



## A Comparative Study of High Scope, Reggio Emilia & Waldorf Approaches: Providing Guidelines for Training of Pre-primary Teachers in Iran

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 06 June 2022          Revised: 01 July 2022          Accepted: 18 November 2022          Online: 25 February 2023</p> <p>KEY WORDS</p> <p>High Scope Approach          Pre-primary Education          Reggio Emilia Approach          Waldorf Approach</p>	<p>The aim of this research was to compare the approaches of High Scope, Reggio Emilia and Waldorf in order to provide guidelines for the training of pre-primary teachers in Iran. The research method is comparative qualitatively using documentary and Bereday methods for data collection and analysis respectively. The research findings showed that all three educational approaches in cases such as acceptance of sequence and child's developmental tasks; unique role of the coach as a guide and facilitator; following the basics and principles of child psychology; attention to the physical, mental and emotional aspects of the child; and attention to the famous principles and theories of learning are similar to each other. In terms of differences, the "high scope" approach emphasize on components of special needs of the child, dialectical education, technical coach and reverse education; Reggio Emilia's approach highlights multicultural components, technical training situation, implicit values and Waldorf's approach persists the components of curriculum integration, artistic method of imaginative play, classroom with natural materials and trained teachers. The findings of the present research can be a good guide for experts, executives and decision makers in the field of preschool education in Iran to identify and pay attention to the characteristics and elements of an effective educational model for the training of preschool teachers.</p>

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## **1. Introduction**

Language The new era is the era of knowledge and governance of skilled human resources, and for this reason, leading countries pay attention to the training of human capital - as the most influential factor in the growth and productivity of the organization and a valuable asset for creating a competitive advantage - at the forefront of their development plans. Nowadays, maintaining human resources is one of the most important concerns of all organizations. In this regard, the quality of the training system of preschool teachers has been placed at the top of the demands of the policy makers in both national and international evaluations levels (Musapour et al., 2021). In the process of education, the trainer is considered the main and fundamental pillar, and achieving the goals of the education system is not possible without the presence of trainers who have the capabilities and professional competences.

In order for such trainers to be in the country's education system, the process of recruiting, training and employing human resources must be systematic and based on certain and predefined goals. The output of the current preschool teacher training courses in Iran is not only the increase of effort, enthusiasm and curiosity, but also the decrease of creativity and questioning spirit of teachers. In Iran, preschool teachers do not have enough expertise and skills to produce spontaneous and eventful content. The curriculum and training of trainers does not have a special position in the education system (Ansari, López, Manfra, Bleiker, Dinehart, Hartman, & Winsler, 2017). Pre-primary teachers have not yet been recognized as one of the specialized and legitimate occupational identities in the education structure of the country (Larkian, Mehr Mohammadi, Maleki, & Mofidi, 2011).

Iran's teacher training centers have not been able to provide effective training to create sufficient competence in educators so that they can be effective in the development process of children. In Iran, despite the theoretical attention paid to the training of preschool teachers and the wide publicity in spreading the curriculum based on the general and professional skills and competencies of the teachers, in practice, this activity are limited. Research has shown that the current preschool teachers are below average in terms of professional, intellectual and technological qualifications (Fallah, Ahmadi, & Rezazadeh Shiraz, 2015). Meanwhile, the findings of psychology and educational sciences show that the preschool period plays a fundamental and decisive role in the all-round growth and excellence of children. The low quality of education in the primary levels will cause irreparable damage to the educational system, and the weakness of Iranian students in the TIMSS and PIRLS tests with ranks lower than the world average has been the result and consequence of pre-primary education.

Today, the new educational approaches of advanced countries have caused growing changes and developments in the training of preschool teachers in developing countries. Most of the countries of the world have emphasize the importance of children's education and considered pre-school education as strategic, universal and important (Mofidi, 2015). In this regard, some scholars believe that the teacher training curriculum in most countries of the world - due to social and political changes and reforms in the process of life customs - needs to be recreated (Mueller & File, 2020). There are many challenges in the training of pre-primary teachers, such as the gap between theoretical learning and practical skills, and inconsistency in the integration of scientific knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and practical knowledge (Gopinathan, 2008). Among the other basic challenges facing pre-primary curricula are: the lack of skill-oriented program and professional and specialized curriculum programs (Mueller and File, 2020); weakness in basic educational methods (conceptual learning) and adverse impact on higher grades; prescribing non-scientific educational ideas and theories (Hirsch, 2018); and the inefficiency of curriculum governance based on evolutionary theory and general skills. In Iran, the most important challenges of preschool teacher training courses are: Lack of a curriculum with a specialized and formal identity in the organizational structure of education (Mehr Mohammadi, 2018), incompatibility of the programs with the comprehensive needs of children (Talaee, 2018), the curriculum not being aligned with the changes of today's society and lack of a comprehensive model of growth-oriented according to global experiences.

