

# A Study on Promoting Optimism Utilizing a Communication Board Game - With a focus on college students

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커뮤니케이션 보드 게임을 활용한 낙관성 증진에 관한 연구  
대학생 집단을 중심으로

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## ABSTRACT

This study verified the effects of promoting optimism by utilizing communication board games with university students. Since optimism is closely related to grade, self-efficacy, a sense of achievement, the importance of enhancing optimism was emphasized. This study seeks to investigate practical measures that can promote optimism utilizing games in a more casual environment based on the research of Seligman(1990), which claimed that the optimism can be learned regardless of temperaments. In Study1, the level of optimism increased from  $M=-4.7(t1)$  to  $M=12.8$  in  $t2(p<.001)$ . In Study2, a control group( $n=22$ ) was added with the experiment group( $n=21$ ). The level of optimism increased from  $M=-2.4(t1)$  to  $M=11.5(t2)$  in the experiment group( $p<.001$ ), whereas there was no difference in the control group.

## 요 약

본 연구는 대학생들을 대상으로 커뮤니케이션 보드 게임을 활용하여 낙관성 증진 효과를 검증하였다. 기존 연구에서는 낙관성이 자기효능감, 성취감, 성적, 삶의 만족도, 역경 극복 등과 밀접하게 관련이 있기에 낙관성 증진이 중요함을 강조하였다. 본 연구는 기질과 상관없이 낙관성도 학습될 수 있다는 Seligman(1990)의 연구를 기반으로, 보다 캐주얼한 환경에서 게임을 활용하여 낙관성을 증진시킬 수 있는 실용적인 방안에 대해 연구하고자 한다. study1에서는 사전(t1) 검사 시 낙관주의는  $M= -4.7$ , 그리고 사후(t2) 시기에는  $M=12.8$ 점으로 증가하였다( $***p<.001$ ). study2에서는 실험집단( $n=21$ )과 함께 통제집단( $n=22$ )도 설계하였으며, 실험집단은  $M= -2.4(t1)$ 에서  $M=11.5(t2)$ 로 증가하였으나( $***p<.001$ ), 통제집단은 차이가 없었다.

**Keywords** : Learned optimism(학습된 낙관주의); Communication Board Game(커뮤니케이션 보드게임); Ugame(언게임)

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## 1. Introduction

Following the release of results from the World Happiness Report 2016[1], Korea was ranked 58th and has continued to decline compared with its positions of 43th in 2015 and 41th in 2013. It means a pessimistic mood has prevailed in society and been exacerbated by the recent prolonged economic depression, as well as social and natural disasters in South Korea. This is highly likely to lead to further increased pessimism among members of society and has also been found to have a negative effect on individual's lives: including such factors as health, work, relationships and overall satisfaction[2,3,4]. Conversely, it has been found that optimistic people have lower levels of depression despite their age[5] and relieve stress levels and a sense of pain[6,7,8]. In addition, optimism turned out to be closely related to self-efficacy, sense of achievement, trust, satisfaction with life and the overcoming of adversity[9,10,11].

However, previous studies supported such optimism in terms of temperament traits of individuals or were mostly focused on specific environments and subjects. In this regard, this study seeks to investigate practical measures that can promote optimism by utilizing games in a more casual environment based on the study of Seligman[12] which claimed that the optimism can, in fact, be learned, regardless of temperaments.

## 2. Learned Optimism

Optimism refers to the atmosphere or attitude related to positive expectations

concerning the future and was previously measured as innate temperaments of individuals[10]. However, Seligman[12] saw that an individual's optimism can be learned, and a distinction between optimism and pessimism is made depending on explanatory styles of individuals that appear as language habits. There are three key dimensions of permanence, universalism and personalization in language habits. Pessimists (optimists) assumed that the cause of negative events is persistent (temporary), has effects on the overall lifestyle (only in a specific situation) and can't be controlled (can be controlled) as the cause is due to his/her faults (external factors), whereas they interpreted the cause of positive events in the opposite way. Therefore, he argued that if the way in which their situations are explained is changed, pessimists can be transformed into optimists.

## 3. Communication Board Game

A game is a recreational activity and culture that college students can easily access. Certain elements of games - such as fun and immersion - exert a great influence on emotional states and behaviors of humans, and Wilkinson et al.[13] confirmed the therapeutic effectiveness of games through a meta-analysis in relation to a variety of mental health issues. In particular, 'Ungame' developed by Zakich[14] takes the form of a non-competitive game that makes conversation with written statements in the card and was used as a healing method in a variety of fields mainly for the purpose of attentive hearing

and the enhancement of self-expression. For example, it was used as part of psychotherapy for sexually abused children[15] or a part of a treatment program for students with asthma[16]. Likewise, it can be seen that optimism is also closely related to mental health in terms of individual ways of thinking. In this regard, this study utilized 'Ungame', which is a communication board game, to promote such optimism.

#### 4. Method and Results

In Study1, The subjects were 24 students (women: 17, men: 7) attending a college located in C city in South Korea. A pre-test and a post-test were conducted to measure changes in optimism by Learned Optimism scale(Seligman, 1990) which is consist of 48 questions. Based on the ABCDE technique(ABCDE model) proposed by Seligman (1990), 'Ungame' planning and play of a game type that can induce optimistic ways of thinking and communication were actually performed for one hour per week for ten weeks. The results showed that the optimism score of college students was an average of -4.7 before participation, but most of the students scored higher (more than 8) after participation, thus promoting an optimistic disposition. And according to paired sample t-test results, the optimism score was -4.7 in the pre-test(t1), and 12.8 in the post-test(t2), showing a 300 percent increase. This difference was proven to be very significant. Meanwhile, the effect of promoting optimism utilizing communication board was confirmed

empirically through individual interviews with participants.

[Table 1] Paired t-test Results(Study1)

Variable	M	SD	t	P
T1	-4.7083	5.27075	-9.696***	.000
T2	12.8333	7.49299		

\*\*\*p<.001

In Study2, a control group(n=22) was added with the experiment group(n=21) to measure optimism using the same method as Study 1. The level of optimism in the experiment group was M=-2.4(t1) and in the control group was M=-4.0(t1), which displayed pessimism in both groups. However, it increased by five times to M=11.5(t2) in the experiment group(p<.001), whereas there was no difference in the control group.

[Table 2] Paired t-test Results(Study2)

Variable	M	SD	t	P
Experiment Group (N=21)	T1	-2.3810	7.151***	.000
	T2	11.5238		
Control Group (N=22)	T1	-4.0000	.217	.830
	T2	-4.1818		

\*\*\*p<.001

#### 5. Conclusion and Implications

This study verified the effects of promoting optimism by utilizing communication board games with college students as subjects. This enabled the students to understand their thoughts, behavior and language types more easily and acquire positive thinking and optimistic behavior. In addition, this allowed

them to change their pessimistic thinking, behavior and language into more positive ones, and thus promoting optimism.

This study has its practicality in that it was conducted with the general public within a casual environment, not with groups in a specific environment such as patients, elementary school students or people under laboratory conditions. In addition, it is positive in that it led to a new creative process, while applying game elements and optimism more easily. For future work, there is a need for gender comparisons and the persistence of effects with more subjects.

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