influences the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. In that case, it can be assumed that what kind of media an individual uses affects the individual's social perception, but what content he or she sees can affect his or her social perception. From this point of view, this study attempts to grasp the effect of the use of content genres such as entertainment, news, and current affairs on pluralistic ignorance. Until now, in studies related to pluralistic ignorance, the effect of individual media on the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance has been studied, but it is difficult to find a study on the effect of the use of content genres such as entertainment, news, and current events on the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance.

The genre is composed of a story style and a video style that reveals a pattern of repetition, and uses a certain pattern. In other words, a genre can be said to be a product system in which consumers' preference for a specific program is patterned. The content market is basically structured and developed based on. In this study, the following research problem was set up in order to analyze the effect of the use of content by genre of TV and Internet composed of various genres on the pluralistic ignorance from this genre perspective.

Research problem 4: What is the effect of TV and Internet content genres on the pluralistic ignorance that appears in the perception of marriage?

## 4. Reresearch methods

### 4.1 Research design

This study conducted a questionnaire survey of university students in order to determine whether there is a phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance in the perception of marriage among young Koreans, and to understand the influence of media usage behavior and personal characteristics on the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. 136 university students nationwide selected by convenience sampling participated in the survey. The average age of 136 final survey subjects was 21.2 years old and the standard deviation was 1.6. In order to analyze the data of this study, a t-test was conducted to verify the difference in attitudes of respondents to marriage and attitudes of others which respondents guess to marriage. Regression analysis was performed to verify whether media usage and personal characteristics affect pluralistic ignorance. In order to grasp the pure influence of each variable on pluralistic ignorance, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to analyze the influence of the independent variable after controlling other predictive variables.

### 4.2 Measurement of variables

#### 4.2.1 Attitude toward marriage of respondent

In order to measure one's attitude toward marriage four questions were measured on a 7-point scale ( $\alpha=.861$ ) - 'marriage is necessary', 'It is happier to live in a family than to live alone', 'Marriage is very important in life', 'Marriage at an appropriate age is desirable'. For example, if marriage is considered necessary, it is indicated as 7 points, and if it is not necessary at all, it is indicated as 1 point.

#### 4.2.2 Attitude toward marriage of others

To measure other people's attitude toward marriage, 4 questions were measured on a 7-point scale based on the questionnaire for measuring the attitude toward marriage of respondents ( $\alpha=.763$ ).

#### 4.2.3 Pluralistic ignorance

Pluralistic ignorance is measured as the difference between respondents' attitudes toward marriage and those of others based on the study of Prentice and Miller[14].

#### 4.2.4 Involvement

In order to measure involvement three questions were measured on a 7-point scale ( $\alpha=.891$ ) - 'marriage in the future is an important issue for me', 'I often think about marriage', and 'I am interested in marriage,

#### 4.2.5 Media usage

In order to measure the amount of individual media usage, the average daily viewing time for TV, the average daily listening time for the radio, and the average daily Internet use time for the Internet

(including all Internet services) were measured on a 7-point scale.

#### 4.2.6 Contents genre usage

For TV, entertainment programs, dramas and movies, news and current events, documentaries and lecture programs were measured by measuring the average daily viewing volume of each genre on a 7-point scale. For internet, information, entertainment, and social intercourse were measured based on related research[17-18].

### 5. Results

#### 5.1 State of Pluralistic ignorance

<Research problem 1> examines the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance in the perception of marriage. Specifically, it examines the difference between respondents' real perceptions of marriage and those of others. For this, the corresponding sample t-test was used. As a result of the analysis, a pluralistic ignorance was found in the respondents, who perceived that other people would show a more positive attitude toward marriage than the actual people thought about marriage. Their average attitude toward marriage of respondents was 3.82 (sd=1.44), while the average perception of other people's attitude toward marriage was 4.00 (sd=1.10), However, it did not appear statistically significant (Table 1).