Taking advantage of global experiences and the weakness of the teacher training curriculum in Iran adds to the necessity and eligibility of present research. Therefore, in order to answer the research questions, it is necessary to know the most important features, components, elements, and coordinates of these important models and approaches. Here are the findings of some previous international and national researches: Shapira – Lishchinsky (2020) declares that one of the important components of the professional ethics of teachers is to pay more attention to dimensions such as a suitable interactive spirit and an ideal human relationship with colleagues, families, and children; observance of fairness and confidentiality; participating in educational activities, observing school rules, and establishing a balance between conscience and laws. Costa & Kallick (2019) acknowledged that among the effective factors in the mental development of learners after the family, the teacher is the most important and effective factor. Dozois, Dobson, & Rnic (2019) stated that it is useful for trainers to be familiar with cognitive-behavioral skills, because through these skills, people change their thought and communication with the surrounding world. Ferguson

(2018) stated that local needs, mental health and well-being education, skill development and citizenship rights should be paid attention to in the training of teachers. Akcamete, Kayhan, & Yildirim (2017) emphasize that teachers should have the following characteristics: awareness of professional duties, respect for cultural characteristics and language differences, development of professional competencies, familiarity with psychological sciences, providing suitable conditions for children with special needs, using diverse educational methods, optimal use of information and communication technology, and having a spirit of criticism. Also, these skills have beneficial effects in reducing children's anxiety and strengthen their learning. He considers self-regulation to be one of the ways to achieve this skill. Lobman, Sharon, & McLaughlin (2012) found that preschool teachers need to have full knowledge about child development and different teaching strategies.

In Iran, Khasavarzi, Javadani, & Badakhshan, (2021) found that the personal, social and professional competencies of the mentor can be called "professional competencies of the entrepreneur teacher". Rastagari, Musapour, & Mehni, (2021) showed that the application of internship could be significantly effective in improving the professional training of student-teachers. Hariri (2018) acknowledged that the teacher training curriculum based on creative drama and storytelling will have good moral consequences on children of pre-primary schools. Baboli Behmai , Saadatmand , Yarmohamedian & Barmaki (2017) showed that the most important features of Reggio Emilia's approach in the training of pre-primary teachers is to pay attention to the child's skill development, perform exploratory and project-oriented activities, discovery-oriented activities and creating situations based on beauty, attention to the role of fundamental values and evaluating children's activities through its documentation. Larkian, Mehr Mohammadi, Maleki, & Mofidi, (2011) states that the following four stages should be considered in the training of pre-primary teachers: specialized training / content knowledge; general professional training / general educational knowledge; special professional training with internship and program to enter the teaching profession.

According to the background of national and international research, it can be said that in Iran, in terms of management and training, preschool education has no good condition. While the average rate in one year of pre-primary school in leading countries is above 95%, this rate in Iran is between 68% and 85%, and naturally 75% of children enter primary schools without passing the pre-primary period (Talaee, 2018). Also, there are many weaknesses in the preschool curriculum. The main criticism is the approach of this program, which is the same approach of the busy curriculum that exists in elementary and high schools. In fact, this program fills the teacher's time with different topics and takes the child's joy and happiness from her/him and turns this course

into a school course (Alatalo, & Westlund, 2021) . For example, the first bell is language learning, the second bell is math skills, etc., which are not very desirable and the child still does not know these divisions.

In recent years, there has been a managerial change in Iran's pre-primary education course, in such a way that this academic course has been completely handed over to the Ministry of Education, while during the past few decades, the centers were under the supervision of the Iran Welfare Organization. On the other hand, the model of preschool education in Iran is chair-centered in such a way that more than 70% of the child's time - which should be spent on movement and playing - is spent immobile and in a chair. In terms of space and equipment, preschool centers are weak and their organizational atmosphere is completely school-like, tables and benches are arranged for children. Therefore, you can't expect interaction and movement, and children should sit and wait for assignments, books, and bells (Talaee, 2018). In the "National Curriculum of Iran" document, the curriculum of the pre-primary school period is unknown and lacks identity. Considering the importance and complexity of this educational level, it is necessary that it be recognized as one of the specialized and legitimate identity among the various identities of the national curriculum. In order to achieve this, giving opportunities for the growth of ideas and thoughts and the flow of experts with different trends and opening the field for the emergence and development of different brands of curriculum are important (Larkian, Mehr Mohammadi, Maleki, & Mofidi, 2011). In recent years, to support the curriculum of pre-primary teacher training, an educational package entitled "Children's Education and Learning Guidance" has been designed and compiled (Mofidi, 2018). The authors of this instructional package, referring to religious and scientific sources, have been explained the elements of the child education and learning program - including approaches and logic, goals, standards of performance & content, teaching & learning strategies, family, teacher, manager, real & virtual environments, devices & equipment, time & evaluation-,. Of course, this package has not yet been able to convince the expectations of the scientific community and experts and respond to the needs and expectations of the society. Also, there are deficiencies in the preschool curriculum section of " National Curriculum of Iran Document"; for example, lack of attention to the psychological and developmental requirements of children; failure to attention to values in goals according to religious standards; conceptual ambiguity in many words used in the objectives; ontological foundations, and defects at the level of defining goals - general goal and behavioral goal- ; and the existence of overlap between goals. Since not much research has been done on the teacher training curriculum from the perspective of

