Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY IN CAREER DECISION-MAKING AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN HARYANA: THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND RESILIENCE

Prerna Kadian
Research Scholar, Lovely Professional University

Abstract

Adolescence is an important stage of life during which young people begin to make decisions that shape their future education and careers. At this stage, many students experience a lot of pressure from academic expectations, family members, peers and the increasing need to choose suitable career pathways. For some adolescents, these challenges lead to uncertainty and difficulty in making informed career decisions, particularly when they have limited awareness of mental health, poor emotional regulation and ineffective coping skills. This paper explores how mental health literacy can support adolescents in managing these challenges within the school setting. It also examines the potential contribution of emotional intelligence and resilience in helping students make more confident and informed career choices. Drawing on existing research, the paper discusses how school-based mental health literacy programmes may improve awareness, reduce stigma and encourage appropriate help-seeking behaviour. A conceptual framework, along with a proposed mixed-method research design, intervention modules and an analysis plan, is presented to guide future empirical research among adolescents in Haryana.

Keywords: Mental Health Literacy, Career Decision-Making, Adolescents, Haryana, Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, School Counselling, Career Guidance

Introduction

Adolescence is an important stage of life when students begin to think seriously about their future. Their current academic performance, subject choices and personal interests gradually become linked with further education, employment and social identity. At the secondary and senior secondary levels, students are often expected to choose academic streams, understand entrance examinations, explore different occupations and prepare for adult responsibilities. These decisions are not always easy. A student's interests and abilities may not match family expectations, peer choices or the career information available to them. As a result, choosing a career can become an educational concern as well as a psychological and social challenge.

Career decision-making difficulties are the problems that make it hard for a person to choose a suitable career with confidence and clarity. Gati, Krausz and Osipow (1996) grouped these difficulties into three broad areas: lack of readiness, lack of information and inconsistent information. Among school students, these difficulties may be seen in different forms. Some students may have little motivation to plan for the future, while others may fear making the wrong choice. They may also have limited understanding of their own strengths, insufficient knowledge of occupations or disagreements with parents about suitable career options. Such difficulties may become more serious when students are already dealing with emotional stress, low confidence or uncertainty about where to seek guidance.

Mental health plays an important role in both educational development and career planning. According to the World Health Organization, one in seven young people between the ages of 10 and 19 experiences a mental disorder. Depression, anxiety and behavioural disorders are also among the major causes of illness and disability during adolescence (World Health Organization, 2025). This issue is equally relevant in India, where students often experience examination pressure, comparison with peers, high family expectations and limited access to professional counselling. A rural community-based study conducted in Haryana using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 also identified adolescent depression as a serious concern and highlighted the need for early identification and intervention (Mohta et al., 2021).

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

Mental health literacy can help schools respond to some of these concerns. Jorm et al. (1997) described mental health literacy as the knowledge and beliefs that help people recognise, manage or prevent mental health problems. Jorm (2000, 2012) later broadened the concept to include awareness of emotional distress, knowledge of risk factors, understanding of self-help and professional support, positive attitudes towards help-seeking and the ability to find reliable mental health information. In the school context, mental health literacy should go beyond teaching students about mental disorders. It should also help them understand emotions, manage stress, challenge stigma, seek support, develop coping skills and build healthy relationships with peers.

Schools provide a suitable setting for such initiatives because they can reach students before emotional or behavioural problems become severe. The size of the Indian school system also makes it an important platform for both educational support and mental health promotion. According to UDISE+ 2024–25 data, India has 14.71 lakh schools, 24.69 crore students and 1.01 crore teachers (Ministry of Education, 2025). Emotional well-being and mental health have also been included as a separate module under the Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme. Under this programme, selected teachers are trained to work as Health and Wellness Ambassadors (Press Information Bureau, 2023). This policy framework shows that mental health literacy can be used not only during a crisis but also as an early and preventive form of support.

This paper explores the possibility that mental health literacy may reduce career decision-making difficulties by strengthening emotional intelligence and resilience. Emotional intelligence can help students recognise and manage feelings such as fear, guilt, pressure and confusion that often arise during career planning. Resilience can help them respond to failure, adjust their goals and continue exploring other opportunities when their first plan does not work. Bringing mental health literacy, emotional intelligence and resilience together within school counselling and career guidance may help adolescents make more thoughtful, informed and confident career choices.

Haryana provides a relevant setting for examining this relationship because the state includes rural, semi-urban and urban school environments. Students in these settings may differ in their access to career information, counselling services, educational opportunities and family support. Studying these differences may help in developing school-based interventions that are more suitable for the actual needs of adolescents in Haryana.

