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ASSERTIVENESS AND WELL-BEING IN STUDENTS HAVING VS. NOT HAVING A PASSION: THE MODERATING ROLE OF LIFE SATISFACTION*

Introduction: Satisfaction of psychological needs and harmonious integration of passion into one's identity is of key importance for an individual's well-being and development. These issues are particularly significant in the context of the growing mental health challenges faced by young adults.

Research Aim: The aim of the research/study was to examine the relationship between assertiveness, life satisfaction, passion, and mental well-being among university students.

Method: A diagnostic survey delivered in the form of an online questionnaire.

Results: Students pursuing a passionate activity/having a passion displayed higher assertiveness ($M = 4.23$; $SD = 0.54$) and well-being ($M = 5.12$; $SD = 0.47$) than those having no passion (assertiveness: $M = 3.89$; $SD = 0.61$; well-being: $M = 4.76$; $SD = 0.53$). In the passion group, life satisfaction moderated the link between assertiveness and well-being ($B = -0.015$; $p < 0.001$), while this effect was absent in the non-passion group ($B = 0.002$; $p > 0.05$).

Conclusions: The study confirmed the important role of assertiveness as a predictor of student well-being and demonstrated the differentiating function of passion. In the group of students having a passion, life satisfaction moderated the relationship between assertiveness and well-being, while in the group of students with no passion, this effect was not observed.

Keywords: students, passion, assertiveness, life satisfaction, well-being, self-determination theory

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INTRODUCTION

Well-being, which comprises the key aspect of psychological functioning, involves two major approaches: hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Hedonism centres on pleasure and avoidance of pain, defining well-being as high life satisfaction and frequent positive emotions (Lucas et al., 1996). Eudaimonia on the other hand, focuses on personal growth, realization of one's potential, and the sense of purpose in life (Czapiński, 2012; Ryff, 1989). Eudaimonic well-being models include the six-factor model developed by Ryff (1989) including: self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and autonomy. Seligman's PERMA model (2011) outlines five elements of well-being: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement.

Well-being is a dynamic process determined by personal and social factors. Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) indicates that satisfaction of three fundamental needs – autonomy, competence, and relatedness – promotes comprehensive growth and well-being. In the context of SDT, the sense of autonomy, that is control over one's own life and conscious decision-making, enhances intrinsic motivation and enables students to pursue their life goals in a more informed manner. The sense of competence, that is acting effectively, supports academic engagement and professional growth. Relations with others, on the other hand, comprise the key source of support, which is particularly important in the periods of substantial emotional and social changes (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Research on well-being considers subjective and objective aspects of the quality of life. The three-factor model developed by Diener et al. (2002) defines well-being as a combination of life satisfaction, presence of positive affect, and absence of negative emotions. At the same time, the self-determination theory suggests that high quality of life depends on the balance between hedonic enjoyment of pleasures and eudaimonic pursuit of growth and finding purpose in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Academic life involves facing substantial educational demands, developmental changes, and the need to build one's autonomy. It makes well-being a particularly significant protective resource (Sverdlík et al., 2021). Research has emphasized that high well-being promotes enhanced quality of academic functioning and general flourishing of university students (Byra & Zielińska, 2024).

In the context of the self-determination theory, well-being involves satisfaction of the basic psychological needs, which promotes sustainable mental health and emotional stability (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Recent research has shown that student well-being is positively correlated with personal resources, such as mental toughness and resilience, which support their adaptation to facing academic challenges (Byra & Zielińska, 2024). Moreover, students who score higher on the well-being scale present a more favourable mental health profile, higher vitality, and lower academic burnout (Larionow & Gabryś, 2024).



