

## Well-Being and Coexistence in Migratory Contexts: Socioemotional Adaptation Dynamics of Migrants in Colombia

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### Abstract

Venezuelan migration to Colombia constitutes a complex social phenomenon framed by structural inequalities and vulnerability conditions that affect migrants' adaptation processes in local contexts. This article analyses the socioemotional adaptation dynamics of Venezuelan migrants in Funza, Cundinamarca, Colombia, with special emphasis on emotional intelligence as a factor of resilience, well-being, and social cohesion. A 22-item Likert-type questionnaire was applied to a sample of 208 male and female migrants, selected through non-probabilistic convenience sampling. The study, with a quantitative approach, descriptive design, and cross-sectional scope, identified significant trends in dimensions such as emotional self-awareness, adaptability, interpersonal relationships, and resilience. The results highlight coping strategies, leadership, and agency in adverse contexts. However, challenges persist related to managing emotions under pressure, access to support networks, and stability in the labour environment. It is concluded that emotional intelligence stands as an important resource in the integration of Venezuelan migrants, contributing to the design of inclusive public policies and community-strengthening programmes.

**Keywords:** migration, emotional intelligence, adaptation, resilience, Venezuelan migrants, well-being.

### INTRODUCTION

The migratory phenomenon has gained particular relevance in the global arena over recent decades. Specifically, the massive flow of Venezuelans to Latin America, mainly driven by Venezuela's political, social, and economic crisis influenced by both endogenous and exogenous factors, has drawn increasing academic and political attention (Weitzman & Huss, 2024). Studying Venezuelan migration in Colombia is especially relevant due to the magnitude and complexity of this phenomenon, considered one of the most significant in the country's and Latin America's recent history. Beyond economic and demographic impacts, migration raises social and cultural challenges (Jiménez, 2022) related to integration, coexistence, and the construction of inclusive communities in host territories (Gandini et al., 2020). In this scenario, local municipalities

such as Funza, Cundinamarca, become key settings to understand how settlement and adaptation processes unfold in everyday contexts.

Most studies on Venezuelan migration in Colombia have focused on structural aspects such as access to employment, housing, education, and healthcare (Chaparro, 2017). However, less attention has been given to socioemotional dimensions that shape how migrants face displacement challenges, develop resilience, and integrate into their new communities (Panchi, 2023). This gap in academic literature limits a comprehensive understanding of the migratory experience and hinders the design of interventions that consider emotional well-being as an essential component of social inclusion.

Within this framework, emotional intelligence emerges as a fundamental resource for analysing migrant adaptation, as it enables exploration of variables such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, creativity, and the ability to establish meaningful connections (Ríos-Niño et al., 2023). This displacement not only represents a structural process but also entails traumatic experiences such as loss of home, support networks, and personal safety—similar to those endured by people displaced by conflicts or disasters (Agudelo-Suárez et al., 2022). Nonetheless, despite these adversities, migrants display remarkable human agency, evidenced in their ability to make strategic decisions, adapt to new environments, and build a sense of belonging even under adverse conditions (Wilde, 2025). In this regard, Hussein & Nye (2024) highlight that despite multiple challenges—such as labour informality, barriers to accessing healthcare, housing, and formal inclusion—Venezuelan migrants show significant resilient capacities, maintaining contingent hope and deploying creative survival strategies in the face of rigid or insufficient structures.

Incorporating this perspective broadens the understanding of the migratory phenomenon by recognising that integration does not only depend on material resource availability but also on the development of emotional competencies that facilitate coping and social cohesion. This article seeks to contribute to this field of study through an empirical analysis of Venezuelan migrants' socioemotional dynamics in Funza, Cundinamarca, Colombia, based on a questionnaire applied to 208 participants. In doing so, it provides relevant input for both academia and local public policies, by highlighting the importance of strengthening programmes and strategies of integration that acknowledge the emotional dimension as a pillar of migrant well-being and inclusion.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Venezuelan migration to Colombia has become one of the most significant social phenomena of the past decade, not only because of its demographic magnitude but also due to the challenges it poses in terms of social, labour, and cultural integration. Analysing this phenomenon requires understanding migration and adaptation processes in local contexts, considering demographic dynamics, integration strategies, and migrant well-being.