comparing High Scope, Reggio Emilia and Waldorf approaches, this research can help the preschool teacher training planners in Iran. The research questions are:

- What are the most important components of "High Scope" approach in training preschool teachers?
- What are the most important components of the "Reggio Emilia" approach in training preschool teachers?
- What are the most important components of the "Waldorf" approach in training preschool teachers?
- What are the similarities and differences between the approaches of "High Scope", Reggio Emilia and Waldorf in the training of preschool teachers?

## 2. Research Method

The purpose of the research was to compare the approaches of High Scope, Reggio Emilia and Waldorf, to provide guidelines to educational planners and preschool teachers in Iran. The data was related to the theories and methods of preschool education using articles, books, theses and reports as well as research projects available at national and international information databases.

## 3. Findings

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- *Description of the "high scope" approach*

As an expert, David P. Weikart focused on the topic of children's education in order to organize his opinions by identifying a pattern of an early childhood education program. After extensive study of the opinions of psychologists such as Erikson, Arnold Lucius Gesell, etc. - who worked in the field of child and developmental psychology, he focused on Piaget's evolutionary theory. In this way, Piaget's theory forms the basis and mental philosophy of Weikart (Holt, 2015). The important aspects of Weikart's view were that it includes qualitative, participatory evaluation, recording observations and cooperation of parents and feedback to decision makers. In Weikart's comments,

it is mentioned the role of the coach and that he should appear as a helper and facilitator in the training process. Regarding the component of educational resources, Weikart emphasized active cooperative learning, regular planning, carrying out activities, checking and reviewing; interactions based on positive thinking and targeted training (Mohammadi, 2018).

- *Interpretation of the "high scope" approach in the training of preschool teachers*

The "High Scope" approach is derived from the cognitive evolutionary theory of Jean Piaget and the educational philosophy of progressivism and emphasizes on active learning in the form of key learning experiences. This approach provides a comprehensive and carefully designed training program. Based on that, it develops creativity, self-confidence and independence in the child. High Scope training program includes the following items: Principles of learning; learning methods and learning environment. High Scope approach also has a number of goals namely: Emotional, social and personal growth; communication, language and literacy; problem solving, reasoning and calculations; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical growth and creative growth (Mohammadi, 2018). A series of key experiences prevail in this approach are: creative representation (drawing, painting, role playing, pretend play, building models); language and literacy (talking about meaningful personal experiences, describing, writing, having fun with language); spontaneous and social communication (making plans, making decisions, solving problems, encountering while playing, expressing feelings, being sensitive to others); movement and music (moving in different ways and with objects, examining the sound of songs, producing songs, understanding and performing various continuous rhythms ); logical reasoning (classification, discovering and describing the similarities, differences and characteristics of objects); comparing, classifying and sorting things based on characteristics; expanding mathematics and arithmetic to know the spatial changes of shapes; experiencing different game spaces and interpreting spatial relationships; knowledge of time ( beginning and end, predicting and describing possible events). The important features of "High Scope" approach for preschool education are:

- **Active cooperative learning:** In this approach, children are involved with direct and first-hand experiences with people, objects, events and thoughts. Children make their plans and choices through working with materials and interacting with other children and adults. **Adult-child interaction:** The teacher designs a safe and secure environment where children can be happy and follow their interests. The coach observes the children's behavior and



interacts with them in order to discover their thoughts and encourage them to perform any learning and spontaneous activities. She/he also encourages children to solve problems using materials, help other children, work together and solve conflicts with each other (Hohmann, Weikart, & Epstein, 2008).

- Learning environment: they are arranged and labeled based on different and clear areas for children; For example, the art section or the home section. Labels are easily understood by children, like painting of a hammer, representative of carpentry or a photo of a brush can represent art. This arrangement allows children to independently find and use the materials they need for their activities. Also, children spend some time outside the preschool center every day to experience all the physical and sensory features (sights, sounds, smells, and textures) of the natural environment (Holt, 2015).
- Daily program: every day a program similar to the events of daily life is implemented by children. This program is predictable for both children and adults. The daily plan gives children the opportunity to decide what they want to do and how to do it, and then share their experiences with other children and adults.
- Measurement: The teacher regularly writes notes about children's behaviors, experiences and interests. Then, based on these notes, it is used to measure the growth of each child. Through these direct and accurate observations, the teacher designs experiences that encourage children's growth and development, and also these notes in meetings with parents help them better understand children's development and generalize learning. It is also used at home to ensure the continuity of the quality of the programs. The teacher regularly evaluates himself and the programs using the "Preschool Program Quality Measurement" tool. Children's works can be done by families at home. For example, the family can provide various learning materials - often at little or no cost - at home. Also, families can encourage their children to make plans, carry them out, and talk about what they have learned from them (Hohmann, Weikart, & Epstein, 2008).

