Human Rights Victimization and Self-esteem of University Students: Mediating Effect of Hope and Moderating Effect of Human Rights Awareness

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Abstract: This study focused on human rights victimization among university students and how it affects their self-esteem. It also examined the mediating effects of hope and the moderating effects of human rights awareness in the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem. 223 university students, chosen through purposive sampling, participated in the study. Human rights victimization did not significantly affect self-esteem (β = .6052, p>.05) and also had a statistically significant negative effect on the mediating variable - hope (β = -.2413, p <.01). Hope, on the other hand, had a statistically significant positive effect on self-esteem (β = .5307, p<.001). Therefore, hope mediates the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem. The moderator – human rights awareness – had a statistically positive effect on self-esteem (β=.5683, p<.01), but the interaction variable (human right victimization x human rights awareness) had a statistically significant negative effect on self-esteem (β = -.2479, p <.01) meaning human right awareness moderates the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem.

Keywords: human rights victimization, human rights awareness, self-esteem, hope

1. Introduction

The importance of human rights and the requirement to respect them is based on the notion of human dignity (Mubelo, 2016). Violation of these rights inherent to a person is one of the most depressing experiences that can be had. Human rights victimization results to the loss of one’s dignity thus adversely affecting self-esteem.

Several studies have been conducted showing how victims of human rights violation developed low self-esteem. But in such studies, the victims identified were mostly elementary and high school students. In this study, the subjects were university students who are presumed to have a higher degree of awareness of their rights as persons and possess a more definite view of the future. This study looked into how human rights victimization affect self-esteem of university students and how hope and their awareness of their human rights would mediate and moderate that relationship, respectively. The following were the specific hypotheses examined in the study.

Hypothesis 1: Human right victimization would affect self-esteem.
Hypothesis 2: Hope would mediate the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem.
Hypothesis 3: Human rights awareness would moderate the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem.

2. Methods

Two hundred and twenty-three (223) university students participated in this study. They were chosen through purposive sampling. The questionnaire developed by the National Human Rights Commission (2014) was used to measure human rights victimization and awareness. To measure hope and self-esteem, the Korean version of hope scale or K-DHS (2008) and the instrument developed by Rosenburg (1965) were used.

SPSS PC + and SPSS macro PROCESS proposed by Hayes (2013) were used in measuring the mediating effect of hope and the moderating effect of human rights awareness in the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem. Frequency analysis, reliability analysis, and path analysis were performed. Bootstrap method was used to determine the mediating effect. Correlation was used to measure the relationships between and among the variables in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

Statistical analyses have shown that there was
a positive correlation among self-esteem, hope and human rights awareness and a negative correlation among human rights victimization, human rights awareness, hope, and self-esteem. The highest correlation coefficient (r=0.601, p<=0.01) was between hope and self-esteem. Frequency analysis showed self-esteem had the highest mean at 3.4773 while human rights awareness had the lowest at 2.0616.

The path analysis indicated that human rights victimization had a statistically significant negative effect on hope (β = -.2413, p < .01) while hope, the mediator, had a statistically significant positive effect on self-esteem (β = .5307, p < .001). Therefore, hope mediates in the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem.

Human rights victimization did not significantly affect self-esteem (β = .6052, p>.05) while the moderator, human rights awareness, had a statistically significant positive effect on self-esteem (β=.5683, p<.01). However, the interaction variable (human rights victimization x human rights awareness) had a statistically negative effect on self-esteem (β = -.2479, p < .01). Therefore, the moderator, human rights awareness moderates in the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem. Thus, human rights victimization also influences self-esteem by relying on human rights awareness.

The bootstrapping analysis on the indirect effect of hope, 0.1281, is within the interval from -0.1788 to -0.0867 under 95% confidence level in 5,000 corrected bootstrap samples, and is significant because it does not include 0 within this interval. Therefore, indirect effects were significant. This means that hope will increase self-esteem despite the effects of human rights victimization. Therefore, it is of vital interest to develop programs that will promote self-esteem both directly and indirectly (Bakoma et al., 2017).

The interaction variable (human rights victimization x human rights awareness) was significant (T-value = -2.6277, p < .01), and thus human rights awareness had a moderating effect. Conditional direct effect of human rights victimization on self-esteem at values of the moderator was significant when it was higher than the average of human rights awareness (effect = -0.3351, -0.4538 to -0.2164). Therefore, human right awareness, the moderator, increases self-esteem. Students with high levels of human rights awareness will have high self-esteem as compared to students with low levels of human rights awareness. Also, with the interaction effect being statistically significant, it means self-esteem of students can be increased either directly or indirectly using appropriate factors.

As a result of the conditional effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables in the specific variable (M, M + 1SD, M-1SD) of the moderator, the simple slope of relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem was significant at the level of human rights awareness (effect= -.3351, -.4538 to -.2164).

The moderating effect of human rights awareness was statistically significant, so the moderating effect was visualized to confirm its shape. It is necessary to maintain a certain degree of human rights awareness and the moderating effect was significant in such a situation.

4. Conclusion

Hope mediates in the relation between human rights victimization and self-esteem. The positive statistically significant effect of human awareness verification effect, showed human rights awareness is a good predictor of self-esteem, and moderates in the relationship between human rights victimization and self-esteem. Thus, it implies hope and human rights awareness are good predictors of self-esteem.

References