

Abstract

The current study is the result of the creation of a science based monitoring and evaluation program created to support a cooperation grant from USAID aimed at increasing reading skills in children from first to sixth grade in the Dominican Republic. The program also aims to increase the inclusion of students with disabilities, the reduction of the acceptability of gender based violence, and the reduction of bullying. The program will reach 200,000 children and 5,000 teachers, and 1,000 school administrators by the year 2020. In order to accurately attribute changes to the program, a baseline study with an experimental design of 400 schools was designed. Students within each school were selected through simple randomization. In addition, there are few open access measurement tools with adequate psychometric properties in the Dominican Republic. The few available tools have questionable cultural relevance and they tend to be too expensive for researchers to acquire. As such, this creates significant barriers for scientists in developing countries who rarely have access to valid instruments that can support sound research. To contribute to the creation of valid and reliable instruments that strengthen cooperation programs with a solid evidence base, instruments were developed. The results of this study show adequate psychometric properties that include alpha scores above acceptable ranges as well as baseline data on the acceptability of gender based violence, bullying, as well as reading automaticity in second graders from the Dominican Republic's public school system. Results of confirmatory factor analyses will also be presented.