- *Description of Reggio Emilia's views in the training of preschool teachers*

Reggio Emilia's approach is one of the most important global approaches in preschool teacher training. This approach is simultaneously rooted in the constructivist theory of Jean Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and John Dewey. This approach paid a lot of attention to the education and training of early childhood teachers. In Reggio's approach, educators must acquire the science and techniques related to children's growth and upbringing. Proponents of this approach are strongly



against one-dimensionality in education and consider the child as a “whole” that has many dimensions. Based on this, in preschool education and upbringing, all aspects of the child's growth and development (physical, spiritual, cognitive, emotional-social), learning, revision and rethinking should be paid equal attention to instead of raising a one-dimensional child. Therefore, “the whole existence of the child” should be nurtured (Edwards, Gandini, & Nimmo, 2015). Reggio Emilia's approach emphasizes that the child's teacher should not be a prisoner of certain things, but her/his educational programs are formative, progressive, and immediate, in such a way that the program are flexible and appropriate to her/his comprehensive interests and opinions- in the form of a project -. In this approach, project-based educational programs play a fundamental role. A project is gradually formed through the formation of small groups. The project is actually a purposeful research that is done through the interaction of the teacher, the child and the surrounding environment. In this approach, the learner combines her/his knowledge and skills with others, which leads to the acquisition of more skills and more effective group learning. Proponents of this approach focus on the role of human management in the pre-primary centers. They have emphasized that the planners of the teacher training system should provide the basis for scientific and professional advancement by attracting and continuously training human resources. Based on new scientific findings, educational planners should use new educational methods - such as workshops, projects, and the provision of tools, equipment and software suitable for the teacher and the student - in order to monitor, improve and modify the education process.

One of the distinctive features of Malaguzzi training programs is special attention to the development of emotional art and the implementation of artistic programs in order to better understand children and their feelings. In Reggio's approach, teachers, staff, and fathers and mothers are among the most important assets of the education system. In the training of a coach with the Reggio approach, all the items that are necessary for the developmental-educational dimensions of children can be learned and transferred to the child. This approach is based on a thought-oriented curriculum and emphasizes the production and strengthening of all expressive, communicative and cognitive languages. The main basis of this approach is to pay attention to the child - as a competent and active learner - who constantly builds and tests theories about herself/himself and the world. In this approach, each child should produces her/his own personal meaning. She/he does this through the support of peers and adults - when they recognize her/his merits. Therefore, Reggio Emilia's approach in the process of raising children emphasizes communication and real listening to children. Also, this approach emphasizes on relationships and

communication, individual and interpersonal concepts and core concepts of pedagogy. In this approach, the focus is on the role of the environment - as a supporter of communication between the three elements of the teacher, parent and child. Reggio Emilia's approach emphasizes the central role of experiences to understand children's understanding (words, gestures, discussion, pretending, movement, drawing, painting, structures, sculpture, shadow play, drama and music).

In this approach, the integration of different languages is used as a tool for cognitive, linguistic and social development. Changing from one language to another and two-way interaction enables children to produce and consolidate concepts and conceptual maps. Another feature of Reggio Emilia's approach is to pay attention to learning for the sake of learning - through experience and experimentation with the help of content and forms; Learning to communicate with others - through different languages, learning through reacting to others and to oneself - and paying attention to the learner's identity, values, communication and competencies. Reggio Emilia's approach emphasizes the constructive role of the educational environment and refers to it as a teacher of children. The dynamism and effectiveness of the learning environment depends to a large extent on the role of the teachers. The approach of Reggio Emilia is rooted in the opinions and thoughts of "John Dewey" and "Vygotsky". These two emphasize that children grow individually through experiences and re-creation as well as through social interactions. In Reggio Emilia's approach, the teacher uses the documentation method - as an important and fundamental process - to record educational programs and activities. Documenting is actually recording various activities performed by children in different stages. With documentation, children's learning becomes visible to themselves, their teachers, and their parents. Since in this approach, there is no belief in "examination, grade, leveling and scoring", it is natural that teachers try to use different stages of work, examples and evidence for the growing process of each child's work - or groups of children. - to collect. The variety of documentation in these educational centers is so wide that sometimes they dedicate a major part of the time of the trainers - or a group of trainers - to this task. In Reggio Emilia's approach, attention to professional trainers is a priority. Creative and innovative educators who have a collaborative spirit and can share their skills and experiences with other educators.