Figure 1. Proposed Integrated Conceptual Framework

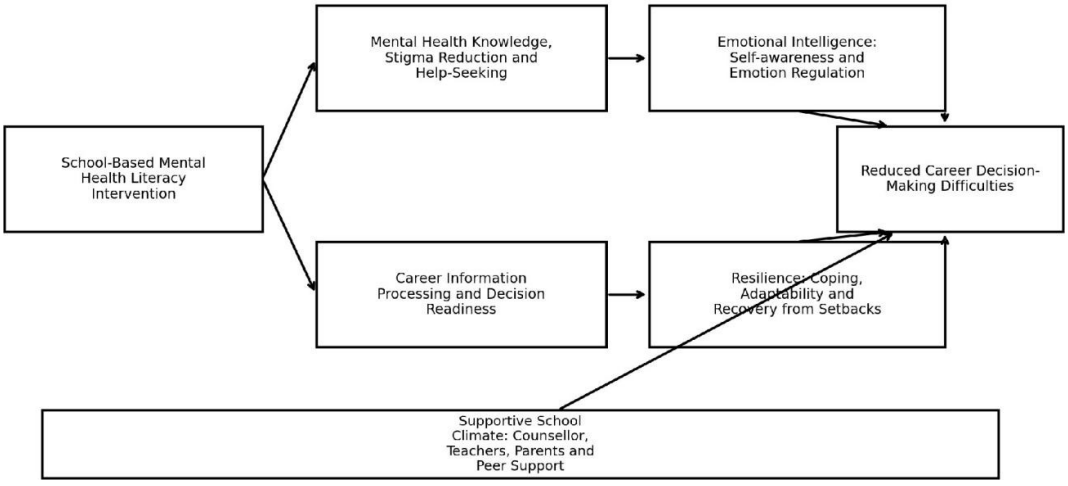


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework showing how school-based mental health literacy, emotional intelligence and resilience may influence career decision-making difficulties among adolescents.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

1. Review of Literature

1.1 Mental Health Literacy: Meaning and Development

The idea of mental health literacy developed from research in the field of public mental health. Jorm et al. (1997) used the term to explain the knowledge and beliefs that help people recognise, manage and prevent mental health problems. This knowledge is important because people often delay seeking support when they do not understand what they are experiencing. A lack of awareness can also strengthen negative attitudes and stigma around mental health. Jorm (2000) later explained that mental health literacy includes the ability to recognise emotional or psychological distress, understand possible causes and risk factors, know about self-help and professional support, develop positive attitudes towards help-seeking and locate reliable mental health information.

For adolescents, mental health literacy needs to be explained in a way that matches their age and daily experiences. Technical psychiatric terms may be difficult for school students to understand, but they can easily relate to feelings of stress, sadness, fear, anger, loneliness, examination pressure, bullying and uncertainty about careers. For this reason, mental health education in schools should use simple language, familiar situations and practical examples. Kågström et al. (2023) also emphasised that mental health literacy programmes for children and adolescents should be age-appropriate, culturally relevant and connected with their everyday lives. This is especially important in Indian schools, where some students may hide emotional difficulties because they are afraid of being judged, criticised or punished.

Another important purpose of mental health literacy is to reduce stigma. In many families and communities, emotional or mental health problems are still misunderstood as personal weakness, poor discipline or a source of shame. Because of these beliefs, adolescents may hesitate to talk about their difficulties or ask for help. School-based mental health literacy can help change such attitudes by teaching students that emotional distress is common and can be managed with timely support. It can also help them understand how to respond when a friend is struggling and when it is necessary to approach a teacher, counsellor, parent or mental health professional.

1.2 School-Based Mental Health Literacy Interventions

School-based mental health literacy programmes have been introduced in many countries in different forms. Some schools use classroom lessons, while others rely on teacher-led activities, counselling sessions, peer discussions, digital learning material or wider awareness programmes involving the whole school. Although the format may differ, the main purpose is usually the same: to improve students' understanding of mental health, reduce stigma, encourage help-seeking and support healthier ways of coping with stress. Skre et al. (2013) found that even a low-cost school programme could improve mental health literacy among adolescents. In a similar way, Milin et al. (2016) reported that a structured mental health curriculum helped high-school students gain better knowledge and develop less negative attitudes towards mental health problems.

More recent research also supports the usefulness of these programmes. Ma, Anderson and Burn (2023a), in their review of school-based interventions, found that such programmes may improve outcomes related to help-seeking. Their second review also showed that school interventions can strengthen mental health literacy and reduce stigma among students (Ma, Anderson & Burn, 2023b). Wei et al. (2024) studied a school-based programme in Canada and observed improvement in student outcomes after the sessions were delivered by trained teachers. Together, these studies show that mental health literacy can be included in regular school activities, especially when teachers and counsellors receive proper training and support.

In India, school mental health programmes are still at a developing stage. Raman and Sharma (2023) pointed out several difficulties, including a shortage of trained professionals, limited resources, weak referral systems and differences in implementation from one school to another. These challenges can make it difficult for schools to provide consistent mental

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

health support. At the same time, the School Health and Wellness Programme under Ayushman Bharat offers an important policy foundation. Since emotional well-being and mental health are included as a separate module, schools have an opportunity to connect mental health literacy with counselling, life-skills education and career guidance.

