



**REGGIO EMILIA EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS APPLICATION
IN SOME PRESCHOOLS IN HANOI CITY**

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Abstract:

The educational environment is an important condition for the development of children. The educational environment contributes to the cultural identity and the philosophy of the educator creating that environment. Currently, in the world there are many different educational perspectives, with their characteristics, creating a rich and diverse early education with its own identity, Reggio Emilia is a typical example. Based on theoretical and practical research methods (quantitative combined with qualitative), the article presents the viewpoint, educational philosophy, characteristics of the Reggio Emilia educational environment, and the actual situation of applying the Reggio perspective. at some preschools in Hanoi today. Research results show that building an educational environment according to Reggio Emilia will help children to be confident, have a balanced and harmonious development between cognition and emotions, and feelings. However, the application of this concept in preschools in Hanoi is still not good, depending on many factors.



MÔI TRƯỜNG GIÁO DỤC REGGIO EMILIA VÀ THỰC TRẠNG ÁP DỤNG TẠI MỘT SỐ TRƯỜNG MẦM NON TRÊN ĐỊA BÀN THÀNH PHỐ HÀ NỘI

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Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
Ngày nhận bài: 10/9/2022	Môi trường giáo dục là điều kiện quan trọng đối với sự phát triển của trẻ. Môi trường giáo dục góp phần tạo nên bản sắc văn hóa và triết lý của nhà giáo dục tạo ra môi trường đó. Hiện nay trên thế giới có rất nhiều các quan điểm giáo dục khác nhau, mang các đặc trưng riêng, tạo nên một nền giáo dục sớm phong phú đa dạng và mang bản sắc riêng, Reggio Emilia là một ví dụ điển hình. Dựa trên phương pháp nghiên cứu lý luận và thực tiễn (định lượng kết hợp định tính), bài viết đưa ra quan điểm, triết lý giáo dục, các đặc trưng của môi trường giáo dục Reggio Emilia và thực trạng áp dụng quan điểm Reggio Emilia tại một số trường mầm non trên địa bàn thành phố Hà Nội hiện nay. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy, xây dựng môi trường giáo dục theo Reggio Emilia sẽ giúp trẻ tự tin, có sự phát triển cân đối, hài hòa giữa nhận thức và tình cảm, cảm xúc. Tuy nhiên việc áp dụng quan điểm này vào quá trình chăm sóc giáo dục trẻ tại các trường mầm non trên địa bàn thành phố Hà nội vẫn chưa tốt và còn phụ thuộc vào nhiều yếu tố.
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1. Introduction

Reggio Emilia's educational perspective has its roots in Italy, appeared in the 40s of the twentieth century after the Second World War when the city was severely damaged. Built and developed by Loris Malaguzzi and the parents themselves in the city of Reggio Emilia [5]. This is an educational model for preschool children, child-centered and based on the principles of respect, responsibility and community, through self-experience, discovery to learn and direction. 2]. Currently, the Reggio Emilia education concept is quite popularly applied in public preschools in Hanoi city.

2. Research results

2.1. Reggio Emilia educational environment

Reggio Emilia's philosophy originates from the belief that "in every child, there is a great latent potential and that potential will be experienced and built through the child's inherent curiosity". Children should try to think and form the world around them and come up with their way to answer questions about the movement of the world around them. Educators need to encourage children to solve problems on their own and to put their ideas and feelings into words. Loris Malaguzzi says: "Our mission is to spark the imagination of our little friends so that they can conquer the highest mountain with their own two feet. No one can proceed to replace them" [5].

Within the framework of this research, we perceive the educational environment as the total of three areas: the psychosocial environment, the

physical environment, and the natural environment. The educational environment is clearly shown in the educational philosophy, content, methods, organizational forms, means and toys and around the school scene for children [4].

a) Psycho-social environment of Reggio Emilia

Reggio Emilia appreciates the environment for children to be active. According to Malaguzzi, the environment is the place that attracts children's attention and arouses their love of beauty. It is a place to give children the tools to explore, learn about the world and realize their creative ideas.