The adaptation of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia cannot be understood merely as an external adjustment process. Rather, it is an active exercise of intentional agency, conscious decision-making, and control over one's life, which combines decisions, choices, and strategies across various life domains. As Saltos and Márquez (2023) note, adaptation involves concrete actions that respond to the cultural, social, economic, and

political conditions of the host community. Mendoza-Macías (2023) emphasises the role of human agency in decision-making when facing daily challenges and in building new social networks. Similarly, Corcelet (2021) highlights that conscious control over aspects such as education, employment, cultural identity, and community participation is central to this process. For his part, Sandoval-Correa (2022) underlines that agency strengthens resilience and empowerment, enabling migrants not only to face contextual difficulties but also to actively create more favourable conditions for their integration and well-being. Migration is a global and regional phenomenon. Contemporary migration is understood as a response to structural dynamics that include economic crises, political conflicts, and regional inequalities. The departure of millions of Venezuelans represents one of the largest human displacements in Latin America (Martínez, 2020; Weitzman & Huss, 2024). Thus, migration cannot be viewed merely as a population flow but rather as a complex social process involving transnational relations, impacts on labour markets, and transformations in social cohesion (Castles et al., 2019; de Haas, 2010).

Migrant adaptation has been analysed mainly through Berry's (1997) and Bourhis et al.'s (1997) acculturation models, which explain how individuals negotiate preserving their cultural identity while integrating into the host country. The literature shows that integration—understood as the combination of cultural preservation and participation in the host society—is associated with higher levels of subjective well-being and social capital (Rauhut & Laine, 2023; Zapata-Barrero, 2024). In the Colombian case, institutional and community reception influences degrees of social inclusion or exclusion (Pinto et al., 2019), shaping acculturation and adaptation models.

A central aspect to consider is migrant well-being and health, since migration raises challenges regarding physical, emotional, and social well-being. Recent research shows that Venezuelan migrants in Colombia face significant inequalities in accessing healthcare and decent living conditions (Agarwal-Harding et al., 2024; Serrano, 2024). However, emotional resilience and self-management of psychosocial resources emerge as protective factors that mitigate the effects of vulnerability (Schäfer & Morillas, 2025; Stillman et al., 2015). In this line, well-being must be analysed multidimensionally, encompassing both the satisfaction of material needs and the construction of meaning and purpose in the new context.

This requires labour and social integration strategies, which represent both opportunities and barriers for migrants. While Venezuelan labour is recognised as vital in high-demand sectors, informality and discrimination limit their full integration (Cuberos et al., 2024; Vargas-Silva, 2020). Evidence shows that migratory regularisation programmes and community support networks enhance labour inclusion and favour social mobility (Botello et al., 2024; Jayaram & Varma, 2020). Thus, social integration strategies go beyond access to employment, also involving the strengthening of capacities and citizen participation to build interpersonal and group networks of trust that contribute to social capital (Arboleda et al., 2008).

Social capital is a key resource in migrant adaptation, as social networks operate as mechanisms of material and symbolic support that facilitate insertion into local contexts (Putnam, 2000; Portes, 1998). In Colombia, host communities have played an ambivalent role: on the one hand, fostering solidarity and mutual aid, while on the other, reproducing exclusionary dynamics (Jackson, 2019; Pollenne & Vargas-Silva, 2024). In this context, strengthening trust-based ties is essential to reduce social tensions and guarantee peaceful

coexistence. This shows that migration management should not be limited to border-control policies but requires designing inclusion strategies that ensure basic rights and development opportunities (Kronick & Rousseau, 2015; Bao et al., 2025).

In this sense, Colombia has implemented initiatives such as the Temporary Protection Statute, internationally recognised as an innovative example of migration governance (Angeleri & Murphy, 2023). However, challenges remain regarding inter-institutional coordination and policy sustainability (Mugocha, 2025).

