



The Role of Emotional Maturity in Homesickness Among Northeastern Students Living in Karnataka

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between emotional maturity and homesickness among Northeastern students residing in Karnataka, using a quantitative correlational design with 250 participants aged 18-25 years. Emotional maturity, measured by the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS; Singh & Bhargava, 1991), showed a significant negative correlation with homesickness ($r = -.639, p < .001$), assessed by using the Homesickness Questionnaire (HQ; Archer et al., 1998). Multiple regression analysis indicated that independence ($\beta = -.318, p < .001$), emotional progression ($\beta = -.181, p < .05$), and emotional stability ($\beta = -.135, p < .05$) significantly predicted homesickness, accounting for 40.7% of the variance. Social adjustment and personality integration were not significant predictors. The findings highlight emotional maturity particularly independence as a critical protective factor against homesickness.

Keywords: *Emotional maturity, homesickness, Northeastern students, migration, Karnataka*

1. Introduction

Homesickness involves distress from separation from home, marked by anxiety, longing, and adjustment issues, particularly among intra-country migrants like Northeastern students in Karnataka. Such a move can frequently cause homesickness, which is the distress caused by lack of connection with home, characterized by anxiety, homesickness, and problems with adjustment (Stroebe et al., 2015; Thurber and Walton, 2012).

Emotional maturity is the combined ability to manage the affective experience in five interrelated areas, such as emotional stability (being able to hold together in the face of stress), emotional progression (positively growing through adversity), social adjustment (harmonious interpersonal functioning), personality integration (cohesive self-identity), and independence (autonomous decision-making despite attachment needs) (Singh and Bhargava, 1991). This multidimensional construct operationalizes higher order emotion regulation, which allows reappraisal of separation distress instead of reactive longing (Gross, 1998).

Cultural shifts from joint families to urban hostels exacerbate homesickness, risking academic impairment and mental health issues. Grounded in Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969), Emotion Regulation Model (Gross, 1998), and Erikson's psychosocial stages (1950), the research addresses gaps in intra-India migration studies.

2. Literature Review

Nelson (2018), the authors base their study on a cross-sectional study on 93 first-year medical students in South India and focus on homesickness. They identified a prevalence of 93.55 with 66.66% moderate homesickness significantly predicting academic decline ($r = -0.335$, $p < .001$) and distance between homesickness and home (>500 km).

Sun et al. (2016) study freshmen in the U.S. revealed moderate separation distress (25% of the total) and extreme homesickness (10% of the total) to be predictive of retention failure, with 64.1% of the sample experiencing moderate separation distress in the first three weeks of adjustment

The longitudinal follow-up on first-year college students made by English et al. (2016) disclosed that homesickness decreased slightly but remained in socially isolated students, severely affecting social (not academic) integration.

Nauta et al. (2019) applied ecological momentary assessment (EMA) to 92 first-year Dutch/international students in 14 days. They discovered that homesickness was highest when parents video called at home, and the internationals exhibited higher retrospective/ momentary levels which were associated with unpleasant effects.

Mariska (2018) the authors studied the effect of self-adjustment and emotional maturity on homesickness in 104 first-year Indonesian migrants. Multiple regression showed that emotional maturity was a significant predictor of 35% of the home sickness variance ($F = 16.458$, $p < .001$), although the negative effects ($\beta < 0$) of emotional maturity were similar to the present $R^2 = .350$.

Jaya (2022) research investigated 53 cadets and discovered that social adaptation was negatively associated with the feeling of homesickness ($r = -.335$, $p = .014$), and an increase in social adaptation decreased the level of feelings of homesickness.

2.1 Research Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between overall emotional maturity and homesickness among Northeastern students living in Karnataka.
2. To determine which dimensions of emotional maturity (emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personal integrity, and independence) significantly predict homesickness among this population.

2.2 Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant negative relationship between emotional maturity and homesickness among Northeastern students living in Karnataka.

H2: The dimensions of emotional maturity significantly predict homesickness among Northeastern students living in Karnataka.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Participants were 250 Northeastern students (48.4% male, 49.2% female, 2.4% other; M age = 20.5 years) living in Karnataka ≥ 6 months, recruited via convenience and snowball sampling from Karnataka hostels/PGs including aged 18-25, from eight Northeastern states; while the study excludes locals or long-term residents (> 5 years).

