Abstract

There is a limited understanding of factors that contribute to resilience in refugee youth who successfully adapt in Canada, despite multiple traumas and the challenges of acculturation. Using the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT), the objective of this study was to answer the question, “What helps or hinders adolescent refugees who have experienced war in their homeland to build resilience psychologically, socially, and academically as they resettle in Canada?” For this purpose, 12 young refugees (between 13 and 19 years of age) from Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma, Honduras, and Congo were interviewed. Findings from this study shed light on personal and contextual qualities that contribute to the young refugees’ resilience (i.e., successful adjustment evaluated from the perspective of age-salient developmental and acculturative tasks) after resettling in Canada.

Keywords: Refugee youth; resilience; immigration; adaptation and acculturation; Enhanced Critical Incident Technique