In the Reggio Emilia educational environment [5]:

- Children are the protagonists: Children are free to design their learning based on all the conditions that the environment brings.

- Children as collaborators: Instead of isolating each child, the Reggio Emilia educational environment aims at each child in relationships with other children, with families, and with the community.

- Children are communicators of information: Children have the right to use different materials to discover and express what they see, understand, and ask questions...

- The environment is a child's third teacher: The design and use of space play a role in encouraging interaction, communication, and relationships. The architectural space of the play corners, equipment, and materials in the school needs to be arranged with order and aesthetics. Each play corner in the entire classroom space must have a clear personality and purpose, attract children's attention, encourage children to interact, and be cared for and appreciated by both children and adults.

- Teachers are companions, nurturers, and guides. Teachers facilitate children's exploration by topic, work with short and long-term projects, and guide experiences in connection, open exploration, and problem-solving. To know how to plan and pursue children's art projects, teachers need to listen and observe children. Teachers ask questions, explore children's ideas, hypothesize with children, and open up opportunities for children's exploration and learning.

- Teachers as researchers: Teachers work in pairs, maintaining cooperative relationships with colleagues and other staff; they participate in discussions and interpret the works of teachers and students. These exchanges act as training sessions, fostering pedagogical skills for teachers.

- Document as a communication channel: All forms of expression of children's thinking and the way adults interact with children are carefully considered and paid

attention to. The teacher's comments on the purpose and process of learning, the children's sayings, pictures of activities, and forms of expression of thought in various ways are preserved, and carefully designed on the website. posters, or bound into books to document the learning process at school, this material serves a variety of purposes. On the one hand, it helps parents understand their children's experiences. On the other hand, it helps teachers understand the child, evaluate the child's efforts, and help teachers exchange experiences and ideas with other educators. The kit also makes children feel that their work is valued and appreciated.

b) Reggio Emilia's physical environment

"Smart Materials" is also a matter of particular interest in Reggio: The term "Smart Materials" is used by Reggio to refer to the creative resources provided to children. To support creative expression in children, teachers at Reggio pay close attention to the materials provided to children. In Reggio schools there are very few single-use "toys" but a wide range of "open materials" that children can explore and use creatively [2].

Working with these materials can encourage children to think that materials are valuable and full of potential, ready to be transformed into any form of new creations and inventions. Materials not only help develop children's skills and manipulations but also encourage children to use their imagination.

Items that can be used by preschool children include Kitchen utensils, bathroom accessories, and natural materials. For preschoolers, open resources provide a fun starting point for all kinds of creative ideas, such as Natural materials, and recycled materials, often available at very low cost. Smart user experience. In addition, in schools Reggio provides children with a wide variety of art materials, helping children explore and express their ideas in different ways.

The creative arrangement of materials is a matter of great attention. To develop children's creativity, it is required that materials be arranged to encourage creativity. It is attractive, engaging, and easy for children to approach. They can be arranged in transparent plastic trays for easy visibility, and sorted by color pattern, type... Paying attention to the presentation of materials will show children that you appreciate the value of materials. how, while also encouraging children to choose and use them creatively (sometimes the teacher's creative arrangement also helps children think of using them to make products) and Store away carefully when finished.

Specially displaying children's work is considered an important part of creative art activities. Through the way teachers display their work, children realize

that their work is seen and valued. In addition to the finished works that are hung in the classroom or taken home, with Reggio Emilia there will also be unfinished works because we help children develop several ideas and discoveries over a long period. Children will need to store everything safely so they can return to work at a later date.

In Reggio school, there are some special areas. The first is the admission area to welcome everyone, this area is like a family's living room making parents and guests comfortable and encouraging them to visit often. A Reggio school brings beauty and peace to special areas, such as the square, the garden, the art studios, the kitchen, and the dining room.

Square area: A large space in the middle of the building where children of different ages meet and play. There is large equipment here, such as a kaleidoscope, stage, costumes, performance props, and puppet theater... so that children can play and coordinate together.

