

# A literature therapy program based on positive psychology Impact on elementary school students' happiness

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## 긍정심리학에 기반한 문학치료 프로그램이 초등학생의 행복에 미치는 영향

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**Abstract** The purpose of this study is to verify the effect of positive psychology-based literacy therapy program on elementary school students' happiness by constructing a literature therapy program based on positive psychology. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, the experiment group and the control group were subjected to the pre - test. The same test as that carried out in the test was conducted. The pre - and post - scores of experimental group and control group were compared and analyzed by independent sample t-test. The results of this study were as follows. First, literature therapy programs based on positive psychology were found to be effective in improving elementary school students' happiness ( $t = 10.175, p < .001$ ). Second, the effects of positive psychology - based literacy therapy programs on self - esteem, optimism, friendship, and family environment were found to affect all four factors ( $t = 5.720, p < .001$ ) . Therefore, the children tend to equate themselves with the person in the book, so that the short and concise sentence of the poem can convey emotion and emotion to the child.

**Key Words** : Positive psychology, Happiness index, Self esteem, Optimism, Friendship, Home environment

요 약 본 연구의 목적은 긍정심리학에 기반한 문학치료 프로그램을 구성하여 긍정심리학에 기반한 문학치료프로그램이 초등학생의 행복에 미치는 효과를 검증하는데 있다. 이를 위해 두 학급을 실험집단과 통제집단으로 배정하여 검사를 실시하였다. 실험집단과 통제집단을 대상으로 사전검사에서 실시한 것과 동일한 내용으로 사후 검사를 실시하여, 사전, 사후점수를 독립표본 t검증을 통하여 비교 분석하였다. 본 연구결과는 다음과 같았다. 첫째, 긍정심리학에 기반한 문학치료 프로그램이 초등학생의 행복증진에 효과가 있는 것으로 나타났다. ( $t=10.175, p<.001$ ). 둘째, 긍정심리학에 기반한 문학치료 프로그램이 행복의 각 하위요소인 자기존중감, 낙관주의, 친구관계, 가정환경에 미치는 영향은 네 요소 모두에 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. ( $t=5.720, p<.001$ ). 이러한 결과는 초등학생은 책속의 인물과 자신을 동일시하는 경향이 강하기 때문에 시의 짧고 간결한 문장은 이들의 정서와 감정을 전달시켜 줄 수 있다는 것을 알 수 있었다.

주제어 : 긍정심리학, 행복지수, 자기존중감, 낙관주의, 친구관계, 가정환경

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## 1. Introduction

Modern society has more convenient life and material abundance than the past, but happiness index like emotional stability or life satisfaction seems to be falling behind. In the case of countries that achieved high growth for a short period of time, such as the Korean society, the adverse effects of rapid growth are amplified by materialism and generational conflicts, resulting in fewer interests and policies for the less voting classes such as children and youth is[1]. As a result, school maladjustment and anxiety of elementary school students and middle and high school students are increasing, and their deviant behavior is increasing[2]. Especially, diversity was difficult to be respected due to the monopolistic pursuit of value and dichotomy in the school scene. Successful superstitionism deprived the opportunity to pursue individual happiness. As youths' delinquency and crime become social problems, the age group is getting lower and elementary school students are exposed to crime and become a social problem[3]. Therefore, We must solve these problems.

Elementary school students are less able to express their language than adults and adults, and hesitant to express their thoughts or problems directly[4]. This is why familiar literature, A literature therapy program that can be used without any psychological burden or resistance will be helpful and self-esteem[5, 6, 7], self-expression[5], mind reading ability[8], self concept [9, 10], self-efficacy[11, 12], psychological well-being[13], happiness[6], peer relationship[14, 16], interpersonal relationship[8], social skills and sociality[8, 9, 12].

