



DCMENTOR

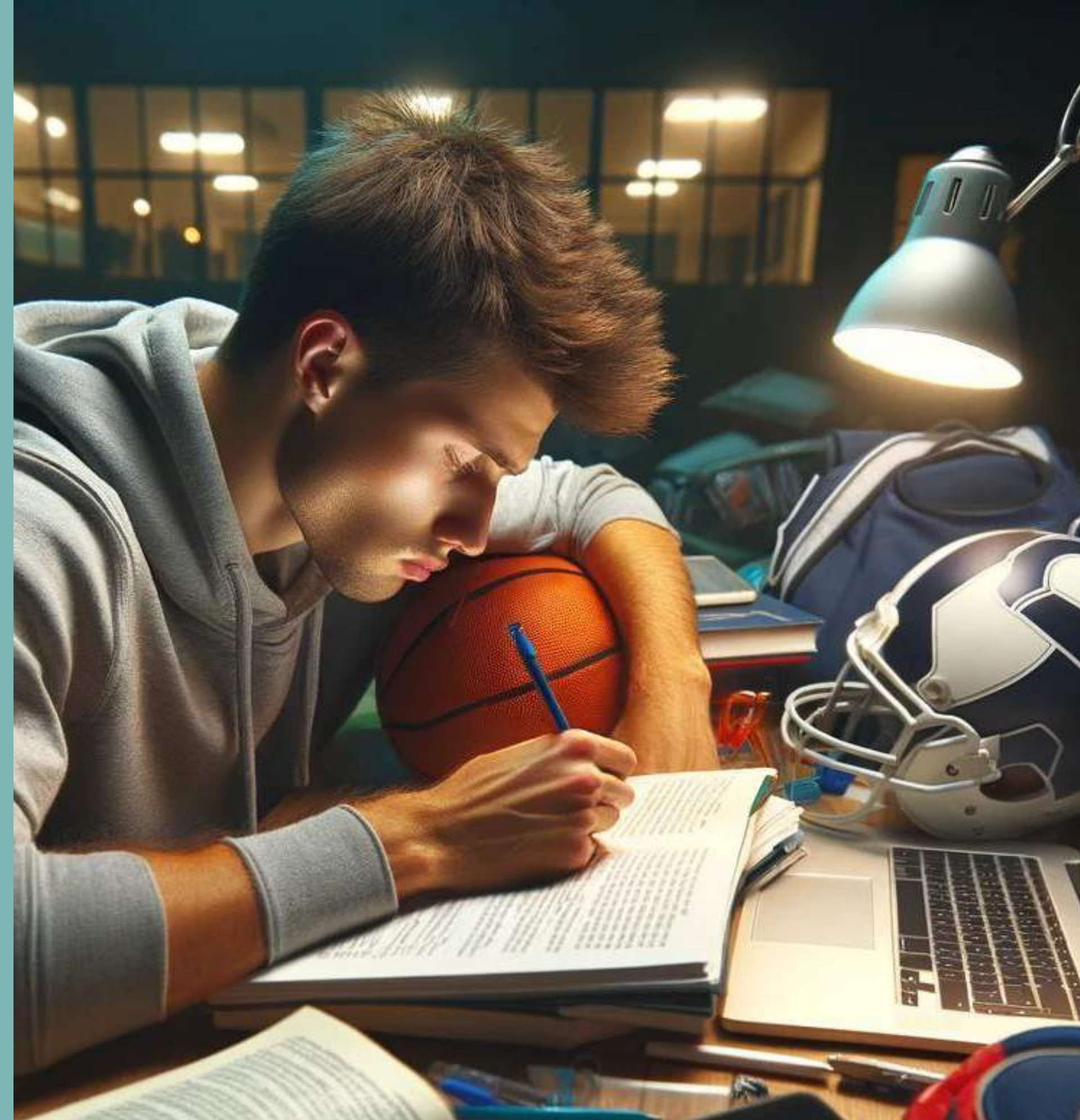
Advancing Athlete Employability through Career Mentorship and Education

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INTRODUCTION

Approximately **120,000 elite athletes** in Europe strive to combine their sports careers with education and employment (European Commission, 2012).