1.3 Career Decision-Making Difficulties

Career decision-making difficulty is an important issue in career counselling because students do not struggle with career choices for the same reason. Gati et al. (1996) developed a framework to explain the different problems people may face while making career decisions. They divided these difficulties into three broad categories. The first is lack of readiness, which may include low motivation, general indecisiveness and unrealistic beliefs about careers. The second is lack of information, such as limited understanding of one's interests and abilities, poor knowledge of occupations and uncertainty about the steps involved in making a decision. The third category is inconsistent information, where students may receive conflicting advice, face inner confusion or experience disagreement with family members. This framework is especially useful in adolescent research because school students may experience more than one of these difficulties at the same time.

Gati and Saka (2001) found that career decision-making difficulties among high-school students may differ according to their age and how far they have progressed in the decision-making process. Osipow (1999) also pointed out that career indecision should be assessed carefully, as every student may remain undecided for a different reason. Some students mainly require reliable career information, while others may need emotional support, greater confidence or help in dealing with family pressure. For this reason, one general career lecture may not be sufficient for all students. Career counselling needs to combine accurate information with self-exploration, personal guidance and psychological support.

In Haryana, career decision-making may also be influenced by the social and educational environment in which students live. Rural and urban location, type of school, family income, gender expectations, caste and class background, and the availability of trained counsellors may all affect the choices available to them. Students often receive advice from parents, relatives, teachers, coaching centres, friends and social media. However, the information they receive may be incomplete, conflicting or unsuitable for their individual interests and abilities.

In some cases, students select a career because it is considered prestigious or because they are afraid of disappointing their families. Their actual interests and strengths may receive less attention. Such decisions can create stress, confusion and dissatisfaction later. Therefore, career decision-making should not be understood only as a matter of choosing a course or occupation. It should also be examined in relation to students' emotional well-being, confidence, coping ability and access to meaningful support.

1.4 Emotional Intelligence and Career Decision-Making

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognise, understand and manage one's emotions in a sensible way. Emotions often have a strong influence on career decisions, particularly during adolescence. Students may worry about failure, future income or disappointing their families. At the same time, they may feel excited about a preferred career or embarrassed after receiving low marks. When students understand these emotions, they are more likely to handle them calmly instead of making decisions under pressure or fear.

Santos, Wang and Lewis (2018) reported that higher emotional intelligence is associated with fewer career decision-making difficulties. They also found that career decision self-efficacy plays an important role in this relationship. In other words, students who can manage their emotions well may also feel more confident about exploring careers, collecting information and making choices. This confidence can reduce confusion and indecision. Earlier studies by Di Fabio and colleagues similarly highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in career development. This ability is especially relevant

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

during adolescence, as young people are still learning how to express their feelings, deal with stress and communicate openly with parents and teachers.

Schools can help students develop emotional intelligence through practical activities related to self-awareness, identifying emotions, reflection, empathy, communication, stress management and problem-solving. These skills can also be included in career guidance sessions. Students should be encouraged to discuss not only which career option appears suitable, but also how they feel about that option and what concerns may be influencing their decision. In this way, career counselling becomes more supportive and responsive to the emotional needs of students.

1.1 Resilience and Career Decision-Making

Resilience refers to a person's ability to recover, adjust and move forward after facing stress, failure or disappointment. This quality is particularly important in career development because career planning does not always follow a smooth path. A student may receive low marks, fail to qualify for an entrance examination, face financial difficulties or realise that a preferred career option is not practical. Such experiences can leave students feeling discouraged or uncertain about their future. Resilience helps them accept the setback, reconsider their plans and look for other suitable opportunities instead of giving up completely.

Research has connected resilience with effective coping, academic adjustment and psychological well-being. Connor and Davidson (2003) developed a widely used scale for measuring resilience. Masten's work also explained that resilience does not necessarily involve an extraordinary quality; rather, it often develops through ordinary adaptive processes that help people continue functioning during difficult situations. In the context of career planning, resilience may reduce fear, avoidance and hopelessness. Resilient students may be more willing to seek guidance, collect career information, try again after failure and remain patient when the future is uncertain.

Mental health literacy programmes in schools may help students build resilience by teaching them that stress and failure are manageable parts of life and that support is available when needed. Schools can include practical activities such as goal-setting, preparing coping plans, reflective writing, peer-support exercises, discussions about career changes and problem-solving tasks. Sharing realistic stories of people who changed their career path or recovered after failure may also help students view setbacks in a more balanced way.

In Haryana schools, these activities can be delivered in Hindi, English or a bilingual format, depending on students' language needs. Local examples and situations should also be included so that students can connect the activities with their own educational, family and career experiences.

Table 1. Key Literature Mapped to the Present Study

Author/Source	**Area**	**Main Finding/Argument**	**Relevance for Present Paper**
Jorm et al. (1997); Jorm (2000)	Mental health literacy	MHL includes recognition of distress, knowledge of risk factors, help options and help-seeking attitudes.	Provides the conceptual base for school MHL intervention.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

Author/Source	Area	Main Finding/Argument	Relevance for Present Paper
Skre et al. (2013)	School intervention	A low-cost school programme improved adolescent MHL.	Shows that MHL can be delivered in school settings.
Ma et al. (2023a, 2023b)	Systematic review	School-based MHL interventions can improve help-seeking and reduce stigma.	Supports intervention-based approach.
Gati et al. (1996)	Career decision difficulties	Career difficulties include lack of readiness, lack of information and inconsistent information.	Provides outcome framework for career difficulty.
Santos et al. (2018)	EI and career decisions	EI relates to lower career decision-making difficulties through career decision self-efficacy.	Supports EI as a mediator/protective factor.
Mohta et al. (2021)	Haryana adolescents	Depression among rural Haryana adolescents indicates need for early support.	Justifies mental health focus in Haryana schools.
PIB/Government of India (2023)	School health policy	School Health and Wellness Programme includes emotional well-being and mental health module.	Shows policy space for school-based intervention.
WHO (2025)	Adolescent mental health	One in seven 10-19-year-olds experiences a mental disorder globally.	Shows global urgency of adolescent mental health promotion.