In addition, regarding the composition of programs to promote the sub-factors of happiness, Koh Young-Mi[16] seems to improve some of the sub-factors of happiness. In addition, through a literacy program that can improve psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and interpersonal relationships with elementary school students suffering from mental

health problems due to excessive academic burden and stress in a competitive and sequential educational environment, We want to make a relationship and feel happiness. Literary therapy is not only a curative process but also an educational process, and the process of literary experience itself [8, 17].

Positive psychology finds the optimal function that gives individuals happiness and satisfaction because they study specific methods and practices that support human happiness and growth, develop human potential, and promote happiness through scientific research. Therefore, in order to increase the effectiveness of the literature therapy program, positive psychology, which is an alternative to overcome the crisis in various difficult situations that can face a rapidly changing society as well as mental health problems caused by stress, To maximize the characteristics. In addition, based on positive psychology, there is a need to construct literature therapy programs and literary activities using various media and to verify the effects of elementary school students on their happiness.

Through this study, we support programs that can enhance happiness by developing individual potential for happiness of elementary school students. Also, elementary school students will be able to develop their potential as much as possible and grow into a healthy society, and contributing to research on the promotion of happiness for elementary school students.

The purpose of this study is to verify the effects of positive psychology - based literacy therapy programs on elementary school students' happiness. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following hypothesis was set up based on the following rationale.

Hypothesis 1. Positive psychology-based literature therapy programs will improve the overall happiness of elementary school students.

Hypothesis 2. The literature therapy program based on positive psychology will improve the element of happiness of elementary

school students (self-esteem, optimism, interpersonal relationship, home environment).

Hypothesis 2-1. The experimental group participating in literature therapy based on positive psychology will have a higher self-esteem score than the control group.

Hypothesis 2-2. Experimental groups participating in literature therapy based on positive psychology will have significantly higher optimism score than control group.

Hypothesis 2-3. Experimental groups participating in literature therapy based on positive psychology would have significantly higher interpersonal scores than control group.

Hypothesis 2-4. Experimental groups participating in literature therapy based on positive psychology will have a significantly higher score on the home environment than the control group.

## 2. Research method

### 2.1 Study subjects

In this study, two homogeneous classes were selected as the experimental group and the control group among the four classes of the 6th grade of D elementary school located in J city, Jeollabuk-do, and the experimental group performed a literature therapy program based on positive psychology. I did not give any treatment.

<Table 1> Composition distribution by group of study subjects

group	subject		total
	male	female	
experiment group	12	12	24
control group	12	12	24
total	24	24	48

### 2.2 Research Design

The independent variable is literature therapy based on positive psychology and the dependent variable is the happiness scale score. We applied the program only to experimental group and compared pre-test and post-test between experiment group and control group for each measurement tool. The experimental design contents of this study are shown in <Table 1>.

<Table 2> Experimental Design Contents

group	pre-test	experimental treatment	post-test
G <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
G <sub>2</sub>	O <sub>3</sub>		O <sub>4</sub>

G 1: experimental group, G 2: control group,  
 X : literature therapy program based on positive psychology  
 O 1, O 2: Pre-test of happiness scale,  
 O 3, O 4: Pre-test of happiness scale

### 2.3 Research procedure

The experimental group and the control group were selected by conducting the pre-test and the questionnaire before the practice of the literature therapy program based on positive psychology. In order to verify the effectiveness of the program, we conducted a pre-test on the happiness scale for the experimental group and the control group. Second, a total of 10 sessions were held twice a week for 80 minutes from September to October, 2016. Third, in order to examine the effect of the program, the same test as that conducted in the pre-test was conducted on the experiment group and the control group in the last session, 10 sessions.