This process should be viewed not only in terms of athletic performance but also through its **educational, psychosocial, and vocational** dimensions (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004).



250.000 EUR

PARTNERS



Malta



Norway



Spain



Sweeden



Poland



Norway



Türkiye

PROBLEM

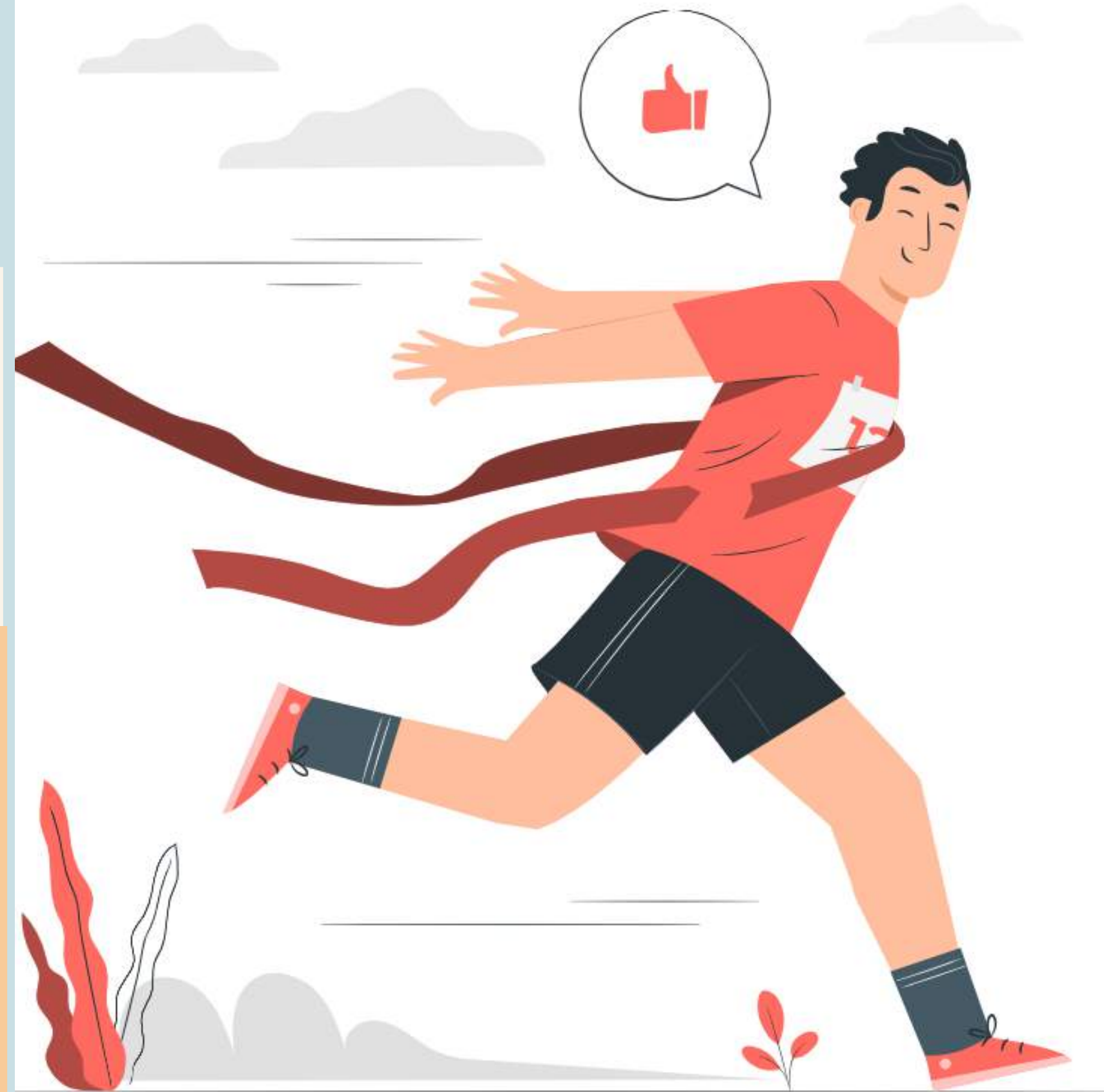
- Athletes mainly rely on **external support** (family, coaches, clubs, institutions).
- Internal coping skills and individual problem-solving abilities are **insufficient**.
- They lack clarity on areas to focus on for **personal development**.
- No comprehensive and systematic **training program** currently exists to address these gaps.



