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Research Article

Teaching Motivation and Pedagogical Approaches as Predictors of Lesson Planning Skills Among Early Childhood Education Students

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Abstract
This study examined the relationships and predictive contributions of teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches to lesson planning skills among early childhood education students. A quantitative, non-experimental predictive correlational design was employed involving 100 second- and third-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education students selected through stratified random sampling at a local college in Region XI, Philippines. Data were gathered using adapted self-report questionnaires and were analyzed through descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple linear regression. The results revealed high teaching motivation (M = 4.14), very high engagement with pedagogical approaches (M = 4.50), and very high perceived lesson planning skills (M = 4.48). Teaching motivation had a significant moderate positive relationship with lesson planning skills ($r = .493$, $p < .001$), whereas pedagogical approaches had a significant strong positive relationship ($r = .757$, $p < .001$). The regression model explained 57.8% of the variance in lesson planning skills. Pedagogical approaches significantly predicted lesson planning skills ($\beta = .704$, $p < .001$), while teaching motivation did not make a significant unique contribution ($\beta = .092$, $p = .252$). The findings indicated that pedagogical approaches had greater predictive value than teaching motivation when both variables were considered simultaneously. The study recommended strengthening pedagogical training through guided lesson planning, supervised teaching demonstrations, and structured feedback while continuing to support students' motivation.

Keywords
teaching motivation; pedagogical approaches; lesson planning skills; early childhood education; predictive correlational design

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This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of early childhood education depends partly on the preparation of future teachers to select appropriate pedagogical approaches, sustain motivation toward teaching, and develop effective lesson planning skills. Teaching motivation has been recognized as relevant to teachers' professional engagement and instructional work, with previous studies examining intrinsic and extrinsic factors associated with teachers' work motivation and job satisfaction (Baroudi et al., 2022; Collie, 2023; Uysal, 2023). In early childhood settings, pedagogical decisions also require careful consideration of children's learning experiences, particularly when planning play-based activities and integrating different areas of learning (Fox et al., 2025; Peltomaa et al., 2026). The selection and organization of instructional strategies are important aspects of teacher preparation because pedagogical approaches need to be translated into purposeful learning activities and coherent instructional plans. Previous research on collaborative pedagogy and pedagogical practices further demonstrated the relevance of instructional approaches in teaching and learning processes (Acharya et al., 2024; Ampang, 2023). In this

context, examining how teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches relate to lesson planning skills provides insight into the development of instructional competencies among prospective teachers.

In the Philippine context, previous studies examined pedagogical practices, teaching competence, and lesson planning across different educational settings. Research conducted among teachers in the Davao Region addressed curriculum viability, teaching competence, and effective instruction, highlighting the relevance of instructional competence in regional educational practice (Abendaño et al., 2023). Other Philippine-based studies investigated the use of pedagogical approaches in relation to professional teaching standards and the implementation of the K–12 curriculum (Ampang, 2023; Roallos, 2022). Lesson planning was also examined in relation to the knowledge and preparation of preservice teachers, as well as teachers' instructional performance (Ponce, 2024; Rojo, 2021). Research on teachers' pedagogical competence further considered the planning of teaching and learning processes (Hasriani, 2022), while a study on lesson plan analysis emphasized the value of systematically examining instructional plans (Ndihokubwayo et al., 2022). More recent studies addressed collaborative expertise and instructional skills, as well as factors associated with teaching efficacy among early childhood education teachers (Barrera, 2026; Guinanao & Pabalinas, 2026). Collectively, these studies demonstrated continuing scholarly attention to teaching competence, pedagogical practices, and instructional planning. However, the relationships among these areas required further examination within the specific population of preservice early childhood education students.

Although previous studies addressed teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, instructional competence, and lesson planning, these topics were generally examined through different research concerns and populations. Researchers investigated teachers' motivation and its associated professional outcomes (Baroudi et al., 2022; Collie, 2023; Uysal, 2023), collaborative and other pedagogical practices (Acharya et al., 2024; Ampang, 2023; Roallos, 2022), and lesson planning knowledge, processes, and analysis (Hasriani, 2022; Ndihokubwayo et al., 2022; Ponce, 2024; Rojo, 2021). Other studies explored instructional competence and teaching efficacy in particular educational contexts (Abendaño et al., 2023; Barrera, 2026; Guinanao & Pabalinas, 2026). Nevertheless, an empirical and contextual concern remained regarding the extent to which teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches were associated with and jointly predicted lesson planning skills among early childhood education students. In particular, the relative predictive contributions of these two factors among preservice early childhood educators in a local college in Region XI, Philippines, warranted investigation. Examining these variables within one predictive correlational framework provided an opportunity to determine whether motivational orientation, pedagogical approaches, or both were statistically associated with students' perceived lesson planning skills.

