

Emotional Intelligence Among The Indian Youth Migrants During Digital Age: A Covid Pandemic Study

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Abstract

COVID epidemic has altered global patterns of human movement, accelerating technological and digital transformations that need individuals and systems to respond to changes in how we live quickly. Using an online structured questionnaire from 187 youth migrants from various parts of the northeast states of India through digital platforms, this study investigated how youth migrants from northeast India perceive their emotional stability during COVID and their ability to adapt. The questionnaire included demographic characteristics and a validated scale to measure emotional intelligence. The findings demonstrated that their emotional intelligence impacted adaptive behaviour, including managing relationships with digital technology, selfless conduct, and emotional stability. The results should be used to develop plans to improve emotional intelligence and adaptability in the pandemic context and beyond.

Keywords: COVID, Emotional intelligence, Indian migrants, Digital age

1. Introduction

The COVID sickness, which began as a severe respiratory infection in China and was later named a pandemic by the World Health Organization, has had a worldwide impact on lives and livelihoods. (Organization, 2020). While the public health measures were designed to safeguard people and populations, they had varying effects on different groups of people. Others were disproportionately affected among people who migrated for employment, home, study, vacation, or survival (Skeldon, 2017).

Migrant employees have been identified as a vulnerable occupational group due to the COVID pandemic (Koh, 2020). Migrants were disproportionately affected by COVID, as in many other crises. Several factors can affect their ability to avoid infection, receive appropriate health care, and

cope with the pandemic's economic, societal, and psychological impact, lack of cultural and linguistic diversity in service provision, limited local awareness, and access to rights and education (Liem et al., 2020).

"Migrant workers also bear a double burden of the pandemic and the occupational constraints (Choudhari, 2020)". Many internal migrants faced problems such as social exclusion, inability to timely access to various services, which gave rise to the psychological distress of internal migrant workers (Bhagat et al., 2020)". "Further, is the blow of financial constraints due to loss of work, absence or suspension of occupational safety, and health-related basic laws with associated occupational hazards, making this occupational group highly vulnerable to the development of psychological illnesses. The risk is primarily higher for those who work in unorganized

industries (Guadagno, 2020)". "COVID has triggered a wide variety of psychological problems, such as panic disorder, anxiety, and depression (Qiu et al., 2020)". "COVID pandemic and the lockdown produced psychological consequences with an increase in levels of depression (Altieri & Santangelo, 2021)". "Reactions to the COVID-related threat and to protect the public health measures introduced to help resulted in slowing down the spread of the virus are physical distancing, self-isolation, and handwashing resulted in a range of negative emotions (Somma et al., 2020)".

Also, "fear seems to be a central emotional response to imminent threats such as COVID and may have a significant emotional issue resulting from the pandemic (Arpaci et al., 2020; Schimmenti et al., 2020)". "Negative emotions like fear and panic may result from a threat of infection, contagiousness, and ramifications on how people feel about and react to others (Van Bavel et al., 2020)". "The lockdown and consequences like job losses, financial insecurities, and disruption to day-to-day activities are likely to harm emotional imbalance and wellbeing. Due to such changes to people's lives and daily routines, many have experienced physical and mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, panic responses, insomnia, a worsening of their immune system, and posttraumatic stress symptoms, among others (Brooks et al., 2020; Nicomedes & Avila, 2020; Pappa et al., 2020; Yang & Ma, 2020)".

"In the COVID era, emotional intelligence is significant in successfully dealing with daily environmental pressure: self-awareness, emotional control, relationships, and effective communication. During the first week of the pandemic, EI was slightly associated with a lower level of rage, disgust, and sadness. Fear, anxiety, and depression were expected to be less intense with emotional intelligence (Moroń & Biolik-Moroń, 2021)". "Emotional intelligence played a vital role in maintaining the mental health of the migrants (Chehal et al., 2020)". Due to this context, the current study's goal is to investigate the perception of youth migrants from northeast India on their emotional intelligence level and to study the determining factors that influence the level of emotional intelligence skills during COVID using digital devices.