3.2 Measures

Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS): The EMS (Singh & Bhargava, 1991) is a 48-item self-report instrument assessing five dimensions of emotional maturity (Emotional stability, Emotional Progression, Social Adjustment, Personality Integration and Independence). Higher scores indicate lower emotional maturity. ($\alpha = .42-.86$)

Homesickness Questionnaire (HQ): The HQ (Archer et al., 1998) is a 33-item scale measuring attachment to home and aversion to the new environment. Higher scores indicate greater homesickness. (5-point Likert; $\alpha = .88$)

3.3 Procedure

Informed consent preceded online (Google Forms) or in-person questionnaire administration, data was analyzed in SPSS 22. Ethical protocols ensured anonymity and confidentiality.

3.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were conducted. Assumptions of normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were tested and met.

4. Results

Table 1: *Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 250)*

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	121	48.4
	Female	123	49.2
	Other	6	2.4
State of Origin	Arunachal Pradesh	15	6.0
	Assam	31	12.4
	Manipur	25	10.0
	Meghalaya	25	10.0
	Mizoram	97	38.8
	Nagaland	26	10.4
	Sikkim	18	7.2
	Tripura	13	5.2
Current Living Situation	Hostel	119	47.6
	Rented House	131	52.4
Age	18-20 years old	127	50.8
	21-23 years old	97	38.8
	24-25 years old	26	10.4
Socio Economic Status	High	2	0.8
	Middle	244	97.6
	Low	4	1.6
Family Type	Nuclear Family	202	80.8
	Joint Family	48	19.2

Visitig Hometown	Occasionally	109	43.6
	No	99	39.6
	Yes	42	16.8

Table 1 outlines the overall socio-demographic character of the study population with a balanced representation of genders (48.4 percent male, 49.2 percent female, 2.4 percent other) with a predominant representation of Mizoram origin students (38.8 percent) according to the historical migration patterns of this educationally mobile state. Preponderance was on middle socioeconomic status (97.6), and 80.8% of the participants were of nuclear family structure. The age distribution was focused on younger pupils (50.8% were aged 18-20 years), but hostel (47.6%), and rented accommodation (52.4%) were almost equally represented- this is the real world of residential aspects of intra-India educational migration.

Table 2: *Normality Test Table (Skewness and Kurtosis for N=250)*

Variables	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Maturity	156.216	27.2362	-0.008	-0.750
Homesickness	95.292	17.9206	0.278	-0.517

Table 2 shows central tendency and variability statistics of the primary study variables, as well as, distributional diagnostics. Emotional maturity provided moderate average scores ($M = 156.22$, $SD = 27.24$), whereas homesickness showed high levels of mean severity ($M = 95.29$, $SD = 17.92$) that were close to the upper quartile of the possible range of 33-165, indicating the clinical relevance of the given phenomenon in this group of migrants. Normality testing was a pre-condition of statistical inference, which was done by the analysis of skewness and kurtosis against pre-determined parameters (George and Mallery, 2010). No significant distributional deviations were found as both of the primary variables had acceptable univariate normality with skewness coefficients ($|Sk| < 2.0$) and kurtosis ($|Ku| < 7.0$).

Table 3: *Correlation Between Emotional Maturity and Homesickness*

Variables	Emotional Maturity	Homesickness
Emotional Maturity	-	-0.639**
Homesickness	-0.639**	-

*Note $N = 250$. Correlations are significant at the *.05 level ($p < .05$) or .01 level ($p < .01$; 2-tailed)

Hypothesis 1: It predicted negative significant association between emotional maturity and homesickness was tested using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis. Table 3 indicates that the hypothesis is true and that 40.9% of the homesickness variance is related to maturity variation, and the relationship is statistically significant ($r = -.639$, $p < .001$), which is a substantively significant correlation that is above the meta-analytic averages (Stroebe et al., 2015).