2. Research Gap and Rationale

The literature reviewed for this paper shows that mental health literacy, emotional intelligence, resilience and career decision-making difficulties have mostly been examined as separate areas of research. Studies on school-based mental health literacy usually concentrate on improving knowledge, reducing stigma and encouraging students to seek help. Research on career decision-making often focuses on self-efficacy, lack of information, indecision and the process of choosing a career. Emotional intelligence and resilience, on the other hand, are commonly studied in relation to well-being, academic adjustment, coping and career confidence. Only a limited number of studies have brought all these factors together within one school-based framework, particularly in the Indian context and more specifically in Haryana.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

This gap is important because adolescents may struggle with career decisions for reasons that go beyond a lack of career information. Some students may know about different courses and occupations but still feel confused because of fear of failure, low confidence, family pressure, emotional stress or difficulty in dealing with uncertainty. In such situations, providing information alone may not be enough. A school-based mental health literacy programme may be more useful when it also helps students understand their emotions, manage stress and develop the ability to cope with setbacks. In this way, mental health literacy may reduce career-related difficulties by strengthening emotional intelligence and resilience along with improving awareness.

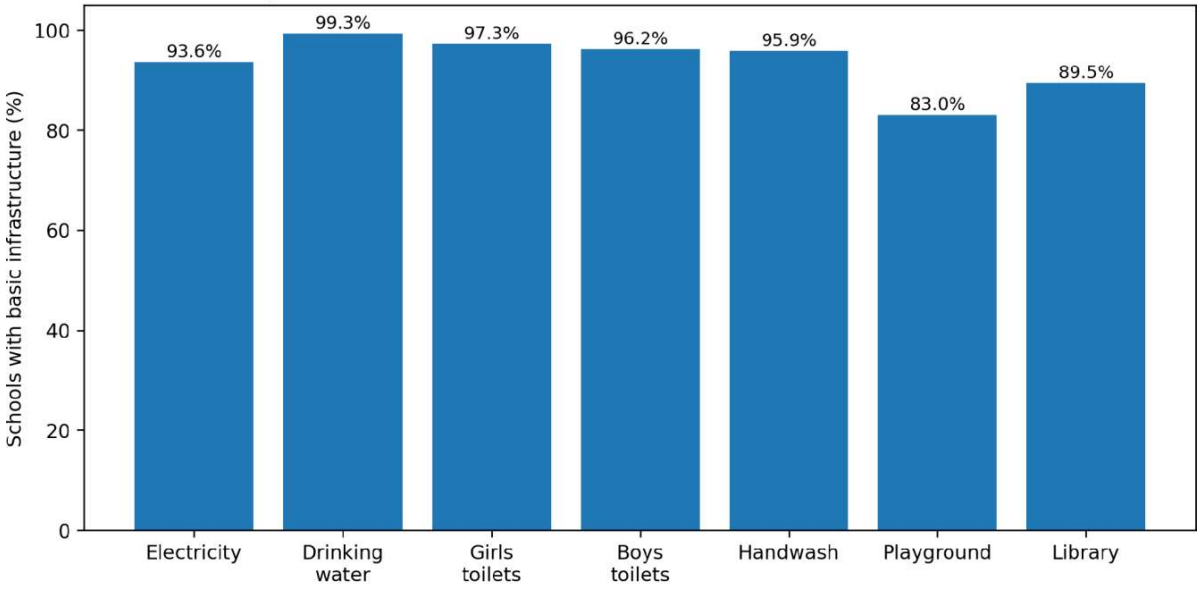
The main reasoning behind this paper is that schools in Haryana can use mental health literacy as an early and preventive form of support. It can be included within existing school activities such as career-guidance periods, counselling services, life-skills classes, health and wellness programmes and teacher-led classroom sessions. This makes the approach practical because schools can use their existing structure instead of referring every student to a clinical mental health service.

Such an approach may also help identify students who need support before their difficulties become more serious. Many adolescents do not require clinical treatment, but they may still need accurate information, emotional guidance and a safe space to discuss their concerns. Introducing mental health literacy at the school level can therefore support both psychological well-being and more confident career decision-making among students.

School Context for Intervention

The chart below shows selected indicators of school infrastructure in India based on UDISE+ 2024–25 data released by the Ministry of Education through the Press Information Bureau. Although these figures do not provide direct information about mental health services, they help explain the size and basic capacity of the school system. They also indicate how schools may serve as practical settings for organised health, well-being and awareness programmes.