Empirical analyses of the determinants of well-being have shown that it is positively correlated with emotional support, physical activity, and quality of sleep, and negatively with stress and examination-related anxiety (Szepe & Mészáros, 2024). What is more, the phenomenological approach to student well-being shows that it is deteriorated by such factors as the feeling of loneliness, academic pressure, anxiety about uncertainties, financial difficulties, and limited institutional resources (Ozdemir et al., 2024). At the same time, such strategies as effective time management, stress relief techniques, and access to academic and psychosocial support may enhance student well-being and counteract its deterioration (Ozdemir et al., 2024). Considering these findings, well-being may be treated as the central developmental resource during the academic period, conditioning the quality of ongoing functioning and the long-term psychosocial adjustment.

Assertiveness is the ability to express one's needs, opinions, and emotions in a straightforward and downright manner, while respecting the rights of other people. In light of the self-determination theory (SDT), it promotes the realisation of one's need for autonomy, enabling acting in accordance with one's system of values, and enhances the sense of competence through effective functioning in social relations (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus, it comprises an important mechanism that supports mental well-being.

Assertive individuals cope more effectively with interpersonal situations. They also set boundaries and solve conflicts in a constructive manner. They less frequently experience tension resulting from expressive suppression or subordinate to social pressure, which favours higher emotional balance and higher level of positive affect – key components of hedonic well-being (Diener et al., 1985; López-Guerra et al., 2025).

In the population of university students, assertiveness has a special meaning due to substantial developmental and academic challenges. It facilitates communication, management of demands, and building of fulfilling relationships. Research has shown that higher assertiveness is associated with less severe stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression, as well as with higher life satisfaction (Eslami et al., 2016; Tsitsas et al., 2019), and more effective emotional functioning and higher self-efficacy (Prince Samuel & Chandrasekaran, 2018).

Assertiveness may also act as a protective resource in case of deteriorated well-being. It relieves stress and interpersonal conflicts, hence supporting mental health (Pourjali & Zarnaghash, 2010). Further, its level is positively correlated with life satisfaction (Sheinov, 2018). What is more, intervention studies have shown that assertiveness training enhances psychological well-being of university students and reduces their levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Parray & Kumar, 2022), which confirms its significance as a factor that enhances well-being in real terms.

Research on passion, in particular pertaining to the dualistic model of passion developed by Vallerand et al. (2003; 2023) has shown that it may lead to posi-

tive and negative consequences depending on its type – harmonious and obsessive passion. Passion is defined as a strong and permanent inclination toward a self-defining activity an individual finds important and which becomes deeply integrated into an individual's identity (Vallerand, 2008). Harmonious passion develops autonomously; it facilitates integration of the activity into other life areas and supports satisfaction of the basic psychological needs in accordance with the self-determination theory. On the other hand, obsessive passion is based on inner compulsion and it may lead to intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, as well as generate tension and stress.

Numerous studies have shown that harmonious passion is associated with higher engagement, motivation, and more effective/successful academic and professional functioning. It facilitates achievement of better learning outcomes, acquisition of new competences and talent development, as well as building of more enduring social and professional networks (Byra & Zielińska, 2024; Vallerand & Verner-Filion, 2013; Zhao et al., 2021). What is more, individuals who pursue harmonious passion experience higher life satisfaction, enhanced well-being, and higher psychological resilience (Carbonneau et al., 2008). Harmonious passion may therefore act as a psychological resource that enhances perseverance, determination, and ability to cope with difficulties.

The literature has also underlined the fact that passion plays a significant role in the building of identity and supports the development of eudaimonic well-being (Vallerand & Verner-Filion, 2013). Following one's passion promotes experiencing positive emotions, the purpose in life, and integration of personal goals into one's activities. At the same time, the absence of passion may lead to the feeling of a lack of direction and reduced engagement, which potentially diminishes the impact of other personal resources – such as assertiveness – on psychological well-being.

Passion is also an important value in interpersonal relations. Individuals who pursue harmonious passion make better use of their social skills, including assertiveness, in the building of relationships, which promotes higher life satisfaction and general well-being (Vallerand et al., 2003). By following one's passion and through assertive behaviours, supporting autonomy and competence enhances an individual's capability to constructively cope with social and academic situations.