**Table1** Attitude toward marriage

	Average (sd)	df	t	P
Correspondents	3.82 (1.44)	1,35	-1.352	.179
Others	4.00 (1.10)			

#### 5.2 Influencing factors of pluralistic ignorance in perception of marriage

<Research problems 2, 3, 4> verify the influence of individual media usage, individual content genre usage, involvement, and age on pluralistic ignorance that appears in the perception of marriage. To this end, a regression analysis was conducted using the degree of pluralistic ignorance perceived by individuals as the dependent variable. The degree of individual's pluralistic ignorance was measured by subtracting the average value of the actual respondents' attitude toward marriage from the perceived value of other people's attitude toward marriage.

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to analyze the influence of independent variables after controlling other predictive variables in order to grasp the pure influence of media usage behavior related variables and individual characteristics variables on pluralistic ignorance. Before performing the hierarchical regression analysis, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was analyzed to identify the problem of multicollinearity. In general, if the VIF value is 5 or higher, it can be suspected that there is a problem of multicollinearity. As a result of calculating the VIF value using SPSS-WIN, the distribution of the VIF value of the 12 predictors used in this study ranged from 1.00 to 1.76. Therefore, it can be said that the problem of multicollinearity among predictive variables is not large enough to affect the research results. In the first stage, involvement in marriage was introduced, TV, radio, and Internet usage as a media usage in the second stage, drama and movie, entertainment, news and current affairs, and documentary as TV contents genre in the third stage, information, entertainment, and social intercourse as an internet contents genre in the fourth stage, and age in the fifth stage.

First, as a result of analyzing the involvement of marriage, which is a personal characteristic, as a first step, it was found that the involvement of marriage had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance that other people judged to be more positive for marriage than in reality ( $\beta=.180$ ,  $p<.05$ ). In other words, it can be seen that the higher the degree of personal involvement in marriage, the greater the degree of misrecognition that other people will think positively about marriage (Table 2).

**Table2** Hierarchical regression analysis of Pluralistic ignorance in marriage

Independent variables	beta	Increase of R <sup>2</sup>
Involvement	.180 **	.032
Media usage	TV	.011
	Radio	

	Internet	.053	
	Drama and movie	.200 *	
TV contents genre usage	Entertainment,	-.121	.033
	News and current affairs	.022	
	Documentary	-.029	
Internet contents genre usage	Information,	-.077	
	Entertainment	-.129	.019
	Social intercourse	.025	
Age		.195 **	.028
last R <sup>2</sup>		.124**	

\*\* p< .05, \* p< .1

In this study, the degree of pluralistic ignorance was stronger as the degree of involvement in marriage increased. It can be said that the more involved people are, the greater the degree to which they mistakenly perceive that other people will be positive about marriage. A high degree of involvement in marriage may mean that they are very interested in marriage and have a high probability of having a positive attitude toward marriage. These results are consistent with studies that have identified the effect of involvement in dieting on pluralistic ignorance of beauty diets in female university students and found that involvement significantly affects pluralistic ignorance [19]. These findings show that involvement is an important variable that consistently affects pluralistic ignorance.

As a result of analyzing the media usage variables as the next two steps, it was found that the individual media usage did not significantly affect the pluralistic ignorance. As a result of the analysis of TV genre usage variables as the next three steps, it was found that drama and movie genre usage had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage recognition at the level of  $p < .1$  ( $\beta = .200$ ). In other words, it can be seen that the more people who use the drama and movie genre on TV, the greater the degree to which they mistakenly perceive that other people will think positively about marriage. As a result of the analysis of Internet genre usage variables as the next four steps, it was found that individual Internet genre usage did not significantly affect pluralistic ignorance.

As a result of analysis by inputting age as the last five steps, it was found that age had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage perception ( $\beta = .195$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In other words, it can be seen that the higher the age, the greater the degree of misconception that other people will think positively about marriage.

As a result of this study, the more audiences who use the genre with a content context that deals with a lot of themes related to love between men and women and deals with more content related to marriage, the more people tend to misunderstand that they are more positive about marriage. Specifically, it was found that TV dramas and movie genres with the aforementioned content context had a positive effect on pluralistic ignorance of marriage perception at the  $p < .1$  level. It can be said that this is because TV drama and movie genres deal more about love or marriage between men and women than other genres. Therefore, it can be seen that what content is used a lot in the media influences the pluralistic ignorance of marriage perception.