The future of Venezuelan migration in Colombia will depend on the country's ability to create sustainable integration conditions. This implies addressing structural tensions such as labour informality, xenophobia, and social precariousness, but also capitalising on opportunities arising from cultural diversity and migrants' economic contributions (de Haas, 2021; Vega-Muñoz et al., 2025). Espasa et al. (2023) stress that many Venezuelan migrants positively contribute to host communities by bringing cultural diversity, labour skills, talent, and effort to the local labour market, with some even undertaking initiatives to improve the host society's well-being. Complementarily, Revelo-Paredes (2023) highlights that these contributions can have a positive impact on the local economy through income generation, tax contributions, and economic growth. However, Ávila and Ariza (2023) emphasise the importance of recognising that migrants' ability to face challenges largely depends on the existence of favourable reception policies and the reduction of systemic barriers that still hinder their integration.

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This research was conducted under a quantitative approach, as it sought to measure, through numerical data, the perceptions and manifestations of emotional intelligence among Venezuelan migrants residing in Funza, Cundinamarca. According to Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza (2018), this approach is suitable when the objective is to identify behavioural patterns and establish frequency levels of observable variables through standardised instruments. In this case, a structured survey with a Likert-type scale was applied, allowing the quantification of responses and the development of descriptive analyses of the evaluated dimensions. This approach is the most appropriate since it enables the objectification of results, minimises interpretative biases, and provides a consistent statistical basis for the conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The study employed a descriptive, cross-sectional design. It is descriptive because it sought to characterise the levels of emotional self-awareness, adaptability, personal development, and social relationships of the migrants, without manipulating variables or establishing direct causal relationships (Arias, 2012). Likewise, it is cross-sectional because the information was collected at a single point in time, providing a representation of the current state of emotional intelligence in the population under study (Creswell, 2014). This type of research is relevant as it offers a clear approximation to the analysed social phenomenon and allows the identification of trends, strengths, and limitations in the socioemotional adaptation of Venezuelan migrants in the local context.

The study population consisted of Venezuelan migrants residing in the municipality of Funza, Cundinamarca, Colombia. From this universe, 208 surveys were administered to men and women over the age of 18. The sample was selected non-probabilistically, by convenience, considering participants' accessibility and willingness to respond to the

questionnaire (Otzen & Manterola, 2017). This sample size was considered adequate for descriptive studies, as it provides sufficient information to identify significant patterns within the group (Cochran, 1977).

The technique used was a structured survey, administered both in person and online. The instrument was a 22-item Likert-type questionnaire, divided into three dimensions: (1) Self-awareness and emotional management, (2) Adaptability and personal development, and (3) Interpersonal skills and positive leadership. Internal consistency was verified through Cronbach's Alpha (0.84). Response options ranged across five categories: Never, Almost never, Sometimes, Almost always, and Always. This format enabled precise measurement of the frequency of attitudes and behaviours associated with emotional intelligence (Likert, 1932).

The collected data were organised in matrices and analysed through descriptive statistics—frequencies and percentages—using SPSS and Excel software. This strategy made it possible to identify predominant trends in each item, as well as critical aspects related to emotional intelligence and the social integration of migrants.

The analysis was conducted in three phases: 1) Tabulation of data in spreadsheets. 2) Calculation of frequencies and percentages per item. 3) Comparative interpretation, identifying strengths (high frequencies in “almost always” and “always”) and weaknesses (concentrations in “sometimes” or low categories).

In this way, the results are grounded in empirical evidence, providing input for academic discussion and for the design of public policies aimed at the social integration of migrants.