In this research model, passion was included as the grouping variable (students having vs. not having a passion), which allows for a more precise grasping of differences in the relationships between assertiveness, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being. This approach allows to determine to what extent the presence of passion modifies the analysed relationships and whether it provides a context for strengthening the effect of personal resources. Consideration of passion as a differentiating variable increases accuracy in interpreting the results and provides the foundations for designing interventions that would enhance student well-being.



It has been emphasized in the literature that although life satisfaction and psychological well-being are interrelated, they are not conceptually identical. Well-being is a multi-dimensional construct, and it includes both the emotional component (positive and negative affect), as well as eudaimonic dimensions, such as personal growth, sense of purpose in life, and quality of relations with others (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989). Life satisfaction on the other hand, is about the cognitive judgment about one's life made in reference to personal standards and expectations (Diener et al., 1985; López-Guerra et al., 2025). Therefore, it may be treated as a component of subjective well-being, but at the same time as a relatively distinct indicator acting as a psychological resource modifying the relationships between other variables.

In accordance with the self-determination theory (SDT), life satisfaction yields from satisfaction of three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomy involves the sense of agency and acting in accordance with one's system of values, competence refers to efficient fulfilment of tasks, whereas relatedness involves the feeling of belonging and sense of social support. Satisfying these needs promotes hedonic as well as eudaimonic well-being, which arises from self-development and the sense of purpose (Huta & Ryan, 2010).

Life satisfaction can act as a mediator or moderator in the relationships between personal resources and well-being. It strengthens positive outcomes of such resources as assertiveness in coping with difficult interpersonal situations (Pourjali & Zarnaghash, 2010). Individuals more satisfied with their life have been shown to display higher engagement in the pursuit of goals, they cope with challenges more effectively, and experience positive emotions more frequently.

Empirical studies have confirmed a strong relationship between life satisfaction and different dimensions of well-being. Matwiej (2020) showed that in young women satisfaction with professional life is closely related with their psychological well-being, and the lack of work life balance reduces the quality of their life. Keyes (2002) on the other hand, emphasized the importance of social well-being, involving social integration and acceptance as an important component of general well-being. In addition, the study by Luty-Michalak (2023) showed that engagement in life-long learning is linked to higher life satisfaction and well-being. In sum, these results confirm that life satisfaction comprises an important indicator of psychosocial functioning and a significant resource promoting sustained well-being.

The literature review points to consistent relationships between assertiveness, life satisfaction and psychological well-being, in consideration of differences that result from the level of engagement in the pursued passionate activity. Psychological well-being of university students is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, determined both by the personal and social factors, and its significant predictors

involve assertiveness, passion, and life satisfaction. In accordance with the self-determination theory (SDT), all these variables are linked by the mechanism of satisfying the basic psychological needs for: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Assertiveness strengthens autonomy of an individual and provides for a more effective building of relationships, which in turn enhances well-being. Literature has emphasized that passion, especially harmonious passion, boosts intrinsic motivation and personal growth, thus enhancing the sense of purpose in life and mental resilience. In our model, however, passion will be analysed as a grouping variable. Life satisfaction acts as the mediator and moderator, which increases positive impact of assertiveness and passion on well-being, and at the same time forms its key component. Consequently, the adopted theoretical model assumes that the interplay between assertiveness, passion and life satisfaction allows to account for varied levels of student well-being, hence forming a consistent reference framework for further empirical analyses.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIM

The aim of the study is to verify to what extent life satisfaction moderates the relationship between assertiveness and well-being in university students pursuing vs. not pursuing a passionate activity. Inclusion of the SDT model and Vallerand's concept of passion will enable an analysis of these relationships. The literature review has confirmed the links between assertiveness, life satisfaction, passion, and psychological well-being. University students, forming a specific demographic group, must face challenges related to education, social relations, and building their independence, which affects their well-being (Dodd et al., 2021; Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff, 1989; Sagone & De Caroli, 2014).