Accordingly, this study aimed to determine the levels of teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, and lesson planning skills among Bachelor of Early Childhood Education students; examine the relationships between teaching motivation and lesson planning skills and between pedagogical approaches and lesson planning skills; and identify the predictive contributions of teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches to lesson planning skills. The study involved 100 second- and third-year students selected from a population of 240 students across six sections at a local college in Region XI, Philippines. Its findings were intended to provide context-specific evidence that could inform teacher education administrators and instructors in strengthening students' pedagogical preparation, lesson planning activities, and instructional development. The study was limited to the participating students and institution, and its reliance on self-reported measures needed to be considered when interpreting the findings. By examining motivational and pedagogical factors together, the study sought to contribute empirical evidence to discussions on the preparation of future early childhood educators and the development of their lesson planning competencies.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental design using a predictive correlational approach. It was grounded in the postpositivist paradigm, which emphasized objective measurement, empirical observation, and statistical analysis in examining relationships among variables. This design was appropriate because the study aimed to determine the levels of teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, and lesson planning skills; examine the relationships among these variables; and identify the extent to which teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches predicted lesson planning skills among early childhood education students. The variables were examined without experimental manipulation. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis were therefore employed to establish statistical relationships and predictive contributions rather than causal effects.

Locale

The study was conducted at a local college in Region XI, Philippines, where the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education program was offered. The institution served as the study setting because the investigation focused on second- and third-year students who had prior exposure to lesson planning and teaching demonstrations. Data collection was conducted over two academic semesters.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved 100 second- and third-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education students selected from a total population of 240 students distributed across six sections. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation from each section. The population was divided into six strata according to section, and respondents were randomly selected from each stratum. Students were included if they were officially enrolled in the second or third year of the program, had prior exposure to lesson planning and teaching demonstrations, and voluntarily agreed to participate. First-year students were excluded because of their limited exposure to these instructional activities. The sampling procedure was intended to provide representation across the participating sections and reduce potential sampling bias.

Instrument

Data were gathered using adapted questionnaires consisting of three instruments that measured the study variables. The teaching motivation questionnaire contained 18 items, the pedagogical approaches questionnaire consisted of 50 items, and the lesson planning skills questionnaire included 36 items. These instruments were used to obtain respondents' assessments of their teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, and lesson planning skills. The questionnaires underwent expert validation to assess the relevance, clarity, and suitability of the items for the intended respondents and study objectives. Pilot testing was also conducted with 30 respondents to examine the clarity and suitability of the instruments before their administration to the main sample.

Validity and Reliability

The instruments underwent expert validation and pilot testing before the actual data collection. Expert validation was conducted to evaluate the appropriateness and clarity of the questionnaire items, while the pilot test involving 30 respondents was intended to assess the instruments' suitability and reliability. These procedures were undertaken to strengthen the quality of the data collection instruments.

Collection

Data collection was conducted over two academic semesters following the necessary institutional permissions and procedures. Permission was first obtained from the College Administration and the Head of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Program. The instruments were subsequently subjected to expert validation and pilot testing with 30 respondents. After the validation and pilot-testing procedures, the questionnaires were administered to the 100 selected second- and third-year students through Google Forms. Before completing the questionnaires, respondents were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw without adverse consequences. Informed consent was secured before participation. The completed responses were collected electronically, checked for completeness, and systematically organized for analysis. The data were subsequently stored in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researchers to maintain confidentiality and protect respondents' information.