"Before the pandemic, there has been worldwide technological transformation with the

progress and development of numerous digital technologies applied to address the challenges related to the unexpected pandemic (Ting et al., 2020)". "Government synchronized efforts throughout the globe have engrossed on suppression and eradication, based on the application of digital technologies in COVID pandemic management. Usage of digital technology emphasized how successful countries have implemented pandemic forecasting, planning, observation, testing, isolation, health maintenance, and tracing of contacts (Whitelaw et al., 2020)". "The COVID pandemic has changed the way of lifestyle that there is a greater reliance on and integration of technology going forward (Ramsetty & Adams, 2020)". With the technological advances, migrant workers have access to technology via mobile and other devices. Technological advances and access also offer migrant workers opportunities to apply emotional intelligence to identify and take advantage of possible actions and solutions during this unprecedented global crisis. As such, this study examined the perceptions related to emotional intelligence and their ability to cope during the pandemic.

2. Research Questions (RQ):

RQ1: During COVID using digital technology, what is the degree of emotional intelligence among young migrants from India's North-East states?

RQ2: During COVID, what factors influence the level of emotional intelligence using digital technology?

3. Methods

3.1 Sample

This study included 187 young migrants living outside of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura, which make up India's North-Eastern states.

3.2 Measures

The online survey included demographic information in Section 'A' and emotional intelligence statements in Section 'B'. The demographic characteristics include 'place of hometown' and 'nature of employment. Hyde's emotional intelligence scale was used (Hyde et al., 2002) with additional questions to address the COVID context on youth migrants. A sample of the improvement made in the EI scale: in the original item,

it is stated as 'I can encourage people to take the initiative'. The item states, 'I take the initiatives during this difficult COVID era'. To capture the respondents' answers, a 5-point Likert-type scale was used throughout the study (from 1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - undecided, 4 - agree, and 5 - strongly agree). All items were formulated, taking the study context into account. In general, Cronbach's alpha rated the reliability of the questionnaire during the pilot study. The overall Cronbach's Alpha calculated using SPSS is .855, much higher than the acceptable level in social sciences research (Hair et al., 1984).

3.3 Data Collection and Procedure

In Feb 2021, an online survey was launched to gather responses from different north-eastern youth migrants. The online questionnaire was distributed electronically to reach out to the respondents. Data were collected from 1st February 2021 to 25th February 2021 from youth migrants living outside of the eight states of northeast India who were asked to fill out online structured questionnaires. Individuals who agreed to take part were sent the online standardized questionnaire, including WhatsApp and Facebook.

There was a total of 187 responses out of 200 sent to youths from North-East India.

3.4 Data Analysis

The study's data was gathered from primary sources and secondary sources. For the collection of primary data, a standardized online questionnaire was developed. Secondary data was gathered from research papers and news accounts. The data were entered into the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) after all of the samples were deemed suitable for study. During the COVID situation, an Emotional Intelligence Index and Factor Analysis were performed on the data collected to determine the level of EI and analyze the deciding factors that influence the level of EI among youth migrants from northeast India.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondent's Profile

The youth migrants residing outside the eight north-eastern states of India were taken for the study and their distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1 (home state), and Table 2 (nature of employment).

Table 1: Respondent's Home State Profile

Home State of the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Assam	43	22.99
Arunachal Pradesh	18	9.63
Manipur	54	28.88
Meghalaya	12	6.42
Mizoram	10	5.35
Nagaland	17	9.09
Sikkim	7	3.74
Tripura	26	13.90
TOTAL	187	100.00

Source: Primary data.

In Table 1, out of 187 respondents, 22.99 percent had Assam, 9.63 percent had Arunachal Pradesh, 28.88 percent had Manipur, 6.42 percent had

Meghalaya, 5.35 percent had Mizoram, 9.09 percent had Nagaland, and 3.74 percent had Nagaland as their home state.

Table 2: Respondent's Nature of Employment Profile

Nature of Employment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Health & Medical Services	11	5.88
Professionals	38	20.32
Education	56	29.95
Administration	24	12.83
Computer Services	5	2.67
Manufacturing	19	10.16

Tourism & Hotel/Catering	31	16.58
Others	3	1.60
TOTAL	187	100.00

Source: Analysis using SPSS.

In Table 2, the majority of the respondents (29.95%) were pursuing education, 20% were professionals, 16.58 per cent were in tourism & hotel/catering-related employment, 12.83 per cent were in the administration, 10.16 per cent were in manufacturing industries, and just 2.67 per cent were in other occupations. EI index is applied to reveal the emotional intelligence level among the youth migrants from north-eastern India during the COVID pandemic.

