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Self-efficacy and well-being in students of pedagogy and teacher education programmes: The moderating role of passion

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Abstract

Research objectives and problems: The aim of the study is to determine whether passion moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and well-being – in both its eudaimonic and hedonic dimensions – in students of pedagogical and teacher education programmes. The study addresses the following research problem: Does passion moderate the relationship between self-efficacy and eudaimonic and hedonic well-being in students of pedagogical and teacher training programmes, and, if so, in what manner?

Research methods: The data for this analysis were collected using the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and the Self-Reported Passion Scale (SRPS).

Process of argumentation: The article begins by introducing the concepts of self-efficacy, well-being and passion. It then outlines the research methods, followed by an analysis and discussion of the results.

Research results and their impact on the development of educational sciences: The results show that the moderating role of passion in the relationship between self-efficacy and well-being occurs only in the context of hedonic well-being, not for eudaimonic well-being.

Conclusions and recommendations: In light of the obtained data, the systematic reinforcement of self-efficacy among university students should be regarded as key.

Introduction

The period of one's education is a time of gaining new knowledge and skills essential to one's future career, of searching for one's identity, and of determining one's goals in life. It is also a time for facing new situations, learning how to be independent and responsible, establishing new relationships, and developing new interests and passions. In the context of coping, the disposition manifested in self-efficacy becomes an important issue. Self-efficacy is the belief in oneself and one's abilities, which is helpful in achieving success and releases additional energy. It is responsible for human motivation and behaviour, which makes it regulate human pursuits, as the belief in one's capabilities determines the amount of stress an individual is able to cope with, as well as their determination and perseverance in searching for new solutions and achieving their goals (Byra, 2011; Juczyński & Juczyński, 2012; Kwiatkowski, 2020).

University students with high self-efficacy display good adjustment ability, look for help in difficult situations, are less stressed (Landis et al., 2007; von Keyserlingk et al., 2022), make informed decisions related to the choice of their study programme, and draw more satisfaction from studying (Carranza Esteban et al., 2022; Nowak et al., 2018). Consequently, they are more motivated to learn and feel more responsible for their learning process and learning outcomes (Dybiec et al., 2021; Rodek, 2020), which translates into higher academic achievements (Landis et al., 2007; Lin et al., 2022). Moreover, students with high self-efficacy much more often establish interpersonal relations full of trust and warmth, believe they have the higher competencies necessary to achieve their goals (Gabryś, 2023), report higher well-being, and pursue their passions harmoniously (Bochniarz & Olejnik, 2025b). Students who believe they have high self-efficacy also more often engage in health-related activities, are more consistent in caring about themselves, and are more aware of their

role in maintaining their health (Han et al., 2022; Nowak et al., 2018; Reide et al., 2023).

Well-being is also of considerable importance for a young person's personal and social functioning. Psychological concepts of well-being usually stem from two main philosophical concepts: hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Hedonic well-being focuses on pleasure and subjective satisfaction with life. Eudaimonic well-being, on the other hand, centres on the sense of fulfilment that results from the development of human potential and living in harmony with one's own nature; therefore, it emphasizes searching for and pursuing the meaning in life (Karaś & Ciecuch, 2017; Kołodziej-Zaleska & Przybyła-Basista, 2018b; Kossakowska & Zadworna, 2019). Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff (2002) refer to these two approaches as subjective well-being (also called emotional well-being or happiness) and psychological well-being. The former relates to evaluating life in terms of satisfaction and balance between the positive and negative affect, while the latter entails an individual's perception of coping with existential challenges (Keyes et al., 2002). Comparative analyses of subjective well-being based on the hedonic approach and psychological well-being stemming from the eudaimonic approach have shown that a combination of the two is the most rewarding. At the same time, it has been emphasized that these two concepts complement each other, allowing for a more complete description of different aspects of well-being (Ilska & Kołodziej-Zaleska, 2018).