## RESULTS

### Sociodemographic Profile of Venezuelan Migrants Who Participated in the Study.

The sociodemographic profile of surveyed Venezuelan migrants reveals greater participation of women compared to men, reflecting a trend toward the feminisation of migration, where many women assume both caregiving responsibilities and economic roles within host households. Regarding age, young and middle-aged adults predominate, with the highest concentration in the 35–44 and 25–34 age groups, while youth aged 18–24 represent 10%, and those over 55 barely 3%. This shows that migration is mainly composed of individuals in productive stages of life, with potential for labour insertion. In terms of length of stay in Colombia, 59% reported more than three years on average, indicating prolonged settlement processes. However, 23% reported between 6 months and 1 year, reflecting the coexistence of recent and established migration flows. This information is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Aspects of the Venezuelan Population in Colombia

Gender	Age – Years	Length of Stay – Years	Cities Visited	Marital Status
Woman 63%	18–24 → 10%	Up to 6 months → 5%	In 1 → 44%	Single → 51%
Man 37%	25–34 → 31%	6 months to 1 year → 18%	In 2 → 32%	Married → 14%
	35–44 → 38%	1 to 2 years → 4%	In 3 → 15%	Common-law union → 35%

	45–54 → 18%	2 to 3 years → 15%	In 4 → 4%	
	Over 55 → 3%	3 to 4 years → 21%	In 5 → 3%	
		Over 4 years → 38%	In 6 → 2%	

Note. Statistics based on SPSS results.

Regarding geographic mobility, 44% have remained in one city, 32% in two, and 15% in three, reflecting trajectories of opportunity-seeking. As for marital status, half of the surveyed population is single, a third are in common-law unions, and a smaller percentage are married, showing a social structure in which non-formalised households predominate—likely linked to vulnerability dynamics or the need for flexibility in migratory processes.

### **Emotional Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation of Venezuelan Migrants in Funza**

Findings in this dimension reveal that Venezuelan migrants demonstrate the ability to recognise, understand, and manage their emotions, maintaining coherence with their values and responding adequately under pressure.

**Table 2.** Emotional Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation

Scale	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
<b>Never</b>	1%	1.0%	3.8%	1.0%	2.9%	2.9%	1.9%	3.4%
<b>Almost never</b>	1%	5.8%	4.3%	4.8%	15.4%	15.4%	10.6%	10.1%
<b>Sometimes</b>	12%	13.5%	11.1%	7.2%	27.9%	24.0%	24.0%	23.6%
<b>Almost always</b>	48%	51.0%	56.3%	51.4%	31.3%	38.5%	31.7%	40.9%
<b>Always</b>	38%	28.8%	29.3%	30.8%	22.6%	19.2%	31.7%	22.1%

Note. Statistics based on SPSS results.

The results show that participants display a significant level of emotional openness and self-awareness. Notably, more than 80% reported feeling comfortable expressing their emotions honestly and valuing honesty in personal and professional interactions. This suggests that, despite the adversities of migration, there is a clear inclination toward authenticity and emotional transparency—key strengths for social and labour integration. Additionally, 87.1% of respondents indicated awareness of the impact emotions have on behaviour (“almost always” or “always”), highlighting resources of self-knowledge that support self-regulation and interpersonal relationship management. These are fundamental to cultural adaptation.

However, some dimensions reveal vulnerability. Regarding trust in intuition for decision-making and acting consistently with personal values, positive percentages decrease while responses of “sometimes” and “almost never” increase. This reflects how migration, marked by uncertainty and rebuilding life projects, can create tensions in personal security and identity coherence.

Performance under pressure and stress reaches acceptable levels, though 14% report clear difficulties. This is especially noteworthy as it shows how emotional and labour demands in migration directly affect stability in high-pressure contexts. Thus, Venezuelan migrants demonstrate significant strengths in emotional self-awareness and honesty,

enhancing resilience and positive social interaction. Still, challenges remain in decision-making confidence, value coherence, and stress management, pointing to the need for psychosocial support strategies that strengthen adaptation and holistic well-being.

### **Adaptability, Learning, and Personal Development**

Findings indicate that Venezuelan migrants demonstrate relevant levels of adaptability to change, capacity to use feedback constructively, and willingness to solve problems with creativity and innovation.