Schoolyard: The outdoor space at the Reggio school is also set up for children's creativity. There, children can explore nature, exercise, knit - plait, perform art, learn, build and create works on a larger scale than at home. Teachers can provide children with: Large pieces of wood, planks, crates, gutters, pipes, sheets, ropes, boxes, crates...; magnifying glasses, art materials (chalk, paint, charcoal, and easel...); natural and recycled materials: wood, gravel, sand, leaves, grass, seeds, shells, silk strips, plastic bottles, twine, and sacks...

Art studios: carpentry workshop, tailor workshop, pottery studio, light studio, painting studio, or studio, where young groups will engage in creativity with art mentors (painter/playwright/ photographers...) every day. Workshops are equipped with many "creative resources" such as clay, art materials, natural materials, etc.

Kitchen and dining area: A very important part of Reggio centers because mealtime is seen as a very valuable opportunity for children's personal and social development. There children are arranged dining table with tablecloths, flowers, pads, eating utensils (knives, forks...). Children can observe the preparation of meals and discover about food (What dish? Where does it come from? What ingredients are it made from? How is it prepared?...). Children can also participate in the process of preparing ingredients, making some simple dishes, preparing the table, choosing the utensils and taking food for themselves or helping the children ...

- Flexibility: At the school Reggio attaches great importance to flexibility in the construction of the environment: Flexibility is evident in the way the space

is not fixed, instead of using fixed furniture patterns to block the area. and activity corners in the room, in Reggio children can freely move between areas because there are no fixed doors but open bookshelves, transparent glass panels, wooden frames to divide the room/area. Fabrics, wooden frames set up as tents, caves for children to get in and out of, can be resized, positioned, etc. Open resource" to flexibly use in many different activities and create many products difference.

- Easy to use available resources, such as Light, shadow, trees, soil, gravel... Those are the things that are available without having to buy but children always find attractive and bring great value to children. children's learning.

c) Natural environment of Reggio Emilia

An environment according to the Reggio school system needs to create a lively, welcoming child every day at school, stimulate children's curiosity, help children express and seek beauty. The space needs to have an expansion and connection to the outside and use direct light, to help children get close to nature and available materials such as trees, sand, stone... At the same time, each In the area, each classroom forms a small workshop for children to unleash their creativity and unleash their potential.

Loris Malaguzzi believes that every space in a preschool must have a purpose. The architecture of the building as well as the layout of the rooms convey the educational philosophy of the Reggio method. The spaces at Reggio are designed to allow each child and group of children the opportunity to play, learn and explore, socialize and develop relationships every day, providing a variety of opportunities for those involved. participants can actively interact with the environment and thereby build and reproduce their knowledge; It also aims to promote comfortable relationships among people of different ages, opening up effective and cognitive social learning styles. For example, the "Creative Spaces" area: At the Reggio school, creative spaces can be set up outdoors as well as indoors. It provides opportunities for children to use skills and experiences in different contexts, and thus make connections in their learning.

Having a space in the house for children to be quiet and think, dream or simply observe others. There is an outdoor space for children to be active and explore, with the opportunity to experience the change of season and time. The space is always ready so that children can choose activities according to their interests at any time. The space must be regularly changed to meet the needs of the child. A space that does not restrict the child's vision is also a very important requirement. Mezzanine walls and partitions or made of transparent materials help children observe the outside world, recognize

what is happening around them, and recognize changes over time (different times of the day and the seasons).

It can be seen that the physical environment, the psychosocial environment and the natural environment in the preschool in Reggio Emilia’s point of view are always intertwined and harmoniously combined, forming an overall educational environment. imbued with the founder’s educational philosophy [1].

In short, the Reggio Emilia educational environment will have a strong impact on not only children’s cognition but also their emotions, giving them an enjoyable experience with unlimited creativity, satisfying their passions. With such advantages, we have surveyed in Hanoi city to assess the application of this concept in preschools in the area today.