In this study, the higher the age, the stronger the degree of pluralistic ignorance that other people would be positive for marriage. This means that as we get closer to the marriageable age as we get older, we become more interested in marriage, and the tendency to mistakenly think that others will be positive for marriage also increases. These results can be said to be in line with the results of this study that the higher the degree of involvement in marriage, the greater the degree of pluralistic ignorance about marriage.

## 6. Conclusions

This study investigated the influence of media usage behavior and personal characteristics on pluralistic ignorance on their perception of marriage among university students. Studies show that the higher the degree of involvement in marriage, the greater the degree of pluralistic ignorance, indicating that the degree of involvement in marriage significantly affects pluralistic ignorance. Higher

involvement means that the issue is important to people, and the more important it is to people, the more conscious people are of others and the greater the social pressure people feel. In this case, the higher the involvement in marriage, the stronger the degree of pluralistic ignorance, in that it may be difficult to judge rationally by objective information, could be explained.

Remarkable results were drawn as a result of analyzing the influence of media's use of individual content genres on individual pluralistic ignorance. In the case of the TV genre, it was found that the amount of use of drama and film genres had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage perception in p<.1 dimension. These results indicate that the more audiences who use genres such as dramas and movies with content context related to love or marriage between men and women, the more people will be mistaken for marriage as more positive. However, it can be said that caution is needed when interpreting the results in that the above assumptions related to the influence of content genre usage on pluralistic ignorance did not appear consistently across all content genres. Nevertheless, it is the significance of this study to discover that the influence of pluralistic ignorance by content genre can appear differently beyond whether the use of the entire media or individual media affects pluralistic ignorance.

In this study, the higher the age, the stronger the degree of pluralistic ignorance that other people would be positive for marriage. This means that as we get closer to the marriageable age as we get older, we become more interested in marriage, and the tendency to mistakenly think that others will be positive for marriage also increases. These results can be said to be in line with the results of this study that the higher the degree of involvement in marriage, the greater the degree of pluralistic ignorance about marriage.

Currently, in Korea, the issue of low birth rate is emerging as an important social issue. There may be various reasons for the intensification of the low birth rate phenomenon, but it can be said that the increase in negative attitudes toward marriage among the younger generation is an important reason. In this situation, the results of this study are worth referencing in establishing policies to increase a positive attitude toward marriage and alleviate the low birth rate problem.

As a result of this study, it was found that the degree of involvement in marriage had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage. In other words, the higher people's involvement in marriage, the more likely people are to think that others will be positive about it. Since humans are social beings and hate being marginalized, they tend to change their attitudes and behaviors in the direction the majority thinks and acts. Therefore, when examining the results of this study, it can be expected that increasing the degree of involvement of individuals in marriage leads to a positive attitude toward marriage, which leads to an increase in marriage and fertility rates. In this context, there is a need to establish and implement education and policies that can increase involvement in marriage for children and adolescents as well as in their twenties in the future.

As a result of analyzing the effect of media's use of individual content genres on individual's pluralistic ignorance, in the case of TV genre, it was found that the use of drama and film genres had a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage perception. In view of these results, it is judged that the media can induce a socially positive atmosphere in marriage. In other words, it will be possible to create a favorable social atmosphere for marriage through content dealing with love between men and women and the importance of marriage and family. In addition, creating and executing communication campaigns that convey the importance of marriage, family, and children will help in inducing positive attitudes and behaviors toward marriage and childbirth socially.

As a result of this study, it was found that age has a positive effect on the pluralistic ignorance of marriage. These results imply that it is necessary to instill the importance of marriage and a positive attitude to middle and high school students and college students rather than men and women of marriageable age. In other words, it was found that the closer the marriage age was, the more people would think that marriage would be positive, and it can be inferred that as the person gets older, they will change positively about marriage. Therefore, younger people, ie, middle and high school students and college students who are relatively negative about marriage, should have a favorable attitude toward marriage. Therefore, it is necessary to focus more on them as targets of policies and campaigns for childbirth promotion or marriage.