- *Interpretation of Reggio Emilia's approach in early childhood education*

Reggio Emilia's approach in raising a child's teacher emphasizes the role of learning and teaching multiple languages because eloquent and catchy language plays an important role in expressing thoughts and feelings and even transferring cultural heritage (Hirsch, 2018). Learning

the language can be useful in solving the challenges of the later life period - especially the primary period. Language learning problems during early childhood will cause irreparable damage to children, so that it can have a negative impact on the social dimension - communicating with others in today's changing world. According to the opinions of educational thinkers, we find that language learning is effective in producing and strengthening children's expression, communication and cognition. Also, Reggio Emilia's approach emphasizes the role of the curriculum based on thinking and reasoning in the teacher training process. In this regard, the role of the teacher is important in designing and implementing a logical framework for thinking and reflecting on the curriculum and learning of children (Fleer, 2010). In addition, according to the approach of Reggio Emilia, the teacher must have sufficient knowledge and awareness of the values and norms of the society and pay attention to the linguistic, cultural, local and global identities in the education process (Edwards, Gandini, & Nimmo, 2015). Proponents of this approach encourage educators to get to know and acquire basic skills regarding the superior models and approaches of child education. Gaining experience and revising previous experiences leads to better learning. Experience is the foundation of thought development.

According to the supporters of the Reggio Emilia approach, the experience-oriented curriculum provides the means for children's cognitive, social and physical development and helps them to develop their self-confidence and create a positive mental image of themselves. The learning process and training of child educators emphasize the observation and judgment components of documentation, handiwork, and performance history (Holt 2015). Also, this approach emphasizes "relationship-based training" which focuses on the nature of each child's relationship with others and seeks to activate and strengthen mutual relationships between child , families, educators, and society. According to Malaguzzi our goal is to create a friendly and peaceful school; a school that is active, creative, lively, documented, acceptable and welcoming. Our goal is to create a school that is a place for research, learning, review and rethinking and contemplation (Edwards, Gandini, & Nimmo, 2015). The activity of learning and the way of organizing educational programs, from Malaguzzi's point of view, the realization of educational growth, diverse and different, art and aesthetics, language learning, social studies, math, science, etc., is integrated. Educators following the Reggio Emilia approach should be familiar with all kinds of children's play - especially imaginative games - because these games are referred to as "forms of expression". In the schools of Reggio Emilia, children are allowed to immerse themselves in play without interruption to develop their imagination. Another component of Reggio Emilia's approach is to pay attention to the role of the learning environment. The educational situation is

referred to as the "third teacher" and therefore the learning situation should be creative-oriented, selective, attractive, motivating, research-oriented, individualistic and safe (Qasim Tabar, 2017). The coach should play the role of skilled coordinator and an active participant, a source of inspiration and guidance for children through careful listening, observation/documentation and reflection with others. The teacher provides a stimulating environment full of opportunities to invite children to explore and solve problems. The teacher tries to discover the child's needs - through the child's language - and organizes new activities based on these needs. Another very serious topic in the process of training a teacher is the place of assessment and evaluation. From the point of view of the Reggio Emilia approach, the use of traditional evaluations has no place in preschool education centers and the main emphasis should be on real and authentic assessment. Real assessment requires the creation of those assessment tasks that are as similar as possible to situations outside the classroom, and the learner acts to perform them based on information and skills acquired during the learning process.

- *Description of Waldorf's point of view in the training process of preschool teachers*

Rudolf Steiner was one of the first thinkers who had an impact on the education of preschool teachers. He was the founder of the Waldorf school in Germany, while his views made growing changes in the preschool period of most countries in the world. One of the main reasons for welcoming Waldorf's approach was emphasizing the role of re-training and exchange of experience between educators and teachers. The educational philosophy of the Waldorf curriculum is based on anthroposophy, which comes from the Greek root "anthropo-sophia" or human wisdom. Anthroposophy is a philosophical thought based on the principle that humans can join the immaterial flow of the world through a dream-like consciousness. In other words, anthroposophy is a human philosophy that talks about the fundamental and deep spiritual needs of man and her/his free communication with the world, and deals with the taste and artistic needs of man. This philosophy, which has its roots in the idealistic philosophy of Aristotle, Plato and Thomas Aquinas, was developed more than anyone else by Rudolf Steiner at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The concept of freedom is the central core of anthroposophical philosophy. The curriculum of this philosophy focuses on individualism, discipline, living education and the development of creativity and initiative. Steiner's focus in child education is on discovering and becoming more familiar with the body and the arrangement of organs and the use of the senses, creative and constructive games, oral language and speech - not written - as well as stories, songs and hymns. Steiner believes that despite having a material body,

man is the bearer of a sublime soul, and her/his inner being is full of nobility and originality, and she/he has inner guidance. According to Steiner, it is important to attention to the child's physical and biological aspects before paying attention to the child's spiritual development in the pre-primary school (Burchinal, 2018).

