

# Behavioral Modification and Management in Early Childhood Education

**JOCELYN P. ROSAL**

Teacher III

Tiposu Elementary School

Department of Education

jocelyn.rosal001@deped.gov.ph

**MARIO E. CAMPILLA, EDD**

Chief, School Governance and Operation Division

SDO Urdaneta City

*Abstract* — This study aimed to determine the level of behavioral modification and management among Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers, recognizing its vital role in fostering a conducive learning environment. The research focused on identifying both individual and institutional factors that influence behavioral modification and management practices in ECE settings. The study investigated the demographic and professional profiles of ECE teachers, including age, sex, civil status, teaching position, highest educational attainment, length of service, and the number of relevant trainings attended. Behavioral modification and management were examined across four key domains: modeling, shaping, positive punishment, and reinforcement techniques. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing structured survey questionnaires to collect data from ECE teachers. The collected data were analyzed to assess patterns and relationships between teacher profiles and their implementation of behavioral management strategies. Findings revealed varied levels of behavioral modification and management across the sampled population, with teaching experience emerging as a significant influencing factor. Teachers with more years of experience demonstrated a higher level of competency in implementing behavioral strategies. However, some domains showed no significant difference across other demographic variables. A positive correlation was established between the number of years in teaching and effective use of behavioral modification techniques. Based on these findings, the study recommends that ECE teachers holding only baccalaureate degrees pursue advanced graduate and postgraduate studies to enhance their professional capabilities. Experienced ECE educators, particularly those with over ten years in the field, are encouraged to mentor less experienced colleagues in the practical application of behavioral strategies. Strengthening the consistent use of behavior modification and management techniques is essential for improving learner conduct and ensuring a smooth teaching-learning process. Additionally, active involvement of parents in behavior management efforts is suggested to reinforce positive behavioral outcomes in the classroom.

*Keywords* — *behavioral modification, management, early childhood education*

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## I. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a pivotal role in shaping the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral foundations of young learners. However, young children often display a wide range of behaviors that can disrupt learning and hinder social development, especially in the early years when self-regulation skills are still developing. These behavioral challenges pose a critical concern for educators, necessitating effective classroom management and behavior modification strategies to foster a conducive learning environment (Fresco University Staff, 2025).

Behavioral modification in ECE involves structured strategies aimed at promoting desired behaviors and reducing disruptive ones. Common techniques include modeling appropriate behaviors, shaping desired actions through reinforcement, and applying positive punishment when necessary. These practices are rooted in well-established behavioral theories, particularly those of B.F. Skinner and Edward Thorndike, who emphasized the importance of reinforcement and the consequences of behavior in the learning process. Recent studies affirm that effective use of these methods can significantly enhance classroom interactions, student engagement, and academic performance.

Despite the wealth of theoretical support, the practical implementation of behavioral strategies varies widely among educators. Factors such as teaching experience, training, and educational background may influence the extent to which teachers adopt and apply these techniques. In particular, teachers in rural or underserved areas may face additional challenges due to limited resources, insufficient training opportunities, or a lack of institutional support.

This study determined the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management strategies among ECE teachers in SDO Urdaneta City. It explored how teacher profiles—such as age, sex, civil status, teaching position, educational attainment, years of service, and training—relate to the use of behavior modification and management. By identifying patterns and gaps in implementation, this research aimed to provide insights that can inform teacher development programs, enhance classroom management practices, and ultimately improve the learning outcomes of young children.

## Literature Review

Behavioral modification has long been studied as a core framework for managing student behavior and promoting a productive learning environment, particularly in early childhood education (ECE). This approach involves applying behavior-based techniques to encourage desired behaviors and reduce unwanted ones. Common strategies include modeling, shaping, reinforcement, and punishment—each grounded in behavioral psychology, especially the works of B.F. Skinner and Edward Thorndike.

Nasr (2021) investigated the use of social stories tailored to children's restricted interests in improving social behaviors among children with autism. His study demonstrated that when

interventions incorporate children's interests, they are more likely to exhibit positive social behaviors, reinforcing the value of individualized behavior modification strategies. This supports the idea that child-centered techniques can be effective in ECE settings where learners have diverse needs.