The significance of this study is that it has found that the influence of pluralistic ignorance by content genre can appear differently beyond whether the use of the entire media or individual media affects pluralistic ignorance, and that personal characteristics such as involvement and age have had an effect on pluralistic ignorance. Nevertheless, the research has limitations in the following aspects. First, it can be expected that the influence of interpersonal communication and reference group in addition to the media and personal characteristics in the formation of young people's perception of marriage is also significant, but this study did not address these variables. Also, there are points on the classification of



content genres. In a situation where there are not many studies on the content genre, the purpose of the study was considered and related studies were referenced to classify them, but a more rigorous approach is needed in future studies. Regarding the results of this study, the following research is proposed. In a situation where research on pluralistic ignorance is not active lately, research from the perspective of pluralistic ignorance needs to be activated in fields related to various social phenomena or marketing activities.

## 7. Acknowledgements

Funding for this paper was provided by Namseoul University

## 8. References

- [1] O'Gorman HJ. Pluralistic ignorance and whites estimates of white support for racial segregation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 1975; 39(3):313–330.
- [2] Breed W, Ktsanes T. Pluralistic ignorance in the process of opinion formation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 1961; 25(3):382–392.
- [3] Fields J, Schuman H. Public beliefs about the belief of the public. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 1976; 40(4):427–488.
- [4] Korte C. Pluralistic ignorance about student radicalism. *Sociometry*. 1972; 35:576–587
- [5] O'Gorman HJ, Garry GL. Pluralistic ignorance: A replication and extension. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 1976; 40(4):449–458.
- [6] Boon SD, Watkins SJ, Sciban RA. Pluralistic ignorance and misperception of social norms concerning cheating in dating relationships. *Personal Relationships*. 2014; 21(3):482–496.
- [7] Halbesleben JR, Buckley MR. Pluralistic ignorance: Historical development and organizational applications. *Journal of Management History*. 2004; 42(1):126–138.
- [8] Henningsen ML, Henningsen DD. Cheating, Pluralistic Ignorance, and the Theory of Normative Social Behavior. *Southern Communication Journal*. 2020; 85(1):16–27.
- [9] Levine J, Etchison S, Oppenheimer DM. Pluralistic ignorance among student–athlete populations: a factor in academic underperformance. *Higher education*. 2014; 68(4):525–540.
- [10] Miller DT, Nelson LD. Seeing approach motivation in the avoidance behavior of others: Implications for an understanding of pluralistic ignorance *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 2002; 83(5):1066–1075.
- [11] Prentice DA, Miller DT. The emergence of hometown stereotypes. *American Psychologist*. 2002; 57(5):352–359.
- [12] Park DE, Yoo GS. The delaying & advancing factors of marriage & fertility timing among married women. *Korean Journal of Family Welfare*. 2011; 16(2):29–65. <http://www.riss.kr.proxy.nsu.ac.kr:8010/link?id=A82602355>.
- [13] Lee EH. Pre-service teachers' perception of gender equality consciousness and marriage values. *Teacher Education Research*. 2019; 58(2):267–278. <http://www.riss.kr.proxy.nsu.ac.kr:8010/link?id=A106296044>
- [14] Prentice DA, Miller DT. Pluralistic ignorance and alcohol use on campus: Some consequences of misperceiving the social norm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1993; 64(2):243–256.
- [15] Noelle-Neumann, E. *The spiral of Science: Public opinion-our social skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1984.
- [16] Shamir J, Shamir M. Pluralistic ignorance across issues and over time: Information cues and biases. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 1997; 61:227–260.
- [17] Larose R, Mastro D, Eastin MS. Social-cognitive approach to uses and gratifications. *Social Science Computer Review*. 1997; 19(4):395–413.
- [18] Stafford TF, Stafford M. Identifying motivations for the use of commercial web sites. *Information Resources Management Journal*. 2001; 14(1):22–43.
- [19] Choi MW. A study on the influence of the media use and involvement on the perception of diet: Focusing on pluralistic ignorance. *Journal of Public Relations*. 2010; 14(2):227–260. <http://www.riss.kr.proxy.nsu.ac.kr:8010/link?id=A104989337>