Specifics in Expert Assessments of Educational Profiles Based on Personality Strengths Among European Countries

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Abstract

The present study aims to identify distinctive features in the perception and expert assessment of students' strengths in the context of educational profiles in different European countries. Growing differentiation in the field of education necessitates the development of more effective and sustainable models for personalization in school education. This search for appropriate methodologies and environments for optimizing and individualizing the learning experience has led to the emergence of numerous innovative practices and tools. Educational profiles are particularly beneficial tools that enable significant individualization of the learning process. The combined use of educational profiles and artificial intelligence enables the creation of online learning platforms capable of providing a unique learning trajectories, thereby significantly optimizing the learning process. Introducing such training paths can also be done successfully in a multinational environment, which adds even more value to the effort to develop relevant and effective educational profiles. Our study examines the specificities associated with the perception of educational profiles in a multinational context, enabling a case analysis based on the specific expertise of various European countries. The study involves 16 scientists (experts) from 6 European countries (Bulgaria, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Poland), who give their expert assessment of an educational profile in a short questionnaire specially designed for this purpose. Certain specific features are observed, the scientific significance of which is discussed in detail in this paper.

Keywords: experts, educational profile, personal strengths, student profile

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Introduction

Educational systems around the world are remarkably diverse and employ a variety of structures and methodologies in the educational delivery process. There are no unified standards for or uniformity in these types of activities, either globally or within Europe. In the context of increasing globalization, however, practical conditions necessitate the search for ways to synchronize the outputs of the educational systems of countries within the European Economic Area, where the transfer of knowledge and skills from one country's educational system to another's labor market is becoming increasingly common (European Commission, 2025). At the same time, educational systems in different countries can vary significantly from one another along a number of indicators. For example, the period of compulsory education in the six countries included in this study begins earliest in Bulgaria (starting at age 4) and ends earliest in Bulgaria and Spain (at age 16). On the other hand, the period of compulsory education begins and ends latest in Finland, Poland, and Portugal (from age 7 to 18) (European Commission, 2025). Similar differences can be found in other aspects of education systems as well. A comprehensive transformation of the education system requires an in-depth debate among countries, as well as addressing a vast amount of cultural issues that cannot be quickly resolved. At the same time, however, the labor market imposes requirements that cannot be postponed. That necessitates the development of a model to support the establishment of a system of nationally valid competencies that would form the basis of the debate on education. Educational profiles, as a concept, hold significant potential for achieving this goal. Therefore, this study focuses on the elaboration of an international expert assessment of the concept of educational profiles based on students' strengths, as suggested by us.

Literature Review

Systems for diagnostically assessing students' educational profiles involve a multi-component set of methods and tools designed to accurately evaluate students' cognitive abilities, interests, and career orientation. These systems integrate pedagogical and psychological assessment with objective criteria used to analyze the educational process. In the contemporary paradigm, a wide range of methodologies is used (Levterova-Gadjalova et al., 2023). The main models for profile construction include:

- Questionnaires and Self-Assessment – This method is based on students' reflection upon everyday situations, allowing them to identify their personal preferences through self-assessment.
- Standardized assessment – Administration of validated questionnaires to measure various dimensions of personality and intellectual capacity.
- Assessment against educational standards – Evaluation of the degree to which competencies outlined in the curricula for specific subjects have been acquired from the students during the educational process. Main method used from the educational systems around the world.
- Observation and expert assessment – Direct monitoring of behavior in an educational setting. In the Bulgarian context, this method is fundamental to assessing individual needs for additional support for personal development (Ministerstvo na obrazovanieto i naukata, 2017).
- Digital diagnostics and intelligent tutoring systems – This method is undergoing the most dynamic development, as it integrates artificial intelligence and adaptive algorithms to analyze the learning process in real time. Unlike the traditional methods,

digital systems enable active diagnostics that not only record results but also modulate the behavior of the learner on the e-learning platforms (Tzouveli et al., 2008).

Contemporary research has highlighted the role of artificial intelligence in education for identifying individual learning styles and cognitive aptitudes. Through tracking the "digital footprints" of learners' progress, adaptive learning systems provide personalized content tailored to the specific needs of each learner (Luckin & Holmes, 2016). The implementation of these technologies allows an expansion of the scope of profiling, shifting from static assessment to dynamic prediction of educational outcomes.

Globally, approaches to the exploration of student profiles vary widely. Different axes are used depending on the central characteristic of the system. Some models emphasize the characteristics of sensory processing, while others focus on personality traits or the development of specific knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for lifelong development.