Figure 2. Selected School Infrastructure Indicators in India, 2024-25



Source: Ministry of Education / PIB release on UDISE+ 2024-25 school infrastructure indicators.

Figure 2. An overview of selected school infrastructure indicators in India, 2024–25. Source: Ministry of Education/PIB, UDISE+ 2024–25.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

3. Objectives and Hypotheses

3.1 Objectives

- To understand how mental health literacy can be used to support adolescents within schools in Haryana.
- To explore the relationship between students' mental health literacy and their difficulties in making career decisions.
- To understand how emotional intelligence may help students deal with career-related anxiety, confusion and indecision.
- To examine how resilience helps adolescents cope with academic pressure, career uncertainty and setbacks.
- To develop an integrated conceptual model linking mental health literacy, emotional intelligence, resilience and career decision-making difficulties.
- To propose suitable tools, techniques and statistical methods for future empirical research in Haryana schools.
- To suggest practical implications for school counsellors, teachers, parents and policy implementation.

3.2 Hypotheses

H1: Mental health literacy will be negatively associated with career decision-making difficulties among adolescents.

H2: Emotional intelligence will be negatively associated with career decision-making difficulties among adolescents.

H3: Resilience will be negatively associated with career decision-making difficulties among adolescents.

H4: Mental health literacy will be positively associated with emotional intelligence.

H5: Mental health literacy will be positively associated with resilience.

H6: Emotional intelligence and resilience will mediate the relationship between mental health literacy and career decision-making difficulties.

H7: Adolescents who receive a school-based MHL intervention will show lower career decision-making difficulties in post-test scores compared with pre-test scores.

H8: Career decision-making difficulties may differ significantly according to gender, school type, rural/urban location and academic stream.

4. Research Methodology

The present paper is structured as a review-based research paper with a proposed empirical design. The review component synthesises literature from mental health literacy, school mental health, emotional intelligence, resilience and career decision-making. The proposed empirical component provides a research design that can be used later for fieldwork in Haryana schools. This approach is suitable because the present stage of work is conceptual and preparatory, while future research can collect primary data from students.

A mixed-method design is recommended for future research. The quantitative component can measure mental health literacy, emotional intelligence, resilience and career decision-making difficulties using standardised scales. The qualitative component can include interviews or focus-group discussions with students, school counsellors, teachers and parents. This combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will allow the researcher to examine statistical relationships while also understanding the personal experiences of students, teachers and counsellors.

The study may involve adolescents studying in Classes IX to XII in Haryana, generally between 14 and 18 years of age. Participants can be selected from government and private schools located in both rural and urban areas. Students from different academic streams may also be included so that the sample reflects varied educational backgrounds. For the quantitative part, a sample of about 400 to 600 students would be appropriate for correlation, regression and mediation

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

analysis. In addition, around 20 to 30 interviews may be conducted for the qualitative part of the study. Stratified random sampling can help ensure suitable representation based on gender, school type and location.

The proposed school-based programme may consist of six to eight sessions conducted over a period of four to eight weeks. Each session may last between 40 and 60 minutes. These sessions can be delivered by school counsellors, trained teachers or research facilitators who have received proper orientation. English, Hindi or a bilingual format may be used according to the needs of the students. The content should reflect the social and cultural realities of adolescents in Haryana and should be explained in simple, familiar language rather than using difficult clinical terms.

4.1 Proposed Intervention Modules

Module 1: Understanding Mental Health This module will introduce students to the basic meaning of mental health and emotional well-being. It will help them understand the difference between normal stress and more serious emotional difficulties. Common concerns faced during adolescence, along with myths and misunderstandings about mental illness, will also be discussed.

Module 2: Identifying Career-Related Stress Students will learn how to recognise career anxiety, examination pressure, fear of failure and unhealthy comparison with others. The module will also help them identify thought patterns that may create confusion or lead to poor career decisions.

Module 3: Developing Emotional Intelligence This module will focus on helping students become more aware of their emotions and express them clearly. Activities may include identifying feelings, managing emotional reactions, developing empathy and improving communication with parents and teachers.

Module 4: Building Resilience Students will be guided to develop healthy ways of coping with stress, disappointment and failure. The module will include problem-solving, preparing coping plans, revising goals when necessary and maintaining hope during uncertain situations.

Module 5: Improving Career Decision-Making Skills This module will encourage students to understand their own interests, abilities and values. They will also learn how to collect reliable career information, compare different options, follow decision-making steps and avoid misleading information.

Module 6: Seeking Help and Supporting Others Students will learn when professional or personal support may be needed and whom they can approach. The module will also explain how to talk to a counsellor, teacher or parent and how to support a friend safely without taking on responsibilities beyond their ability.