Previous studies conducted on groups of university students found a positive relationship between the respondents' self-efficacy and mental well-being (Bochniarz & Olejnik, 2025b; Gabryś, 2023). Well-being is also positively associated with harmonious engagement in the passions pursued by university students (Bochniarz & Olejnik, 2025b). Access to more extensive material assets, the ability to generate income, physical activity, engagement in an intimate relationship, emotional support experienced in interpersonal relationships, or a higher sense of satisfaction from one's studies are all significant factors contributing to students' enhanced mental well-being (Jach, 2012; Kulawska, 2019; Szepe & Meszaros, 2024). Moreover, students who are motivated to learn are kind to one another and tend to report high mental well-being (Kotera et al., 2022). On the other

hand, highly negative self-evaluations, the constant need for struggle and competition, perfectionism, and high stress or fear before examinations are associated with poorer mental well-being among students (Chang, 2006; Kotera et al., 2022; Słodkowska & Bokszczanin, 2012; Szepe & Meszaros, 2024).

Passion is most often construed as a driving force that gives meaning to life and develops personal interests. It is a self-defining activity in which an individual invests time and which he or she finds important. It results from the willingness to satisfy the needs for independence, competence, and maintaining people-to-people links. Passion makes an individual better prepared to cope with challenges and derive satisfaction from standing up to them, which positively impacts public perception of the individual (Bochniarz & Olejnik, 2025a; Buczak & Łukasik, 2024; Freire et al., 2020; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). However, passion is not always adaptive; sometimes it may transform into compulsion, evoking negative emotions and unnatural perseverance, making it difficult to achieve a balanced and fulfilling life (Curran et al., 2015; Frask, 2020).

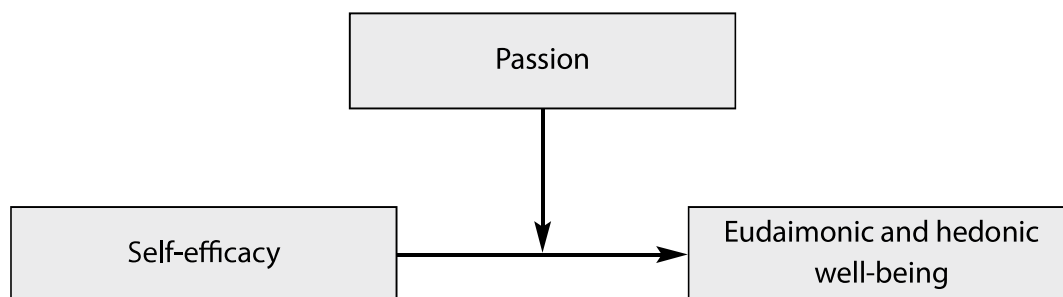
Having a harmonious passion for learning offers numerous advantages: students experience positive emotions and have more fulfilling relationships with their peers and teachers. Moreover, pursuing a passion is linked to students' perception of studying as an interesting and developmental experience, enhancing their inner motivation and engagement, which in turn translates into higher perseverance in the face of learning challenges and better academic achievement (Abdellatif, 2023; Mudło-Głagolska & Larionow, 2023; Zhao et al., 2021; Zinczuk-Zielazna, 2021). Harmonious passion promotes students' higher well-being and enhanced self-efficacy, ego-resiliency, and self-esteem (Abdellatif, 2023; Bochniarz & Olejnik, 2025a; Bochniarz & Olejnik, 2025b; Byra & Zielińska, 2024; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024).

Research problem and aim

The study's aim was to analyze the relationship between self-efficacy and eudaimonic and hedonic well-being in students of pedagogical and teacher education programmes, bearing the moderating role of passion in mind. Therefore, the study addresses the following research problem: Does passion moderate the relationship between self-efficacy and eudaimonic and hedonic well-being in students of pedagogical and teacher training programmes, and, if so, in what manner? Based on theoretical assumptions and previous empirical research, and subsequently verified by the author's own study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: Self-efficacy is positively associated with eudaimonic and hedonic well-being in university students.
- H2: Passion acts as a moderator in the relationship between self-efficacy and eudaimonic and hedonic well-being.

Figure 1. Relationships between study variables



Method and sample characteristics

A diagnostic survey was used to achieve the study's aims and verify its hypotheses. The authors administered questionnaires that included socio-demographic questions and normalized measures: the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and the Self-Reported Passion Scale (SRPS).

