

THE ADJUSTMENT EXPERIENCES OF AN IMMIGRANT STUDENT TO SCHOOLING IN BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN, USA

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing wave of immigration into the United States, there is the tendency to concentrate more on the adaptation process of adults to the neglect of those of young people. However, the adaptation process of immigrant children especially the educational and psychosocial challenges they face are equally daunting. While some research has gone into looking at the complex issues that affect these groups of immigrants, it is apparent that a lot more remains to be done. This is because the literature seems to indicate that the adjustment patterns for immigrants from different parts of the world, different family backgrounds, and different age groups may differ. This narrative qualitative study attempts to document some of the adjustment experiences of an immigrant young person from an English speaking West African country. A pseudonym is used for the subject to disguise his identity. The results of the study indicate the importance of the school, the support provided by family, and the ability to make trusted friends as critical in the early adjustment process. There were also indications that while the first year of arrival in the U. S. is most critical in the adjustment process, complete integration into the society may take longer depending among others on the age of the child at the time of immigration.

Keywords: Immigrant Children, Adjustment Process, Immigrant Paradox.