2.2. Factors affecting the construction of an educational environment according to Reggio Emilia’s opinion.

Reggio Emilia is considered an educational concept with many advantages, which is now widely applied in countries around the world. However, when applying this point of view, as well as other advanced educational views in the world, it is also influenced by different subjective and objective factors [3]. The first influencing factor is the perception of educators who apply this point of view, specifically education administrators and preschool teachers. Their level of awareness will directly affect the application implementation as well as the implementation of child care and education from Reggio’s point of view. In addition, due to the specific nature of the Reggio environment, the physical conditions of the equipped educational institutions are also a significant factor affecting the design of the environment from this point of view. For the application of the Reggio concept to be widespread and feasible, the educational needs of young parents from the Reggio point of view also have a great influence. In addition, the direction of the local departments, the support or vice versa is also a factor

contributing to the process of applying the Reggio Emilia education perspective in practice.

2.3 The current situation of building an educational environment according to Reggio Emilia in some preschools in Hanoi today

To research and evaluate the current situation of applying Reggio Emilia’s point of view to building an educational environment for preschool children, we studied over 10 preschools in Cau Giay District and Bac Tu Liem District in Hanoi, with a total of 20 guests including 10 teachers and 10 administrators. We use a combination of a group of theoretical research methods and a group of practical research methods (investigation, in-depth interviews), using SPSS 20.0 software to analyze data.

In this study, we survey to find out: The extent of applying Reggio Emilia’s point of view in building psychosocial, physical, and natural environments in preschools; The effectiveness of the application, and the factors affecting the application of this concept.

To survey the situation, we use a scale of 5 levels, and change the corresponding quantification from 1 to 5, the levels will be in the range of $1 \leq X \leq 5$, specifically:

- Level 1 (Very Low): $1,0 \leq \text{Mean} \leq 1,8$
- Level 2 (Low): $1.8 < \text{Mean} \leq 2.6$
- Level 3 (Average): $2.6 < \text{Mean} \leq 3.4$
- Level 4 (High): $3.4 < \text{Mean} \leq 4.2$
- Level 5 (Very High): $4.20 < \text{Mean} \leq 5.0$

2.2.1. The current situation of applying the Reggio Emilia perspective in building an educational environment for preschool children

The results of the survey on the application of the Reggio Emilia perspective in building psychosocial, physical and natural environments in preschools are shown in the table below:

Table 1. The level of application of Reggio Emilia perspective in building an educational environment for preschool children

No.	contents	Level of application										Mean	The level
		Very good		good		Medium		low		Very low			
		amount	percent	amount	percent	amount	percent	amount	percent	amount	percent		
1	Building a psychosocial environment	0	0	11	55	9	45	0		0	0	3,55	1
2	Building physical environment	0	0	7	35	10	50	3	15	0	0	3,2	3
3	Building the natural environment	0	0	10	50	7	35	3	15	0	0	3,35	2
GPA												3,37	

The results in Table 1 show that currently, the application of Reggio Emilia’s point of view in some public preschools in Hanoi city in building an educational environment for children is quite common, reaching a high level. On the scale with an mean of 3.37. However, the level of application of each school in each area of the educational environment (psychosocial environment, physical environment, natural environment) is not the same. Specifically, the level of application to the construction of psychosocial environment is the highest, ranked 1st with the average rating of 3.55 (high level of the scale), and ranked 2nd is the level of application in construction. The natural environment ranked third in the level of application in building the physical environment.

To further clarify this situation, through interviews, we learned that, due to the characteristics and conditions of the school’s facilities, the application to the design of the physical environment such as equipment Toys, display areas for children’s products, art workshops are difficult to do. For example, in Reggio’s view, the art area must have an area large enough for children

to participate in activities in it with natural materials, but due to the limited design of the school. system and has been built stably for a long time, so it is difficult to change. The same goes for the enrollment area from Reggio Emilia’s point of view because the school’s construction design follows the general model, so it’s almost impossible for public preschools to design this area. The school often uses the schoolyard area to decorate events and welcome children at the beginning of the school year (or the end of the school year only), and every day when they come to class, the children will be greeted by their parents. Pick up and drop off at the classroom door. The construction of flexible classrooms according to Reggio is also difficult to do because of the current “static” construction design of schools, which cannot be flexibly changed according to the requirements of Reggio’s physical environment.

