Be Like an Athlete (BLA)

Socio-Psychological Common Profile for
Dual Career Student-Athletes

The **Be Like an Athlete Socio-Psychological Common Profile** is developed within the Erasmus+ Sport project Be Like an Athlete (BLA) that involves a transnational and trans-disciplinary team from five European countries: Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, and Spain. The BLA common profile is the result and conclusion of a questionnaire in dual career students of the five European countries.

The project combines the objectives of drawing a social-psychological profile of student-athletes involved in dual careers programmes and contributing to the positive development of youth and an innovative sport education strategy. The aim is to improve sport and school results of those involved in dual careers programmes, while enhancing the balance of these two contexts.

The **Be Like an Athlete Socio-Psychological Common Profile** for dual career student athletes – Output 2 of the project – includes the following seven variables:

1. Wellbeing
2. Resilience
3. Passion for school
4. Passion for sport
5. Career planning
6. Social competencies
7. Management

The **Be Like an Athlete Socio-Psychological Common Profile** is based on the BLA Socio-Psychological Profile Questionnaire (SPPQ)[1] – Output 1 – including data from both girls and boys.

The profile is based on more than one thousand student-athletes of 14-18 years old involved in dual careers programs in 2021 from Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, and Spain (n=1192, females=527, males=657, age mean 16,4).[2]

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1   A full exploratory analysis was carried out on the data for the full dataset and then the data for each country. Descriptive statistics and exploratory plots were determined to assess the distribution
of each variable and identify possible outliers. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the magnitude and direction of any association between the validated scale variables (total scores). For further information see the report Be Like an Athlete Survey analysis at https://belikeanathlete.eu/.

2   For results divided on each country and gender, see the report Be Like an Athlete Survey analysis (IO2) at https://belikeanathlete.eu/.

These student-athletes spend between 10 and 30 hours, or more per week, on sport training (mean=20,2 hours/week) and between 20 and 35 hours studying at school weekly (mean=26,6 hours/week). Additional study outside school ranges from 5 to 15 hours per week (mean 11,7 hours/week).

The overall results from the BLA SPPQ regarding the proportion of 1192 student-athletes who scored >= midpoint score of each variable is shown in table 1 and figure 1 below.

Table 1. Data representing the Be Like an Athlete Socio-Psychological Common Profile (n=1192).

Variables BLA Socio-Psychological Common Profile	Maximum score	Mid point score	Number of participants with score >= midpoint	Proportion with score >= midpoint
Wellbeing	100	50	903	0.76 (76%)
Resilience	40	20	1014	0.88 (88%)
Passion for school	40	20	996	0.87 (87%)
Passion for sport	40	20	1098	0.97 (97%)
Career planning	20	10	1069	0.96 (96%)
Social competencies	30	15	1092	0.98 (98%)
Management	50	25	1061	0.97 (97%)

The **Be Like an Athlete Socio-Psychological Common Profile** for boys and girls in Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, and Spain shows that student-athletes have strong passion for sport, but scores lower in well-being, which is visualized in figure 1.
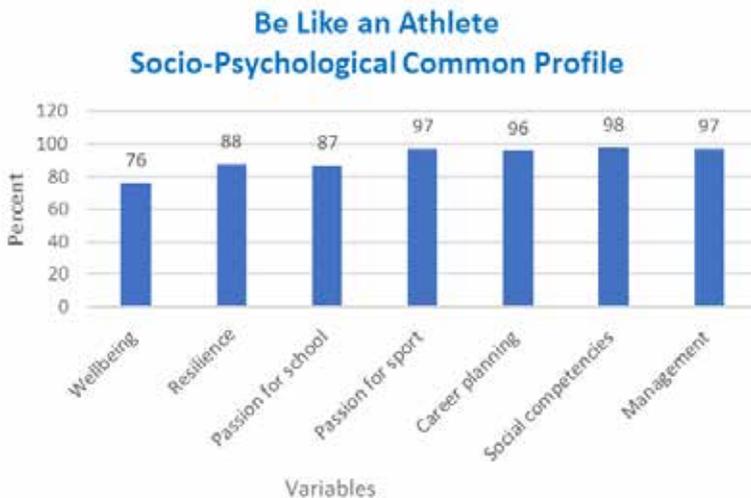
Figure 1. Be Like an Athlete Socio-Psychological Common Profile.

In addition, the survey showed a strong positive correlation between the variables career planning, social competencies, and management scores (r=0.74 to 0.77), and between well-being and resilience (r=0,71). The survey indicated that there is a moderate to strong positive correlations between the variable's passion for sport, social competencies, and management (r=0.68), but also between resilience and passion for sport, social competencies, and management (r=0.66 to 0.67).[3] The moderate to strong positive correlations show a relationship between variables indicating they will change together. The positive values show that these variables will tend to increase together.

Regarding gender there was a statistically significant difference in well-being score between boys and girls (p<0.001, 95%), with girls having lower well-being scores on average (Girls mean score was 61.3 and boys 66.1). However, there was little difference in the other scores, hours training, hours of school, hours of study outside school, or highest level of sport achieved between boys and girls. Concerning the results by country, some differences were found. Although trying to define a common profile the particularities of each country cannot be ignored and will be considered in the further steps of the project.

In the BLA project it is argued that this type of profile needs not only to be optimised in the sport context but also to be developed in the school context to foster a positive youth development and well-being from sport to life. Based on this profile, BLA will develop digital and interactive pedagogical tools to be used to help monitor and reveal the actual socio-psychological characteristics of youngsters.

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