Analysis

The collected data were organized, coded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations, were employed to determine the levels of teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, and lesson planning skills among the respondents. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the strength, direction, and statistical significance of the relationships between teaching motivation and lesson planning skills and between pedagogical approaches and lesson planning skills. Multiple linear regression analysis was subsequently performed to determine the individual and combined predictive contributions of teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches to lesson planning skills, which served as the dependent variable. Regression coefficients, significance values, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) were examined to evaluate the predictive model. All inferential statistical analyses were conducted using a 0.05 level of significance. The analyses focused on identifying statistical relationships and predictive contributions and did not establish causal relationships among the variables.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles intended to protect the rights, privacy, and well-being of the respondents. Clearance was obtained from the College Research Office, together with permission from the College Administration and the Head of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Program. Informed consent was secured after the respondents had been informed of the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary participation, confidentiality measures, and right to withdraw without adverse consequences. Participation was conducted without coercion, and respondents' privacy and well-being were respected throughout the process. All collected responses were anonymized, treated confidentially, and used exclusively for academic purposes. Electronic data were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researchers. These procedures were implemented in accordance with the principles of Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Limitations and Rigor

The study had several methodological limitations. First, the participants were limited to 100 second- and third-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education students from one local college in Region XI, Philippines, which may have restricted the generalizability of the findings to other institutions and educational contexts. Second, the use of self-reported questionnaires may have introduced response bias because the respondents assessed their own teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, and lesson planning skills. Third, the non-experimental predictive correlational design established statistical relationships and predictive contributions but did not support causal conclusions. Despite these limitations, methodological rigor was supported through stratified random sampling, expert validation of the instruments, pilot testing involving 30 respondents, standardized data collection procedures, and the application of statistical analyses appropriate to the study objectives. These procedures strengthened the systematic implementation of the study and provided a basis for interpreting the relationships among the investigated variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, and lesson planning skills are important dimensions of the preparation of future early childhood educators. Teaching motivation reflects students' willingness and commitment to pursue the teaching profession, while pedagogical approaches represent the instructional strategies they understand and apply in preparing learning experiences. Lesson planning skills involve the ability to organize instructional objectives, learning activities, competencies, and assessment procedures. Examining these variables provides an understanding of students' perceived readiness to undertake instructional responsibilities. Previous studies have examined teachers' motivation and professional engagement (Baroudi et al., 2022; Collie, 2023; Uysal, 2023), pedagogical practices (Acharya et al., 2024; Ampang, 2023;

Roallos, 2022), and lesson planning competencies (Hasriani, 2022; Ndihokubwayo et al., 2022; Ponce, 2024). Accordingly, the first objective of this study was to determine the levels of teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, and lesson planning skills among early childhood education students.

The findings revealed that teaching motivation among early childhood education students was high (M = 4.14, SD = .519). Intrinsic motivation obtained a higher mean (M = 4.20, SD = .529) than extrinsic motivation (M = 4.09, SD = .564), indicating that respondents reported stronger internal motivation toward teaching than motivation associated with external considerations. This result suggests that personal interest, professional aspirations, and internal commitment were important dimensions of the respondents' motivation to enter the teaching profession. Intrinsic motivation has been examined as an important dimension of professional preparation and engagement among teachers and teacher candidates (Uysal, 2023). Similarly, teachers' work motivation has been associated with perceived leadership practices and professional outcomes (Collie, 2023). The comparatively higher rating for intrinsic motivation may indicate that respondents placed considerable value on the personal and professional fulfillment associated with becoming early childhood educators. These findings suggest that teacher education institutions should sustain students' intrinsic motivation through meaningful teaching experiences, reflective activities, and supportive learning environments that encourage professional commitment.

Extrinsic motivation also received a high rating, although its mean was lower than that of intrinsic motivation. This indicates that external considerations remained relevant to respondents' motivation toward teaching. Such considerations may include career opportunities, professional recognition, and institutional support. Intrinsic and extrinsic factors have been examined in relation to teachers' job satisfaction and professional experiences (Baroudi et al., 2022). Teachers' work motivation has also been examined in relation to perceived leadership practices and professional outcomes (Collie, 2023). The present findings suggest that students' motivation may involve both personal fulfillment and expectations concerning their future professional careers. However, the descriptive results alone do not establish which specific external factors influenced the respondents. Teacher education institutions may therefore strengthen students' professional motivation by providing supportive academic environments, recognizing their achievements, and helping them understand the professional opportunities and responsibilities associated with teaching.