PURPOSE

The DCMENTOR project aims to help athletes build self-reliance by developing problem-solving, career planning, and life skills.” To achieve this, the project has developed

- A training program focused on life and future skills,
- Self-assessment tools,
- A digital mentoring platform.



DESIGN APPROACH

Literature Review

- A review of the literature was first conducted. Within the field of dual careers, athletes' transition processes, individual skill gaps, and support mechanisms were examined.
- The issues highlighted in the literature formed the main foundation of our research.



Coaches – Interviews & Surveys

- Through individual interviews with coaches and administered surveys, **systematic data** were collected on the main challenges faced by athletes.
- This phase revealed, from an **external observation perspective**, the areas in which athletes require support



Athletes – Individual & Group Interviews

- Both individual and focus group interviews were conducted with athletes.
- An analysis of participants' own statements revealed **key themes** such as communication, time management, and career planning



Themes → Subthemes → Modules

- By combining qualitative and quantitative findings, main themes and their subcategories were identified.
- This process revealed not only the current needs but also the areas of development that remain unaddressed.



Integration into DCMENTOR Platform

- The resulting modules were integrated into the **DCMENTOR Online Training Platform**.
- In this way, a comprehensive, applicable, and sustainable curriculum was developed based on literature and field data

DC Mentor

Our course is designed to help athletes successfully balance the growing as well-rounded individuals.

- ✓ **Because Every Athlete Deserves a Future Beyond the Field**
- ✓ **Module 1**
- ✓ **Module 2**
- ✓ **Module 3**
- ✓ **Module 4**
- ✓ **Module 5**

PARTICIPANTS

Interviews

- A total of 35 individual interviews were conducted with 5 elite athletes from each partner.
- Individual interviews with coaches provided a different perspective for evaluating the challenges expressed by athletes



Focus Groups

- The focus group discussions with athletes helped clarify common themes and needs