**Table 3.** Adaptability, Learning, and Personal Development

Scale	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	P16
<b>Never</b>	9.1%	3.8%	12.5%	3.8%	3.8%	4.3%	3.8%	2.4%
<b>Almost never</b>	12.0%	6.7%	19.7%	11.5%	8.7%	10.6%	12.5%	9.1%
<b>Sometimes</b>	24.5%	28.8%	46.6%	22.6%	26.0%	30.3%	27.9%	34.6%
<b>Almost always</b>	31.3%	33.7%	21.2%	44.2%	42.8%	34.6%	37.5%	31.3%
<b>Always</b>	23.1%	26.9%	100.0%	17.8%	18.8%	20.2%	18.3%	22.6%

Note. Statistics based on SPSS results.

Results show openness to learning, creativity, and adaptability, though with nuances of vulnerability. For example, over 50% accept constructive feedback almost always or always (P9), while 21.1% do so rarely, possibly due to past rejection or insecurity in work/community settings.

Creativity in problem-solving (P10) is strong, with 60.6% reporting frequent use, confirming creativity as a central adaptation strategy. However, flexibility to change (P11) is more dispersed, with 46.6% responding “sometimes” and 32.2% in lower categories, suggesting that uncertainty and instability limit adaptability for many.

Using discontent constructively (P12) is positive, with 62% reporting frequent practice, showing frustration is often channelled toward improvement. Commitment to personal/professional development (P13) and continuous learning (P14) is also strong, with about 60% actively engaged.

Confidence in creative instinct (P15) and ability to identify hidden opportunities (P16) reflect an intermediate balance: ~55% frequent practice, while ~35% only sometimes. These findings reveal that while migrants have creativity and proactive resources, they face challenges in flexibility and innovation consolidation, underscoring the importance of psychosocial and labour-inclusion programmes to strengthen adaptability and talent.

### **Interpersonal Skills and Positive Leadership**

This dimension reflects migrants' perceptions of their socioemotional competences to build trust-based relationships, manage conflicts respectfully, and exert positive influence without formal authority.

**Table 4.** Interpersonal Skills and Positive Leadership

Scale	P17	P18	P19	P20	P21	P22
<b>Never</b>	1.9%	1.9%	3.8%	1.9%	1.0%	1.9%
<b>Almost never</b>	6.3%	5.3%	13.9%	8.7%	14.9%	12.5%
<b>Sometimes</b>	18.3%	26.4%	33.7%	29.8%	24.5%	30.3%

<b>Almost always</b>	52.9%	43.8%	35.6%	45.2%	35.6%	30.3%
<b>Always</b>	20.7%	22.6%	13.0%	14.4%	24.0%	25.0%

Note. Statistics based on SPSS results.

The findings from the third group of items reveal that Venezuelan migrants show a positive tendency toward responsibility, the building of social relationships, and influence within their environment, although limitations persist in aspects related to conflict management and the expansion of trust circles. Regarding responsibility in actions and decisions (P17), 73.6% of participants reported doing so almost always or always, reflecting a strong sense of personal commitment and maturity in decision-making. This constitutes a fundamental resource for adaptation in work and community contexts, as responsibility is associated with credibility and social trust. With respect to the effort to establish meaningful connections (P18), results are concentrated at high levels, as 66.4% of respondents reported frequent practice, indicating a clear orientation toward social integration and the strengthening of support networks—an essential element in migratory processes. However, the situation differs when analysing the expansion of trust circles in the workplace (P19). While 48.6% responded in the highest categories—almost always and always—47.6% stated they do so only sometimes or less, revealing difficulties in establishing stronger and more sustained workplace bonds.