2.2.2. *Actual status of effectiveness in applying Reggio Emilia’s perspective in building an educational environment for preschool children*

The results are shown in the two tables below:

Table 2. The effectiveness of applying the Reggio Emilia perspective in the design of an educational environment for preschool children

No.	Contents	Level of application										Medium score	The level
		Very good		Good		Medium		low		Very low			
		amount	percent	amount	percent	amount	percent	amount	percent	amount	percent		
3	Psychosocial environment	1	5	12	60	7	35	0	0	0	0	3,7	1
1	The natural environment	1	5	11	55	7	35	1	5	0	0	3,6	2
2	Physical environment	0	0	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0	3,6	2
GPA												3,63	

The survey results in Table 2 show that the educational environment according to Reggio Emilia’s point of view when designed in some pre-schools in Hanoi city has been effectively applied, with an average score of 3.63 reaching the High end of the scale.

In particular, the application in the area of psychosocial environment achieved the highest efficiency with an average score of 3.7 - A high level of the scale, followed by the natural environment, the physical environment, also achieved the most effective results. with an average rating of 3.6 - A high level on the rating scale.

This result shows that the design of the educational environment for preschool children according to the educational perspective of Reggio Emilia in some public preschools in Bac Tu Liem and Cau Giay districts is still limited, but still very doable.

2.2.3. *Actual situation of factors affecting the application of Reggio Emilia’s perspective in the design of the educational environment for preschool children*

The process of designing an educational environment for children according to Reggio Emilia’s point of view has the influence of many basic factors, such as awareness of administrators, teachers, direction of all levels, departments, and basic conditions. school facilities and parents’ need to adopt the Reggio Emilia perspective. To continue to investigate this situation, we use a scale of 4 levels, the corresponding quantification is from 1 to 4, the levels are in the range of $1 \leq \bar{X} \leq 4$, specifically:

Level 1 (Non-affected): $1.0 \leq \text{mean} \leq 1.75$

Level 2 (Less effect): $1.75 \leq \text{mean} \leq 2.5$

Level 3 (Strong influence): $2.5 \leq \text{mean} \leq 3.25$

Level 4 (Very strong influence): $3.25 \leq \text{mean} \leq 4$

The survey results are shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Factors affecting the application of the Reggio Emilia perspective in the design of the educational environment for children in preschools

No.	contents	Level of application									
		Very strong influence		strong influence		Little effect		No effect		Medium score	The level
		amount	%	amount	%	amount	%	amount	%		
1	Perception of teachers and administrators	5	25	11	55	4	20	0		3,25	1
2	The school's material facilities conditions	2	10	15	75	3	15	0		2,95	2
3	Parents' needs	0	0	13	65	6	30	1	5	2,60	3
4	Directing views of local authorities and departments	3	15	13	65	4	20	0		3,25	1

A look at Table 3 shows that, for some preschools in Hanoi city, all the above basic factors strongly influence the process of applying the Reggio Emilia perspective to child care and education activities, in which the awareness factor of managers, teachers and teachers and the guiding point of view of all levels and departments is the strongest influence, with the average score of the scale reaching 3.25. The next factor is The school's material facilities conditions and finally the parents' needs for the application of this point of view in the care and education of children.

Thus, with the survey results showing that, in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of child care and education activities when applying the Reggio Emilia perspective in public preschools in Hanoi City, It is necessary to take measures to raise awareness for administrators and teachers as well as other measures to help relevant departments and agencies to have appropriate and timely direction. Besides, it is necessary to invest in facilities to suit the conditions of the Reggio Emila educational environment as well as the needs' parents for the application of this point of view in the process of child care and education.

3. Conclusion

Research results show that building an educational environment according to Reggio Emilia's point of view is quite popularly applied in some public preschools in Hanoi city, the level of application and effectiveness are at the same level. high. The effectiveness and extent

of applying Reggio Emilia's point of view into practice at preschools is influenced by many factors, of which the cognitive factor of administrators and teachers has the strongest influence.

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