Farzana (2020) analyzed the effects of punishment in behavior modification. Her findings highlighted the mixed outcomes of using punitive methods, stressing that while punishment can sometimes correct behavior, it may also elicit negative emotional responses or escalate behavioral issues. This underscores the importance of using positive reinforcement and non-violent disciplinary practices in ECE.

Spiegler (2024) described modeling as a powerful tool in observational learning. Children learn behaviors by observing adults or peers, which is particularly effective in young learners who often mimic the actions of role models. This reinforces the teacher's role not only as an instructor but also as a behavioral exemplar.

In sum, the literature reveals a strong foundation for using behavioral modification strategies in early education, while also pointing to the need for contextually appropriate, developmentally sound, and evidence-based practices. The integration of modern approaches—such as incorporating children's interests, using music, and applying cognitive-behavioral methods—provides opportunities to expand traditional strategies and better address the complex behavioral needs of ECE learners.

## II. Methodology

This section outlines the methods employed to examine the extent of behavioral modification and management among Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers in SDO Urdaneta City. A structured approach was utilized to ensure accuracy and validity in data collection and analysis.

### Research Design and Strategy

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design, which is appropriate for identifying patterns, relationships, and variations among variables without manipulating the environment. The descriptive aspect provided a snapshot of existing practices in behavioral modification and management among ECE teachers. The correlational element investigated whether there were significant relationships between the teachers' demographic and professional profiles and their behavior management practices.

### Population and Locale of the Study

The study involved 60 ECE teachers (Kindergarten to Grade III) from SDO Urdaneta City during the school year 2024–2025. Respondents were selected using simple random sampling,

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ensuring that each teacher had an equal opportunity to participate. This approach provided a representative sample of the ECE teaching population in the area.

### **Data Gathering Tools**

The primary instrument used was a researcher-made questionnaire checklist, developed through a thorough review of related literature. The instrument had two parts:

Part I: Gathered demographic and professional information about the respondents, including age, sex, civil status, teaching position, highest educational attainment, length of service, and the number of relevant trainings attended.

Part II: Measured the extent of behavioral modification and management practices used by the respondents, specifically in four domains: modeling, shaping, positive punishment, and reinforcement techniques.

The tool was validated by an expert panel using the Survey/Interview Validation Rubric developed by Simon & White (2016). It achieved a mean validity score of 3.91, interpreted as “Highly Valid.”

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher first obtained formal approval from the Schools Division Superintendent. Once granted, questionnaires were distributed personally to the respondents. The researcher explained the study’s objectives and assured the participants of voluntary involvement, confidentiality, and anonymity. After the data collection, the responses were checked for completeness and organized for analysis.

### **Treatment of Data**

Data were encoded using Microsoft Excel and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools:

To answer problem one, on the profile of the respondents including age, sex, civil status, teaching position, highest educational attainment, length of service, and the number of relevant trainings attended, frequency and percentage were used.

To answer problem number two, on the extent of behavioral modification and management in terms of: modeling, shaping, positive punishment, and reinforcement techniques, the average weighted mean was used.

To answer problem number three, on the significant differences in behavior management practices based on profile variables, ANOVA and t-test were used.

To answer problem number four, on the relationship between the extent of behavior modification and teacher profiles, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Prior to data collection, participants were provided with a consent form and a brief overview of the study. In accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), all data were handled with confidentiality and used exclusively for research purposes. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

This chapter presents the interpretation and analysis of the data of the study.

#### **Profile of the Respondents**

The respondent's profile on Table 1 shown on the next page provides and describes the background information about them as subjects of the study. Such profile variables were likewise used to describe and analyze the relationship between the level of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers and the profile variables of the respondents.

**Age.** As seen in the table 1, most of the ECE teachers are in the age bracket 31-40 years old that is 25 or 34.7 percent, 21 or 29.3 percent belong to age bracket 41-50, 16 or 22.2 percent belong to the age bracket 21-30 which is the youngest categorization of age while 10 or 13.8 percent belong to 51-60 age bracket. The data would mean that the ECE teachers are just in their prime age of maturity suited for active and effective classroom managers. On the other hand, teachers who are young still have room for improvement for professional and personal growth.