The GSES, developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem and translated into Polish and validated by Juczyński, consists of 10 items rated on a four-point scale to measure an individual's general belief in their self-efficacy in coping with difficulties. The measure has satisfactory internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$) (Juczyński, 2000).

The PWBS, developed by Ryff and translated into Polish and validated by Karaś and Ciecuch (2017), measures six aspects of well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. In this study, the short 18-item version was used. The items are rated using a six-point scale. Although individual scales displayed low reliability, the total score ultimately confirmed satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$) (Karaś & Ciecuch, 2017).

The SWLS, developed by Diener and colleagues (1985), was translated into Polish and validated by Juczyński (2001). The instrument consists of five items measuring the respondent's general level of satisfaction on a seven-point Likert scale. This scale measures hedonic well-being and is widely applied in research on subjective well-being. The measure's reliability is satisfactory (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$) (Juczyński, 2001).

The SRPS consists of two parts. In Part 1, respondents list their passions and rate them on a five-point scale. Part 2 consists of nine items encompassing three sub-scales: 'Personal benefits of pursuing a passion' (five items), 'Way in which passion was developed' (two items), and 'Passion-life balance' (two items). These aspects are measured using a five-point scale (Byra et al., 2025). The present study used the SRPS to obtain an overall indicator of passion. Respondents who declared at least one passion and provided ratings in Part 1 of the inventory were classified as "with passion," whereas those who did not identify any passion were classified as "without passion." This operationalization was consistent with the main research question, which examined whether the presence of passion – rather than its specific type – moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and well-being.

Although Vallerand's dualistic model of passion emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between harmonious and obsessive passion, the present study was designed as an initial step to investigate whether passion in general influences the self-efficacy-well-being link among

students. Therefore, the study employed a dichotomous indicator of passion (present/absent); a more fine-grained differentiation between harmonious and obsessive passion was reserved for future research.

The sample consists of students of bachelor's and master's degree programmes who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The study was conducted online in accordance with the ethical standards governing scientific research. In total, the sample consisted of 1,165 students, 779 of whom (66.9%) reported having a passion, while 386 (33.1%) failed to identify any passion in themselves. The vast majority of respondents were female (923, 79.9%). The mean age of the respondents was 23.2 (SD = 4.68). Most respondents lived in a city (740, 63.5%) and were not married (584, 50.1%).

Data analysis

Correlation analyses of the study variables were conducted using SPSS software. To determine the moderating role of passion in the relationship between self-efficacy and eudaimonic and hedonic well-being, moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro (model 1) for SPSS software (4.2 beta).

Results

In the first step, correlation analysis of the study variables was conducted.

Table 1. The relationship between self-efficacy, eudaimonic well-being and hedonic well-being – Pearson's correlation coefficients

Variable	Self-efficacy	Eudaimonic well-being	Hedonic well-being
Self-efficacy	1	0.538**	0.476**
Eudaimonic well-being	0.538**	1	0.473**
Hedonic well-being	0.476**	0.473**	1

** < 0.01

A number of statistically significant relationships can be identified based on the results of the correlation analysis. All correlations were statistically significant. A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.538$) was found between self-efficacy and well-being. This means that students who believe more strongly in their capabilities and ability to cope with adversity report higher well-being. An average positive correlation ($r = 0.476$) was found between self-efficacy and satisfaction with life. This suggests that individuals who more strongly believe in their own competencies are more likely to see their lives as valuable and fulfilling. This points to the importance of self-efficacy not only for task-based functioning but also for the emotional evaluation of well-being. An average positive correlation ($r = 0.473$) was also found between eudaimonic and hedonic well-being. This suggests that students who feel fulfilled in life grow and achieve their goals while also viewing their lives as a whole in positive terms. As found in the literature, this points to the permeation of eudaimonic and hedonic aspects of well-being. All study variables showed positive and statistically significant relationships. The strongest relationship was between self-efficacy and eudaimonic well-being.