Also, the coach should have skills such as reasoning, listening well, seeing well, touching well, accuracy and a research attitude (Holt, 2015). Steiner emphasizes on the relationship and interaction of teachers with families and their active role in organizing and performing social events and activities, workshops, crafts and festivals. He also believes that a educator should be able to turn education into art; art that addresses the whole existence of the child (Steiner, 2004). From Steiner's point of view, the child education curriculum is based on the use of music, games, theater, writing, literature, legends and myths. Teachers should cultivate the field of learning in children by gaining deep experience of these arts and with enthusiasm. Stanir emphasizes the irreplaceable role of the teacher and believes that the teachers should be the designers of the curriculum. He considers the child as the real curriculum and says that the curriculum should be based on the needs of the child.

However, the ideal of taking creative risks and responding to the child's needs is at odds with the accountability and transparency requirements of contemporary education. The teacher's task is to create a kind of balance between these two requirements through the conscious selection and implementation of methods that address the obvious and hidden values of each lesson or learning context. This paradox is not unique to Waldorf schools, but to any educational approach, especially when a standardized curriculum is imposed. The basic philosophy of Steiner is rooted in the principles and foundations of Gestalt. This curriculum pays attention to the whole existence of the child; considers children to be different with special education for each child. Another component in Waldorf approach is attention to the role of evaluation. In this approach, evaluation is mostly in the form of providing continuous feedback to the child and is not done in a traditional way with specific tests. On the other hand, descriptive information about the status and participation of children in class, the amount and type of activities, as well as their progress, is provided to parents. The collection is delivered to the parents or sent to their home.

- *Interpretation of Waldorf's approach in teacher pre-primary education*

Rudolf Steiner was born on February 27, 1861 in Kralovice (Austro-Hungarian Empire, present-day Croatia). He had an extraordinary talent. In 1879, he began studying mathematics and natural sciences at the University of Vienna and took courses in literature, philosophy, and history.

In 1891, he received a PhD degree in philosophy - defended his thesis on epistemology- which was published as his first book, "Truth and Science" in 1892. Rudolf Steiner was asked to devise an educational method that would focus on human healing: "It is necessary to achieve an educational system that will rescue us from the vortex of social chaos in which we are caught. The only solution to this problem is to introduce spirituality into the human soul through education" (Steiner, 2004). His main point of view was the complete education of children so that it can lead to the unity and harmony of thoughts, feelings and desires and cause a balanced human development. Steiner related these three aspects of the soul - thought, feeling and desires - to the physical parts of the body, so that thought is related to the head and the nervous system, feeling to the heart and lungs, and desires to the organs and metabolic system of the body.

Therefore, the education of heads, hearts and hands is the name by which the Waldorf educational method is sometimes called. In other words, although Steiner's cognitive theory - like Piaget - is based on biological science, it also emphasizes the connection between body and mind. The main feature of teacher training curriculum from Rudolph Stanier's point of view is serious attention to "living curriculum" which is affected by various political, economic, social and cultural aspects of the society. Another prominent component of the education of a child's teacher from Stanir's point of view is to pay attention to the authority of the teacher. He believes that teachers should be the designers of the curriculum and at the same time consider the child as a "real curriculum" and act according to her/his needs.

### *Juxtaposition and comparison*

Table 1. Components and characteristics of the views of different approach in training of pre-primary teacher

Approaches	Components
High Scope	A supportive environment for children, monitoring children's behavior, trusting children, valuing children's play, teaching children original and basic skills, playing the role of method (designing, doing, reviewing), playing the role of facilitator, transformational theory, valuing children's independence, attention to children's key experiences, attention to children's individual needs, emphasizing the key role of the teacher, observing children's behavior, attention to children's right to choose, positive feedback to children's behavior, parents' participation, use of question & answer method, acceptance of the child's right to make mistakes, creating a safe and peaceful environment for the child, use of active teaching/learning methods, attention to the principles and basics of learning, evaluation of learning progress.