The findings further revealed that pedagogical approaches obtained a very high overall mean (M = 4.50, SD = .424). Integrative learning received the highest rating (M = 4.54, SD = .461), followed by activity-based learning (M = 4.52, SD = .452). Play-based, constructivist, and collaborative approaches also received very high ratings, with means of 4.49, 4.48, and 4.46, respectively. These results indicate that respondents reported favorable perceptions of instructional approaches that emphasize active participation, knowledge construction, collaboration, and the integration of learning experiences. Integrative teaching and learning have been examined in relation to the development of curricula in primary teacher education (Peltomaa et al., 2026). Similarly, planning for play has been discussed as an important consideration in early childhood classrooms (Fox et al., 2025). The high rating for integrative learning may reflect the importance of connecting concepts and learning experiences across developmental areas in early childhood education. These findings suggest that teacher education programs should continue strengthening interdisciplinary instructional design and experiential learning activities to prepare students to develop meaningful and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Play-based, constructivist, and collaborative approaches likewise received very high ratings, indicating that respondents favorably assessed instructional strategies that encourage exploration, active knowledge construction, and social interaction. These approaches are relevant to early childhood education because young learners benefit from opportunities to participate in activities, explore ideas, and interact with others during the learning process. The importance of planning for play in early childhood classrooms has been examined in previous literature (Fox et al., 2025), while collaborative pedagogy has been investigated in relation to teaching and learning practices (Acharya et al., 2024). The utilization of pedagogical approaches has also been examined in relation to the implementation of professional teaching standards (Roallos, 2022). However, the respondents' favorable ratings did not independently demonstrate their ability to implement these approaches effectively in actual classroom situations. Challenges associated with pedagogical approaches and curriculum implementation have also been documented (Ampang, 2023), indicating the importance of considering practical conditions in instructional implementation. Therefore, teacher education institutions should reinforce pedagogical knowledge through supervised teaching demonstrations, collaborative lesson development, and opportunities to apply different instructional strategies in authentic teaching situations.

The findings also indicated that respondents had a very high level of perceived lesson planning skills (M = 4.48, SD = .432). Among the indicators, the process of evaluating a lesson plan received the highest mean (M = 4.52, SD = .462), followed by assessment and assignment (M = 4.51, SD = .487). The purpose of the lesson plan obtained a mean of 4.49, while crafting lesson objectives and identifying the competencies required to write a lesson plan received means of 4.48 and 4.47, respectively. Writing a lesson plan obtained the lowest mean (M = 4.44, SD = .488), although it remained within the very high descriptive category. This result suggests that respondents perceived themselves as relatively more capable of evaluating lesson plans and identifying assessment components than of constructing complete written lesson plans. Effective lesson planning requires the alignment of objectives, competencies, instructional strategies, learning activities, and assessment procedures. Systematic procedures for analyzing lesson plans have been discussed as useful tools for examining instructional planning (Ndihokubwayo et al., 2022), while lesson planning knowledge among preservice teachers has also been examined (Ponce, 2024). Pedagogical competence has likewise been considered in relation to planning teaching and learning processes (Hasriani, 2022). These studies highlight the importance of developing both conceptual understanding and practical planning abilities among future teachers. The comparatively lower rating for writing a lesson plan suggests that students may benefit from repeated opportunities to construct complete instructional plans, receive formative feedback, and revise their outputs using appropriate assessment criteria.

Overall, the descriptive findings indicated that respondents reported high teaching motivation and very high levels of pedagogical approaches and lesson planning skills. Because the variables were measured through self-reported questionnaires, the findings should be interpreted as respondents' assessments rather than direct evidence of actual classroom performance. The results emphasize the importance of sustaining students' motivation while strengthening their practical application of pedagogical knowledge in lesson preparation.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Motivation, Pedagogical Approaches, and Lesson Planning Skills Among Early Childhood Education Students (N = 100)

Variables and Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Teaching Motivation	.519	4.14	High
Intrinsic Motivation	.529	4.20	Very High
Extrinsic Motivation	.564	4.09	High
Pedagogical Approaches	.424	4.50	Very High
Play-Based Approach	.508	4.49	Very High
Constructivist Approach	.463	4.48	Very High
Collaborative Approach	.495	4.46	Very High
Activity-Based Learning	.452	4.52	Very High
Integrative Learning	.461	4.54	Very High
Lesson Planning Skills	.432	4.48	Very High
Purpose of the Lesson Plan	.462	4.49	Very High
Writing a Lesson Plan	.488	4.44	Very High
Crafting Lesson Objectives	.501	4.48	Very High
Competencies Required to Write a Lesson Plan	.455	4.47	Very High
Assessment and Assignment	.487	4.51	Very High
Process of Evaluating a Lesson Plan	.462	4.52	Very High

Note. SD = standard deviation. High = 3.40–4.19; Very High = 4.20–5.00, based on the study's five-point interpretation scale.