The self-determination theory (SDT) indicates that the full growth and well-being are achieved by satisfaction of three essential needs. These are autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Assertiveness as an interpersonal skill supports autonomy and competence, which makes it a significant factor affecting well-being.

Life satisfaction, comprising a cognitive appraisal of the quality of life, acts as a moderator in the relationships between psychological resources and well-being (Pourjali & Zarnaghash, 2010). Harmonious passion, in accordance with Vallerand's theory (2008), enhances intrinsic motivation and facilitates satisfaction of psychological needs, which positively affects well-being. Given the above, we have formulated three research hypotheses.

H1: University students who have a passion display higher assertiveness, life satisfaction, and well-being when compared to university students having no passion.

Justification: development of a passion is linked to a stronger sense of purpose, higher engagement in the passionate activity, and higher quality of life (Mudło-Głagolska et al., 2019; Vallerand et al., 2008).

H2: Assertiveness is significantly correlated with psychological well-being in both groups of respondents; however, the strength of this correlation differs between students who have vs. do not have a passion.

Justification: studies have shown that assertiveness facilitates expression of one's needs, effective emotion regulation, and maintenance of fulfilling social relations, which is reflected in enhanced well-being (Jakubowska, 2017; Żechowska, 2020).

H3: Life satisfaction moderates the relationship between assertiveness and psychological well-being in the group of students who have a passion, but not in the group pursuing no passion.

Life satisfaction, construed as a global judgement about the quality of one's own life (Diener et al., 1985; López-Guerra et al., 2025), can change the strength of the relationship between assertiveness and well-being. As a cognitive indicator of general satisfaction, it forms a psychological resource which may reinforce or undermine the significance of other personal traits. Since well-being also includes emotional and eudaimonic components (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989), life satisfaction can modify the impact of assertiveness on well-being, especially in the group of students having a passion, with an additional source of engagement and the purpose of action.

In this study, it was assumed that life satisfaction will not act as a moderator in the group of students who have no passion, as it lacks the additional source of engagement and purpose of action that could enhance the interactions between psychological resources. In the presence of passion, life satisfaction can collaborate with assertiveness in the building of well-being. On the other hand, in the group of students who have no passion, well-being may be more directly dependent on single traits, such as assertiveness, without the interactive effect.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study presented in this paper was performed as part of the activities of the Passion Research Group that operates at the Institute of Pedagogy of the Maria Skłodowska-Curie University in Lublin. It was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were informed about anonymity and aim of the study. Convenience sampling was applied. The sample was composed of university students who pursue programmes in various fields of study. To identify students who have vs. do not have a passion, they were provided with the definition of passion (Vallerand, 2003, as cited in: Mudło-Głagolska et al., 2019), and asked a question: Do you have a passion? yes/no.

The following measures were used in the study:

Kwestionariusz Dobrostanu Psychologicznego (KDP) [*Psychological Well-Being Scale*] by C. Ryff (translated into Polish and validated by Karaś & Ciecuch, 2017) measures eudaimonic well-being (Karaś & Ciecuch, 2017). The abbreviated version consists of 18 items rated on a scale from 1 (“I definitely disagree”) to 6 (“I definitely agree”). The tool measures six dimensions of well-being: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-acceptance. The total score is the sum of all scores – the higher the result, the higher the well-being. Reliability of the sub-scales ranged from 0.71 to 0.89, and Cronbach’s alpha for the total score was 0.81.

Kwestionariusz JA-INNI [*ME-OTHERS Inventory*] (Majewicz, 1998) measures assertiveness construed as a set of interpersonal skills related to the realisation of personal resources, growth, and self-acceptance (Majewicz, 1998). The measure comprises 17 items rated on a scale from 1 (“completely false”) to 5 (“completely true”). The total score points to the level of assertiveness, including expressive, interpersonal and task-based behaviours. The higher the result, the higher the assertiveness. Reliability of the measure (Cronbach’s alpha) for the study group was 0.87.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larson, and Griffin (translated into Polish and validated by Juczyński, 2001) consists of 5 items rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (“I definitely disagree”) to 7 (“I definitely agree”). The tool measures general life satisfaction, and a higher score means higher satisfaction with life. Reliability of the measure (Cronbach’s alpha) for the study group was 0.87.