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Within the context of the American educational framework, various approaches to the educational profile are employed. Newer models, disseminated and implemented by NGOs, focus on different domains related to the student's socio-cultural environment—family, culture, and community (Avallone, 2026). For other models, the focus is on learning styles and predominant intelligence (EL Education, 2026). The use of the cluster analysis approach, meanwhile, reveals the presence of two main domains in students' learning profiles at the end of their education—cognitive and motivational (Alexander & Murphy, 1999) — and allows for the formulation of four main learning styles: integrated strategy users, information organizers, mental learners, and limited strategy users, where the highest results on achievement tests are found among students who use integrated learning strategies (Rogiers et al., 2019). In the U.S. public education system, learning profiles are primarily used to develop individualized education programs for students with special needs, within the context of the legal provisions defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (U.S. Department of Education, 2026).

At the global scale, however, there is also a long-standing practice of actively using learning profiles as a key tool in school education. The use of the VARK model with students who are already literate and possess skills in reflection and self-monitoring has been in use in New Zealand's educational system as early as 1987. Within this framework, the questionnaire has been used as a primary model for identifying students' sensory learning preferences (Fleming & Baume, 2006), which allows for better personalization of educational materials. The

acronym for its name comes from the four main sensory styles—Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, and Kinesthetic (Fleming, I'm different; not dumb. Modes of presentation [VARK] in the tertiary., 1995). The widespread use of this type of model is directly linked to the early profiling of learners, since the creation of individual student profiles allows for the establishment of personalized learning paths as early as middle school. However, there is also considerable strong criticism directed at Fleming's model and other similar models. The main criticism is directed at the lack of any clear evidence that the learning outcomes actually improve as a result of the model's use (Nancekivell et al., 2020; Newton & Miah, 2017; Pashler et al., 2008). Directing students towards the sensory styles identified through the methodology does not have a positive effect on academic achievement or student well-being in the educational setting (Nancekivell et al., 2020). The inconsistency of the model also encompasses the existence of an extremely wide variety of preferred models in practical work with students (Pashler et al., 2008). The existence of individual differences regarding preferred styles of information presentation does not imply that these preferences correspond to actual individual characteristics of cognitive information processing. Although this type of profiling has been used for over 20 years in global practice, no study has confirmed any benefits in terms of the learning process (Nancekivell et al., 2020; Newton & Miah, 2017). These findings have prompted the search for new working models that can provide real added value to the educational process. These models must take into account not only sensory and neuro-processual approaches to the delivery of instructional content, but also a holistic view on the educational process. Such models are designed to meet the requirements that the digitization and globalization of our society place on education.

The creation of educational profiles is also used by many European countries, but this approach is mostly focused on supporting the educational process for children who need extra support, such as those with special educational needs, children at risk, migrant children, and also gifted and talented children. An example of this is the Portuguese government’s policy on creating educational profiles for migrant children, with the aim of supporting their integration into the Portuguese educational environment (Portal de serviços públicos da República Portuguesa, 2026). In Spain, the educational system focuses on the specific needs of the child and student over the course of 2-year cycles, without creating a holistic profile for the student (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2026). In Finland, educational profiles are used not only in the context of special educational needs and additional support, but also as a tool for creating an individual competency-based learning path and for developing personalized digital lifelong learning services (Digital service package for continuous learning) (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2026). The use of educational profiles in Poland is relatively limited, with the primary focus being placed on the development of a profile for students who have completed their compulsory education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2026). On its part, Turkey has introduced, as a useful innovation, the development of an educational profile for students consisting of four general integrated areas, which are divided into 10 sub-competencies, each of which is expressed as six different desired outcomes (four integrity areas are divided into 10 sub-competencies and each of these 10 competencies is expressed as 6 different student outcomes) (European Commission, 2025). As already mentioned, in Bulgaria, educational profiles are fundamental to the assessment of individual needs for additional support in the country’s inclusive education system (Ministerstvo na obrazovanieto i naukata, 2017).

Educational profiles are often identified as a fundamental tool for the improvement and harmonization of educational standards in developing countries, where access to education is often limited. In this setting, educational profiles serve as a quick and effective model for

assessing educational needs and guiding learning along the most appropriate educational pathways (RISE, 2026). The development of educational profiles is a key factor in optimizing pedagogical interaction and realizing the full potential of school-based educational programs in society. For this reason, the international organization UNESCO emphasizes the need to develop a holistic educational profile not only during school education but also at the very end of it. In this regard, UNESCO (2017) advocates the need to develop a holistic educational profile that encompasses the development of the student throughout the entire course of compulsory education. This conceptual framework is hierarchically structured and includes: an axiological core—based on fundamental values such as sovereignty, responsibility, integrity, and civic participation—and a periphery of competencies—critical and creative thinking, scientific and technological literacy, digital communication, and autonomy (UNESCO, 2017).