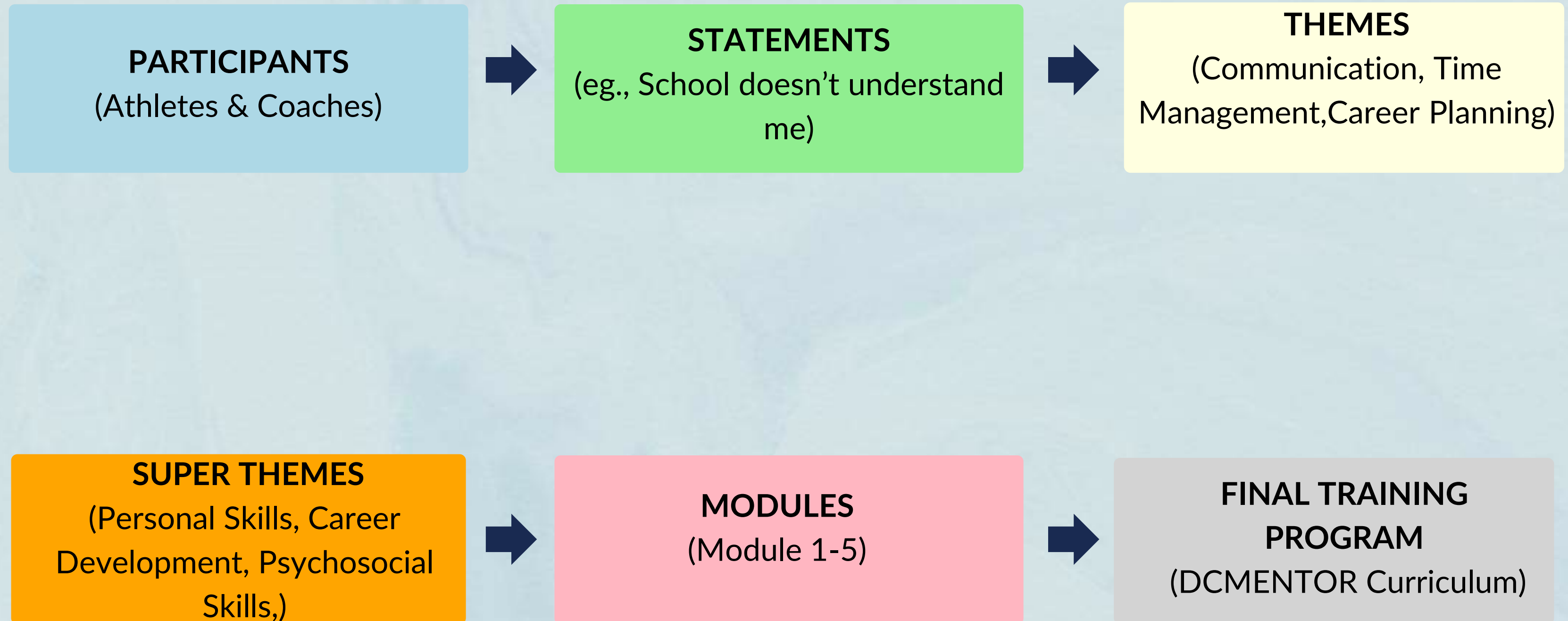


Surveys

- A total of 280 athletes from different countries participated in the surveys, supporting the qualitative findings.
- This data contributed to making the training modules broader and more inclusive.



Recap;



FINDINGS–THEMES

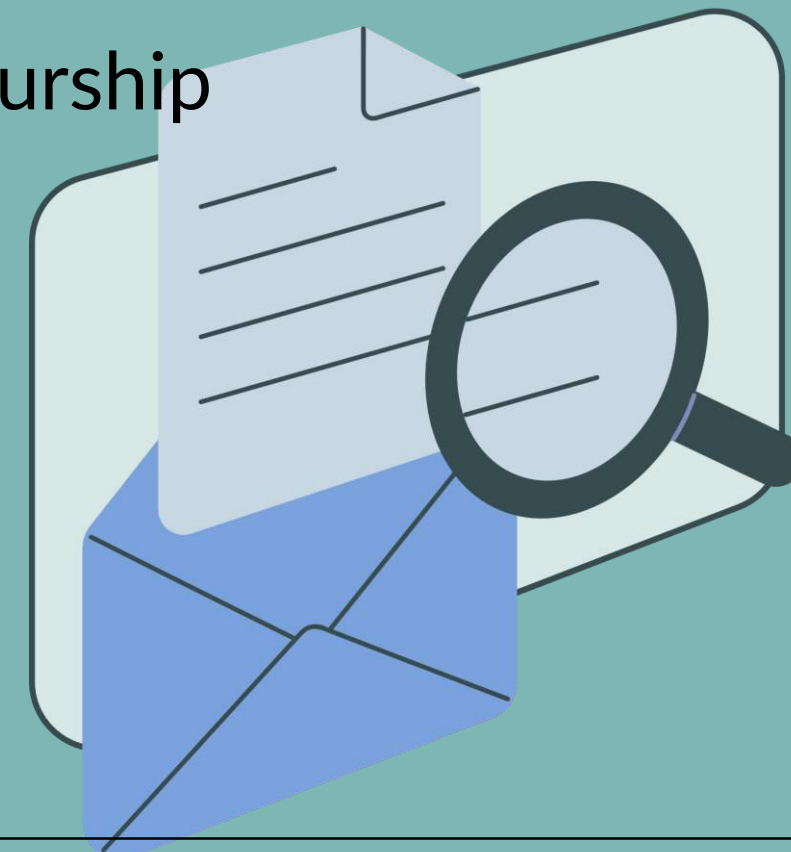
Qualitative Findings (Interviews & Focus Groups)

- Through focus group discussions with athletes and individual interviews with coaches, the **key needs** encountered in the dual career journey were identified.
- Participants' direct statements were transformed into themes:
 - “School doesn't understand me, I have problems with coaches” → Communication skills
 - “I don't have enough time, I feel overwhelmed” → Time management and coping with stress
 - “I don't know what to do after sports” → Career planning and transition support



Grouping of Themes (Super Themes)

- The sub-themes were clustered under broader categories:
 - **Personal Development** → communication, self-awareness, leadership, stress management
 - **Psychosocial Skills** → empathy, cultural awareness, resilience
 - **Career Management** → career planning, employability skills, CV preparation
 - **Life and Future Skills** → digital literacy, financial management, entrepreneurship



Quantitative Findings (Surveys)

- The surveys conducted with 280 athletes revealed the prevalence and priority of these themes. For example:

- 70% of athletes reported concerns about their post-sport careers.
- 65% identified time management as their biggest challenge.
- 60% felt insufficient in financial management skills.