The sample consisted of 771 university students. The vast majority of respondents were female – 672 (87.2%). 91 (i.e., 11.8%) were male. Mean age of the participants was 23.11 years ($SD = 5.41$). The majority of the respondents lived in a city – 472 persons (61.2%). As regards marital status, 349 individuals (45.3%) reported to be single, 80 individuals (10.4%) – in a non-marital relationship, and 342 people (44.4%) were married. Moreover, 712 individuals (92.3%) did not have children. 423 respondents (54.9%) reported to be unemployed. The participants assessed their financial standing on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “only slightly satisfactory,” and 5 – highly satisfactory, which proved to be average ($M = 3.24$; $SD = 0.97$). The participants were primarily students of social studies – 569 individuals (73.8%) and humanities – 92 individuals (11.9%), primarily pursuing full-time programmes – 670 individuals (86.9%) – offered by UMCS in Lublin (571 persons – 74.1%).

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis began with statistical description of the variables for the two groups of participants (students who have vs. do not have a passion). In the first step,



correlations between assertiveness, well-being, and life satisfaction in both groups were calculated, and correlation coefficients were compared using z test (using the [www.psychometrica](http://www.psychometrica.com) calculator).

The moderation analysis was performed using Preacher & Hayes Model 1, using normal theoretical approach and bootstrap approach, to obtain reliable confidence intervals. The results were regarded as significant at $p < 0.05$ (see Table 2 below).

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 below show that university students who have a passion display significantly higher level of assertiveness than those who do not pursue a passionate activity, which suggests that people who have a passion express their needs and opinions more effectively. Further, their well-being is also significantly higher, which generally reflects their better mental well-being. In this group, life satisfaction was reported to be average, approximating the mean value, which may suggest moderate satisfaction with life in individuals who pursue a passionate activity. Students who have no passion on the other hand, reported a significantly lower satisfaction with life than the group pursuing a passionate activity, which may suggest that passion is a significant factor that affects the general quality of life.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics, summary of correlations in university students who have vs. do not have a passion

	<i>have a passion</i> <i>M (SD)</i>	<i>have no passion</i> <i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i> (769)	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
Means:					
Well-being	76.04 (8.76)	72.59 (9.38)	4.46	0.001	0.39
Life satisfaction	19.64 (6.60)	17.98 (6.94)	2.89	0.004	0.25
assertiveness	65.06 (10.56)	62.13 (10.63)	3.30	0.001	0.28
correlation matrix					
	assertiveness	satisfaction	assertive- ness		satisfaction
Well-being	0.51**	0.40**	0.64**		0.44**
assertiveness	-	0.25**	-		0.33**

Assertiveness/ well-being	-2.33 ($p < 0.05$).
Assertiveness/ life satisfaction	-0.66 ($p > 0.05$).
Life satisfaction/ well-being	-1.01 ($p > 0.05$).

** Correlation significant at $p < 0.01$ (bilaterally).

Source: Author's own materials.

Correlation analyses of well-being and assertiveness showed a significant positive correlation between assertiveness and well-being in both groups of respondents. The correlation was stronger correlation in the group of students who have no passion. This means that higher assertiveness is related to higher well-being, especially in the group of students who have/pursue no passion.

Analyses of the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction showed that in both groups of respondents, life satisfaction was significantly positively correlated with well-being. This suggests that higher satisfaction with life is linked to higher well-being. Z Test, however, found no significant differences in the strength of the correlation between life satisfaction and well-being in both groups of respondents ($z = -1.01, p > 0.05$).