Even though the principles of this approach are founded on a humanistic perspective and coherence, its traditional application through teacher surveys reveals serious methodological shortcomings. One of the main problems is relative subjectivity, whereby evaluative statements often do not correlate directly with theoretical constructs and suffer from low statistical validity and reliability. It follows that they carry a significant probability of error. Therefore, most methodologies for identifying specific details in the educational profile use standardized questionnaires that examine the various aspects of the profiles in detail. For this reason, the present study focuses on the creation of precisely such an instrument. We can identify three main approaches to the educational profiles, in terms of their role as a tool for personalization in education—approaches based on the learner's existing knowledge (Learner models), on the learner's competency profile (Competency-based profiling), and on the learning analytics profile (Learning analytics-based profiling). All three models play a significant role in the development of curricula that allow the personalization of learning and allow teachers to adapt their teaching so that students can self-regulate and monitor their own learning (Barthakur et al., 2023).

The differences in approaches do not hinder the formulation of a comprehensive international and multinational approach to the student's educational profile. On the contrary, they provide a broad foundation upon which a comprehensive model for developing educational profiles could be built.

Methodology

In the present questionnaire, we utilize the profile of the learner's strengths. We sought the expert opinion of an international team of education experts regarding a questionnaire that includes five core profiles based on students' strengths. These five profiles are as follows:

- Social competencies profile;
- Emotional profile;
- Behavioral profile;
- Cognitive profile;
- Sensory profile;

Mapping the educational profile of students by describing their strengths is an innovative approach aimed at creating a holistic profile that enables the learning process and outcomes to be practically oriented toward achieving optimal learning outcomes.

A 5-point rating scale is provided for each question, as follows: 1 – Never, 2 – Very rare, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Often, and 5 – Always.

Experts assess the relevance of each question to the corresponding scale based on their experience and expert knowledge within the context specific to their country.

Table 1

Questionnaire for Expert Assessment of Educational Profiles Based on the Student's Strengths Questionnaire. 5 – Factor Model

Social competence profile	Emotional profile	Behavioral profile	Cognitive profile	Sensory profile
1.1 Demonstrate an ability for positive communication with others.	2.1 Able to recognize emotions and emotional reactions.	3.1 Demonstrates a drive for prosocial behavior.	4.1 Learn from past mistakes.	5.1 Demonstrates good sensory integration and awareness. Adequate sensory processing of incoming information
1.2 Loves to collaborate with others.	2.2 Exhibits the ability to adopt another person's perspective.	3.2 Has a good sense of humor.	4.2 Learns best when doing different things/making things.	5.2 Demonstrates ability to discriminate between significant and irrelevant sensory information. Able to separate important from unimportant information for a given task.
1.3 Understands non-verbal communication signals.	2.3 Has an optimistic attitude to life.	3.3 Able to follow instructions with accuracy.	4.3 Uses cognitive strategies for learning and problem solving.	5.3 Observing and ability to identify changes related to transformation/modification in sensory information.
1.4 Is able to ask for support when needed.	2.4 Establishes trustworthy affective attachment to significant others.	3.4 Able to organize their learning and leisure time.	4.4 Demonstrates an ability to think with an attention to the details.	5.4 Good semantic processing of structural elements (figures, background, shapes, objects).
1.5 Participate with ease in different group games and activities.	2.5 Able to express their feelings openly and appropriately to the social situation.	3.5 Plans and implements consistent actions to accomplish a given goal.	4.5 Able to use imagination to create creative solutions and conduct mental experiments.	5.5 Precision and sensitivity to the fine details of the sensory image.

The survey was conducted in December 2025 with paper forms. All experts provided their informed consent to participate in the study. The data were collected in accordance with ethical standards for conducting research involving human subjects. No personal data was collected in the study. All analyses were performed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

Results and Discussion

All profiles show high average ratings (Min = 5; Max = 25) – Social (20.31), Emotional (21.06), Behavioral (20.75), Cognitive (20.75), Sensory (21.13). That can be considered as a significant mark for the perceived relativeness of the scales, according to the subjects. The descriptive statistics of the expert assessment results are showed in Table 2.