In the next stage of the study, the role of passion as a moderator in the relationship between self-efficacy and eudaimonic well-being was examined.

Table 2. Passion as a moderator in the relationship between self-efficacy and eudaimonic well-being

Variables		B	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
Eudaimonic well-being	Constant	56.958	4.707	12.098	0.000	47.7114	66.2046
	Self-efficacy	0.6939	0.161	4.298	0.000	0.3769	1.0109
	Passion	-3.208	3.186	-1.007	0.314	-9.4676	3.0499
	Self-efficacy x Passion	0.066	0.112	0.590	0.555	-0.1547	0.2876
Model: $R^2 = 0.294$; $F(3.570) = 79.20$; $p < 0.001$							

The data presented in Table 2 show that the designed moderation model is statistically significant and accounts for 29.4% of the variance in eudaimonic well-being in the responding students. However, the interaction between self-efficacy and passion is not significant ($p = 0.555$), which means that the relationship between self-efficacy and eudaimonic well-being is not moderated by passion ($R^2 = 0.294$). Further analyses revealed a moderating role of passion in the relationship between self-efficacy and hedonic well-being.

Table 3. Passion as a moderator between self-efficacy and hedonic well-being

Variables		B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Hedonic well-being	Constant	11.28	3.47	3.25	0.001	4.4540	18.0982
	Self-efficacy	0.30	0.12	2.52	0.011	0.0667	0.5347
	Passion	-4.49	2.35	-1.91	0.056	-9.1026	0.1270
	Self-efficacy x Passion	0.1446	0.08	1.74	0.042	0.0185	0.3077
Model: $R^2 = 0.332$; $F(3.569) = 57.36$; $p < 0.001$							

The data presented in Table 3 point to the moderating role of passion in the relationship between self-efficacy and hedonic well-being ($R^2 = 0.332$). The agreed moderation model is statistically significant and accounts for 33.2% of the variance in hedonic well-being in study participants. A positive relationship between self-efficacy and hedonic well-being was found only in students who reported having a passion.

Conclusions

The aim of the study was to determine whether, and, if so, in what manner, passion moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and well-being (eudaimonic or hedonic) in a group of students of pedagogical and teacher training programmes. The results confirmed hypothesis H1,

that is, self-efficacy is positively related to psychological (eudaimonic) well-being and satisfaction with life (hedonic well-being). Hypothesis H2, on the other hand, was only partially confirmed, as the moderating role of passion occurred only in the context of hedonic well-being. The relationship between self-efficacy and satisfaction with life was found to be positive, but only among students who reported having a passion.

In line with Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997), the belief in one's capabilities not only mobilizes one to action but also improves one's resistance to academic and social stressors. The results, therefore, are consistent with previous findings showing that high self-efficacy is associated with lower tension and higher life satisfaction (Byra, 2011; Juczyński & Juczyński, 2012). In the literature on mental well-being, eudaimonic and hedonic well-being are often treated as complementary (Keyes et al., 2002). This approach is also reflected in the study's findings, which confirmed that self-efficacy impacts both the emotional aspect of well-being (satisfaction, emotional balance) and the psychological experience of meaning and personal growth. A strong relationship with eudaimonic well-being suggests that believing in their abilities helps students achieve their goals and overcome obstacles effectively, which translates into a sense of fulfilment and self-realization. At the same time, the moderation analysis revealed that the mere presence of passion does not further moderate this relationship in a statistically significant manner. Although passion may be a motivational resource, in the presented model, it failed to act as a modifier of the impact of self-efficacy on well-being. The mere presence of passion may not be as important as its type (harmonious or obsessive); however, this requires further research and detailed qualitative analysis.