4.2 Emotional Intelligence level among the Youth Migrants from north-eastern India during COVID using digital technology

The level of EI among the youth migrants from north-eastern states in India during COVID using digital technology is summated in the form of an Emotional Intelligence Index (EII). It is calculated by:

$$EII = \frac{\text{Sum of ISEI}}{\text{Sum of MSEI}} \times 100$$

Whereas,

ISEI – Individual Score on Emotional Intelligence variables

MSEI – Maximum score on Emotional Intelligence variables

Table 3: Emotional Intelligence level among the Youth Migrants from North-eastern India during COVID using digital technology

Sl. No.	Level of Emotional Intelligence (%)	Number of Respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
1.	>= 20	2	1	3
2.	21 to 40	7	5	12
3.	41 to 60	32	14	46
4.	61 to 80	41	23	64
5.	<= 81	27	35	62
	Total	109	78	187

Source: Analysis using SPSS.

Table 3 explains the Emotional Intelligence Index (EII) in the present study is confined to '>= 20', '21 to 40', '41 to 60', '61 to 80', and '<= 81' per cent. The dominant EII among the respondents is 61 to 80 per cent and above 80 per cent, constituting 34.22 and 33.15 per cent to the total. The respondents with an EII of 41 to 60 per cent constitute 24.59 per cent of the total. The dominant EII among the male respondents is 61 to 80 and 41 to 60 per cent, which constitute 37.61 and 29.35 per cent of its total, respectively. Among the female respondents, these are above 80 per cent and 61 to 80 per cent, constituting 44.87 and 29.48 per cent of the total. It reveals that the female respondents have a

higher level of emotional intelligence than the male respondents.

4.3 Factors influencing the level of Emotional Intelligence level among the Youth Migrants from north-eastern India during COVID using digital technology

In addition, the data were subjected to the KMO, and Bartlett tests to identify the crucial factors influencing the level of emotional intelligence of young migrants from northeast India during the COVID19 pandemic using digital technology and after the accuracy of the data was established, a factorial analysis was carried out.

"Cronbach's alpha is a commonly used criterion in reliability statistics today. Cronbach's alpha is a metric for determining the internal accuracy or average similarity of items in a survey instrument (Santos 1999)". Reliability of 0.855 indicates a high level of internal precision. Additionally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sample Adequacy is a statistic that shows how much variation in the variables is due to underlying factors. KMO is used to determine sampling adequacy, which must be greater than 0.5, to proceed with appropriate factor analysis. The Keyser-

Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy measure is 0.836 at a 5 per cent level, and both Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and the estimated Chi-Square value are 2670.975. As a result, the sample size is adequate for evaluating variables relevant to emotional intelligence.

4.3.1 Communalities

Communalities indicate how much difference is counted in each variable. The Communities and IBM are the variations of the variables that are accounted for by all components, or the variables are calculated based on initial communalities. (Communities / IBM)

Table 4: Communalities

Statements	Initial	Extraction
When things aren't going well, I inspire others to work with digital technology.	1.000	.626
In this pandemic, I don't depend on others' motivation.	1.000	.669
I see the positive aspects of the current situation.	1.000	.661
During this pandemic, I am an inspiration to others.	1.000	.623
Using digital technology, I should evaluate a situation and tact appropriately.	1.000	.496
In these trying times, I believe emotions should be controlled with digital technology.	1.000	.617
I agree that having a positive outlook will relieve stress.	1.000	.587
Using digital technology, I encourage others during this COVID era.	1.000	.570
With digital technology, I am handling well in this present situation.	1.000	.323
I keep my promises and honour my obligations.	1.000	.707
In this challenging COVID era, I am meticulous in my work using digital technology.	1.000	.515
Even in the face of extreme criticism, I continue to do what I believe.	1.000	.623
I have my goals clear.	1.000	.584
I believe in myself that I can effectively combat this pandemic.	1.000	.646
Using digital technology, I've established relationships with co-workers.	1.000	.629
I pay attention to my worries and concerns in these trying times.	1.000	.590
I am able to listen without compelled to speak.	1.000	.544
I am able to remain concentrated during this trying times.	1.000	.625
I am able to manage various demands at home using digital devices.	1.000	.566
I avoid bringing up needless feelings in the situation at hand.	1.000	.622
During this pandemic using digital technology, I am open to new ideas and knowledge.	1.000	.662
During COVID, I am persistent in following my goals using digital technology.	1.000	.686
I can recognize and distinguish my emotions.	1.000	.722
In these trying times, I stand firm in my convictions.	1.000	.627
I am capable of upholding the highest levels of integrity.	1.000	.720
Despite the pandemic, I continue to confront others' unethical conduct.	1.000	.616
Using online technology, I seek goals that go beyond what is necessary and expected of me.	1.000	.666

Source: Analysis using SPSS.