Table 2

Five Scales Descriptive Statistics – Results by Countries

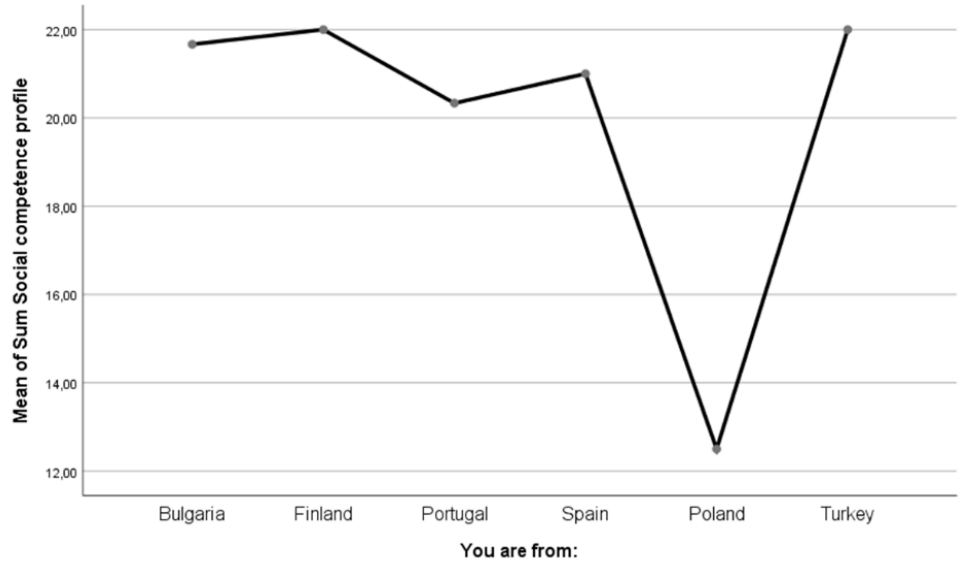
Descriptives									
						95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Sum Social competence profile	Bulgaria	3	21.6667	0.57735	0.33333	20.2324	23.1009	21.00	22.00
	Finland	3	22.0000	3.60555	2.08167	13.0433	30.9567	18.00	25.00
	Portugal	3	20.3333	1.52753	0.88192	16.5388	24.1279	19.00	22.00
	Spain	2	21.0000	1.41421	1.00000	8.2938	33.7062	20.00	22.00
	Poland	2	12.5000	2.12132	1.50000	-6.5593	31.5593	11.00	14.00
	Turkey	3	22.0000	3.00000	1.73205	14.5476	29.4524	19.00	25.00
	Total	16	20.3125	3.66458	0.91615	18.3598	22.2652	11.00	25.00
Sum Emotional profile	Bulgaria	3	22.0000	1.00000	0.57735	19.5159	24.4841	21.00	23.00
	Finland	3	21.0000	2.00000	1.15470	16.0317	25.9683	19.00	23.00
	Portugal	3	19.0000	1.00000	0.57735	16.5159	21.4841	18.00	20.00
	Spain	2	23.5000	0.70711	0.50000	17.1469	29.8531	23.00	24.00
	Poland	2	21.0000	5.65685	4.00000	-29.8248	71.8248	17.00	25.00
	Turkey	3	20.6667	4.04145	2.33333	10.6271	30.7062	17.00	25.00
	Total	16	21.0625	2.64496	0.66124	19.6531	22.4719	17.00	25.00
Sum Behavioral profile	Bulgaria	3	20.6667	0.57735	0.33333	19.2324	22.1009	20.00	21.00
	Finland	3	23.6667	0.57735	0.33333	22.2324	25.1009	23.00	24.00
	Portugal	3	17.0000	1.73205	1.00000	12.6973	21.3027	15.00	18.00
	Spain	2	20.5000	0.70711	0.50000	14.1469	26.8531	20.00	21.00
	Poland	2	20.5000	6.36396	4.50000	-36.6779	77.6779	16.00	25.00
	Turkey	3	22.0000	3.00000	1.73205	14.5476	29.4524	19.00	25.00
	Total	16	20.7500	3.04412	0.76103	19.1279	22.3721	15.00	25.00
Sum Cognitive profile	Bulgaria	3	20.6667	2.08167	1.20185	15.4955	25.8378	19.00	23.00
	Finland	3	22.6667	1.52753	0.88192	18.8721	26.4612	21.00	24.00
	Portugal	3	18.0000	2.00000	1.15470	13.0317	22.9683	16.00	20.00
	Spain	2	23.0000	2.82843	2.00000	-2.4124	48.4124	21.00	25.00
	Poland	2	18.5000	6.36396	4.50000	-38.6779	75.6779	14.00	23.00
	Turkey	3	21.6667	3.05505	1.76383	14.0775	29.2558	19.00	25.00
	Total	16	20.7500	3.10913	0.77728	19.0933	22.4067	14.00	25.00