Relationship Between Teaching Motivation, Pedagogical Approaches, and Lesson Planning Skills

Teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches may be associated with the development of lesson planning skills because preparing instructional plans requires both commitment to teaching responsibilities and an understanding of appropriate instructional strategies. Students who are motivated toward teaching may demonstrate greater willingness to participate in professional preparation activities, while those with stronger pedagogical knowledge may be better equipped to organize learning objectives, activities, and assessments. Previous studies have examined motivation in relation to professional engagement and teaching-related outcomes (Baroudi et al., 2022; Collie, 2023; Uysal, 2023), as well as the relevance of pedagogical competence to instructional planning (Hasriani, 2022; Roallos, 2022). In this regard, the second objective of the study was to examine the relationships of teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches with lesson planning skills among early childhood education students.

The findings demonstrated that teaching motivation had a statistically significant moderate positive relationship with lesson planning skills ($r = .493$, 95% CI [.328, .629], $p < .001$). Pedagogical approaches also demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship with lesson planning skills, with a stronger correlation ($r = .757$, 95% CI [.658, .830], $p < .001$). These findings indicated that both predictor variables were positively associated with lesson planning skills. Consequently, the null hypotheses concerning the absence of significant relationships were rejected. However, pedagogical approaches exhibited a stronger association with lesson planning skills than teaching motivation.

The significant moderate positive relationship between teaching motivation and lesson planning skills indicated that students who reported stronger motivation toward teaching also tended to report higher lesson planning skills. This finding suggests that motivational orientation may be associated with students' willingness to engage in teaching-related responsibilities, prepare instructional materials, and develop their professional competencies. Intrinsic motivation among teachers and teacher candidates has been examined in relation to professional motivation (Uysal, 2023), while teachers' work motivation has been investigated in relation to professional outcomes (Collie, 2023). Intrinsic and extrinsic factors have also been examined in relation to teachers' job satisfaction (Baroudi et al., 2022). These studies provide relevant perspectives on the role of motivation in professional preparation and engagement. The observed relationship may be explained by the possibility that students with stronger motivation demonstrate greater commitment to activities associated with their future profession, including instructional preparation. Nevertheless, the correlation does not establish that teaching motivation caused improvements in lesson planning skills. It indicates only that the two variables tended to increase together among the respondents. These findings suggest that teacher education programs should continue fostering students' motivation while providing structured opportunities to develop the technical competencies necessary for effective lesson planning.

The findings further revealed a significant strong positive relationship between pedagogical approaches and lesson planning skills. This result indicated that students who reported stronger engagement with or understanding of diverse pedagogical approaches also tended to report higher lesson planning skills. The strength of this relationship suggests that pedagogical knowledge was closely associated with students' perceived ability to prepare instructional plans. Pedagogical competence has been examined in relation to the planning of teaching and learning processes (Hasriani, 2022), while the utilization of pedagogical approaches has been discussed in relation to professional teaching standards (Roallos, 2022). Collaborative pedagogy practices have also been examined in relation to instructional approaches that organize participatory learning experiences (Acharya et al., 2024). In early childhood education, the preparation of play-based and

integrative learning experiences requires the selection of instructional strategies that are appropriate to children's learning needs (Fox et al., 2025; Peltomaa et al., 2026). Students who understand different instructional approaches may be better prepared to organize learning activities, select appropriate strategies, and align instructional procedures with intended learning outcomes. However, the correlation does not establish a causal relationship between pedagogical approaches and lesson planning skills. It demonstrates a strong statistical association between the respondents' assessments of these variables. The findings imply that teacher education institutions should integrate pedagogical instruction with practical lesson planning activities, supervised teaching demonstrations, and systematic feedback.

A comparison of the two correlation coefficients revealed that pedagogical approaches had a stronger relationship with lesson planning skills than teaching motivation. This difference suggests that instructional knowledge and the selection of teaching strategies may have a closer statistical association with the specific tasks involved in lesson preparation than motivational orientation alone. Nevertheless, both variables demonstrated significant positive relationships with lesson planning skills. These findings highlight the importance of addressing motivational and pedagogical dimensions together in preparing future early childhood educators.