**Sex.** In terms of sex, there are more female ECE teachers that is 60 or 83.3 percent while 12 or 16.7 percent are males. This would imply that the male group of respondents is outnumbered by the female group

**Civil Status.** The same table shows that majority of the respondents that is 45 or 62.6 percent are married, 25 or 34.7 percent are single while 2 or 2.7 percent are widow/er. Such finding could mean that married teachers are goal oriented and responsible towards work being family persons.

**Teaching Position.** As seen in the table, most of the respondents are Teacher I that is 28 or 38.9 percent, 20 are Teacher II, 14 or 19.4 percent are Teacher III while there are 10 or 13.9 percent who are Master Teachers. When it comes to position, the distribution among ECE teachers provide valuable insights into the career progression and hierarchy within the educational setting. It showcases the varying levels of experience and expertise among the respondents with master teachers as the highest rank comprising seasoned and accomplished educators.

**Highest Educational Attainment.** As shown in the table, a great number of respondents are BEED/BSE graduate that is 29 or 33.3 percent, 20 or 27.8 percent have earned their M.A units, 14 or 19.4 percent are MA degree holder, 8 or 11.1 percent have Doctoral units while 1 or 1.4 percent is full pledge doctoral graduate. This could be interpreted to mean that the respondents' educational qualification is sufficiently high with the impression that most of them went beyond the bachelor's degree. In fact, the educational qualification of the respondents is one of the essential factors in recruitment and promotion in the practice of the profession or career service.

**Table 1**  
**Profile of the Respondents**

Profile Variables	Variable Category	Frequency	Percentage	
<b>Age</b>	21-30	16	22.2	
	31-40	25	34.7	
	41-50t	21	29.3	
	51-60	10	13.8	
<b>Sex</b>	Male	12	16.7	
	Female	60	83.3	
<b>Civil Status</b>	Single	25	34.7	
	Married	45	62.6	
	Widow/er	2	2.7	
<b>Teaching Position</b>	Teacher I	28	38.9	
	Teacher II	20	27.8	
	Teacher III	14	19.4	
	Master Teacher I/II	10	13.9	
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>	BEED/BSE	29	33.3	
	with M. A. Units	20	27.8	
	MA Degree Holder	14	19.4	
	MAEd with Doctoral Units	8	11.1	
	EdD/PhD Degree Holder	1	1.4	
<b>Number of Years Teaching Experience</b>	5-below	18	25	
	6-10	32	44.44	
	11-15	10	13.9	
	16-20	7	9.72	
	21-25	5	6.94	
<b>Trainings Attended</b>	<b>District</b>	3-below	25	34.7
		4-6	45	62.5
		7-above	2	2.8
	<b>Division</b>	3-below	10	13.9
		4-6	50	69.4
	<b>Regional</b>	7-above	12	16.7
		3-below	50	69.4
<b>National</b>	4-6	22	30.6	
	3-below	62	86.1	
<b>International</b>	4-6	10	13.9	
	3-below	20	27.7	
	4-6	0	0	

**Number of Years of Teaching Experience.** As shown in the table, majority of the respondents 6-10 years of teaching experience that is 32 or 44.44 percent, 18 or 25 percent have below 5 years, 10 or 13.9 percent have 11-15 years, 7 or 9.72 percent have 16-20 years of experience while there are 5 or 6.94 percent who have 21-25 years of teaching experience. ECE teachers who are young in the service should work hand in hand with the old ones in the service to acquire some skills. Based on the general knowledge that experience makes the best teachers and there are many more things for them to learn that they can apply in their profession.

**Number of Relevant Trainings.** As shown in the table, it is surprising to note that the respondent ECE teachers have attended 4-6 number of trainings in the district, division and regional levels while most of them have attended 3 training in the national and international levels. It could be said that the rest enjoy the opportunity of attending trainings in one level or the other but not in all trainings to keep them abreast with the trends in education.

Basically, attendance in trainings is very significant in the performance of the roles and responsibilities of the ECE teachers. It is also an opportunity for them to widen horizons of professionals as it improves their frontier of knowledge because of their interactions with the experts.