Reggio Emilia	Child-centered, language learning, blended learning, learning basic skills, thinking and imagination by the child, forming small work groups, imaginative games, using models and symbols, emphasizing the participation of parents and teachers and children in projects and activities, attention to the developing curriculum, creativity through art, emphasis on the classroom environment as a reflection of the community, emphasis on nurturing a professional and creative teacher, taking advantage of the skill-oriented position, emphasis on cultural heritage, observation and documentation, authentic and real evaluation, child's social development, creativity, child's interaction experiences with the environment, intellectual skills, children's needs and abilities, emphasizing the use of methods open and democratic, attention to children's rights, art and emotional development, exploratory method, documenting activities, teacher learning, presenting a unique image of the child,
Waldorf	Attention to the spiritual development of the child, emphasizing individualism and elitism, attention to the rules of all kinds of games, experience-centered, attention to complementary and extracurricular activities, humanistic approach, emphasizing teaching hidden and implicit values, emphasizing human values and dignity, thinking skills, valuing children's dreaming and fantasizing, research activities, attention to children's creative and constructive games, emphasis on artistic and aesthetic education, incidental and improvisational curriculum, myths, self-evaluation, observation and documentation, emphasis on private and individual education, attention to types of thinking (soul, thought and feeling), comprehensiveness and holistic view, authority of the teacher, attractive and modern environment, painting, drawing, modeling and handicrafts, singing and singing hymns, interaction between the family and the teacher and the center, providing continuous feedback to children.

Table 2. Comparison of the components of child teacher training according to Weikart, Malaguzzi and Steiner

Most important extracted components	Weikart	Malaguzzi	Steiner
Knowing the developmental-educational dimensions of the child	❖	❖	❖
Emphasis on the comprehensive development of the child	❖	❖	❖
Teacher's familiarity with the philosophy and psychology of the child	❖	❖	❖
Growth based teaching and learning	❖	❖	❖
Teacher's familiarity with the rules of purposeful and skill-oriented games	❖	❖	❖
Emphasis on a decentralized program tailored to the needs of learners	❖	❖	❖
Emphasis on the use of active learning	❖	❖	❖
Emphasis on the use of problem solving methods	❖	❖	❖
Teacher's familiarity with multiple languages (expressive, communicative and cognitive)	-	❖	-



Teacher's familiarity and ability to use integrated teaching methods	❖	❖	❖
Less emphasis on memory-centricity	❖	❖	❖
Attention to the education of children with special conditions	❖	-	-
Emphasis on the use of dialectical education	❖	-	-
Emphasis on the multicultural nature of curriculum	-	❖	❖
Emphasis on strengthening child's physical and mental abilities	❖	❖	❖
Emphasis on the acquisition of internship skills and the ability to use them	❖	❖	❖
Attention to individualism and elitism and individual education	-	-	❖
Emphasis on the use of project-based curriculum	❖	❖	❖
Emphasis on the use of professional and skill-oriented educational position	-	❖	❖
Emphasis on comprehensive development of the child	❖	❖	❖
Attention to complementary and extracurricular activities	-	-	❖
Getting to know implicit and hidden values	-	❖	❖
Attention to values and norms and learning competencies	❖	❖	❖
Attention to the role of myths and legends	-	-	❖
Attention to self-evaluation and evaluation based on observation and documentation	❖	❖	❖
Hiring a creative and professional coach	❖	❖	-
More attention to imaginative games and dreaming and daydreaming of the child in learning	-	❖	❖
Functional and observational evaluation	❖	❖	❖
Transformational and up-to-date approach, implementation of workshops and festivals	❖	❖	❖
Comprehensiveness and holistic view in child education	❖	❖	❖
Observational measurement	❖	❖	❖
Attention to aspects of thought (spirit, thought and feeling)	-	-	❖
Emphasis on improvised curriculum	-	-	❖
Attention to subcultures and negation of the rule of the dominant culture	-	-	❖
Emphasis on continuous, formative and functional evaluation	❖	❖	❖
A holistic approach in education	-	-	❖
Attention to reverse teaching and repetition of topics	❖	-	-

- *Similarities in the views of Weikart, Malaguzzi and Steiner*

Based on the data listed in Table 2, in all above perspectives, teachers should pay attention to the all-round development of the child. These three scientists believe that teachers should be able to nurture children's physical, emotional, moral, social, religious, cognitive, and psychological dimensions. In all three perspectives, the familiarity of teachers with general philosophy and psychology has been emphasized. Also, these great educators emphasize on decentralized curriculum with native-local content and based on the needs of learners and society. In addition, all three scholars emphasize the importance of local and formal languages, culture, and values, as well as the cultivation of ethical teachers with the ability to establish emotional and human relationships. All three viewpoints pay attention to the training of inquisitive, patient and thoughtful teachers and encourage them to learn and apply diverse and multiple (integrated) teaching/learning methods.