Module 7: Orientation for Parents and Teachers This module will help parents and teachers understand the importance of listening to adolescents and reducing unnecessary career pressure. It will also focus on supporting informed career choices, recognising signs of distress and referring students to suitable counselling or professional services when required.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

1.1 Tools for Data Collection

Variable	Suggested Tool	Purpose	Expected Direction
Mental health literacy	Adapted Mental Health Literacy Scale / school MHL questionnaire	To measure knowledge, recognition, stigma and help-seeking awareness.	Higher MHL expected to reduce career difficulties.
Emotional intelligence	Schutte Self-Report EI Test or Wong and Law EI Scale	To measure emotional awareness, regulation and use of emotions.	Higher EI expected to reduce anxiety and indecision.
Resilience	Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale or Brief Resilience Scale	To measure coping and recovery from stress.	Higher resilience expected to reduce uncertainty-related difficulty.
Career decision-making difficulties	Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire	To measure lack of readiness, lack of information and inconsistent information.	Lower post-intervention scores expected.
Background variables	Demographic information sheet	Gender, class, stream, school type, rural/urban location, parental education.	Used for group comparison and control variables.

5. Analysis and Interpretation Plan

Before starting the analysis, the collected data will be checked carefully. Incomplete responses, missing values and possible data-entry errors will be identified. Each research scale will then be scored according to the instructions given in its manual.

Basic descriptive statistics will be used to understand the background of the participants and the main study variables. Frequencies and percentages will describe characteristics such as gender, class, school type and location. Mean and standard deviation will be calculated for mental health literacy, emotional intelligence, resilience and career decision-making difficulties. These results will provide an overall picture of the students included in the study.

The reliability of the scales will be examined using Cronbach's alpha. This step is particularly important if any scale is translated or adapted for students in Haryana. In most social science research, an alpha value of .70 or above is generally viewed as acceptable. However, the number of items and the nature of the variable will also be considered while interpreting reliability.

Pearson correlation will be used to examine whether the main variables are related to one another. The analysis will show whether students with higher mental health literacy, emotional intelligence and resilience experience fewer difficulties while making career decisions. A negative correlation would indicate that an increase in these psychological resources is associated with a decrease in career-related difficulties.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

Multiple regression analysis will be carried out to understand whether mental health literacy, emotional intelligence and resilience can predict career decision-making difficulties. Factors such as gender, class, school type and rural or urban location may be included as control variables. This will help determine the contribution of each psychological variable after considering students' background characteristics.

Mediation analysis may also be used to examine whether emotional intelligence and resilience help explain the connection between mental health literacy and career decision-making difficulties. This analysis can be conducted through the PROCESS macro or structural equation modelling, depending on the final research design and quality of the data.

To assess the proposed intervention, students' scores before and after the programme may be compared through a paired-sample t-test. When an intervention group and a control group are included, ANCOVA may be used to compare their post-test scores while controlling for their initial scores. Improvement would be reflected through higher scores in mental health literacy, emotional intelligence and resilience, along with lower scores in career decision-making difficulties.

Interview data will be examined through thematic analysis. The researcher will read the responses carefully, identify repeated ideas and group them into broader themes. These themes may include parental pressure, fear of failure, shortage of reliable career information, stigma around mental health, emotional confusion, the need for counselling and the role of supportive teachers.

Table 2. Proposed Statistical Analysis Plan

Research Question	Variables	Statistical Technique	Interpretation
What is the level of MHL and career difficulty?	MHL, CDDQ scores	Mean, SD, percentage	Identifies overall status of students.
Are MHL, EI and resilience related to CDD?	MHL, EI, resilience, CDD	Pearson correlation	Negative correlations support protective role.
Do MHL, EI and resilience predict CDD?	Predictors and CDD outcome	Multiple regression	Shows explanatory power of psychological variables.
Do EI and resilience mediate the relationship?	MHL, EI, resilience, CDD	Mediation / SEM	Tests indirect pathways of the conceptual model.
Does intervention improve outcomes?	Pre-test and post-test scores	Paired t-test / ANCOVA	Tests effectiveness of school-based programme.
Do groups differ?	Gender, school type, location, stream	t-test / ANOVA	Shows social and educational differences.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

6. Expected Findings and Discussion

The proposed study is likely to show that students with better mental health literacy experience fewer difficulties while making career decisions. Adolescents who understand stress, emotional well-being and the importance of seeking help may be less likely to avoid career-related problems. They may feel more comfortable discussing their concerns, asking for guidance and using healthy coping strategies. Such findings would suggest that mental health literacy is useful not only for improving awareness about mental health problems but also for supporting students in their educational and career development.

Emotional intelligence may also play an important role in this process. Career choices often involve strong emotions. Some students may feel pressured to choose science, while others may hesitate to select humanities because of social attitudes. They may also feel guilty about not meeting family expectations or anxious about future income and job security. Students with stronger emotional intelligence may be better able to recognise these feelings and manage them in a balanced way. This may reduce panic, unrealistic beliefs and confusion while helping them make decisions with greater confidence.

Resilience is also expected to help students deal with career-related difficulties. Many adolescents believe that one poor result or one wrong choice can permanently affect their future. This type of thinking may increase fear and prevent them from exploring other options. Resilience can help students understand that career development is not a one-time decision. Plans can change, new skills can be learned and alternative pathways can be considered. A resilience-focused approach may therefore make career guidance more realistic, flexible and less threatening for students.