The results regarding the moderating role of passion in the relationship between self-efficacy and well-being showed that it does not occur in the context of eudaimonic well-being, only hedonic well-being. Hedonic well-being, as measured by the SWLS, primarily refers to the balance between positive and negative emotions, as well as subjective pleasure (Keyes et al., 2002). Passion, construed as an engaging activity evoking strong positive feelings, may directly enhance pleasures and optimism; therefore, the moderating effect can be observed in the hedonic

model. In other words, students who have a passion more strongly believe in their abilities and experience more satisfaction than their less engaged peers. Eudaimonic well-being, on the other hand, involves meaning in life, autonomy, personal growth, and life purpose (Ilska & Kołodziej-Zaleska, 2018). These aspects require not only emotional intensity but also a permanent sense of competence, value, and relations with others. Self-efficacy here serves as the key motivational and cognitive resource, irrespective of whether it is accompanied by passion. Consequently, the moderating function of passion “fades away” – the strong belief in one’s abilities is enough to increase one’s sense of fulfilment, whereas passion no longer offers a clinical “bonus”.

In sum, passion enhances pleasure and satisfaction here and now (hedonism), but when we speak about meaning in life and growth (eudaimonia), the belief in one’s abilities is of more importance. High self-efficacy and the feeling that “I can make it” is enough for the sense of fulfilment. The additional factor, i.e., passion, fails to significantly boost this feeling, as the fundamental tenet of eudaimonia is the ability to act efficiently, not to experience pleasure. What is more, Byra and Zielińska (2024) showed that it is not so much the presence of passion that is of importance but the way it matches the individual’s resources and the contextual framework. Students pursuing passions that are strongly focused on personal growth may make better use of their belief in their self-efficacy in achieving goals, which may not necessarily translate into experiencing pleasure or finding fulfilment. The study by Mudło-Głagolska and Larionow (2023) complements this approach by showing that harmonious passion correlates with well-being only when accompanied by social support and adequate environmental conditions; however, these factors were not considered in the moderation model presented in this paper.

In light of the obtained data, the systematic reinforcement of self-efficacy in university students should be regarded as key. This may be achieved by extending the curricula with dedicated training workshops focused on developing the ability to cope with stress and solve problem-based tasks. The curricula should also include models focused on

developing self-reflection skills, as well as on the formulation and verification of one's personal goals and values. An integral part of this support should be a mentoring and academic coaching scheme under which younger students would receive regular personalized feedback from their more experienced peers or lecturers. This approach would not only build relationships of an emotional and substantive nature but also contribute to a factual reinforcement of one's self-efficacy in academic tasks.

Finally, considering the relationships between self-efficacy and health-promoting behaviours, it would be advisable to focus on the close integration of health-promoting education – including health psychology seminars and intellectual wellness workshops – with traditional forms of education. In this manner, one can simultaneously support a sense of control over one's functioning, improve one's physical and mental well-being, and strengthen one's motivation to learn and care for one's health amid daily academic practices. It also seems reasonable to include targeted personal development workshops that combine self-efficacy enhancement with elements supporting the development of passion. These short, cyclically repeated small-group programmes, led by psychologists or career counsellors in cooperation with teaching staff, could focus on realistic goal setting, coping with stress and basic skills training (planning, self-reflection, emotion regulation), which is consistent with the present results indicating the importance of self-efficacy and passion engagement for students' life satisfaction.

However, the ambiguity of the present study's results contrasts with the approach proposed by Vallerand and Paquette (2024), who, in their dualistic model of passion, distinguished between harmonious passion (favouring well-being) and obsessive passion (inducing excessive engagement and stress). The SRPS makes no distinction between harmonious and obsessive passion, which could have masked subtle differences in the impact of passion on eudaimonic and hedonic well-being. Another limitation of the study was its cross-sectional, self-report design; passion and self-efficacy measured at a single point in time may be subject to fluctuations associated with examination-related stress or current learning load (Kotera et al., 2022; Szepe & Meszaros, 2024).

In future studies, scholars should therefore consider a longitudinal design that will allow them to render the dynamics of the impact of passion and self-efficacy on well-being at different stages of semesters or research projects. What is more, the sample consisted solely of students from pedagogical and teacher training programmes. For this reason, the results are not representative of students from different faculties, age groups, professional statuses, or cultural contexts. When designing future studies, researchers should consider contextual variables, such as social support, material assets, and environmental factors (Mudło-Głagolska & Larionow, 2023), which may considerably moderate well-being, self-efficacy, and the role of passion. The above limitations point to the need for further analyses that consider a broader range of variables.

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