- *Difference between Scope, Reggio Emilia and Waldorf approaches*

High Scope approach have emphasized familiarization and acquisition of knowledge and the commitment of preschool teachers to learning dialectic-oriented teaching methods and reverse teaching and repetition of topics for better learning and serious attention to the targeted education of vulnerable and underprivileged children. While in the approaches of Reggio Emilia and Waldorf, these components were not given much attention. Proponents of the Reggio Emilia approach emphasize language learning from expressive, communicative, and cognitive dimensions and believe that teachers should not be one-dimensional in language learning and teaching. Waldorf's approach in educating preschool teachers has focused its main attention on components such as individualism and elitism, private education, complementary activities, hiring a creative and professional teacher, while supporters of High Scope and Reggio Emilia approaches do not pay attention to these components directly. Also, the approach of Reggio Emilia and Waldorf emphasize the creation of technical and skill-oriented educational situations for the child, in such a way that the supporters of the Reggio Emilia approach refer to educational situations as "third teacher". Weikart, the founder of High Scope approaches believed that learning should have aesthetic, attractive and artistic aspects and provide children with comprehensive support. Based on this, Reggio Emilia's approach emphasizes the employment of creative, technical and professional teachers, but this issue is not seen in High Scope and Waldorf's views. From the perspective of High Scope approach, the teaching method is dialectical and discussion-oriented, while in Waldorf's

perspective, teacher should be used workshop and laboratory for teaching , and in Reggio Emilia, it is project-oriented. In Reggio Emilia and Waldorf's point of view, children's imaginative games, dreaming and daydreaming are highly valued in the learning process.

Reggio Emilia's programs provide a comprehensive education that integrates theory with practice – through exposing the child to projects and experiential learning. This component is not directly mentioned in Reggio and High Scope's view. All three views emphasize the importance of assessment and evaluation in the teaching/learning process, although there are differences between them in terms of form. High Scope approach considers functional and observational methods in the process of measuring children's activity and is against memorizing parrot-like material by them. Reggio Emilia and Waldorf's approach emphasizes continuous, formative and cumulative evaluation and documentation. Also, High Scope's views are largely influenced by cognitive-evolutionary theory and the educational philosophy of progressivism, and for this reason, it emphasizes on active learning - in the form of key learning experiences - and seeks to develop the basic skills and abilities of children. The underlying philosophy of Reggio Emilia's approach is rooted in John Dewey's theory, who believed that children learn through experiences and constantly recreate these experiences. Also, this approach pays attention to Vygotsky's concept of the zone or adjacent zone of growth. According to this concept, social interactions provide the context for individual development, while Waldorf's approach is rooted in the theories of cognitivists - especially Piaget - which are based on biological science.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The This research aimed to provide answers to questions about the identification of the components and characteristics of pre-primary teacher training in Iran by examining three important approaches in the world that have a great impact on the education of teachers. In response to the first question of the research, the most important features of the preschool teacher training curriculum included the following components: attention to the all-round development of children; flexibility and ability to perform in a decentralized manner; creative representation of language and literacy; attention to the role of communication; attention to the role of movement, play and music; teaching the concepts of classification and counting; applying key experiences along with observing the child's behavior; attention to the individual needs of children; familiarizing the teacher with educational design methods; and familiarizing with various questioning styles. This finding is in line with the research results of Marzooqi, Turkzadeh, Jabari, & Nowrozi, (2018). In response to the second question of the research, the most important features of

preschool teacher training in terms of three selected perspectives are: attention to cultural and social development of children; the application of project-based curriculum; using the discovery approach; focusing on documenting the activities of the teacher and the child; and language learning. This finding is consistent with the research results of Burchinal, (2018) and Baboli Behmai , Saadatmand , Yarmohamedian & Barmaki (2017). The third finding of the research shows the similarity of all three approaches in paying attention to the following components in the education of preschool children: valuing cognitive development through strengthening imagination and creative thinking; valuing social, emotional and aesthetic development; using tactile, visual arts , music and rhythmic movements; emphasis on the role of self-evaluation, scientific management and expert trainers; giving importance to the child's imagination and mental activities according to the theories of Vygotsky, Piaget and Bruner. This finding is consistent with the findings of Costa, & Kallick, (2019) and Fallah, Ahmadi, & Rezazadeh Shiraz, (2015).

In response to the fourth question of the research, in terms of similarities between three approaches, it can be concluded that all these approaches are similar in the following components: Emphasis on preschool teachers' attention to the child's growth sequence; unique role of the teacher as a reference, guide and facilitator for the child; valuing the basics and principles of child psychology methods and famous principles and theories of learning; and attention to the physical, mental and emotional aspects of the child. In the deep examination of each approach, differences of opinion were also observed. For example, in the "high scope" approach, special needs and dialectical education, and professional teacher; in Reggio Emilia's approach, multicultural components, skill-oriented situation and implicit values, and in Waldorf's approach, integration of subjects, emphasis on the use of artistic methods of imaginative games, and classrooms with natural materials, are emphasized. Considering the lack of regular and scientific educational planning, the incompleteness of the organized content of child education programs and the lack of a single organization for accepting responsibility for preschool teacher training programs in Iran, the results of present research can be used by curriculum planners to design and develop a comprehensive model of pre-primary teacher education.

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