On the other hand, examination of the relationship between assertiveness and life satisfaction showed that in both groups, students who have vs. do not have a passion, there was a significant positive correlation between assertiveness and life satisfaction, which shows that more assertive individuals are also more satisfied with their life. The applied z test found no significant differences in the strength of the correlation between assertiveness and life satisfaction between both groups of respondents ($z = -0.66, p > 0.05$).

Table 2

Assertiveness and well-being in students who have vs. do not have a passion – life satisfaction as a moderator

Variables		B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Group having a passion (N = 582)	Constant	23.811	6.018	3.957	0.000	11.990	35.631
	Assertiveness	0.648	0.081	7.964	0.000	0.488	0.807
	Life satisfaction	1.365	0.271	5.035	0.000	0.832	1.897
	Assertiveness x Life satisfaction	-0.015	0.004	-3.652	0.000	-0.023	-0.007



Model 1: $R^2 = 0.37$; $F(9.572) = 36.92$; $p < 0.001$

Group having no passion (N=189)	Constant	35.989	9.150	3.933	0.000	17.933	54.045
	Assertiveness	0.475	0.123	3.855	0.000	0.232	0.719
	Life satisfaction	0.282	0.441	0.640	0.523	-0.588	1.152
	Assertiveness x Life satisfaction	0.002	0.007	0.225	0.822	-0.012	0.015

Model 1: $R^2 = 0.49$; $F(9.179) = 18.79$; $p < 0.001$

Source: Author's own materials.

Both regression models (analysed separately for students who have vs. do not have a passion) were found to be statistically significant and accounted, respectively, for 37% and 49% of the variance of well-being. However, the moderating effect of life satisfaction was reported/observed only in the group of students pursuing a passionate activity.

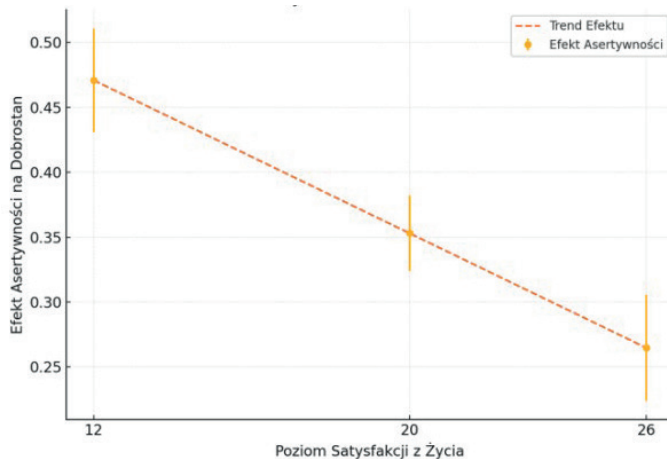
In this group, the interaction between assertiveness and life satisfaction was statistically significant ($B = -0.015$; $p < 0.001$), which means that the strength of the relationship between assertiveness and well-being changed depending on the level of life satisfaction. The higher the life satisfaction, the weaker the impact of assertiveness on well-being.

In the group of students who have no passion, the interaction was insignificant ($B = 0.002$; $p = 0.822$). It reflects the absence of the moderating effect. Assertiveness was a significant predictor of well-being. Its impact, however, failed to depend on the level of life satisfaction.

A further analysis of the relationship between assertiveness and well-being at different levels of life satisfaction showed that assertiveness remains a significant predictor of psychological well-being at all levels of life satisfaction. At the same time, the strength of this relationship diminishes as life satisfaction increases. In case of low life satisfaction, the impact of assertiveness on well-being is the strongest ($B = 0.471$; $SE = 0.040$; $t = 11.784$; $CI_{95\%} [0.392; 0.549]$). In case of average life satisfaction, this relationship remains significant, although weaker ($B = 0.353$; $SE = 0.029$; $t = 12.084$; $CI_{95\%} [0.296; 0.410]$). On the other hand, in case of high life satisfaction, the relationship between assertiveness and well-being is the weakest, although still statistically significant ($B = 0.265$; $SE = 0.041$; $t = 6.495$; $CI_{95\%} [0.185; 0.345]$). This means that life satisfaction weakens the strength of the relationship between assertiveness and well-being in the group of students having a passion.

