

Project Background

The Quiet Cost of Migration

China has over 285 million migrant workers—more than 30% of its total workforce. They are essential to the country’s urban development, yet often remain distant from the families they work to support.

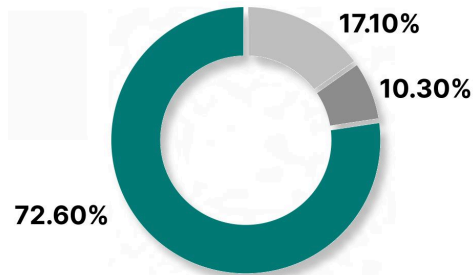
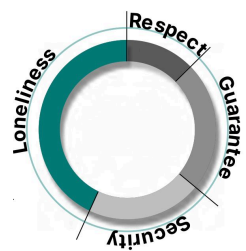
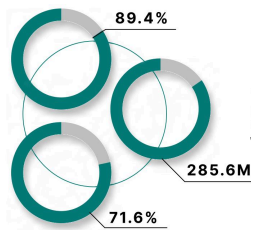
Most migrant workers spend years away from their families, navigating unstable work, low job security, and limited social support in the cities where they work. These conditions heighten their vulnerability and weaken their sense of belonging.

As a result, **chronic loneliness becomes a defining aspect of migrant labor.**

Emotional Needs Reported by Migrant Workers

■ Strong loneliness
 ■ Feel lonely
 ■ No loneliness

Source: Employment Test Report Of Migrant Works Of National Bureau Of Statistics.

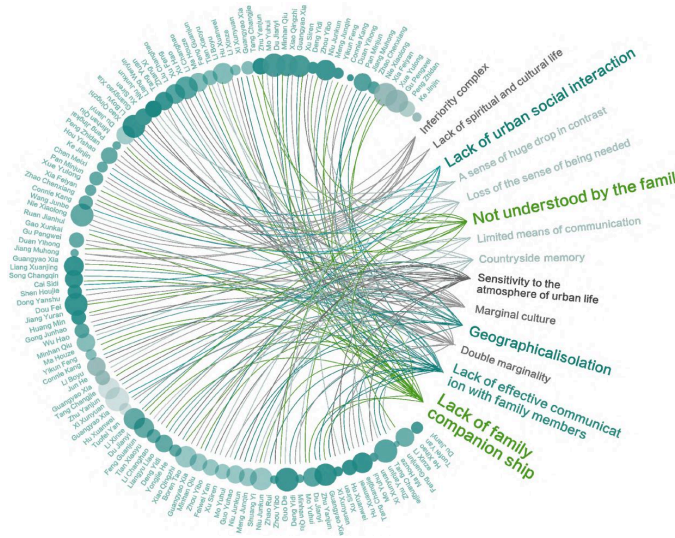


Research & Analysis

Cause Analysis of Loneliness

From 143 interview and survey responses, multiple structural causes of loneliness emerged.

Family distance remains one of the most defining factors.



Interview with Local Workers

Through interviews and field research, I found that migrant workers’ loneliness is strongly linked to family separation. Combined with economic pressure, younger workers—especially those new to city life—experience this sense of isolation more intensely.



User Persona

PING WANG
30, Worker
Leave Home

Years of separation from family, not understanding each other



Poor families are forced to work for money

Mainly use mobile phones to communicate with my family outside

The family is totally dependent on him

The current communication mode of mobile phone is too narrow

User Journey Map

| Stage | Work Time | | | | Family Time | |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | Action 1 | Action 2 | Action 3 | Action 4 | Action 5 | |
| Worker | Enter the construction site to clock in | Carry out construction work | Sign out after work | Return to residence | Communicate with family (phone, video) | |
| Feelings | ☹️ | ☹️ | ☹️ | 😊 | 😊 | |
| Painpoint | Usually depressed at work | | | Lack of communication means | | |

Insights & Opportunities

Families play a central role in migrant workers’ emotional well-being and daily work life. However, with limited communication channels, both sides struggle to maintain understanding and connection, which further deepens their loneliness.