Sum Sensory profile	Bulgaria	3	21.0000	1.00000	0.57735	18.5159	23.4841	20.00	22.00
	Finland	3	22.6667	1.52753	0.88192	18.8721	26.4612	21.00	24.00
	Portugal	3	19.6667	3.21455	1.85592	11.6813	27.6521	16.00	22.00
	Spain	2	22.5000	0.70711	0.50000	16.1469	28.8531	22.00	23.00
	Poland	2	20.0000	2.82843	2.00000	-5.4124	45.4124	18.00	22.00
	Turkey	3	21.0000	3.60555	2.08167	12.0433	29.9567	18.00	25.00
	Total	16	21.1250	2.33452	0.58363	19.8810	22.3690	16.00	25.00

National-level analysis reveals certain distinctive features. In terms of the first scale, which characterizes the social competence profile of students' strengths, a significant difference is observed in the form of a notably lower assessment given by the experts from Poland compared to those from other countries. Experts from all countries gave a score between 20 and 22 raw points (scale average 20.3125), with the highest score on this profile awarded by experts from Finland and Turkey (22). Experts from Poland gave an average score of just 12.5 raw points. This major discrepancy on the scale is due to particularly low scores on the item 1.4 Is able to ask for support when needed. и 1.5 Participate with ease in different group games and activities.

Figure 1

Mean Values of the Expert Assessment on Social Competence Scale



Note/Source: Author analysis generated with IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

The grade on the Emotional Profile scale shows highest grade in Spain (23.5), Bulgaria (22.0) and the lowest – Portugal (19.0). No significant difference was found on this scale.

The Behavioral Profile score is highest in Finland (23.67) and Turkey (22.0), and lowest in Portugal (17.0). On this scale, too, the difference is not statistically significant.

On Cognitive scale profile the highest score is in Spain (23.0) and Finland (22.67), and the lowest in Portugal (18.0). On Sensory profile the highest in Finland (22.67) and Spain (22.5) again and the lowest – Portugal (19.67). There are no statistical significant difference in the both results.

Table 3
ANOVA Test Hypothesis Statistics Results

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sum Social competence profile	Between Groups	145.604	5	29.121	5.216	0.013
	Within Groups	55.833	10	5.583		
	Total	201.438	15			
Sum Emotional profile	Between Groups	27.771	5	5.554	0.720	0.623
	Within Groups	77.167	10	7.717		
	Total	104.938	15			
Sum Behavioral profile	Between Groups	72.667	5	14.533	2.191	0.136
	Within Groups	66.333	10	6.633		
	Total	139.000	15			
Sum Cognitive profile	Between Groups	56.500	5	11.300	1.277	0.346
	Within Groups	88.500	10	8.850		
	Total	145.000	15			
Sum Sensory profile	Between Groups	19.917	5	3.983	0.644	0.672
	Within Groups	61.833	10	6.183		
	Total	81.750	15			

These results clearly demonstrate the overall absence of any statistically significant differences in the experts' evaluations across all scales. The only exception is the opinion of the experts from Poland regarding the students' social competence profile, as already commented. This aspect allows us to conclude that, despite the relatively small sample size, the methodology used yields consistent results due to the broad representation of experts from various European countries.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We can say that, overall, experts from Portugal gave the lowest average scores on all scales, with the exception of the social competence scale. Experts from Finland, Spain, Bulgaria, and Turkey gave comparable, fairly similar scores on all scales, which were relatively close to the maximum number of possible points.

Experts from Poland give the lowest average score on the social competence scale, which is also the lowest average score for the entire questionnaire and the only one with statistically significant differences. The other average assessments of these experts are comparable and, on some scales, even higher than those of their colleagues from Portugal.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the influence of cultural characteristics is most evident in relation to the social competence profile. This highlights the need to develop a different, more up-to-date framework for assessing this aspect of students' personal strengths within the educational system. This scale should inevitably include personality strengths that more accurately reflect, in a broader sense, the cultural characteristics of the European population.

Despite this, one can argue that there is a significant consensus among experts from various European countries, which provides a solid basis for the development of an effective, multinational toolkit for the assessment and implementation of the educational profile of the individual student, based entirely on the strengths of the individual's personality. This aspect is also linked to the main recommendation that can be drawn from the current study, which is aimed at developing a coherent and consistent methodology for assessing students' educational profiles based on their personal strengths not only on national, but also at European level.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author declares that no AI or AI-assisted technologies have been used to generate, refine, or correct the content in the manuscript. The ideas, design, procedures, findings, analyses, and discussion are originally written and derived from careful and systematic conduct of the research.

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