Table 4: Multiple Regression Predicting Homesickness from Emotional Maturity Subscales

Predictor	B	SE	β	T
Emotional Stability	-0.383	0.188	-0.135	-2.034*
Emotional Progression	-0.473	0.194	-0.181	-2.433*
Social Adjustment	-0.112	0.185	-0.043	-0.605
Personal Integration	-0.273	0.191	-0.108	-1.430
Independence	-0.972	0.219	-0.318	-4.446***

Note B = unstandardized coefficient, SE = standard error, β = standardized coefficient. $p < .05^$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$.

Hypothesis 2: The predictive significance of the dimensions of emotional maturity, was examined with hierarchical multiple regression. The best-specified model accounted for 40.7% variance on homesickness [$R^2 = .407$, $F(8, 241) = 16.89$, $p = .001$] with adjusted $R^2 = .392$ which means that it could be cross-validated very well. Regression assumptions were met: VIF range 1.2-2.8 (no multicollinearity), Durbin-Watson = 1.94 (no residual dependence), Breusch-Pagan = .214 (no homoscedasticity), standardized residuals are bound 2.8. Homesickness was significantly negatively predicted by Independence ($\beta = .318$, $p < .001$), Emotional progression ($\beta = -.181$, $p = .016$), and Emotional stability ($\beta = -.135$, $p = .043$). Social adjustment and Personality integration however, were not significant predictors of homesickness. These results partially confirm Hypothesis 1.

The findings show that there is a high negative correlation between emotional maturity and homesickness. Independence was the best predictor among the 5 dimensions followed by emotional progression and emotional stability. The empirical study provided strong evidence in both hypotheses and showed subtle dimensionality in the protective structure of emotional maturity.

H1 was well supported by the fact that emotional maturity was a significant home sickness buffer that yielded a large negative correlation ($r = -.639$, $p < .001$) that shared 41% of the total variance.

H2 was partially confirmed because the five-dimensional model had an excellent fit [$R^2 = .407$, $F = 16.89$, $p < .001$] and independence was the most important predictor ($\beta = -.318$).

5. Discussion

Emotional maturity is a strong protective home sickness predictor among Northeastern students in Karnataka. The analysis substantiated a significant negative association ($r = -.639$, $p < .001$) between total emotional maturity and the severity of homesickness, a 40.9% shared variance was significant (greater than the 35% predictive level that Mariska (2018) demonstrates in a comparable study with Indonesian migrants and the 33.5% correlation with social adaptation Multiple regression [$R^2 = .407$, $F(8,241) = 16.89$, $p < .001$] revealed three significant predictors: independence ($\beta = -.318$, $p < .001$), emotional progression ($\beta = -.181$, $p = .016$), and emotional stability ($\beta = -.135$, $p = .043$), while social adjustment ($\beta = -.043$, $p = .546$) and personality integration ($\beta = -.108$, $p = .154$) were nonsignificant.

The autonomy dominance is in line with the attachment theory by Bowlby (1969), in which autonomous functioning helps in cushioning separation distress, and emotional progression is equivalent to Gross (1998) emotion regulation model that facilitates growth reframing. These results can be extrapolated to the 93.55% prevalence of homesickness in South Indian medical students ($r = -.335$ academic correlation) to intra-country Northeastern migrants, where the mean homesickness score ($M = 95.29$) is clinically relevant. Nonsignificant social adjustment opposes Jaya (2022) but goes with the unstable maturity baseline of college, as proposed by Subbarayan and Visvanathan (2011), and indicates that collectivistic Northeastern students prefer survival autonomy to conformity in acute migration.

5.1 Limitations

The cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation. Convenience sampling may affect generalizability as the sample was dominated by participants from Mizoram, which may limit the findings to all Northeastern students. Self-report measures may introduce bias.

5.2 Conclusion

The present study found a significant negative relationship between emotional maturity and homesickness among Northeastern students living in Karnataka, thereby supporting H1.

The results point to the fact that some scales of emotional maturity, i.e. Emotional Stability, Emotional Progression, and Independence, are significantly predicted by homesickness. It, however, does not make a significant prediction on Social Adjustment and Personal Integration. Thus, H2 is partially supported. This implies that homesickness

influences some of the emotional maturity aspects more than others in Northeastern students residing in Karnataka.

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