Table 2
Relationships of Teaching Motivation and Pedagogical Approaches with Lesson Planning Skills Among Early Childhood Education Students (N = 100)

Predictor Variables	r	95% CI	p	Interpretation
Teaching Motivation	.493	[.328, .629]	< .001	Moderate positive, significant
Pedagogical Approaches	.757	[.658, .830]	< .001	Strong positive, significant

Note. CI = confidence interval. The 95% confidence intervals are approximate estimates derived using Fisher's z transformation. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$.

Predictive Influence of Teaching Motivation and Pedagogical Approaches on Lesson Planning Skills

Teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches may contribute differently to the development of lesson planning skills. Although motivation may encourage students to engage in teaching-related activities, pedagogical knowledge provides the instructional understanding required to organize objectives, select appropriate teaching strategies, and prepare assessment procedures. Previous studies have examined teachers' motivation and professional outcomes (Baroudi et al., 2022; Collie, 2023; Uysal, 2023), while other studies have focused on pedagogical competence and lesson planning knowledge (Hasriani, 2022; Ndihokubwayo et al., 2022; Ponce, 2024). Examining these variables simultaneously may therefore clarify their respective predictive contributions to lesson planning skills. Accordingly, the third objective of the study was to determine whether teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches significantly predicted lesson planning skills among early childhood education students.

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 97) = 66.496$, $p < .001$. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .578$) indicated that teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches collectively accounted for 57.8% of the variance in lesson planning skills. The remaining 42.2% of the variance was not explained by the two predictor variables included in the model and may have been associated with other factors that were not examined in the study. These findings indicated that teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches, when considered simultaneously, significantly predicted respondents' lesson planning skill scores.

Examination of the individual regression coefficients revealed that teaching motivation did not make a statistically significant unique contribution to the model ($B = .077$, $\beta = .092$, $t = 1.151$, $p = .252$, 95% CI [-.056, .210]). Although teaching motivation demonstrated a significant positive bivariate relationship with lesson planning skills, its predictive contribution was not statistically significant after pedagogical approaches were included in the regression model. This distinction indicates that the relationship between teaching motivation and lesson planning skills did not translate into a significant additional contribution when the other predictor was statistically controlled. Intrinsic motivation among teachers and teacher candidates has been examined as an important dimension of professional preparation (Uysal, 2023), while teachers' work motivation has been investigated in relation to professional outcomes (Collie, 2023). These studies provide context for understanding motivation as an important dimension of professional preparation. However, motivation and instructional competence represent different aspects of teacher development. Students may demonstrate strong motivation toward teaching while still requiring additional knowledge and practical experience to prepare effective lesson plans. The nonsignificant unique contribution of teaching motivation therefore does not mean that motivation was unimportant. Rather, it indicates that teaching motivation did not explain a statistically significant additional proportion of lesson planning skills after pedagogical approaches were considered. These findings suggest that motivational development should be complemented by systematic pedagogical instruction, practical lesson preparation, and continuous assessment of students' instructional planning competencies.

In contrast, pedagogical approaches emerged as a statistically significant positive predictor of lesson planning skills ($B = .717$, $\beta = .704$, $t = 8.781$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.554, .880]). The standardized regression coefficient indicated that pedagogical approaches made the stronger unique predictive contribution among the two variables included in the model. This result suggests that students who reported stronger engagement with or understanding of different pedagogical approaches also tended to report higher lesson planning skills, even after teaching motivation was statistically controlled. Pedagogical competence has been examined in relation to planning teaching and learning processes (Hasriani, 2022), while pedagogical approaches have been discussed in relation to professional teaching practice (Roallos, 2022). Collaborative pedagogy practices have also been examined in relation to the organization of participatory learning experiences (Acharya et al., 2024). The importance of selecting appropriate approaches in early childhood education is also reflected in studies addressing play-based planning and integrative teaching and learning (Fox et al., 2025; Peltomaa et al., 2026).

The significant predictive contribution of pedagogical approaches may be explained by their close relationship with the instructional decisions involved in lesson planning. Selecting appropriate pedagogical strategies requires consideration of learning objectives, learners' needs, instructional activities, and assessment procedures. Students who understand different approaches may therefore be better prepared to organize instructional sequences and develop coherent learning experiences. Nevertheless, the present finding represents statistical prediction and does not establish that pedagogical approaches caused improvements in lesson planning skills. Because the study relied on self-reported measures, the result also reflected the association between students' perceptions of their pedagogical approaches and their perceived lesson planning competence. These findings suggest that teacher education institutions should prioritize integrated pedagogical training, guided lesson plan construction, microteaching, and performance-based feedback to strengthen students' instructional planning competencies.