### 2.4 Measurement tools

In this study, we used Kang Young-Ha[18]'s happy scale to measure elementary school students' happiness scale. All the items were composed of 5 items of 'Likert' 5, 'Almost Yes' 4, 'I do not know' 3, 'Almost no' 2 and 'Not very' . The happiness scale score means that the score obtained from each item is added up by

<Table 3> Composition of literature therapy program based on positive psychology

step	session	subject	Activity goal	Activities
Introduction	1	happy meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the objectives, objectives, activities and rules of the program.</li> <li>Form trust and intimacy among group members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing the program and communicating the goal of the group</li> <li>Introducing a partner</li> <li>Read the group rules together and write a pledge</li> </ul>
	2	finding my strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve self-efficacy through positive self-awareness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading Picture book 'Rainbow fish'</li> <li>Feelings and contents about picture books</li> <li>Explore myself talent</li> <li>Find my own strengths - Know my specific strengths using strengths</li> <li>Write my self-introduction letter with your own strengths.</li> </ul>
	3	Precious and Special myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve my positive self-awareness and self-efficacy through activities that identify my strengths and identify them with poetry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch video 'You are special'</li> <li>Share the most memorable scenes and feelings</li> <li>Browse your own star and scoreboards</li> <li>Put my own strengths and write a poem titled 'I am special'</li> </ul>
Working	4	I like myself certainly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve positive self-awareness and self-efficacy through finding good points about oneself</li> <li>Experience intimacy and form a positive interpersonal relationship through praise and support activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read a book of 'I like you' together</li> <li>Find myself a good reason</li> <li>Put myself in good reason</li> <li>Create 'a praise tree of a friend'</li> <li>Mutual praise and sharing</li> </ul>
	5	joy of sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience the importance of sharing and the joy of sharing in interpersonal relationships.</li> <li>Establish an opportunity to learn how to build positive interpersonal relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refreshing the conclusion of a book of 'Rainbow Fish'</li> <li>Watch videos of people who have practiced talent sharing</li> <li>Identify my strengths</li> <li>Creating strengths sharing action plan</li> <li>Predicting strengths sharing practice results</li> </ul>
	6	joy with people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience intimacy through collaborative activities with friends.</li> <li>Encourage recipients to recognize opportunities to form positive relationships and maintain relationships through mutual praise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share own impressions after reading 'A bag-carrying child'</li> <li>Virtual interview with hero in the story - Thinking about respect, sympathy, consideration and sharing about different positions</li> <li>Making cooperative work on the subject of consideration, sharing, and respect</li> <li>Present a letter and praise certificate to own friend</li> </ul>
	7	friend! 'I love you'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize how to experience intimate relationships and build positive relationships.</li> <li>Increase the commitment to maintain and maintain a positive relationship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading and sharing with my friends after reading 'my friends!'</li> <li>Share my troubles with friends</li> <li>Learn the type of 'Favorite friends' and 'unfavorite friends'</li> <li>Checking attitudes with friends</li> <li>Commit to becoming a good friend</li> <li>Change in the poem (presented as an assignment)</li> </ul>
integrated	8	happy when 'thank you'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being aware of the importance of an attitude of gratitude and the concrete way of gratitude, and have an attitude of gratitude in ordinary everyday life.</li> <li>improving positive emotions and psychological well-being through thanks activities and letter writing activities with hope and courage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read 'When it rains' and share your thoughts and feelings</li> <li>Making thanksgiving tree and sharing thanksgiving experience</li> <li>Write thanks letters</li> <li>Give thanks in a sentence</li> <li>Guidance on the importance of the attitude of gratitude and the concrete method of gratitude</li> <li>Create an audit list</li> <li>Daily diary writing (presented as an assignment)</li> </ul>
	9	beautiful forgiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solving negative emotions and improving psychological well-being through forgiveness activities.</li> <li>Provide an opportunity to recover relationships by forgiving those who have negative relationships and improve interpersonal relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read 'Sometimes Rainy Day' together and share each testimony</li> <li>Interview with the characters in the work</li> <li>Share experiences that have been forgiven or forgiven</li> <li>Talk with the person who hurt (empty chairs technique)</li> <li>Write 'a forgiveness letter' and share feelings</li> </ul>
Set a new direction	10	Making me happy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving hope and optimism about the future by raising the happiness of myself in detail.</li> <li>Enhance the ability to strengthen intimacy and maintain positive interpersonal relationships through mutual encouragement and supportive activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making 'a happy future of myself' handbill and make sure of it</li> <li>Create a 'Rolling Paper for Love' (rolling paper) and share it with group members</li> <li>Ending the program and sharing feelings</li> <li>Program evaluation and completion ceremony</li> </ul>

the sub - factors, and the higher the score, the higher the happiness.