The proposed framework suggests that mental health literacy may influence career decision-making in more than one way. It may have a direct effect by increasing awareness, reducing stigma and encouraging students to seek support. It may also have an indirect effect by improving emotional intelligence and resilience. These psychological strengths may then help students cope with uncertainty and reduce career-related difficulties. This explanation is in line with school mental health research that supports literacy-based programmes, as well as career psychology research that highlights the importance of emotional confidence and self-efficacy.

Differences may also be found among groups of students. Adolescents studying in rural areas or government schools may report greater difficulty in accessing reliable career information. Girls may experience additional concerns related to safety, mobility and family expectations. Students in the science stream may face strong competition and examination pressure, while students in arts or vocational streams may experience social stigma or limited awareness of available opportunities. These differences should not be used to make fixed assumptions about students. Instead, they can help schools design counselling programmes according to the specific needs of different groups.

The possible findings also have practical value for education policy and school planning. Mental health literacy can be included in school counselling, life-skills education and health and wellness programmes. Teachers can be trained to notice signs of emotional distress and guide students towards appropriate support. Parents can also be encouraged to listen to their children and provide guidance without creating unnecessary pressure. Career guidance in schools should therefore include not only information about courses and occupations but also emotional support, coping skills and resilience-building activities.

7. Practical Implications

School counsellors can include mental health literacy as a regular part of career counselling. Career guidance should not focus only on courses, entrance examinations and job options. Students also need support in understanding their emotions, managing stress and knowing when and how to ask for help.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

Teachers can also play an important role because they are often the first to notice changes in a student's behaviour. A sudden drop in attendance, poor concentration, low confidence or unusual behaviour may indicate emotional stress or confusion about the future. With basic training, teachers can identify such signs early and guide students towards suitable support.

Parents should also be involved through orientation and awareness sessions. Many career-related conflicts begin because students and parents do not communicate openly with each other. Parents may have good intentions, but excessive pressure or fixed expectations can increase stress. Better communication can help families understand the student's interests, abilities and concerns before making career decisions.

Schools also need a clear referral system. Students experiencing mild stress may benefit from classroom activities, teacher support or school counselling. However, those showing serious or continuing symptoms should be referred to a qualified mental health professional. This would help ensure that students receive the right level of support at the right time.

Career information should be provided in simple and accessible language. Students need guidance about different academic routes, vocational courses, scholarships, entrance examinations and opportunities available in their local area. They should also be taught how to check whether career information received from social media, friends or coaching centres is reliable.

The intervention material should be adapted to the social and cultural setting of Haryana. Local examples, bilingual worksheets and realistic career situations can make the sessions easier for students to understand. Using both Hindi and English may also help students from different school backgrounds participate more comfortably.

School leaders should recognise that mental health and career development are closely connected. A student who feels overwhelmed by fear, shame or hopelessness may find it difficult to make a clear career choice. In the same way, mental health support becomes more practical when it helps students deal with real concerns, such as selecting subjects, handling examination pressure and planning their future.

8. Limitations and Future Scope

This paper is mainly based on existing literature and presents a conceptual framework. It does not include original data collected from students. Because of this, the proposed relationships cannot be treated as final conclusions. They need to be tested through field-based research in schools across Haryana before making any strong claims about cause and effect.

Another limitation is that mental health literacy, emotional intelligence, resilience and career decision-making difficulties may be affected by several social and educational factors. Family income, parents' education, school facilities, caste and class background, academic achievement and access to counselling may all influence students' experiences. Future studies should consider these factors while analysing the results.

Further research may use experimental or quasi-experimental designs by comparing an intervention group with a control group. Long-term studies can also examine whether improvements in mental health literacy and resilience continue after the programme has ended. Qualitative studies may provide a deeper understanding of students' personal experiences, particularly those of girls, rural adolescents and first-generation learners.

Future researchers may also compare different districts of Haryana to understand whether the effectiveness of the intervention changes according to school type, location or local social conditions. Such comparisons may help in designing programmes that are more suitable for the needs of different groups of students.

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

9. Conclusion

Making a career choice is not easy for many adolescents. In Haryana, students may have to deal with academic competition, pressure from family, limited career guidance, comparison with others and uncertainty about the future. These pressures can make career decisions more confusing, especially when students find it difficult to manage their emotions or cope with failure and stress. Mental health literacy can offer useful support by helping students understand these difficulties at an early stage within the school environment.

The literature reviewed in this paper indicates that school-based mental health literacy programmes can improve students' understanding of mental health, reduce negative attitudes and make them more willing to seek help. Emotional intelligence may help adolescents recognise and manage feelings linked with career choices, while resilience can help them respond better to setbacks, changing plans and uncertainty. When these areas are addressed together, students may become more confident and better prepared to make informed career decisions.

The proposed framework is important because it connects career guidance with students' emotional and psychological needs. Career counselling should not be limited to providing information about courses, examinations and occupations. Students also need confidence, emotional clarity, coping skills and support from the people around them. Schools in Haryana may apply this approach through counselling sessions, teacher training, parent awareness programmes and organised career-guidance activities.