Figure 1

The moderating role of life satisfaction in the relationship between assertiveness and well-being in university students who have a passion



Source: Author's own materials.

Summing up, H1 was confirmed – university students who pursue a passionate activity scored significantly higher on assertiveness, life satisfaction, and well-being. H2 was partially confirmed – assertiveness was significantly and positively correlated with well-being in both groups. However, the strength of this relationship differed significantly between the groups. H3 was confirmed – life satisfaction moderated the relationship between assertiveness and well-being only in the group of students who pursue a passionate activity.

DISCUSSION

Considering the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), the obtained results confirm the significance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as the fundamental determinants of well-being, and they also show that passion may act as a psychological resource that enhances the efficacy of assertiveness. This interpretation is also supported by Vallerand's (2008) dualistic model of passion, according to which harmonious passion acts as a buffer against negative experiences. Contrary to previous research (e.g. Pourjali & Zarnaghash, 2010; Tsitsas et al., 2019) that pointed to a universal relationship between assertiveness, life satisfaction and well-being, these analyses reveal differences depending on the presence of passion.

The study confirmed that university students who pursue a passionate activity display higher assertiveness, life satisfaction, and well-being than individuals who have no passion. This finding remains consistent with results of previous studies, which have shown that harmonious passion promotes higher engagement, purpose in life, and general flourishing (Byra & Zielińska, 2024; Sverdlík et al., 2022; Vallerand & Verner-Filion, 2013). In view of SDT, passion – harmonious passion in particular – facilitates autonomous internalisation of the passionate activity and thus satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which leads to enhanced well-being (Koestner et al., 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Assertiveness was found to be significantly and positively correlated with well-being in both analysed groups, which confirms earlier empirical findings (Pourjali & Zarnaghash, 2010; Prince Samuel & Chandrasekaran, 2018; Tsitsas et al., 2019). In accordance with SDT, assertiveness may be treated as a behavioural manifestation of autonomy – it enables expression of one's needs and values, and effective functioning in social relationships, thus enhancing the sense of competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). What is interesting, however, is that this relationship was stronger in the group of students who pursued no passionate activity. It may be presumed that in the event of no clear source of purpose and engagement, assertiveness plays a more central regulatory function in maintaining well-being. Considering the research on student well-being (Dodd et al., 2021; Szepe & Mészáros, 2024), interpersonal resources may then play a compensatory role in the face of academic and developmental challenges.

Results related to the moderating role of life satisfaction proved to be particularly significant. In the group of students who have a passion, life satisfaction modified the strength of the relationship between assertiveness and well-being, whereas in the group that pursued no passionate activity, this effect was not observed. As life satisfaction increased, the impact of assertiveness on well-being was reduced, which shows that in case of high global life satisfaction, well-being is relatively stable and less dependent on additional interpersonal resources. On the other hand, in case of low life satisfaction, assertiveness played a stronger protective function. This pattern may be construed as the interplay between psychological resources – life satisfaction as the cognitive appraisal of the quality of functioning (Diener et al., 1985; López-Guerra et al., 2025), may partially compensate shortages of other resources.

According to SDT, life satisfaction reflects the general level of satisfaction of fundamental psychological needs (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the group of students who have a passion, these needs are additionally supported by the independently pursued activity that is integrated into an individual's identity (Vallerand et al., 2003). The interplay between assertiveness and life satisfaction may, therefore, reflect the dynamic synergy of the two regulatory resources in the context of the presence of passion as the integrating factor. However, the lack of

the moderating effect in the group of students with no passion suggests a less complex structure of the relationship – well-being appears to be more directly linked to single traits, without the synergy effect.