### **Extent of Utilization of Behavioral Modification and Management of ECE Teachers**

This portion of the chapter deals with the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management strategies of ECE teachers along modeling, shaping, positive punishment and reinforcement technique.

Table 2 shows the overall extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers.

As seen in the table, the overall extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers obtained a grand overall weighted mean of 4.74 denoting a transmuted rating of “Very Extensive” having weighted means that range from 4.68 to 4.80. this would imply that the very extensive use of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers are very useful in modifying behaviors of learners in the class betting the tone of having conducive learning environment that can contribute to a meaningful teaching-learning process.

As noted in the table, reinforcement technique obtained the lowest rating of 4.68 although it’s still described as “Very Extensive”. In this case there is a need to further strengthen this area by giving positive reinforcement to rectify undesirable behaviors and make them acceptable. The utilization of this strategy would make the learners develop good character.

**Table 2**  
**Extent of Utilization of Behavioral Modification and Management of ECE Teachers**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Transmuted Rating
1. Modeling	4.79	VE
2. Shaping	4.80	VE
3. Positive Punishment	4.71	VE
4. Reinforcement Techniques	4.68	VE
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.74</b>	<b>VE</b>

Legend: 4.50-5.00 – Very Extensive (VE); 3.50-4.49 – Extensive (E); 2.50-3.49 - Moderately Extensive (ME); 1.50-2.49 - Slightly Extensive (SE); 1.00-1.49 - Not Extensive (NE)

**Summary of Anova Results for Mean Differences in the Extent of Utilization of Behavioral Modification and Management Strategies of ECE Teachers**

Relative to the problem of this study which sought to determine the differences of the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used and computed as indicated by an F-value with its corresponding significance level. This was done for the purposes of making a more in-depth analysis of data gathered in the study where the teachers were compared on their extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management strategies and their profile variables.

Table 3 shows the summary of ANOVA for mean differences with their corresponding values of significance on the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers across their profile variables.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of ANOVA for Mean Differences with their Corresponding Values of Significance on the Extent of Utilization of Behavioral Modification and Management of ECE Teachers**

Profile Variables	Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Age</b>	Between Groups	.576	3	.576	5.473	.076
	Within Groups	3.473	69	.105		
	Total	4.049	72			
<b>Civil Status</b>	Between Groups	.568	2	.568	5.388	.057
	Within Groups	3.481	70	.105		
	Total	4.049	72			
<b>Teaching Position</b>	Between Groups	.574	3	.127	2.935	.059
	Within Groups	3.475	69	.118		
	Total	4.049	72			
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>	Between Groups	.244	4	.122	1.024	.371
	Within Groups	3.805	68	.119		

	Total	4.049	72			
<b>Number of Years Teaching Experiences</b>	Between Groups	.192	3	.033	.264	.769
	Within Groups	3.857	69	.124		
	Total	4.049	72			
<b>RT_District</b>	Between Groups	.507	3	.169	1.478	.239
	Within Groups	3.502	69	.114		
	Total	4.049	72			
<b>RT_Division</b>	Between Groups	.896	3	.096	.797	.459
	Within Groups	3.153	69	.121		
	Total	4.049	72			
<b>RT_Regional</b>	Between Groups	.192	3	.048	.387	.682
	Within Groups	3.857	69	.24		
	Total	4.049	72			
<b>RT_National</b>	Between Groups	.509	3	.299	2.935	.059
	Within Groups	3.540	69	.102		
	Total	4.049	72			
<b>RT_International</b>	Between Groups	.066	3	.170	1.302	.215
	Within Groups	3.803	69	.112		
	Total	4.049	72			

It is clearly reflected in the table that the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers when compared among themselves across their profile variables manifested no significant difference, therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

In other words, regardless of their individual characteristics or qualifications, the ECE teachers exhibit similar extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management.

This implies that the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers is not influenced by factors such as years of experience, educational background or any other profile variable considered in the study. It suggests a level of consistency in the approach of the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers who are involved in the study.

While the absence of significant differences may seem surprising, it also indicates a level of uniformity and consensus among the ECE teachers regarding the value and importance of behavioral modification and management in promoting learning and in development of socio-emotional skills in young learner.