The four sub - factors of happiness scale were divided into self - esteem, optimism, friendship, and family environment. The overall reliability of the scale was .85. The reliability of the subscales was .85, .87, .87, .83, and .84, respectively.

### 2.5 Literature curriculum based on positive psychology

The literature therapy program based on positive psychology used in this study consists of 10 sessions. Literary therapy is developed by Fritz Perls Institute in Germany and is divided into four stages: introduction stage, work stage, integration stage, and new direction introduction, which was introduced to Korea by Hak-Soo Byeun[19]. <Table 3> shows the outline of the program of literature therapy based on positive psychology.

### 2.6 Data Processing

In order to verify the effectiveness of this study, SPSS Window was used. First, to verify the homogeneity, we analyzed pre-test t-test for happiness between pre - program experimental group and control group. In the next step, we compared the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group using the independent sample t-test to see if positive psychological-based literature therapy is effective for elementary school students' happiness.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Verification of homogeneity between experiment group and control group

As a result of pre-test to verify the homogeneity of the experimental group and the control group before the program, there was no statistically significant difference in the <Table 4> as the significance

probability of .338 ( $p > .05$ ) Group.

It can be seen that this is a homogeneous group.

<Table 4> Test of homogeneity between experimental group and control group

experimental group(n=24)		control group(n=24)		t	p
M	SD	M	SD		
148.88	10.420	143.27	7.816	1.00	0.338

The results of the pre-test scores of self-esteem, optimism, friendship, and family environment, which are sub-elements of happiness before program implementation, are the same group in the sub-elements of euphoria as all four factors ( $p > .05$ ).

<Table 5> Affinity between groups of happiness sub-elements

sub-elements	experimental group(n=24)		control group(n=24)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
self-esteem	38.300	7.734	37.500	8.044	0.238	0.815
optimism	40.900	3.789	41.650	4.530	-0.361	0.724
friendship	35.270	3.695	30.680	2.416	1.577	0.142
home environment	34.410	3.911	33.440	3.344	0.422	0.680

### 3.2 Effects of Positive Psychology-Based Literature Therapy on Happiness

The results of <Hypothesis 1> showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the total score of happiness among the experimental and control groups in <Table 6> at  $t = 10.175$  ( $p < .001$ ). This means that the experimental group participating in literature therapy based on positive psychology is more effective in improving happiness than the control group. Hypothesis 1 was accepted.

<Table 6> Differences in Happiness Total Post-test Verification

experimental group(n=24)		control group(n=24)		t	p
M	SD	M	SD		
171.92	9.139	130.28	7.138	10.175	6.212

### 3.3 Effect of Positive Psychology-Based Literature Therapy on Affecting Sub-factors

The results of <Hypothesis 2-1> are as follows. <Table 7> shows the statistically significant difference between the two groups at  $t = 5.720$  ( $p < .001$ ). Therefore, it can be seen that the experimental group participating in literature therapy based on positive psychology has higher self - esteem score than the control group. Hypothesis 2-1 was accepted.

<Table 7> Self-esteem post-test difference test

experimental group(n=24)		control group(n=24)		t	p
M	SD	M	SD		
45.690	4.736	32.370	6.230	5.720	0.000

The results of <Hypothesis 2-2> show that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups as  $t = 3.314$  ( $p < .01$ ) as a result of optimism post test in <Table 8>. Therefore, experimental group participated in literature therapy based on positive psychology had significantly higher self - esteem score than control group. Hypothesis 2-2 was accepted.

