Abstract

Due to large immigrant student numbers enrolled in post-secondary education in Canada, adjustment of immigrant youth to mainstream culture at the university level is an important issue for Canadian educators. However, research on immigrant students’ adjustment while attending Canadian educational institutions is scarce. The purpose of the present thesis was to address this gap by examining Canadian immigrant students’ adjustment to university and to identify potential protective factors that predict immigrant students’ successful adjustment. The adjustment of immigrant students to university was examined by comparing immigrant and Canadian-born students on attachment to university and academic, social and emotional adjustment to university using the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ). Participants were 75 students from two Canadian universities. Results showed that Canadian-born students scored higher in attachment to university than foreign-born students, but did not differ on the other adjustment scales. There were similarities and differences between the two groups in how family demographic and relationship variables related to university adjustment. Neither age at arrival nor years in Canada were found to relate to university adjustment in the immigrant group. While raising new questions, the present study contributes to existing research on the adaptation of foreign-born youth to the host culture as well as to findings on students’ adjustment to university.

Keywords: Adjustment; Canada; immigrant; paradox; students; university