The Communalities for 27 variables that affect EI using online technology are shown in Table 4. It shows that the factors range from 32.3 percent to 72.2 percent,

indicating that the variation for the factors that affect emotional intelligence levels is significant.

4.3.2 Total Variance

The total variance-covariance matrix represents the total amount of variance represented by one of the variables and the total amount of variance represented by all factors. Table 5 reveals that the 27 variables are

reduced to five major factors because all five extracted variables with an Eigenvalue greater than 1 represent 61.190 per cent of the variance in the components' variance-covariance matrix, with average percentage values of 26.056, 8.605, 48.037, 55.467, and 61.190.

Table 5: Total Variance

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.035	26.056	26.056	7.035	26.056	26.056	6.213	23.011	23.011
2	3.388	12.549	38.605	3.388	12.549	38.605	2.963	10.976	33.987
3	2.547	9.432	48.037	2.547	9.432	48.037	2.736	10.135	44.121
4	2.006	7.430	55.467	2.006	7.430	55.467	2.488	9.215	53.337
5	1.545	5.723	61.190	1.545	5.723	61.190	2.120	7.853	61.190

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

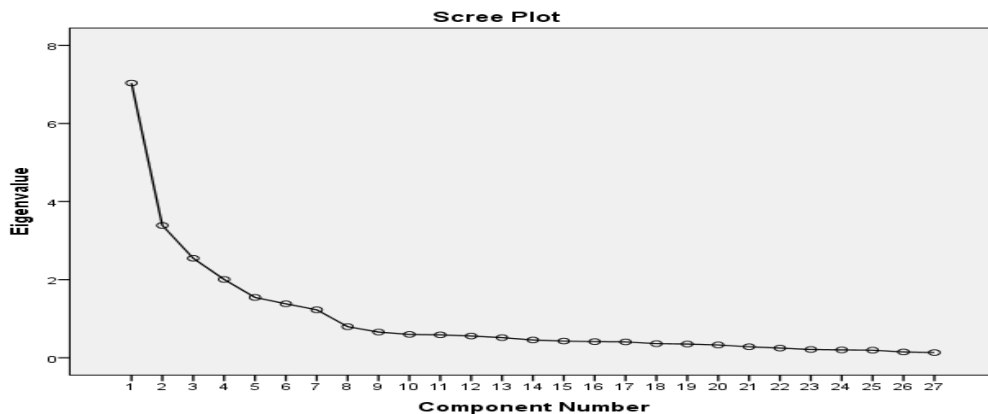
Source: Analysis using SPSS.

4.3.3 Rotated Component Matrix

The rotated component matrix aids in the identification of the various components identified by the test. Table 6 shows how 12 variables combine to form the first element, which is appropriately labelled "Managing Relations." "Altruistic Behaviour" is the second factor, which has four variables, "Emotional Stability" is the third factor, which has four variables, "Self-awareness"

is the fourth factor, which has four variables, and "Self-motivation" is the last factor, which has three variables. There are five factors that affect the level of emotional intelligence among students in India's North-East states during a pandemic involving technology. From the data obtained, the Scree Plot (Figure 3) depicts the amount of variance captured by each principal component.

Figure 1: Scree Plot showing findings of Principle Component Analysis



Source: Analyses using SPSS.

Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
In this pandemic, I don't depend on others' motivation.	.799	-.055	.117	.115	-.019
I see the positive aspects of the current situation.	.793	-.038	.046	.138	.099
During this pandemic, I am an inspiration to others.	.777	-.033	.005	.138	.012
When things aren't going well, I inspire others to work with digital technology	.763	-.179	.035	.067	.078
I am able to remain concentrated during this trying times.	.756	.131	-.159	.024	-.100
I avoid bringing up needless feelings in the situation at hand.	.748	.225	-.083	.068	-.018
I am able to manage various demands at home using digital devices.	.712	.121	-.187	.037	-.089
I keep my promises and honour my obligations.	.703	.454	.013	.016	-.074
I am able to listen without compelled to speak.	.697	.118	-.158	.113	-.077
Even in the face of extreme criticism, I continue to do what I believe.	.674	.401	.078	.027	-.038
In this challenging COVID era, I am meticulous in my work using digital technology.	.658	.271	.013	-.024	.088
With digital technology, I am handling well in this present situation.	.403	.398	.018	.021	-.038
In these trying times, I believe emotions should be controlled with digital technology.	.088	.770	.067	.099	-.036
I agree that having a positive outlook will relieve stress.	.077	.757	.053	.076	-.004
Using digital technology, I encourage others during this difficult COVID era.	.148	.732	-.056	.085	.050
Using digital technology, I should evaluate a situation and tact appropriately.	.053	.667	-.010	.197	.096
During this pandemic using digital technology, I am open to new ideas and knowledge.	-.051	-.018	.809	.043	-.058
During COVID, I am persistent in following my goals using digital technology.	-.028	.055	.788	.084	.233
In these trying times, I stand firm in my convictions.	-.041	.069	.770	-.160	.042
I can recognize and distinguish my emotions.	-.049	-.032	.767	.109	.343
I believe in myself that I can effectively combat this pandemic.	.116	-.006	.055	.787	.100
Using digital technology, I've established relationships with co-workers.	.112	.158	-.087	.764	-.025
I pay attention to my worries and concerns in these trying times.	.093	.115	-.046	.752	.006
I have my goals clear.	.088	.188	.127	.723	-.034
I am capable of upholding the highest levels of integrity.	-.047	.032	.200	-.014	.823
Using online technology, I seek goals that go beyond what is necessary and expected of me.	-.034	.020	-.042	.090	.809
Despite the pandemic, I continue to confront others' unethical conduct.	.030	.023	.287	-.048	.728

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: Analyses using SPSS.

COVID has manifested as a crisis affecting all aspects of human life during this digital era. The pandemic has overwhelmingly affected the world's impoverished population regarding livelihood and survival. A huge migrant worker crisis erupted in digital India. The COVID crisis would have a long-term effect on young migrants (Monitor, 2020) since they are the most vulnerable groups and most affected by the latest global pandemic (Sengupta & Jha, 2020). Further, the COVID pandemic and the ensuing lockout

have become a major source of anxiety for almost all, not just young migrants (Bohart et al., 2002).

The study period during COVID reveals that managing relations during this digital era is the most dominant factor in influencing the level of emotional intelligence among the youth migrants from North-East India. The variables that they don't depend on others to motivate, concentrate on the positive aspects, are inspired by others and inspiring others, can concentrate on the goals, avoid unnecessary feelings, able to

manage demands at home, and able to keep up the word, willing to listen, continue to do the work meticulously and having self-confidence, are having a high factor score that shows that the youth migrants from North-East are having a high level of skills to manage relationship which is an important competency of emotional intelligence using digital technology.

5 Conclusion

The current COVID crisis puts the world's emotional intelligence and stability to the test. The most adaptable to transition to digital technology, not the strongest or brightest, are the ones that excel. In this digital era, emotional intelligence enables an individual to succeed in all aspects of life, the workplace, the home, and society. It provides a basis for healthily developing emotions so that an individual can effectively manage a variety of situations. The research reveals that most of the respondents are from Manipur, Assam, and Tripura provinces. It can also be understood that most respondents are in the education sector, professionals, and the tourism& hotel/catering industry.

The results show that most respondents have high levels of emotional intelligence, which shows why they were able to cope with the COVID19 pandemic using digital technology. India is currently experiencing the second wave; like other nations, migrants suffer from psychological stress, but since their emotional intelligence is high, they can safely manage their feelings; the study also found that relationships, altruistic behavior, emotional stability, self-esteem and Self-motivation are the most important variables of emotional intelligence in this technology era.

The results of this study have certain significant effects. First, it adds to the body of the existing literature as variable emotional intelligence in relation to COVID19 has not been extensively studied in this digital age. Second, suppose the authorities want to empower the youth migrants to face unexpected pandemics. In that case, attention must also be given to incorporating the concept of emotional intelligence as a subject/course from the schooling itself to improve the emotional intelligence skills using technology. Many individual and mobile phone-focused information technologies, commonly used during the COVID outbreak, have been developed and applied to help minimize COVID transmission and preserve normal

emotional equilibrium. Ignoring these concerns would only lead to bigger problems, harming migrants' lives. The study highlights the dire situation of youth migrants in India's North-East and argues that immediate policy measures are required to resolve their plight using digital technologies.

Declaration of Interest

The authors hereby declare that they are unaware of any personal or financial conflicts of interest that could have influenced the work discussed in this document.

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