<Table 8> Examination of difference between optimism post

experimental group(n=24)		control group(n=24)		t	p
M	SD	M	SD		
44.180	4.724	37.650	3.536	3.314	0.000

The results of the hypotheses 2-3 showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups as shown in <Table 9>,  $t = 9.242$  ( $p < .001$ ). The experimental group who participated in literature therapy based on positive psychology had a higher level of friendship score than the control group. <Hypothesis 2-3> was accepted.

<Table 9> Verification of Differences in Friendship Post-test

experimental group(n=24)		control group(n=24)		t	p
M	SD	M	SD		
40.500	2.636	28.290	1.618	9.242	1.614

The results of <Hypothesis 2-4> showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups as  $t = 3.778$  ( $p < .001$ ) as a result of home environment post test in <Table 10>. These results indicate that the experimental group participating in literature therapy based on positive psychology had a significantly higher score on the home environment score than the control group. <Hypothesis 2-4> was accepted.

<Table 10> Verification of Differences in Home Environment Surveys

experimental group(n=24)		control group(n=24)		t	p
M	SD	M	SD		
41.550	3.544	31.970	4.977	3.778	0.000

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

### 4.1 Discussion

In this study, we investigated the effects of positive psychology-based literacy therapy programs on the happiness of elementary school students by conducting the elementary school students' happiness test [16] before and after the program. Based on the results of applying the program and verifying the effects, the effects of the positive psychology-based literacy therapy program on elementary school students' happiness are discussed with the hypotheses and the main results are as follows.

First, a literature therapy program based on positive psychology was found to be effective in enhancing the

happiness of elementary students ( $t = 10.175$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As a result of listening to the testimonies of the students participating in the program, I was able to find my own strengths and realized that I was suffering from the disadvantages and difficulties that I felt I had only my own, and I was proud of myself and loved myself. In addition, it has become more important to understand and respect the diversity of friends, and it has shown positive effects on family happiness by confirming the love of parents. The results of this study are in agreement with the results of previous studies [18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23].

Second, the effects of positive psychology - based literacy therapy programs on self - esteem, optimism, friendship, and family environment were found to affect all four factors ( $t = 5.720$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This is a possible outcome because students who have experienced a positive psychology-based literacy program have realized that everything in the world is worthy and that I am a special and valuable person through the characters and situations that appear in the book. The results of this study are based on the fact that the self-esteem score of the happiness subscale was increased in the previous study [21, 26, 27]. The results is also consistent with the results of the previous studies in that it increased the scores of optimism[28, 29, 30], friendship[31, 32, 33] and home environment [20, 24, 26, 27] respectively.

In summary, the positive psychology-based literature therapy program is effective in improving elementary school students' happiness and subordinate factors. Children tend to identify themselves with the person in the book, so short and concise sentences of the poem can convey many emotions and feelings to the child. Therefore, this study suggests that it is necessary to apply literature therapy program based on positive psychology to improve students' happiness considering the developmental characteristics of elementary school students. Also, experiencing enough happiness in elementary school is a great help to make

children's life more satisfying and happy. Therefore, this study is meaningful in that elementary school students' happiness and each sub-element are improved through literary therapy program mediated through literature that students can easily access.

#### 4.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to verify the effects of positive psychology-based literature therapy on elementary school students' happiness by constructing a literature therapy program based on positive psychology.

The conclusions of this study are as follows.

First, literature therapy programs based on positive psychology are effective in improving elementary school students' happiness.

Second, the literature therapy program based on positive psychology is effective in improving the self-esteem, optimism, friendship, and family environment of each element of happiness of elementary school students. Children tend to equate themselves with the person in the book, so short and concise sentences of the poem can convey emotions and feelings to the child.

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