Lived Experiences and Visual Expressions from Immigrant Adolescents* in Korea during their Early Adjustment**

—Using the Photovoice Methodology—

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<Abstract>

Korea, historically a mono-ethnic country, has recently experienced a surging immigration. Due to the lack of policies as well as awareness toward immigrants, and especially immigrant children, they suffer challenges in settling down in the new country. This study aims to explore the lived experiences of adolescent immigrants in Korea in words and visual images using Photovoice. Six sessions were conducted over two months in 2011 with six participants in Korea. The participants chose the following six themes to talk and take photos about: Friends, my daily life, culture, love, myself, and stress and energy sources. Select narratives and photo images are presented and discussed. Adolescent immigrants might be ostracized and pushed aside to the periphery in school. Lack of school policies and cultural shock resulting from fierce competition and intense curriculum in the Korean school systems seem to worsen their adjustment in school. Adolescent

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* Immigrant adolescents in this study refer to particularly those who were born and raised during their childhood in a foreign country and immigrated to a foreign country to be reunited with their family members who immigrated to Korea before them.
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immigrants seem to be resilient despite all the challenges. Such strengths need to be considered in developing programs for them. Language training for this population and diversity training for teachers and administrators as well as students are urgently needed. Programs to prepare adolescent immigrants for their new host culture would be also essential.

Keywords: photovoice, adolescent, immigrant