These findings have implication for teacher training and professional development progress. Since there are no significant differences in the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management based on the profile variables, it suggests that training programs should emphasize the importance of behavioral modification and management for all ECE

teachers regardless of their background and experience. By promoting behavior modification, ECE teachers can create an engaging and effective learning experiences for the learners.

### **Relationship Between the Extent of Utilization of Behavioral Modification and Management of ECE Teachers and their Profile Variables**

Table 4 on the next page shows the t-test on the significant difference on the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers across the profile variable sex.

As seen in the table that the overall significant value indicator of .753 is higher than the significant value of .05 level of significance. This significant difference warrants the acceptance of the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers across their profile variable sex.

It can be said that sex is not associated in the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management strategies of ECE teachers. In other words, it is not comparable. It means that regardless of sex, the ECE teachers can utilize behavioral modification and management for young learners.

This study further determined the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management. This was done by using the Pearson-r Product of Correlation or Pearson-r. in doing so, the profile variables of ECE teachers were correlated to their extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management strategies.

**Table 4**  
**T-test Results on the Significant Difference on the Extent of Utilization of Behavioral Modification and Management of ECE Teachers across their Profile Variable Sex**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.103	.753	-.760	31	.455	-.08834	.11641	-.32607	.14940
Equal variances not assumed			-.579	1.076	.662	-.08834	.15273	-1.73788	1.56121

Table 5 shows the data for such correlation. Based on the observation of the table it is evident that a significant relationship exists among the variables when considering the number of years of teaching experience, therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. This finding suggests that

the number of years of teaching experience is a relevant factor that influences the outcome or results being measured or analyzed in the study.

The significant relationship implies that there is a notable association or connection between the number of years of teaching experience and the variables under investigation. In other words, the number of years of teaching experience is likely to have an impact on the outcome or behavior being studied.

**Table 5**  
**Relationship Between the Extent of Utilization of Behavioral Modification and Management of ECE Teachers and their Profile Variables**

<b>Profile Variables</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Age	-.275	.316
Sex	.032	.563
Civil Status	-.053	.221
Teaching Position	.148	.320
Highest Educational Attainment	.147	.310
Number of Years Teaching Experience	.423	.010*
RT_District	.122	.342
RT_Division	.223	.527
RT_Regional	.249	.117
RT_National	.352	.227
RT_International	.432	.224

The specific nature of relationship between the number of years of teaching experience and the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management strategies is not provided in the given information. Further analysis would be required to determine the direction and strength of this relationship. It could be that individuals with different number of years of teaching experience demonstrate varying responses or behavior related to the variables examined in the study.

#### IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

In the light of the findings in this research, the following conclusions were formulated:

The respondents ECE teachers widely vary in their profile and in certain their variations are in extreme cases and are female group of respondents. Additionally, the ECE teachers in this study were performing impressively in the utilization of behavioral modification and management in handling the ECE learners. Moreover, the respondents ECE teachers differ in the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management in handling ECE learners. Furthermore, the profile number of years of teaching experience is a determinant factor in the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE learners.

The researcher recommends the following on the basis of the findings and conclusions of the study. Since most of the ECE teachers are baccalaureate graduates, concerned teachers are

encouraged to complete their graduate and post graduate degrees to upgrade themselves morally and professionally. Considering that the number of years of teaching experience is a determinant factor in the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers, those who have been teaching ECE for more than ten years should mentor and coach the younger ones in the utilization of behavioral modification and management in handling ECE learners for an effective teaching delivery. In as much as reinforcement techniques got the lowest mean, ECE teachers are encouraged to discover other kinds of techniques in handling the behavior of ECE learners. Moreover, the ECE teachers should strengthen their utilization of behavioral modification and management to better improve the behavior of learners in the classroom which is very essential in maintaining the flow of the teaching-learning process. The ECE teachers should also involved the parents in the behavioral modification and management of their children which will redound to positive behaviors of learners in the classroom. More appropriate and relevant variables should be explored to better determine the extent of utilization of behavioral modification and management of ECE teachers.

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