However, the ideas presented in this paper still need to be tested through actual research in Haryana schools. Future studies should collect primary data and evaluate whether the proposed intervention leads to meaningful changes in mental health literacy, emotional intelligence, resilience and career decision-making difficulties.

References

1. Connor, K. M., & Davidson, J. R. T. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale. *Depression and Anxiety, 18*(2), 76–82. https://doi.org/10.1002/da.10113
2. Di Fabio, A., & Kenny, M. E. (2012). Emotional intelligence and perceived social support among Italian high school students. *Journal of Career Development, 39*(5), 461–475.
3. Di Fabio, A., & Saklofske, D. H. (2014). Comparing ability and self-report trait emotional intelligence, fluid intelligence, and personality traits in career decision. *Personality and Individual Differences, 64*, 174–178.
4. Gati, I., Krausz, M., & Osipow, S. H. (1996). A taxonomy of difficulties in career decision making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 43*(4), 510–526. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.43.4.510
5. Gati, I., & Saka, N. (2001). High school students' career-related decision-making difficulties. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 79*(3), 331–340.
6. Government of India. (2018). *Operational guidelines on School Health Programme under Ayushman Bharat*. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development.
7. Jorm, A. F. (2000). Mental health literacy: Public knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 177*(5), 396–401. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.177.5.396
8. Jorm, A. F. (2012). Mental health literacy: Empowering the community to take action for better mental health. *American Psychologist, 67*(3), 231–243. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025957
9. Jorm, A. F., Korten, A. E., Jacomb, P. A., Christensen, H., Rodgers, B., & Pollitt, P. (1997). Mental health literacy: A survey of the public's ability to recognise mental disorders and their beliefs about treatment. *Medical Journal of Australia, 166*(4), 182–186.
10. Kågström, A., Juríková, L., & Guerrero, Z. (2023). Developmentally appropriate mental health literacy content for school-aged children and adolescents. *Cambridge Prisms: Global Mental Health, 10*, Article e25. https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2023.16

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:8(2), August 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

11. Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., & Coniglio, C. (2016). Mental health literacy: Past, present, and future. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 61*(3), 154–158.
12. Ma, K. K. Y., Anderson, J. K., & Burn, A.-M. (2023a). Review: School-based interventions to improve mental health literacy and reduce mental health stigma—A systematic review. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 28*(2), 230–240. https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12543
13. Ma, K. K. Y., Anderson, J. K., & Burn, A.-M. (2023b). Review: School-based mental health literacy interventions to promote help-seeking—A systematic review. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 28*(3), 408–424. https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12609
14. Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist, 56*(3), 227–238. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.227
15. Milin, R., Kutcher, S., Lewis, S. P., Walker, S., Wei, Y., Ferrill, N., & Armstrong, M. A. (2016). Impact of a mental health curriculum on knowledge and stigma among high school students: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 55*(5), 383–391.e1. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2016.02.018
16. Ministry of Education. (2025). *Unified District Information System for Education Plus 2024–25*. Government of India.
17. Mohta, A., Malhotra, S., Gupta, S. K., & Kalaivani, M. (2021). Depression among adolescents in a rural area of Haryana, India: A community-based study using Patient Health Questionnaire-9. *Cureus, 13*(9), Article e18388. https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.18388
18. Osipow, S. H. (1999). Assessing career indecision. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 55*(1), 147–154. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1999.1704
19. Press Information Bureau. (2023). *Update on mental health services in rural areas*. Government of India.
20. Press Information Bureau. (2025). *UDISE+ 2024–25: School education data and infrastructure indicators*. Government of India.
21. Raman, V., & Thomas, S. (2023). School mental health program in India: Issues and possible practical solutions. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, 45*(3), 283–288. https://doi.org/10.1177/02537176231165033
22. Santos, A., Wang, W., & Lewis, J. (2018). Emotional intelligence and career decision-making difficulties: The mediating role of career decision self-efficacy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 107*, 295–309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.05.008
23. Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Hall, L. E., Haggerty, D. J., Cooper, J. T., Golden, C. J., & Dornheim, L. (1998). Development and validation of a measure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences, 25*(2), 167–177. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(98)00001-4
24. Skre, I., Friborg, O., Breivik, C., Johnsen, L. I., Arnesen, Y., & Wang, C. E. A. (2013). A school intervention for mental health literacy in adolescents: Effects of a non-randomized cluster controlled trial. *BMC Public Health, 13*, Article 873. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-873
25. Vahedi, S., Farrokhi, F., Mahdavi, A., & Moradi, S. (2012). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry, 7*(2), 74–81.
26. Wei, Y., Sha, L., McWeeny, R., Johal, R., Easton, C., Baxter, A., Cao, B., Greenshaw, A., & Carr, W. (2024). Evaluating the effectiveness of a school-based mental health literacy intervention from a comprehensive demographic and social-cognitive perspective. *Scientific Reports, 14*, Article 5901. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-56682-2
27. Wong, C. S., & Law, K. S. (2002). The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude: An exploratory study. *The Leadership Quarterly, 13*(3), 243–274. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00099-1
28. World Health Organization. (2025). *Adolescent mental health*. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health