Taken together, the regression findings demonstrated that teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches jointly predicted lesson planning skills, but their individual predictive contributions differed. Pedagogical approaches emerged as the significant predictor, whereas teaching motivation did not make a significant unique contribution when both variables were included in the model. This pattern highlights the importance of combining motivational support with practical pedagogical preparation. Although motivation may encourage students to engage in professional learning activities, the development of lesson planning skills also requires specific instructional knowledge and opportunities to apply that knowledge.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of integrating pedagogical preparation into early childhood teacher education programs. Teacher education institutions may provide structured lesson planning activities across professional education courses, supervised teaching demonstrations, collaborative instructional design tasks, and systematic feedback. Particular attention should be given to actual lesson plan writing, which obtained the lowest mean among the lesson planning indicators despite remaining within the very high category. Students may benefit from repeated opportunities to prepare, present, evaluate, and revise lesson plans using established instructional criteria. These activities may strengthen their ability to align learning objectives, pedagogical approaches, learning activities, and assessment procedures when preparing developmentally appropriate learning experiences for young children.

The findings should also be interpreted in consideration of the study's methodological limitations. The participants consisted of 100 second- and third-year early childhood education students from one local college in Region XI, Philippines, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutions and educational contexts. The use of self-reported questionnaires may have introduced response bias because the respondents assessed their own teaching motivation, pedagogical approaches, and lesson planning skills. Furthermore, the non-experimental predictive correlational design did not permit causal conclusions regarding the relationships among the variables. Despite these limitations, the use of stratified random sampling, expert validation, pilot testing involving 30 respondents, standardized data collection procedures, and appropriate statistical analyses provided a systematic basis for examining the study variables. Future studies may involve participants from multiple institutions, independent evaluations of actual lesson plan outputs, and longitudinal or intervention-based designs to provide further evidence concerning the development of lesson planning competencies among future early childhood educators.

Table 3
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Lesson Planning Skills Among Early Childhood Education Students (N = 100)

Predictor Variables	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	.941	.311	—	3.028	.003	[.324, 1.558]
Teaching Motivation	.077	.067	.092	1.151	.252	[-.056, .210]
Pedagogical Approaches	.717	.082	.704	8.781	< .001	[.554, .880]

Note. Dependent variable = Lesson Planning Skills. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval. Model summary: R = .760, R^2 = .578, F(2, 97) = 66.496, p < .001. The confidence intervals should be verified against the original SPSS output.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study found that early childhood education students demonstrated high teaching motivation and very high engagement with pedagogical approaches and perceived lesson planning skills. Both teaching motivation and pedagogical approaches were positively and significantly associated with lesson planning skills. However, when the two variables were examined simultaneously, only pedagogical approaches made a significant unique contribution to predicting students' perceived lesson planning skills. This finding indicates that although motivation remains an important aspect of preservice teachers' professional preparation, pedagogical knowledge and engagement with varied instructional approaches are more strongly associated with their perceived capacity to plan lessons. The study contributes empirical evidence on the relationships among motivational and pedagogical factors and lesson planning skills in the context of early childhood teacher education. Nevertheless, because the study employed a non-experimental predictive correlational design and self-reported measures, the findings do not establish causality or demonstrate students' actual lesson planning performance.

Based on the findings, teacher education institutions are encouraged to strengthen pedagogical preparation through structured lesson planning workshops, microteaching activities, supervised teaching demonstrations, and mentoring programs. These activities should provide opportunities for students to apply play-based, constructivist, collaborative, activity-based, and integrative approaches in developing developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Particular attention should be given to actual lesson plan writing, which obtained the lowest mean among the lesson planning indicators, through guided instructional design exercises, model lesson plans, performance-based assessments, and systematic feedback from teacher educators. Faculty members should also integrate practical lesson planning tasks across professional education courses while sustaining initiatives that nurture students' intrinsic motivation and commitment to

the teaching profession. Preservice teachers should actively engage in reflective practice and use feedback to improve the alignment of learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment strategies. Future studies should involve participants from multiple teacher education institutions, incorporate objective evaluations of actual lesson plan outputs, and consider longitudinal or intervention-based designs to examine the development of lesson planning competencies over time. These initiatives may strengthen evidence-informed teacher preparation and contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 4 by supporting the preparation of competent early childhood educators.

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