Results of this study contribute to the previous knowledge by showing that passion differentiates the mechanisms that regulate student well-being. As much as previous studies have pointed to a general positive relationship between assertiveness, life satisfaction, and well-being (Pourjali & Zarnaghash, 2010; Tsitsas et al., 2019), current analyses have shown that the structure of these relationships depends on the motivational context. In terms of practical implications, this means that undertakings aimed at supporting student mental health should include both the development of interpersonal skills, such as assertiveness (Parray & Kumar, 2022), as well as supporting the development of passion as the source of purpose in life, autonomy, and integration into one's identity (Byra & Zielińska, 2024; Sverdlik et al., 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

The study confirmed the significant role of assertiveness as a predictor of student well-being and revealed the differentiating role of passion. In the group of university students who have a passion, life satisfaction moderated the relationship between assertiveness and well-being, whereas in the group that pursued no passionate activity, this effect was not observed. The results show that passion may act as a psychological resource that modifies the mechanisms which regulate well-being. This means that interventions intended to support student mental health should include growth of assertiveness, as well as enhancement of individual interests and sources of purpose in life.

LIMITATIONS

The use of an on-line survey has been a major limitation of this study. A non-representative sample, which resulted from limited connectivity and respondent self-selection, difficulties with verification of identity of the participants, and lack of control over conditions in which responses were given should be listed here. All of those may reduce reliability and accuracy of obtained data. Consequently, results of studies based on on-line surveys require careful interpretation and consideration of potential sampling errors.

Moreover, studies based on correlation analyses do not provide for identification of cause-and-effect links. Although relationships between assertiveness, life satisfaction, and well-being have been observed, the direction of these relation-

ships cannot be unequivocally determined. Presumably, other non-identified interfering variables may exist and exert impact on these relationships.

The use of self-report measures is an additional limitation. They are likely to produce subjective and biased responses. The participants may make wrong judgments about their levels of assertiveness, life satisfaction, or well-being, and the results may be distorted by their willingness to put themselves in a good light.

The nature of a cross-sectional study is another limitation. Lack of long-term observations prevents the analysis of stability and changes in the relationships between passion, assertiveness, life satisfaction, and well-being over time. A longitudinal study could provide more accurate data about the durability and dynamics of these relationships.

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ASERTYWNOŚĆ A DOBROSTAN U STUDENTÓW Z PASJĄ I BEZ PASJI: MODERACYJNA ROLA SATYSFAKCJI Z ŻYCIA

Wprowadzenie: Zaspokajanie potrzeb psychologicznych oraz harmonijne łączenie pasji z tożsamością jednostki odgrywa kluczową rolę w jej dobrostanie i rozwoju. Kwestie te są szczególnie istotne w kontekście rosnących wyzwań zdrowia psychicznego młodych dorosłych.

Cel badań: Celem badania było sprawdzenie zależności między asertywnością a dobrostanem u studentów z pasją i bez pasji, z uwzględnieniem moderacyjnej roli satysfakcji z życia.

Metoda badań: Metodę stanowił sondaż diagnostyczny z techniką ankiety internetowej.

Wyniki: Studenci z pasją osiągnęli istotnie wyższy poziom asertywności ($M = 4,23$; $SD = 0,54$) i dobrostanu ($M = 5,12$; $SD = 0,47$) niż ci bez pasji (asertywność: $M = 3,89$; $SD = 0,61$; dobrostan: $M = 4,76$; $SD = 0,53$). W grupie z pasją satysfakcja z życia istotnie moderowała relację między asertywnością a dobrostanem psychicznym ($B = -0,015$; $p < 0,001$), podczas gdy w grupie bez pasji efekt moderacji nie był istotny ($B = 0,002$; $p > 0,05$).

Wnioski: Badanie potwierdziło istotną rolę asertywności jako predyktora dobrostanu studentów oraz wykazało różnicującą funkcję pasji. W grupie studentów z pasją satysfakcja z życia moderowała związek między asertywnością a dobrostanem, natomiast w grupie bez pasji taki efekt nie wystąpił.

Słowa kluczowe: studenci, pasja, asertywność, satysfakcja z życia, dobrostan, teoria autodeterminacji