- Thus, the themes derived from qualitative findings were validated by the surveys, and missing areas—particularly financial and digital skills were incorporated into the program.



Module Subjects

Module 1: Introduction to Dual Career Athletes

Module 2: Personal Skills for a Balanced Dual Career

Module 3: Social and Cognitive Skills for a Balanced Dual Career

Module 4: Technical Skills & Foundational Literacies for a Balanced Dual Career

Module 5: Professional Development, Career Planning and Transition to Post Career

Module 1: UCAM

Module 2: IS

Module 3: COLIN

Module 4: NYSA

Module 5: FURIM





DC Mentor

Our course is designed to help athletes successfully balance their academic and athletic careers while growing as well-rounded individuals.

Because Every Athlete Deserves a Future Beyond the Field	1 lectures 22s
Module 1	14 lectures 1h 29m 40s
Module 2	10 lectures 1h 1m 57s
Module 3	24 lectures 1h 58m 10s
Module 4	8 lectures 57m 35s
Module 5	20 lectures 1h 46m 24s



Continue Learning

DCMENTOR

DISCUSSION

Our findings show that athletes rely heavily on external support but lack internal skills such as self-management, communication, and problem-solving.

This pattern **reflects the challenges highlighted in Wylleman & Lavallee's (2004)** developmental model, which emphasizes the multidimensional transitions athletes face, and resonates with Stambulova et al.'s (2009) position stand, where the development of internal coping resources is considered crucial for successful career transitions.



DISCUSSION

Our qualitative and quantitative findings **mirror key issues in the literature** such as time management, communication problems, and post-sport career concerns (Aquilina, 2013; IOC Athlete Career Programme) and are consistent with studies highlighting identity conflicts that hinder academic development (Van Rens et al., 2019).



DISCUSSION

In conclusion, while the literature highlights the need for dual career support, DCMENTOR translates these recommendations into a five-module program that builds athletes' internal capacities to manage their own career transitions

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MODULES

DELIVERABLE NO: D2.1

ADVANCING ATHLETE EMPLOYABILITY
THROUGH CAREER MENTORSHIP AND A
EDUCATION

DCMENTOR – 101132309



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STTR
SPORTSTECH TURKIYE



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CONCLUSION

- The study **revealed that** athletes rely heavily on external support while lacking in the development of internal capacities.
- **To address this need**, the DCMENTOR project developed a comprehensive five-module training program, self-assessment tools, and a digital mentoring platform.
- The program **provides support** in life and future skills, personal development, communication, time management, financial literacy, and career transitions. .
- In this way, the **widely recognized need** for dual career support (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004; Stambulova et al., 2009; Aquilina, 2013) has been translated into a practical curriculum.
- DCMENTOR thus enables athletes to actively manage **their own futures** without relying solely on external systems.

References

1

Aquilina, D. (2013). A study of the relationship between elite athletes' educational development and sporting performance. *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30(4), 374–392.

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European Commission. (2012). *EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes: Recommended policy actions in support of dual careers in high-performance sport*. Publications Office of the European Union.

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Stambulova, N., Alfermann, D., Statler, T., & Côté, J. (2009). ISSP position stand: Career development and transitions of athletes. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 7(4), 395–412. [Aquilina, D. \(2013\). A study of the relationship between elite athletes' educational development and sporting performance. *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30\(4\), 374–392.](#)

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Van Rens, F. E. C. A., Ashley, R. A., & Steele, A. R. (2019). Wellbeing and performance in dual careers: Academic and athletic identities. *The Sport Psychologist*, 33(1), 42–51. <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.2018-0017>

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Wylleman, P., & Lavallee, D. (2004). A developmental perspective on transitions faced by athletes. In M. R. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 507–527). Fitness Information Technology.



THANK YOU