Prevention of Gun Violence Through the Buffering Effects of Intellectual Humility in Traumatized Psychopaths

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Gun violence has become a threatening phenomenon that has been affecting the lives of Americans nationwide. Two main traits that show a predisposition towards gun violence are psychopathy and trauma. I focused on the interaction between childhood trauma and psychopathy, and I analyzed how intellectual humility affects this relationship. When looking at the relationship between these two traits, I found that psychopathy had a positive relationship with trauma ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.001$). This means that there is a highly reactive at-risk population (traumatized psychopaths) that is more likely to use guns for violent purposes. Additionally, a moderation analysis showed that the relationship between trauma and psychopathy was moderated by intellectual humility $F(3, 157) = 74.16$, $p < 0.001$. So, systematically teaching the concepts associated with intellectual humility in schools could decrease the likelihood of traumatized psychopaths committing an act of violence. Additionally, a subscale of intellectual humility had a positive relationship with psychopathy ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). This means that psychopathic individuals are more likely to change their minds. This indicates that persuasive methods may be used to reason with psychopaths and prevent them from pursuing gun violence. This study utilizes novel relationships to help understand and address those who are prone to gun violence and outlines a proof of concept tool to mitigate gun violence predispositions in at-risk populations.

Awards Won:

U.S. Agency for International Development: Second Award Education and Youth