Conflict management (P20) shows that 59.6% respond almost always and 29.8% sometimes, while only 14.4% do so always, and 10.6% remain at low levels. As for positive influence without formal authority (P21), results are balanced, with 59.6% reporting frequent practice, reflecting capacities for informal leadership, although 40.4% do so only occasionally or rarely, evidencing that not all manage to position themselves as agents of change in their communities or workplaces. Finally, active commitment to a better professional future (P22) shows a positive trend, with 55.3% practicing it frequently, although 42.8% remain at “sometimes” or lower levels. This suggests aspirations for progress that face difficulties in being realised due to structural conditions such as labour informality or barriers to accessing formal opportunities. Thus, Venezuelan migrants in Colombia demonstrate a solid foundation in individual responsibility, willingness to generate social ties, and orientation toward professional advancement.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this research provide insights into how Venezuelan migrants in Funza, Cundinamarca, experience adaptation processes in relation to their emotions, personal development strategies, and social-labour relationships, aligning with the theoretical approaches reviewed. Accordingly:

With respect to emotional self-awareness and management, items P1 to P8 show that most migrants report feeling capable of expressing their emotions honestly, maintaining integrity, and acting according to their values—with more than 70% scoring in the upper categories (“almost always”). This coincides with literature highlighting emotional intelligence as a protective resource against migratory stress (Schäfer & Morillas, 2025; Stillman et al., 2015). Furthermore, the ability to self-regulate emotions is associated with

resilience and facilitates adaptation in local contexts (Berry, 1997; Bloemraad, 2021). However, aspects such as trust in intuition or coping under pressure (items P5 and P8) display intermediate percentages in the “sometimes” category, evidencing tensions possibly derived from uncertainty and socioeconomic vulnerability, as described by Serrano Frattali (2024) and Agarwal-Harding et al. (2024).

Regarding adaptability and personal development, results from items P9 to P16 indicate a strong commitment to continuous learning and personal growth, with more than 60% falling into high-frequency categories. This reflects a strong willingness among migrants to overcome barriers through the acquisition of new skills, in line with Botello et al. (2022), who highlight training as a key integration strategy. However, greater concentrations in mid-range categories were observed in areas such as flexibility to change (P11) and identifying hidden opportunities (P16). This reflects a certain ambivalence, suggesting that while migrants possess high internal motivation, their adaptive capacity is conditioned by structural factors such as limited access to formal employment and the absence of support policies (Cuberos et al., 2024; Vargas-Silva, 2020).

In terms of social relationships, leadership, and influence in the workplace, covered in items P17 to P22, more than 50% of migrants consider themselves responsible and committed to building meaningful ties (P17 and P18), while around 60% perceive themselves as exerting positive influence in their work environments (P21). These findings confirm the value of social capital as a key resource in adaptation processes (Putnam, 2000; Portes, 1998). Nevertheless, results regarding conflict management (P20) and the expansion of trust circles (P19) reveal greater difficulties, evidencing persistent relational barriers linked to discrimination experiences and the lack of social integration spaces, as highlighted by Pollenne and Vargas-Silva (2024) and Jackson (2017).

Overall, the findings confirm the theoretical framework: Venezuelan migrants possess relevant emotional and social resources that facilitate their integration, but structural and relational limitations condition their full adaptation. In this sense, it is argued that local public policies must go beyond legal recognition, such as the Temporary Protection Statute, and move toward labour inclusion programmes, promotion of coexistence, and strengthening of community networks (Angeleri et al., 2023; Kronick & Rousseau, 2015). At the same time, it is crucial to enhance resilience and well-being through socioemotional training initiatives and equitable access to services (Mugocha, 2025; Bao et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSIONS

First, the data reveal a predominantly female migrant population, of productive age, with a significant presence of long-term settlement in the country and family structures marked by singlehood and common-law unions.

The results also show that Venezuelan migrants possess important resources of self-awareness, emotional openness, honesty, responsibility, and willingness to learn. These strengthen their resilience, creativity, and social and labour integration. Nevertheless, they face vulnerabilities in decision-making, consistency with personal values, stress management, and flexibility to change—reflecting the tensions of migratory uncertainty.

Additionally, limitations were identified in the expansion of trust networks and in conflict management. Yet, informal leadership practices and professional progress aspirations stand out, which, although conditioned by structural barriers, highlight the need for inclusive environments and psychosocial strategies that enhance their well-being and integral development.

These elements are important for designing social and labour integration policies differentiated by gender, age, and length of stay.

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